

INTERVIEW WITH MAXEY MULLINS

Ferraro: Alright we're going to try it one more time right from the top, Ok?  
I'll ask you the first question Maxey, this is a I want you to describe what it was like being here in 1921 when a the miners started to come on in.

Maxey: Well, there were very few houses in the town of Madison at that time. Twenty houses - probably about oh anywhere between twelve and eight - twelve and twenty somewhere and there were few stores down on main street, two banks and a...they wasn't too much activity in the town at that time a business wise and the people population surely wouldn't have been wouldn't have been five hundred I don't imagine.

Ferraro: How old were you?

Maxey: I was only fourteen at the time. That was when the miners came through...they called it the miners march. 1.00

Ferraro: What did you see and what did you hear?

Maxey: Well, we had heard that they were a bunch of miners congregating in the head of Lens Creek...a about twenty miles away - twenty five miles away and were coming through Boone County and they were going to to Logan County and they were going over there to a to force their entrance in there union people to enter into Logan County. Don Shafin was the sheriff over there and he wouldn't let them pull through. Any miners he wouldn't let a union man come in the country but...they stopped

momentarily at Danville after crossing the hills and a camped there for a while...a day probably or something like that and that all gotten rifles and ammunition and food and stuff for out of all the stores and houses as they came along. These just went in and took what they wanted everywhere and so my father had told me to stay away from country, said that's a dangerous situation. He said the it to dangerous to be around them people. They they just liable to do most anything you know. So I went still want wanted to see what was going on and I went on down...and I was went with a couple of them over on my uncle's porch near the upper end of town of Danville. He had a beautiful daughter named Violet and one of them was sitting in the swing and she talking to her and showing his gun how he could work the mechanism of it - Forty Five Automatic. He brought it home from service and all. He shot hisself through the foot. Well, old Violet, the cousin, wrapped his foot up put turpentine on it and sent him on his way. Well, they was other incident that my dad related to me about a that happened to one of my school mates - chums, Paul Turley. The a one of the miners had him backed up again the wall. My dad in the meantime went down to check up on his father and mother and finding them alright he went back out into the street and found this man with his gun pointed to the fellows chest. So he he was telling him he was going to kill him if he didn't answer his questions. So my dad brushed it aside. He shot and the shot hit the the boy in the hand. Crippled his hand. Then I saw this with another incident. They was some fellow dressed up like a cowboy. He had two guns. One on either side and a cowboy had on and he was going up and down the street a yelling and a shooting - Just like he was some big outlaw or something. They had to tie him down and you know to control him but they commindered a a train

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4:00

either at Danville or just below but anyhow they had lots of flat cars on it. I don't know five or six flat cars. All these miners were on the flat car - had their gun in their laps and they rode up a Little Coal River to Blair Mountain and that a they attempted to go up Blair Mountain and while on the way up the hill, they ran into some of the chief a some of the deputies - Don Shafins' deputies and they started shooting and they killed three of the deputies and one of them was a John Goore. I remember that they had a trial later on relative to him and one of the union men got killed. Well, they went on up the hill to they got within <sup>5:00</sup> gun shot of the top of the hill and I under I'd heard later from a cousin of mine who lived over there that they had about two or three thousand men on top of the hill in fenced in with machine guns all along the top of the hill and that my cousin had told me that they wasn't going to let anybody pass at all. They was going to kill every fellow that attempt to cross that mountain. So they a got up to close as shooting distance <sup>5:30</sup> of them. They all begin to shoot. They's quite a bit of shooting went on and why they heard that the soldiers was coming in. Meantime, there was six airplanes - six or eight. I I never am quite sure of how many army planes flew over and the reason I knew they were army planes - they were flying in formation. V formation just like ducks, geese you know and they they flew back in about fifteen or twenty minutes. <sup>6:00</sup> We'd heard that they'd dropped bombs over there, but they couldn't have dropped bombs in that length of time I don't think. I don't think they were the type of plane that drops bombs. So then later they was a bunch of soldiers came in about a thousand of them came in and camped out at Danville. Well, I I went down and I even got acquainted with one of the soldier boys. He was young. He's some sort of teenager. I don't know eighteen - young fellow and he take <sup>6:30</sup>

me all around the camp and showed me in and out of it. He even showed me where their medical doctor lived. They had a house that they they acquired and they had all sorts of medical supplies in there. They had a nurse too you know. So they had everything lined up and showed me where the kitchen was. I even ate one meal with them - pretty good eating but he'd even gave me - this fellow gave me five hundred round of of forty five and thirty ought six ammunition. Gave me one pound or two, I'd forgotten about that; a one pounder and I sat it up on the granddads mantle, but the reason I was anxious to get his thirty ought six, my uncle that lived down at Danville had a thirty ought six he brought home from the service. Most of these miners - alot of them had went to service and brought back their guns with them you know. So later on I I shot some of the shells in his thirty ought six. They shoot plum through a beech tree...but get on with the story about the miners. They when they heard the soldiers were coming they they fled through the rest of woods all around them. There's nothing but woods up there in the hills you know. Hid their guns in difference places. Well, they...they when the service soldiers got up there they couldn't find them you know . They were gone everywhere just like chickens. So...they the mine war ended right there at Buckley after about four days of heavy fighting. I think they was about ten or twelve killed on each side.

Ferraro: Let me ask (pause) <sup>8:30</sup> Ok, a tell me once again what it was like when the a when the miners came into Madison. What it seemed like in the town.

Maxey: Well, it it was a right quite peaceful sort of town. They wasn't much going on at all no industry in the town. I don't remember whether there were any mines in the town in the county or not at that time. They may <sup>9:00</sup>

have been one or two over on Big Coal River and I think they might have been one up in the head of the river, Spruce Fork-Little Coal River, but there just wasn't any activity at all just a few stores down town - merchants a one of them I recall was a Hatad but he his store was in he had a store at Clother.

Ferraro: What happened when the miners came in?

Maxey: <sup>9.30</sup> Well, everybody took to their houses and and got off the streets so they didn't want to stick around this they was afraid to stay around. So... they was just scared for their lived you know. They'd heard that the miners would kill them if they resisted or did anything wrong or...

Ferraro: What a how many soldiers were there?

Maxey: How many stores?

Ferraro: Soldiers.

Maxey: <sup>10.00</sup> Oh, they they was about a thousand of them down to Danville. I heard later that there was a thousand went up the other river - Guyandotte River.

Ferraro: How many miners do you think came into a Madison?

Maxey: Well, I wouldn't have any estimate. I I would just say they were thousands of them. They were just like honey bees in a bee swarm you know...and you couldn't well, they they outmaned and outdwarfed a they made a what

10:30  
little community looked like a very small community - smaller than what it was.

Ferraro: Can you tell me anything about the miners behavior while they were here? What they looked like, how they dressed?

Maxey: Well, a some of them had on their service uniforms - OD uniforms and most of them had on coveralls and they had a red bandanna handkerchief around their neck. I remember that and for that reason they call them rednecks but you you were dared to call one of them redneck you know. 11:00  
I was afraid to. No telling what they might do to you..but they were were outside of taking what they wanted in the way of pervisions and guns and ammunition. They didn't disturb the people in their homes a great deal. I I never heard of any instances where they ever disturbed them or did anything wrong. Alot of them were from the county you know.

11:30  
Ferraro: Were there a were there apparently people from outside the county too?

Maxey: Most of the miners were from outside. I'd say were from Kanawha River and the New River sections...and of course they picked up what miners they could on the way...had some that weren't miners joined in with them just for a lark you know.

Ferraro: Tell me about your father's a official position in 1921 and his involvement.

12:00  
Maxey: Well, in 1921 after the march was over with he was he was a...now he he wasn't prosecuting attorney until after until 1920. His term expired at at the end of 1920, but his one of his last duties in the office was to

knowledge all the miners that were indicted in Boone County. They were several of them indicted in Boone and a which was a natural course for him to take <sup>12:30</sup> he said at the time because all the rest of the cases had been been disposed of one way or another in the other counties and one for treason where they convicted or they they found a the Bill Blizzard not guilty. He was a chief chief. He was the leader of them through the county. I remember one fellow saying there's Bill Blizzard pointing him up. I didn't get a good look at him. He was a young man. 13:00

Ferraro: Did a did your father know Frank Keeney or Bill Blizzard - talk to them at all?

Maxey: My father was...was elected prosecuting attorney by by the and the union people supported him in the county for his election in 17 or 16. Took office in 17 as prosecuting attorney and he stayed <sup>13:30</sup> in the office until 1921 or 20 December - four year term. A John Hill was the sheriff. I don't know whether I related that or not but if I didn't, John Hill called my father up and asked him what would you do with all these men a coming in - armed men a coming in. He said I've been contracted by the attorney generals office and I want a know what to do. <sup>14:00</sup> He said the best thing you can do is to leave them fellows alone..he said you better get out in the clear - stay in the clear. He said I'm going to do nothing. He wasn't anything he could do at the time. We only had a a few fellows here in Madison and that could fight and a miners had done confiscated all the guns so there wasn't anything they could do really but he he <sup>14:30</sup> really sympathised in in more or less with the miners because that where he got his living. He was attorney you know.

Ferraro: Did your father tell you any particularly memorable experiences about his dealings with the miners?

Maxey: Well, he told me about his connection with a Bill Blizzard and a and a Frank Keeney. He said they were they were both for him a hundred percent in the in the his <sup>15:00</sup> being elected and they were very good friends of his and he was a good friend of them I know, but they cause corresponded together and I believe they talked on each to each other over the phone.

Ferraro: You said you had a members of your family fighting on both sides of the mountain, how did that come about?

Maxey: Well, a I had a second cousin that lived over in Logan county and he <sup>15:30</sup> told me later what he what had happened and he said that Don Shafin had deputised him and others and he went on top of the mountain and manned a machine gun up there. They were down in a trench where they couldn't get hit oh, maybe just to see out of you know and he said they was about he told me how many there up there on top of the mountain and a he also told me that about a hundred fifty - two hundred state police up there <sup>16:00</sup> too..but he said they wouldn't wasn't going to let anybody pass at all - going to kill anybody that came to the top of the mountain...and he told me about Don Shafin ruling the county. He was a regular king in Logan county. He was a he just ruled that's all. He told a...his JP's to deputise their men..any men they wanted to be deputy sheriff - special <sup>16:30</sup> deputy and he'd give them authority to carry a gun and put a tin badge on and tell them to keep all the union organizers out of Logan county. He says if they come in here tell them to leave and if they don't leave bring them jail and if they won't come to jail use whatever force is



necessary. Some of them got beat up and now he was killed. My cousin said they killed two or three.

Ferraro: <sup>17:00</sup> Um, what other experiences as a presecuting attorney did your father have regarding the march?

Maxey: Well, just this of course my father had a twenty two high powered rifle but that's the only gun he had you know and he he wouldn't attempt to go out anywhere with himself - just by himself to do something to try to stop them because it would be too dangerous. <sup>17:30</sup> He he knew that a thing for explosive very volital you know. He was afraid that a they might do anything once you get them arroused and he he he informed me to just strictly to stay away from them but I I wouldn't do it. I hadn't worked for him in the office that time. I I did later on worked for him as a when he ran the second time - worked for him in the office as his <sup>18:00</sup> stenographer. That was many years later but my father was also well acquainted with the governor at that time. I just somehow another I can't remember the governor's name. I I if the name was mentioned I probably could remember it but I think the governor contacted my father talked to him about the matter..but he he sympathised with the miners. <sup>18:30</sup> He knew that how they were being treated and especially over in Logan county. He'd heard all about it you know.

Ferraro: Did he ever have any dealing with Don Shafin?

Maxey: Ever have any what?

Ferraro: Dealings with Don Shafin.

Maxey: No, no never had any dealings with Don Shafin..at one time he did go to Charleston - made a trip over there for a Devil Lance Hatfield. They went over to governors office to keep Devil Lance from being taken back into Kentucky on a on a warrant. The governor of Kentucky sent over for to bring Devil Lance on a murder charge and he wouldn't. My dad went with another attorney - Logan attorney over there. Kept Devil Lance from going back. He told the governor, he said Devil Lance was a captain in the war and he's a fine man - West Virginian.

Ferraro: What did your father remember about a Sid Hatfield?

Maxey: Well, I've heard him tell about Sid Hatfield was a counselor - not a counselor, a police over in Matewan I believe it was..and he was a a union sympathizer. He sympathized with the union and he tried to keep the Boldenfelts out of Logan - called them the detectives a to come in for the mine mine owners would bring them in to guard their mines you know and so they were coming into this town but... meantime the Boldenfelts was later the Boldenfelts had a guns of all sorts I think some machine guns and all. They they shot this officer down in the town of Matewan - killed him...of course that that helped inflame the miners more you know and..it was all on a count of the miners evicting alot of people out of their houses that I remember now that the officer was a directed to going evict all these miners out of their homes. The company had ordered them out you know - got got a court order. He wouldn't he wouldn't serve it on them..so he he was really a union man.

Ferraro: Uh, do you remember the march of a 1919 that was aboarded in Danville?

Maxey: Well, I'd heard that there was one a such a march that was aboarded at one time but...

Ferraro: What part did your father have with that?

Maxey: I believe..my recolition is that he he had told them that there it was <sup>21 30</sup> useless to go over there that they they were out numbered and out gunned and everything else and they better stay at home. They'd be an awful lot of bloodshed - It be a useless thing to do. I believe he did tell them that.

Ferraro: Who did he tell that to?

Maxey: I think he was talking to some of the leaders possibly a Bill Blizzard. That's my recolition - it could have been one of the others. It could have been Frank Keeney...but I don't remember too much about that one <sup>22 00</sup> cause I I don't know I didn't see it - just what I heard.

Ferraro: Did a..ok can we stop for a second (pause) Ok, this is fourteen year old a 1921 just the way we were talking about it. Tell me what it was like to be living here in Madison seeing the miners start the descend on <sup>22 30</sup> the area.

Maxey: Well, it was a far as a very quite peaceful community. They were unuse to a disturbances of any kind a..especially riots or killings or anything like that and us boys would all get together and we'd go down to ballpark and play baseball. We'd choose up side and all and take a bat handle and <sup>23 00</sup> and you know how they chose up - one grab the bat and the other one put

his hand on top of it..and it always have nine on each side - regular baseball team and we'd have quite a bit of fun playing baseball and then we'd all go swimming - had a regular swimming hole - no swimming pool and we enjoyed ourselves very much and we always hate hated to see school end. A when the term came to an <sup>23 30</sup>end why we was all sad and they'd have a candy break an all that you know. So we we loved our community. We we really at the streets were not paved yet. They were dusty - some I remember the first ford came into town - ride up and down the street and the dust just a flying. So..

Ferraro: What and what was it like when the the miners started to come over the mountain?

Maxey: Well, it was still about that <sup>24 00</sup>stage of a town when they came in. They all these few businesses in town you know and they they were had been told that they were take robbing people and taking everything they had but they they did take any precautions. They just kept the stores open when the miners came in they just walked in politely and ask, do you have a pair of shoes size so and so and if they said yes, you go and get it and put them on and wear them out and say nothing - <sup>24 30</sup>Thank you for the shoes.. and I understand that they took quite a few shoes off of this fellow, Nathen Hadad who live at Clother - had a store up there - maybe took everything he had.

Ferraro: Where did the miners stay when they came in Madison?

Maxey: Well, they said we are going to Logan county and we're going to clean up on them fellows over in Logan - they John John Don Shafin and his deputies

25:00  
they said they'd been a running all over our union men out at Logan county and we we got tired of it and we're going in there and clean up on them - so going to hang them on a sour apple tree. They'd sing that going to hang Don Shafin on a sour apple tree.

Ferraro: Tell me about them getting on the flat cars and the train and everything.

Maxey: And this train came up with all these flat cars on it and it had a a fellow in the cab a holding the en a gun behind the engineer making him do whatever he wanted you know and so they all got on - clammered on 25:30 these flat cars and had their guns and sat sat down on the car and had their guns a holding them in their laps and they was a singing that song a going to hang Don Shafin on a sour apple tree. All happy go lucky sort of fellows. They didn't seem to be dangerous at time to me they just on lark I thought but they went on up river on this flat cars - went out of sight.

26:00  
Ferraro: Tell me what your father said about staying away from the trouble.

Maxey Well, he says I don't want you going down there Maxey. He called me Maxey. He says it's a dangerous situation and he said they might do anything. Those miners are there inflamed. They been a listening to Mother Jones talk over on Cabin Creek and other places. Well, the here I think they had a meeting here in in the town sometime before that and but I didn't hear what was said. 26:30 Didn't see her but he told me a very infatically just stay away from them so I I determined that I was going see what they was like you know - like a kid would I guess. So I went down to Danville to see them come into town. So they they walked along

and they seemed would be dusty and tired and dirt dirty looking and had on coveralls most of them and wore these bandanna handkerchiefs around their neck..of course they had been nickname a rednecks. I was afraid to call one of them a redneck. I was afraid they might kill me or something you know.

Ferraro: Is there anything else that you can recall your father telling you about the march on Logan?

Maxey: Well, he he told me he says them miners a going up there and they're going to get alot of them killed because they said them people in Logan county, they mean business. They're going to keep them out of there if they can. He said they all they got all kinds of guns and ammunition. They're deputized - they their they got the law on their side so they they they can do whatever they want you know.

Ferraro: Ok, you a describe the a fact that you had cousin who faught on the other side. Do you know of any other families were a were there people on different sides of the there were people working for Shafin and people marching with the a the miners? Do you know of anybody like that?

Maxey: Anybody who had was a kin to the people in Logan?

Ferraro: Do you know of anybody that had a were families were broken up or had any kind of a you know stress as a result of people being on different side of the fence in the Blair Mountain dispute?

Maxey: Not not necessarily so in that in that in that light. I had a I had

another cousin that was involved in the march himself personally. He'd been in the war, WWI, and he he came home and brought his gun with him you know - thirty ought six. He came with them from Marmett. He lived at Marmett. He just got with them a marched right on through with them.. but..he after it was over with he said he didn't enjoy it. It wasn't any enjoyment to he had out of it - wished he hadn't a gone - some...

Ferraro: Tell me one more time about the planes that you saw coming over head.

Maxey: Well, one one day I don't know it must have been near midday, we saw these six or eight planes a flying in V formation just like a bunch of ducks flying south. That's the reason I knew they were army planes you know. They flew up the river up toward Logan and stayed up there probably fifteen or twenty minutes. They came back a about the same length of time and that was all there was to it. We we thought maybe they were going up to bomb but we we probably realized or thought we realized that they could have bombed in that short time. They didn't look like bombers so...

Ferraro: After the soldiers came through, how long were they here in Madison before they left?

Maxey: Ok, I'd say they were here...somewhere around sixty days more or less - be my best guess..of course they were in camp down at anville and they had these tents like a wigwam - slept about eighty in each tent. They were all very nice people. They'd they'd talk to you any anytime you wanted to talk to them.

Ferraro: Did you talk to the miners when they were came in?

Maxey: Yes, I I remember talking to - well, I talk to these miners that were  
30 30  
on the porch down there on that incident and they...

Ferraro: What did they have to say?

Maxey: They said we were going over to Logan county and we're going to hang  
Don Shafin and we're going to kill all them deputies out over there,  
said they been a treating us miners like dogs and dirt for long enough.  
So they really meant business - I thought they did.

Ferraro: Ok, is there anything else you'd like to ask him on the subject? 31 00