

AppLit

2006 New and Once Lost Films

On West Virginia and Appalachia

By Steve Fesenmaier September 2006

<http://www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/WVFilmIndex.htm>

This year West Virginia films and filmmakers were honored as WV History Heroes. Ray Schmitt, 2004 West Virginia Filmmaker of the Year from Hardy County, was honored for his work with the Hardy County Historical Commission. I was honored for my 28 years of promoting West Virginia films, in particular, my "WV Film Series" at The South Charleston Museum. Dr. Robert Conte, the actor who played Cal Price, in B.J.Gudmundsson's two films about him, gave out the awards as chairman of the Archives and History Commission. Fred Armstrong, director of the WV State Archives, sent a copy of my Graffiti article on the event to every commission member. A filmmaker from Wheeling was honored for her work preserving West Virginia history as was the author of a book that he and Gerry Milnes made into a film about WWII rock climbers. The last person to receive his award gave Cabinet Secretary Kay Goodwin a copy of Daniel Boyd's film about his family estate, "Ghosts of Green Bottom." 2006 was literally a historic year for West Virginia films and filmmakers. (Learn more about WV History Heroes at - <http://www.wvculture.org/history/hisher06.html>.)

As you can tell from this list, it is the year of films about mountaintop removal mining. The state and national press finally discovered the global importance of MTR because of the deaths of our coal miners and the on-going Energy Crisis.

This year Appalachia's greatest film, "Harlan County, USA" was finally released on DVD. It includes several short documentaries including one with John Sayles talking about how it inspired him to make "Matewan." I introduced the world premiere showing of "Black Diamonds" by calling it "the Harlan County, USA for the 21st century." I hope that it does win an Oscar and many other awards – and get shown all over the world as "Harlan County, USA" was back in 1977. The other films on MTR are also unusually well made.

Another one of Appalachia's greatest films, "Buffalo Creek – An Act of Man" was chosen by the Library of Congress for its National Film Registry, guaranteeing that it will be preserved for future generations. Mimi Pickering, its director, presented the film at the WV Cultural Center, in Man itself at the local high school, in Huntington at the Cabell County Public Library and other sites around the state. It is being released on as a restored film on DVD along with its sequel – "Buffalo Creek Revisited."

Gerry Milnes at The Augusta Heritage Center should be given special notice for his on-going series of films about WV musicians. The Center won the Governor's Arts Award for "Arts in Education/Service to Youth." Milnes presented two of his best films at The South Charleston Museum this spring – "Inspired Folk - Outsider Artists Of West Virginia" and the amazing, "Signs, Cures & Witchery- Appalachian Cosmology and Belief," the single most interesting WV film I have seen in 28 years.

Davit McAteer, The Governor's Special Assistant on Mine Safety, made the best film on the history of

coal mine deaths – “Monongah 1907.” The West Virginia Labor History Association presented this film during History Day at the Legislature in March 2006. WVLC has a copy the public may borrow.

Allen Toney, one of the world’s greatest graphic artists, has reappeared with his own pod cast – “Washun Dishes.” It is presently an audio only synthetic creation of life in West Virginia as presented by Toney using artificial and real voices combined with real and created music. It is hilarious – right up there with Lee Maynard’s “Crum.” Check it out at - http://web.mac.com/warshun_dishes/iWeb/Warshun%20Dishes/Welcome.html

Two West Virginia related films were finally released on DVD – “Dear Wendy,” written and directed by the two founders of the “Dogme” film movement – Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg. They sent a researcher to West Virginia to film and photograph Appalachian coal towns for use in their film about the American obsession with guns. Asia Argento made a film version of discredited author J.T. Leroy’s second book, “The Heart is Deceitful Above All Else,” filming in Knoxville. One part is set in West Virginia – Peter Fonda plays a religious obsessed grandfather running his own orphanage in rural West Virginia.

Two highlights of the year were the world premiere of “Black Diamonds” and the West Virginia Labor History Association sponsored showing of the restored “Harlan County, USA.” The funds raised at the “Diamonds” showing were given to the Segoe Mine families. “Harlan” proved to be just as good, or better, in 2006 than it was in 1976. Both B.J. Gudmundsson and Ray Schmitt continued to produce interesting, new films. The Museum of Modern Art in New York City screened the Schmitt’s award-winning film – “The Texture of Life” as part of their “Documentary Fortnight” series. Daniel Boyd has almost finished editing his last film, “Makutano. (Kevin Carpenter is finishing his MA thesis film, “One Earth: Makutano and Kilimanjaro.”) Terry Lively, a long-time film activist, released her film on West Virginia bridges – “Crossings – West Virginia Bridge Building” that premiered at The WV Cultural Center, was shown on WVPBS several times, and a copy was sent to every public library and school in the state.

The Films

Beautiful You

2006 34 mins. Real Earth Productions

Judy and Ray Schmitt have completed their portrait of one of West Virginia’s most unusual artists, Ai Qiu Hopen, a poet and sculptor. She is the daughter of Chinese beekeepers who found her husband, Bill Hopen, on the web. Hopen is a well known Sutton-based sculptor who also founded the Landmark Studio for the Arts. The title of the film comes from “Beautiful You,” a song by Elaine Wine who was performing in Sutton one night when the Schmitts were visiting. Ai Qiu’s beautiful drawings are shown along with some of her artworks – ragtime musician Blind John W. Boone, a large Charles Chaplin for The China National Sculpture Park, “Peace Prayer,” designed for The International Peace Monument, Shanghai, China, “Bat in Sunshine” for the downtown Shanghai Real Estate Plaza, “The Spirit of the Violin” and many small works of art. She is shown sculpting “Blind Boone” and “Spirit of the Violin.” She talks

about her life in China, her work, and her life in West Virginia with her husband and two young children. Her website - www.aiquihopen.com. Access: Real Earth Productions <http://www.realearthproductions.com/>

Blenko – The Spirit of American Stained Glass

2005 59 min. Avant Garde Films

Sheela Kadam of Dallas, Texas directed and narrated this film about the global influence of West Virginia's own Blenko Glass Company. Other people interviewed include Branko Pfeiffer, a glass artist from Sombor, Yugoslavia; Nick Parendo, owner of the Hunt Stained Glass Studio; David Judson of Judson Stained Glass in Los Angeles; Ellen Greisedieck, an internationally known artist; Sam Posey, a famous race driver who has worked for ABC Sports for 22 years; former Commissioner of Culture & History Troy Body; Carolyn Bagby of the Huntington Museum of Art; Richard Blenko, current president; and Sheela Kadam herself who talks about being a Hindu in Texas – and loving stained glass. *Access: Blenko Glass website - <http://www.blenkoglass.com/>.*

Bubble

2005 73 mins. Magnolia Entertainment

Steven Soderbergh, best known for directing “Erin Brokovich” and the “Ocean’s Eleven” remakes, came to Parkersburg to make the first of several low-budget, digital films. It tells the story of several workers in a doll factory who lead conventional lives. Tensions lead to an unexpected murder. The DVD includes deleted scenes, a film on the making of it in Parkersburg and Belpre, Ohio, across the Ohio River where a famous doll factory once existed. *This is the first Hollywood-based feature film ever released on the same day at theaters, on DVD, and on pay cable. Access: Amazon.com*

Black Diamonds

2006 95 mins. Catherine and Ann Pancake

Black Diamonds charts the escalating drama in Appalachia over the alarming increase in large mountaintop coal mines. These mammoth operations have covered 1200 miles of headwater streams with mining waste; demolished thousands of acres of hardwood forest; and flattened hundred of Appalachian mountain peaks. Citizen testimony and visual documentation interwoven with the perspectives of government officials, activists, and scientists create a riveting portrait of an American region fighting for its life--caught between the grinding wheels of the national appetite for cheap energy and

an enduring sense of Appalachian culture, pride, and natural beauty. Filmmakers Catherine and Ann Pancake were born and raised in WV. Catherine has become an award-winning filmmaker and Ann is an award-winning WV author. Working for more than 4 years on this project, they have traveled throughout Appalachia to chronicle the unparalleled destruction. Interviews with Julia Bonds, Maria Gunnoe, Arley Johnson, Ken Hechler and William Maxey. **Access:**

<http://www.blackdiamondsmovie.com/index.html>. The film will be for sale this fall from Bullfrog Films - <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/>

Bringing Down the Mountains

2006 14 mins.

Greensburg Salem High School senior Kaitlyn Walton and juniors Jill Sompel and Stephanie Loughner produced the 14-minute film to describe what life is like around MTR. Coal River Mountain Watch's Hillary Hosta said, "The girls did a great job clearly articulating with pictures and narrative what can be a very complex issue. The piece is concise, to the point and moving." It premiered on Feb. 11 at the West Virginia Energy Gathering" for young people. (

www.climateaction.net/content/wveg/) Limited copies are available for outreach and educational use. **Access:** bringingdownthemountains@yahoo.com.

Buffalo Creek – An Act of Man – DVD

1975 (DVD 2006) 40 mins. Appalshop

In December 2005, the Librarian of Congress selected this film for the National Film Registry. Thus it will be made available to future generations forever.

On February 26, 1972, a coal-waste dam owned by the Pittston Company collapsed at the head of a crowded hollow in southern West Virginia. A wall of sludge, debris, and water tore through the valley below, leaving in its wake 125 dead and 4,000 homeless. Interviews with survivors, representatives of union and citizen's groups, and officials of the Pittston Company are juxtaposed with actual footage of the flood and scenes of the ensuing devastation. As reasons for the disaster are sought out and examined, evidence mounts that company officials knew of the hazard in advance of the flood, and that the dam was in violation of state and federal regulations. The Pittston Company, however, continued to deny any wrongdoing, maintaining that the disaster was an 'an act of God.' Gov. Arch Moore is infamous for settling a \$ 100 million lawsuit against the company for a \$1 million in cleanup charges. The nation's first instant library was built in Man and named The Buffalo Creek Memorial Library. There is an expanded website for the film at – <http://www.buffalocreekflood.org/main.htm>. **Access: Appalshop General Store - <http://www.appalshop.org/film/store/>**

Buffalo Creek Revisited

1984 (DVD 2006) 31 mins. Appalshop

Also filmed by Mimi Pickering. Filmed ten years after the flood, this film looks at the second disaster on Buffalo Creek, in which the survivors' efforts to rebuild the communities shattered by the flood are thwarted by government insensitivity and a century-old pattern of corporate control of the region's land and resources. Through the statements of survivors, planners, politicians, psychologists, and community activists, the film explores the psychology of disaster, the importance of community, and the paradox of a poor people living in a rich land. Dr. Ken Hechler is shown to be a leading fighter for the community. There is an expanded website for the film at – <http://www.buffalocreekflood.org/main.htm>. Access: Appalshop General Store - <http://www.appalshop.org/film/store/>

The CC Boys: A West Virginia Legacy

2006 30 mins. Historic Beverly Preservation Inc.

Robert C. Whetsell and Gerald Milnes, who first worked together on “The Cliff-Scaling Soldiers of West Virginia” (2005), have produced another film about lost WV history. During the 1930s, thousands of “boys in green” worked on projects all over the state for the Civilian Conservation Corps. (CCC) They built state parks, planted trees, and did many other things that made the state a much better place to live. Mr. Whetsell was made a “WV History Hero” in March 2006 at The Cultural Center. Mr. Milnes was chosen as 2006 WV Filmmaker of the Year. Access: Augusta Heritage <http://www.augustaheritage.com/store.html>

Clogging in the New Millennium

2005 50 mins. Afterglow Productions

Ain't your daddy's clogging unless he danced to Michael Jackson's Thriller or a disco version of Amazing Grace while re-enacting the crucifixion. The filmmakers attempt to answer the age old question, "Does God love clogging?" Jacob Young and Carmen Fullmer of Afterglow Productions in Morgantown, WV. Access: *Jacob Young*

Coal Camp Blues, Coalfield Struggle

2003 55 mins. Jim McGee

Jim McGee made this film about Carl Rutherford, a well-known coal field musician and activist. He was active in the grass roots group, Big Creek People in Action (BCPIA), based in McDowell County. As a musician he is known as a Buck Owens style singer,

writing his own songs about coal mines and life. Archival footage and historical photographs are used to illustrate his songs. Also featured is Frani Patton, director of BCPIA. To learn more about Rutherford, visit his website at - http://www.geocities.com/carl_rutherford77/ . **Access –Cost is \$ 21. Send check or money order to - Jim McGee, 1118 Hilliard Ave, Louisville, KY 40204. James.McGee@jhsnh.org. Or check with Frog Creek Books at Charleston Farmer’s Market.**

Coal Hollow – The DVD

2005 13 mins. Photography Channel

Ken Light, a world-famous photographer who is director of the Center for Photography at the Graduate School of Journalism, UC Berkeley, and his wife Melanie Light, a writer and director of a Bay Area foundation supporting documentary photographers, traveled around West Virginia between 1999 and 2003. “Coal Hollow,” a book of his photos and her writings, was published in February 2006. It has been compared to Walker Evans and James Agee’s “Let Us Now Praise Famous Men” and the work of photographer Builder Levy. This documentary interviews the Lights and shows how they chose their subjects. The website for the book is - <http://www.coalhollow.org/> Access to the DVD: <http://www.customflix.com/209057>

Country Boys

2006 360 mins. PBS

David Sutherland, acclaimed producer of "The Farmer's Wife," returns to rural America with "Country Boys," an epic tale of two boys coming of age in Eastern Kentucky's Appalachian hills. Intimate cinematography puts the viewer inside the skin of the story's colorful and memorable characters, two boys who are about to become men, documenting their struggles to overcome hardship and poverty and find meaning in their lives. **Access: PBS Shop**
http://www.shoppbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=2174736&clickid=body_bestellers_txt

Crossings – Bridge Building in West Virginia

2006 56 mins. WV Dept. of Transportation

West Virginia, the most mountainous state east of the Mississippi, is a land of bridges, both famous like the New River Bridge, and infamous like The Silver Bridge. Terry Lively, Creative Services Manager of WVDOT, produced and co-directed this film that looks at the many bridges in our state. Digital Vision Works of Dunbar shot and

directed the film. Bridges shown - Elm Grove Stone Arch, Van Metre Ford Bridge, Carrollton Covered Bridge, Milton Covered Bridge, Hens Mill Covered Bridge, Hokes Mill Covered Bridge, Fletcher Covered Bridge, Simpson Creek Covered Bridge, Sarvis Fork Covered Bridge, Walkersville Covered Bridge, Dents Run Covered Bridge, Laurel Creek Covered Bridge, the Fish Creek Covered Bridge, Center Point Covered Bridge, Statts Mill Covered Bridge, Indian Creek Covered Bridge, Barrackville Covered Bridge, Philippi Covered Bridge, Wheeling Suspension Bridge, Fayette Station Bridge, Shiloh Bridge, High Level Bridge, Elk Suspension Bridge, Admiral T. J. Lopez Bridge, Moundsville Bridge, Charles C. Rogers Bridge, Lower Buffalo Bridge, Glade Creek Bridge, East Huntington Bridge, Veteran's Memorial Bridge, Rubles Run Bridge, West Buckeye Bridge, Star City Bridge, Clifford Hollow Bridge, Blennerhassatt Bridge, There are interviews with Van Kirk, Dink Smith, Dr. Emory Kemp, Jim Sothen, Jack Canfield, and Paul Mattox. Website -

http://www.wvdot.com/crossings/CROSSINGS_index.html. *Access: Every public school and library in WV has a copy.*

Dear Wendy

2003 105 mins. Zentropa

Several years ago Lars von Trier, famous for his Cannes award-winning films "Breaking the Waves" and "Dancer in the Dark", sent a researcher to West Virginia. He wanted to write a story about the sons of coal miners becoming obsessed with guns. B.J. Gudmundsson and Doug Chadwick toured his researcher around southern West Virginia and northern Virginia coal towns. The WV Film Office also sent various WV materials. Because of economic problems, he decided to film in Copenhagen where he built a set of a town he called "Esterslope" and shoot coal mine scenes in German mines. The result is an unusual film about violence in America. Directed by Thomas Vinterberg who made the first well-accepted digital film, "Celebration" that has now become a Broadway play. Von Trier and Vinterberg created a film movement called "Dogme," based on refusing to use advanced cinema techniques in their films. *Access: Amazon.com.*

Feud – The Hatfields and McCoys

32 mins. 2002 Bill Richardson

Winner of "best historical documentary" at the WV Filmmakers Film Festival, WV filmmaker Bill Richardson has created the best film ever made on America's most famous feud legend. Using local experts, historians, and the actual sites where the events took place, he explores the myths and the facts. Devil Anse Hatfield named his

first-born son after a McCoy. Ranel McCoy was from West Virginia. Devil Anse was one of the richest men in the region. Ranel and Devil Anse fought on the same side in the Civil War.

This film tells the true story of the feud and dispels many of the myths that have grown up around it. Here you will find the latest information on what author John Alexander Williams calls, "the most famous ordinary families in American history."

But there is nothing ordinary about the story of the Hatfields and McCoy's. People from all over the world have heard of the conflict between these two families and this is your chance to see the first film about the feud made entirely in the area where it happened. This documentary includes interviews with leading feud historians and descendants from both families. It is filled with vintage photographs and music that was popular during the feud era. You will also see beautiful footage of the rugged mountains and river valleys that were the setting for this world famous conflict.

If you are interested in the Hatfield/McCoy Feud or American history this is a film you need to see. This is not only the tale of a clash between two colorful families but is also a story of ordinary people trying to cope with the aftermath of the Civil War and the upheaval caused by our nation's change from an agricultural society to an industrial power.

Filmmaker Richardson taught at WVSU and presently works for WVU Extension in Williamson, Mingo County. He directed "Mine Wars" in 2004. Access: Bill Richardson, WVU Extension Office, Mingo County Courthouse, Room 3, Williamson, WV 25661, (304) 235-0370, e-mail brichard@wvu.edu.

Fiddlin' Leo Herron

2005 60 mins. Augusta Heritage Center

Born in Barbour County, he became known by playing fiddle and guitar on live radio shows produced at WMMN in Fairmont during the early 1940s. Just before his death in 1998, he played at the Augusta Center's Old-Time Fiddlers Reunion. The film from this event is the only film of him playing. Photographs and audio tunes of his are also presented. Chris Haddox, who studied with him, plays three of his tunes. Filmed by Gerry Milnes. Access: Augusta <http://www.augustaheritage.com/store.html>

For the Love of Theater

2006 28 mins. Real Earth Productions

Hardy County filmmaker Ray Schmitt and his Hardy County colleague Joshua Miller created this portrait of the Landmark Players in Sutton and its director Jim Walker. Several actors including Lydia Mong talk about the influence Jim Walker and participating in theater in general has had on their lives. The world premiere will take place in Sutton during the 2006 West Virginia Filmmakers Film Festival. *Access: Real Earth Productions*

***GardenStory* – The Garden as Environmental Stewardship**

2005 30 mins. Rubicon Productions

Well-known regional garden designer Rebecca Frischkorn, who once lived in Charleston, and has designed gardens in West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Washington, DC and Maine, hosts this episode of her series “***GardenStory***.” It was filmed during summer 2005 in the Upper Shavers Fork Nature Conservancy Preserve in Randolph Count. It is about volunteers and non-profit organizations that work to sustain the preserve that includes rare and endangered plant and animal species. It is called “restoration gardening.” Some of the people interviewed are West Virginia chapter of the Nature Conservancy, biologist Rodney Bartgis, Ruth Blackwell Rogers, a citizen activist and head of the Shavers Fork Coalition , Chris Bolgiano, author of “The Appalachian Forest” and cultural historian at James Madison University, Brian Richter, Director of the Nature Conservancy’s Sustainable Waters Program, Charleston –based Steve Payne, a landscape photographer, Charleston-based Susan Poffenbarger, a landscape painter, and Martin Rosen, co-founder and director for 20 years of The Trust for Public Land. The original score was written and performed by Bahlmann Abbot, both a musician and architect, who has worked extensively in the mountains of West Virginia. The animated plan of the site is based upon a set of watercolors done by artist, architect and landscape architect Emmanuel Didier. Access:

<http://www.gardenstory.org/default.asp>

***GardenStory* – The Garden as Muse**

2004 25 mins. Rubicon Productions

Well-known regional garden designer Rebecca Frischkorn, who once lived in Charleston, and has designed gardens in West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Washington, DC and Maine, began her series “***GardenStory***” with this episode. It is

about West Virginia raised poet and gardener Anne Spencer. Spencer was born in Virginia but spent her childhood and teenager years in Bramwell, Mercer County. Between 1899 and 1901, she taught school in Maybeury and Elkhorn, WV. In 1901 she moved permanently to Lynchburg, Virginia where she died in 1975. Her garden was the site of many famous visits by leading African-Americans, and was her source of strength her entire life. She interviews the son and daughter-in-law of Ms. Spencer.

Access: <http://www.gardenstory.org/default.asp>

Harlan County, USA

1976 (2006, DVD) 103 mins. Criterion

Barbara Kopple came to Appalachia to study at Morris Harvey College –now the University of Charleston. While starting a film about Arnold Miller and the Miners for Democracy Movement a strike became very intense at the Brookside Mine of the Eastover Mining Company in Harlan County, Kentucky in June 1973. Kopple shows the history of coal mining – the many deaths, the conflicts, and for the first time in this film – the role women played in a strike. Dave Morris, Hazel Dickens, and other Appalachian musicians provide the music for the film. It won the Oscar for Best Documentary in 1977 and has become a landmark film, influencing the entire field of filmmaking. A docu-drama version starring Holly Hunter was made in 2000 called “Harlan County War.” The film was restored and premiered at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. Extras on the DVD include an update, “The Making of Harlan County USA,” out-takes, and interviews with Hazel Dickens and John Sayles. *Access: Amazon.com and other sources.*

The Heart is Deceitful Above All Else

2005 100 mins. Wild Bunch Productions

In 2005 WV-raised author J.T. Leroy was proven to not exist. The NY Times and many other publications wrote exposes of the most famous literary fraud in decades. Asia Argento, a well-known actress, was one person who was fooled. She produced and directed a film version of Leroy’s second book by the same name. After premiering at the Cannes Film Festival, it was shown around a few places. It tells the various stories of a young boy who was raised by a mother who made her living as a truck stop prostitute. Peter Fonda, Asia Argento, and others star. Filmed on location in Knoxville, Tenn. Rated R for intense depiction of child abuse/neglect, strong sex and drug content, pervasive language and some violence. *Access: Amazon.com*

The Kingmaker – Don Blankenship

2005 30 mins. WVPBS

Reporter Anna Sale narrates this investigation of Don Blankenship, the president of Massey Energy. Blankenship told the Charleston press he considered the report to be balanced. Others think that it is not accurate because the damage he has done to the environment and workers' health is minimized. He is famous for buying union mines, closing them, and reopening them as non-union. He is best known for financing the campaign against Supreme Court Justice Warren McGraw in fall 2004, spending millions of dollars. (This is shown in detail in Wayne Ewing's film, "The Last Campaign.") Appalshop footage of his early days is used, and various supporters present positive opinions about this management style and contributions to southern WV communities. Various reporters and detractors are also interviewed. The fact that he even threatened to sue WVPBS is noted. *Access: WVPBS, \$25, (304) 556-4900.*

Labor in the Mountains

2005 55 mins. WVU Institute for Labor Studies and Research

This film tells the history of labor in West Virginia from the viewpoint of a retired worker who lived through much of that history. A grandfather answers questions about labor unions from his teen-age granddaughter. The video is divided into two parts of roughly the same length. The first part is introduced by the grandfather as he attempts to explain what labor unions are, and how they came into being in West Virginia. This part begins with the role of union workers in support of the formation of the state during the Civil War, goes through the Great Uprising and General Strike in 1877, and into the story of coal miners and their struggles for justice and fair treatment in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the rise of the United Mine Workers of America. It then shifts to the challenges faced by workers in other industries in the state as they also organized.

The second part involves interviews from a range of current labor leaders who comment on how organized labor essentially built the middle-class in West Virginia through organizing and collective bargaining, in coal and other basic industries. They discuss how workers achieved both economic and political power through their unions. With the arrival of deindustrialization and the considerable loss of industrial jobs in West Virginia, organized labor has shifted much of its base into service-providing jobs and into the public sector at the state and local government levels. The interviewed leaders discuss these trends and end with comments on their concerns about the

challenges facing working families in West Virginia in the immediate future.

Harry E, Lester, recently retired director of United Steel Workers of America District 2 and who is originally from Bud, WV, in the state's southern coalfields, plays the grandfather. His real life granddaughter, Elizabeth Lester, plays herself in the video. It may be the first history of labor for children ever put on film. *Access: Available as VHS or DVD, \$5 from Labor in the Mountains Foundation, ILSR/WVU, 719 Knapp Hall, Morgantown WV 26506.*

Midland Trail – National Scenic Byway

2001 60 mins. Walkabout Productions

Walkabout Productions of Wheeling has produced a travelogue showing the sights along one of America's oldest scenic highways – The Midland Trail, Route 60 that starts in White Sulphur Springs near the Virginia border and ends on the Ohio River near Ceredo. It passes through Lewisburg, Rupert, Charmco, Rainelle, Clifftop, Hawks Nest, Anstead, Gauley Bridge, Smithers, Montgomery, Glasgow, Cedar Grove, Quincy, Belle, Malden, Charleston, South Charleston, Institute, St. Albans, Hurricane, Milton, Barboursville, and Huntington, ending at Point Park in Kenova. Many landmarks including Booker T. Washington's childhood home are shown. 2006 website - <http://www.midlandtrail.com/> *Access: Midland Trail Scenic Highway Association, 304-343-6001.*

Mountain Mourning

2006 30 mins. Patchwork Films

Allen Johnson, a co-founder of Christians for the Mountains, directed this film about the relationship between Christianity and mountaintop removal mining. He and producer B.J. Gudmundsson have taken slides from other MTR groups, added their own narration and music, and greatly improved it with some of their own images. Many of the best known anti-MTR activists including Julia Bonds and Larry Gibson speak about the effects MTR has had on their personal lives. Many quotes from the Bible are placed on screen to remind the viewer of the Christian source for their anti-MTR beliefs. Also, powerful Christian music is used to make the film a profound experience. Johnson is the director of the Pocahontas County Free Libraries system that was chosen as one of the best three public libraries in the US in 2003. Website for CFM-

www.christiansforthemountains.org *Access: Patchwork Films. http://www.patchworkfilms.com/*

Organizing America – A History of Trade Unions

1994 40 mins. Cambridge Educational

Using interviews, personal accounts, and archival footage this film tells a compelling

story about the struggles and triumphs of American workers. Broadly tracing American labor history from the formation of the first "friendly societies" in the 18th century to the challenges posed by new technologies in the 1980s and 90s, it explores the unique combination of individualism and cooperation that characterizes the American workplace. Historical context provides viewers with a fresh perspective on important issues. Interviews with veterans of labor struggles yield fascinating personal insights into the saga of organized labor and its sometimes violent origins. The commentary of labor historians as well as union, business, and government officials helps to identify and explain significant events and influences that have changed the workplace over the last 200 years. In exploring the history of trade unions, the viewer encounters a series of important developments that have shaped American society as a whole: wars, the industrial revolution, immigration, unemployment, Marxism and class conflict, women in the workplace, the Depression and the New Deal, crime and corruption, civil rights, and the emergence of high technology. **Made in West Virginia, WV labor experts such as Dr. Fred Barkey, past president of the West Virginia Labor History Association, and many West Virginia labor leaders are interviewed.** *Access: WVLC and Cambridge Educational -*

http://www.cambridgeeducational.com/id/10010/Organizing_America_The_History_of_Trade_Unions.htm

Pulp Fiction, Poison Promises

1995 14 min.

Mimi Pickering of Appalshop was hired to direct a film about the proposed pulp mill to be built at Apple Grove, Mason County. The Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation paid for the film that explores the dangers that the pulp mill would present – to the workers and the local environment including dumping dioxin into the Ohio River. Many groups, both labor and environmental, opposed the mill, supported by Gov. Caperton and the Legislature. Eventually, the mill was not built.

The film also examines the impact that the company's pulp mill had in the area around Monroe, AL. The film was broadcast on WV television several times. See Doug Hawes-Davis' film, "Green Rolling Hills" and "Southbound" from High Plains Films. *Access: Steve Fesenmaier, WVLC*

Saving Shiloh

2006 90 mins.

This is the third feature film based on a series of books by [Phyllis Reynolds Naylor](#) whose husband grew up in WV. It is about a twelve year old boy in Friendly, WV who has a beagle. Like the famous "Lassie" films and TV series, the boy learns about life and shares his experiences with his dog Shiloh. He befriends a cankerous old man

known for many things including beating dogs. Website - <http://shilohfilm.com/>
Access: Amazon and other retailers.

A Sense of Values – Charles W. Mundy

2006 25 mins. Patchwork Films

The Shepherd's Center of Greenbrier Valley commissioned this portrait of Rupert mayor Charles W. Mundy. Using historical footage, photographs and music, the life and many accomplishments of Mr. Mundy are shown. Mundy said, "I just have a different sense of value. Things that don't mean anything to some people, to me they mean a great deal." He worked as a coal miner and insurance agent before he was elected mayor of Rupert, bringing his wife from Bluefield. He was born and raised in Tazewell, Virginia, growing up under the influence of an uncle after his father died. *Access:* <http://www.patchworkfilms.com>

That Old Time Sound

2004 60 mins. Augusta

Gerry Milnes presents a personal portrait of central West Virginia musician Lester McCumbers. Some rare film shot at the West Virginia State Folk Festival at Glenville in 1973 shows some of the older musical performers. Linda McCumbers, his wife, sings there and at recent visits to the Augusta Heritage workshops. Lester was friends with many deceased central West Virginia musicians including French and Ernie Carpenter, Ward Jarvis, Harvey Sampson, Melvin Wine, Emory Bailey, Phoebe Parsons and many others. Part of the Augusta Master series. *Access -* <http://www.augustaheritage.com/store.html>

A Tractor Accident Can Happen to Anyone

2005 25 mins. WVU Injury Control Research Center

Jacob Young, famous for "Dancing Outlaw," now works at WVU Television Services. He was commissioned to produce this film on tractor safety. Using WV farmers and families, it includes interviews with widows of farmers who died because they did not have a ROPS on their tractors. It presents information on ROPS – rollover protective structures and other safety techniques. Nearly 6,000 copies were distributed in WV to farmers. Another 1,000 copies were sent out nationwide after it was adapted for the national market. It will be posted on the National Ag Safety Data (NASD) website. Website and access - <http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/som/icrc/CompletedResearch6-29-06.asp>.

TruthOut Videos - Go Tell It on the Mountain, Almost Level, West Virginia, Pennies of Promise

2006 various times Rebecca MacNeice

Rebecca MacNeice made and posted these three digital videos about the effects of mountaintop removal mining. The first, "Mountain," is about anti-MTR activist Larry Gibson giving a tour to other activists during a national conference on Memorial Day weekend 2006. The second, "Level" includes a brief narration given by WV's only anti-MTR politician Dr. Ken Hechler and part of activist Doris "Granny D" Haddock's speech given at the Memorial Day 2006 conference. "Pennies" is about a group of people who are trying to raise money to replace a toxic school, Marsh Fork Elementary School in Sundial, West Virginia, that is threatening by a coal silo and slurry pond that could destroy it. Access: <http://www.truthout.org/multimedia.htm>

Vampire Whores from Outer Space

2005 75 mins. Razor Sharp Productions

West Virginia filmmaker Eamon Hardiman and producer Chip Kunhavijit created this psychotronic film about alien whores from outer space who invade the Kanawha Valley. Hardiman also directed "Catholic Ghouls" and "Escape from the Dead." Meghan McDowell, who passed away in June 2006, plays a young woman trying to survive the attack. Other local actors include Lance Steel, Brian Gunnoe, and Billy Dynamite.

Original music by Mark D'Errico. Access:

<http://www.vampirewhoresmovie.com/>

Walkabout Productions New Films - <http://www.gowalkabout.com/>

Midland Trail Project. 2000. 60 mins.

Walkabout produced a 1 hour documentary covering the historic Midland Trail from White Sulphur Springs to Charleston. From the famous Greenbrier Resort to a modern day logging operation, the Walkabout team traveled thousands of miles to create an accurate picture of the people, places, history and events that constitute life along the trail.

West Virginia National Road Film 2006. 30 mins.

Walkabout produced a short promotional video for visitors and to promote heritage tourism. The video highlights the history and attractions along the Historic National Road in West Virginia. Walkabout was also the principal in the creation of the Corridor Management Plan and currently provides administrative management and media production services. The current projects include the production of a 30 minute documentary for public distribution and broadcast, a comprehensive media and marketing package, and an audio driving tour. The driving tour, in English, French, Spanish and German, will be available in 2006.

Washun Dishes

2007 Allen Toney

Allen Toney, one of the world's greatest graphic artists, has reappeared with his own podcast –“Washun Dishes.” It is presently an audio only synthetic creation of life in West Virginia as presented by Toney **and friend E. Meadows** using artificial and real voices combined with real and created music. It is hilarious – right up there with Lee Maynard's “Crum.” Check it out at -

http://web.mac.com/warshun_dishes/iWeb/Warshun%20Dishes/Welcome.html

Hillbilly Da Da does Nouveau Blah Blah

Listen in as “The Prophets of Poverty” walk you through the bedeviled lives and the disheveled minds of those unfortunates who've been left behind... in a long forgotten, Bible belt thumping, welfare dumping, worn down to the ground, rust belt of a town... all the winners are here... bitterly languishing in Gods unchosen land... West Virginia.

We'll endeavor to bring you the best of the worst... from world class dead enders to throngs of economic descenders. From the hillbilly chic to ain't got no food stamps this week. Also, special attention will be given to interviews with the current and future causalities of the great psychotropic testing ground wars between Shier, Lilly, Roche and Merck.

The screen doors of countless H.U.D. hovels will be surmounted to reveal the overflow of pre-tards, breeding to the caustic din of Haldol inspired remixes of Hank Williams Jr. and the Wo-Tang Clan... while out back, Jennie Lynn Joe burst into flames as she tries her hand at cooking up some Clorox-a-Fiend, cause her little baby Jed done drank all that there Psuedaphed... etc...

In short, we offer a journey to a void, at all cost! Hear first hand from the souls imprisoned therein and witness how decades of nothingness has produced an abundance of everything you never wanted.

Friday, April 14, 2006

Episode 1

Riding High With The Down Trodden

In this premiere episode:

Major Hatred's discourse on the principals, origins, evolution and deeper meaning of Warshun Dishes in West Virginia. Special Guest “Harmon Himself” the original New York Hillbilly, drops by to educate Major Hatred & General Anxiety on the intensely random topics of Star Trek baseball and political impersonations from the 1960's. This Episode's music is provided by Mr. Hal Doll & His Ever Blessed Corn Bread Head Orchestra, featuring a raga by Ravi Addkins on the sitar, banjo and mouth harp. A Bush speech is processed through our special, patten pending, Warshun Dishes Truth Engine, finally revealing where the truth lies...

Major Hatred concludes with some down home political jibber jabber that will all but ensure his one way trip to Guantanamo Bay... and the truth shall set them... back..?

Saturday, June 3, 2006

Warshun Dishes #2

Featuring

Major Hatred

General Anxiety

Corporal Punishment

Sara Tonin

Major Hatred opens the show using his new, \$1 melted Barbi Doll Microphone

Sara Tonin demonstrates the meaning of psychotic frenzy in her love letter to Timothy Leary and William S. Burroughs

Corporal Punishment joins Major Hatred and General Anxiety in a wide ranging discussion. The topics include Tesla Coils, Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard's microphone collection, Martha Stewart's prison lover, various psychotropic medications, Skype and persecution by echoes, robots that urinate and give birth, vaginal acoustic research, why pigs eat coal, A Donald Rumsfeld voodoo doll, acid reflux violins, and various theories on why hamsters run on wheels, etc...

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Warshun Dishes #3, Dread Time Stories

A Masonic robot introduces Margie Lynn Atkins. A professional Appalachian story teller and cancer monger. Ms. Adkins recites the first in a series of genuine, West Virginia "Dread Time Stories". Her first tale recalls how true love, whiskey, cigarets, Elvis, a bad wheel bearing and a 3 eyed catfish ends in another West Virginia tragedy.

Major Hatred on: Vlad the Impaler, drinking Rogaine and building an 18 story tall Dan Blocker hotel in the Ohio river. Preacher Earl, the hostile Pentecostal, delivers a fine sermon on why everyone must burn their Bible. Featuring: Major Hatred, General Anxiety, a Masonic Robot, Margie Lynn Atkins, and Preacher Earl. Music: Shiva O'Hanahan performs a Hindu & Irish Jig.

Access – website -

http://web.mac.com/warshun_dishes/iWeb/Warshun%20Dishes/Welcome.html

We Are Marshall

2008 120 mins. Warner Bros.

Based on the true story of the worst sports disaster in American history. Matthew McConaughey stars as Jack Lengyel, the coach who led Marshall University and the Huntington community from tragedy to triumph. Matthew Fox ("ABC TV "Lost") played assistant coach Red Dawson who helps Lengyel rebuild the team after giving up

his seat on the doomed flight to another member of the Marshall squad. David Strathairn (“Matewan”, Oscar nomination for “Good Night and Good Luck”) plays the president of Marshall University who attempts to restore the school's broken spirit against overwhelming odds. The film also co-stars Anthony Mackie (“Million Dollar Baby”) as passionate team captain Nate Ruffin and Kate Mara (“Brokeback Mountain”) as Marshall's head cheerleader Annie Cantrell. Filmed on location in Huntington and Atlanta. **Access: Amazon in 2007.**

Whipping the Devil

2005 27 mins. Appalshop

In 1925, Guy Roberts was a young pool hall hustler in Pound, Virginia, playing pool for money and selling moonshine. After taking part in a robbery, stealing \$5,000, he was forced to flee the area for California. He later returned, turning himself in, serving time until he was pardoned. He then lived a normal life. This film shows both the good and bad side of an Appalachian man who lived a long life. Interviews with him, his family and friends, are mixed with pictures of his early life. Banjo music by Dock Boggs is used. Directed by Anthony Slone who has been making films for Appalshop for 32 years. Other films he has made – “Oaksie,” “Applewise,” ”Homemade Tales – Songs and Sayings of Florida Slone,” ”Nimrod Workman – To Fit My Own Category,” ”Sunny Side of Life,” and “Tradition.” **Access – *Appalshop General Store***
<http://www.appalshop.org/film/store/>