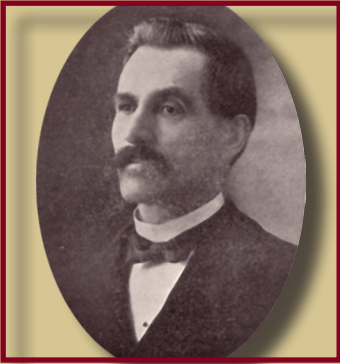


Agents of Change

A Learning Experience & Discussion About Early Labor Union Organizing in Ohio's Hocking Valley Coal Fields & How It Relates to Modern Day



Chris Evans



Richard L. Davis



UMW Ribbon 1890



Ernie Pyle at Devils Oven

Friday, August 8, 2008

(8:30-9:15 AM) Arrive Public Square Nelsonville Ohio
Registration Under The Porch @ The Historic Dew Hotel on Public Square
Complimentary Coffee & Pastry @ Fullbrooks Cafe in Dew Hotel

(9:15AM) Nelsonville -The Original Little City of Black Diamonds
Nelsonville became the largest of the mining communities in the Hocking Valley and a center for labor meetings during the Boom Era (1870-1925). The event kicks off with a tour of Public Square, and visit to the Hocking Valley Depot and Brick Kiln Park. Vans depart 9:50.

(10AM) Van Transportation To Conference Site: New Straitsville
Meet 1850's Industrialist & developer Peter Hayden @ the company town of Haydenville before a ride into the Wayne Forest to New Straitsville, site for the 2-day event.

(10:50AM) Welcome (Dunkle Hall @ Robinson's Cave-New Straitsville)

11:00AM-The Knights of Labor (1870-1884)
Local Historians Cheryl Blosser & John Winnenberg will share research on Knights of Labor organizing here leading up to the eve of the Hocking Valley Coal Strike, an event that would catapult the region into the national limelight of early union organizing in America.

(11:45AM) *Voices of the Little Cities: On The Eve of The Strike-July, 1884*
Playwright Ivars Balkits will lead a theatrical reading of an excerpt from his work in progress play that tells the story of the Knights of Labor in the Hocking Valley.

Noon-Lunch (Included in Registration)

(12:45PM) Robinson's Cave, Unofficial Birthplace of the UMWA
Climb stairs to Robinson's Cave to hear the story of the Hocking Valley Strike which pitted miners against the Columbus & Hocking Iron & Coal Co., known as The Syndicate. The protracted strike was seen as a national disgrace as near starvation plagued the miners and their families. Secret meetings held at this cave led to the setting of underground mine fires during the strike and later led to the formation of the United Mine Workers of America.

(1:20PM) The Fruits of Labor, 1885-86
Post strike investigations and the stunning leadership of mine owner William P. Rend and Union Organizer Chris Evans turned what appeared to be a loss for miners into a victory as landmark policy changes in the nation's labor were accomplished including the first ever interstate labor contract jointly negotiated between workers and owners in 1886.

(1:45PM) The Struggle to Unite, 1885-90
Hocking Valley miners gravitated to the trade union movement while others held to their original love for the Knights of Labor. New Straitsville became national headquarters for both as a dramatic struggle between the two to represent the nation's miners unfolded.

(2:30PM) The United Mine Workers of America, 1890's-1930's
The miners of the region played important roles in the UMWA and on the national labor stage as the UMWA grew to be one of the most powerful unions in the nation's history.

(3:15PM) Devil's Oven-The Fire In The Heart of the Little Cities
Documentary by Valda Lewis uses the New Straitsville Mine Fire to tell the story of the Little Cities past & present. Discuss: How do we relate events of a century ago to today?

(4:30-5PM) Return to Nelsonville