

# 2004 New (and once lost) Films on West Virginia and Appalachia

by Steve Fesenmaier for Goldenseal magazine. The complete list will be posted at –  
<http://www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/WVFilmIndex.htm>

*All of Daniel Boyd's three feature films are available at amazon.com. They should be coming out on DVD in 2005. The three film titles are: "Chillers," (1988) "Invasion of the Space Preachers" (1990) and "Heroes of the Heart" ("Paradise Park., 1996). dancingoutlaw.com will be selling all of Jacob Young's films on DVD in Dec. 2004.*

## **A. James Manchin – The Final Accounting**

28 mins. 1991 WVPBS

AJames Manchin was forced to resign as State Treasurer after his office lost hundreds of millions of dollars. Manchin recently passed away and the public response was overwhelming. Manchin was famous for fighting outsider stereotypes of his beloved West Virginia, even traveling to NYC to protest. He was a colorful politician who could be compared to William Jennings Bryan. This is Nakashima's second portrait of WV's most debated politician. He made an earlier one in 1988, "A. James Manchin – Your Public Servant." *Access: John Nakashima*

## **The Abby Spirit**

2004 30 mins. Real Earth Productions

Abby Wathen grew up in Eastern Kentucky. While a teenager she discovered that she had a rare disease - reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD). Her parents visited scores of doctors and hospitals, never finding any improvement. Finally they found a treatment in Texas that used magnets to relieve the pain. Abby is now a rising model and actress in New York City, thankful to have survived one of modern medicine's least understood conditions. Photos of some of her national ads, a clip from a national TV series, and clips from her indie films are included. *Access: Real Earth Productions*  
<http://www.realearthproductions.com/>.

## **Angel City**

95 mins. 1980

Ralph Waite plays the head of a West Virginia family that heads south to Florida to find work in a migrant labor camp. The film co-stars Paul Winfield as a fellow camp prisoner who is willing to help Waite fight for his dignity. Jennifer Warren and a young Jennifer Jason Leigh play members of Waite's family. Philip Leacock, a well-known Hollywood director, made this film. *Access: Amazon and other video sources.*

## **The Appalachians – series**

2005 180 mins Evening Star Productions

Mari-Lynn Evans, executive producer, was born and raised in Bulltown, Braxton County, WV. After more than two decades producing hundreds of health and other films, she returns home to her beloved Appalachia. The four parts are -1. "First Frontier," - Pre-History-1870 - native Americans, European pioneers, Civil War 2. "Barons, Feuds & White Lightning" - 1871-1929 - feuds, timber and coal, labor wars, moonshine and roaring 1920s 3. "Boom & Bust" - 1929-1965 - Great Depression, WWII, Migration in 1950s, War on Poverty 4. "Memories in a Modern World" - 1965-present - Legacy, Music, Land in Conflict (MTR), People and future of Appalachia. The Sierra Club, a sponsor, has built a good website for the series - [www.sierraclub.org/appalachia](http://www.sierraclub.org/appalachia). Random House published a book in conjunction with the series, edited by Ms. Evans, "The Appalachians." *Access: PBS Store after national showing in Jan. 2005*

## **Appalachian Trail Videos**

One of the most famous places connected to Appalachia is the Appalachian Trail. Outdoorsman Lynn Weldon has made several very interesting films about it. He first directed "Five Million Steps,"(available from WVLC) using 14 different hikers in each of the 14 states it goes thru. He has also made "Amazing Grace!" a film about the blind hiker Bill Irvin who walked all 2,143 miles with his seeing-eye dog. The 20-minute film includes footage censored by a publisher from a book on the subject. He has also made the 5-hour epic, "How To Hike The Appalachian Trail," showing anyone exactly what needs to be done to prepare for the journey. Weldon has made other hiking videos about other routes and techniques. *Access: <http://www.lwgear.com/>.*

## **Archive**

2004 6 mins. Charles Cline

Chosen as "best film of the WV Filmmakers Film Festival 2004," this whimsical silent film turns cinema history on its ear, mixing imagined scenes from the earliest movies with Alice in Wonderland-type characters. They end up chasing each other from scene to scene, creating a retro-Harold Lloyd type world. A masterpiece that should win many awards and find a national audience. *Access: Kevin Carpenter -[elkhotel@elkhotel.com](mailto:elkhotel@elkhotel.com)*

## **Ashes to Glory – DVD**

2000 (2003) WVPBS

Deborah Novak, a native of Huntington, and her partner, John Witek, have released an expanded version of their 2000 documentary on Marshall University's recovery from the worst sports disaster in history.

On the DVD, we have the original two hour version of the documentary, plus four bonus features:

1. HUNTINGTON AND MARSHALL IN 1970 - This video offers rare archival footage of the city and the campus in the 1970s, and shows a variety of vanished landmarks.
2. THE MAKING OF ASHES TO GLORY - a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the PBS documentary. Featuring never-before-seen footage, highlights include interviews with Chad Pennington, Nate Ruffin, and Coach Jack Lengyel that didn't appear in the original program. The video follows the story of the project right up to the premiere at the Keith-Albee Theatre--and also includes the Emmy Awards ceremony.
3. THE 1970 MARSHALL UNIVERSITY THUNDERING HERD - a tribute to the football players who died in the plane crash. Utilizing 3-D graphic effects, it incorporates a photograph of every player who made the trip to East Carolina, intercut with footage of the last game they played.
4. THE YOUNG THUNDERING HERD - The fourth new video is a salute to the 1971 team--the courageous players who carried on the tradition of Marshall football. Charting their victory over a powerful Bowling Green team, it presents rarely seen coaches film of a great victory. *Access: herdnation.com*

### **The Biography of Gwen Clingman**

40 mins. 2003

This film tells the story of a founder of modern Lewisburg, Gwen Clingman. Written and narrated by Joan Browning, produced and directed by Gary Aide. *Access: PatchWork Films. <http://www.patchworkfilms.com/index2.htm>*

### **Burning Annie**

100 mins. 2003

Marshall grad Van Flesher had his directorial debut with this film, shot in Huntington. Gary Lundy, who acted in "Donnie Darko," one of the most unusual recent films, is the star. Website at: <http://www.burningannie.com/>. *Access: none at this time. Still showing at major film festivals.*

### **The Captives**

2004 Jude's True Blue Productions 58 mins.

Roane County teacher Judy Miller responded to the 9/11 Disaster with this film. She wrote, produced, and co-directed the film after raising \$50,000. Filmed entirely inside WV, she tells the famous story of Mary Draper Ingles – how she is captured, survives, and finally escapes her Indian captors to her home in eastern Virginia. The film had its

world premiere at the oldest continuous movie theater in the US – The Robey Theater in Spencer, Roane County, WV. *Access: Jude's True Blue Productions. (304) 927-4793 [flapjack@wvadventures.net](mailto:flapjack@wvadventures.net)*

### **Cliff-Scaling Soldiers of West Virginia**

50 mins. 2004 Augusta Heritage Center

Robert Whetsell, author of “Metropolis Revisited – The History of Elkins,” and Gerry Milnes produced this film about more than 50,000 US soldiers who trained at Seneca Rocks for mountain fighting in Italy. They came to WV between 1943 and 1944. *Access: The Augusta Heritage Center, the Seneca Rocks Discovery Center, or from Rob Whetsell, \$26.15 202 15th St., Elkins, WV 26241.*

### **Cloud Over Bhopal**

**2001 52 mins. Transglobe Films**

A film version of French writer Dominique Lapierre's book, "Five Past Midnight in Bhopal: The Epic Story of the World's Deadliest Industrial Disaster." The film was made by a Spanish company in 2001. Lapierre summarizes the aims of the film - 1. 150,000 people, including a second and third generation of victims, are still suffering, receiving minimal medical treatment; 2. People should be warned about the possibility of another such disaster happening somewhere else. He flies to South Charleston to investigate the effects this disaster and smaller local ones had on Kanawha County residents. Includes a clip of a well-known Indian feature film, "Bhopal Express." See Appalshop's film, "Chemical Valley," that is about the links between this disaster and Kanawha County, location of its sister plant. *Access: Transglobe Films*

### **Communication from Weber**

1988 14 mins. Omni Systems

WV filmmaker Robert F. Gates and Lynn Wyatt, a local artist, filmed Albert Michael Weber, a Californian who had married a WV lady – who then abandoned him in Montgomery, WV. Weber eventually dies from brain cancer and his burial is shown. Gates calls him a "derelict-politico/artist collagist/communicator." Weber was an actor in an early Roger Corman film. The film was called “the best film at the NYC Gay-Lesbian film festival” one year and toured England as part of a series. It has also won several prizes including one at the Athens International Film Festival in Athens, Ohio. *Access: Robert Gates at Omni Productions. (304) 342-2624 Available in 16 mm only.*

**COMPANY TOWN. Now available on VHS from Jim Rutenbeck.**

**Lost Nation Pictures**

**106 Oliver Road**

**Newton MA 02468**

**(617) 969-6533**

[jrutenbeck@mindspring.com](mailto:jrutenbeck@mindspring.com)

**\$19.95 including public performance rights**

### **Dangerous Missions: Miners**

50 mins. History Channel

They work in a world filled with darkness and danger. They have kept the fires burning and the lights lit since the dawn of the industrial revolution, and extracted other precious treasures from the bowels of the earth long before that. And they have paid for the privilege in blood, with many thousands of miners dying underground from fires, floods, collapses, and deadly fumes. This film descends into the earth alongside these workers. From the gold mines of Nevada to the Pittsburgh Seam in the Appalachians, we'll meet the men and watch the giant machines that extract the earth's bounty. Survivors from the notorious Farmington West Virginia Disaster of 1968, which killed 78 men, forever entombing 19 of them, talk about the effects. To those who lost their loved ones, some small comfort is taken from the fact that this tragedy finally led to the passage of stricter safety laws for miners. *Access: History Channel Store - <http://store.aetv.com/html/home/index.jhtml>*

### **Dark Harvest**

88 mins. 2003 Lions Gates Distributors

Richmond, Va. producers Paul N. Moore and director Paul Moore made this film on location in Barboursville, Pt. Pleasant, and Huntington. An indie horror film, it tells the story of a young man who inherits a family farm in "Carter County, West Virginia." He returns with college friends to find a horror story. Brief nudity, violence. *Access: Amazon, etc.*

### **Dead Ends and New Dreams**

25 mins. 1973 Case Western University VHS and 16 MM

Norman Jordan is most famous for his museum in Ansted, West Virginia- African American Heritage Family Tree Museum. In his 20s, he lived in Cleveland and was a leading poet. He worked with Jules Dassin on his film, "Up Tight!" [Dassin was a very well known Hollywood activist director most famous for "Never on Sunday" and "The Naked City."] For many years he was the director of the youth camp at Camp Washington-Carver for the Division of Culture and History, and worked in Archives. He also called himself "Peter Jesus" for several years. He was recently included in the WV Literary Map. He also called himself "Peter Jesus" for several years. *Access - WVLC.*

### **Dental Farmer**

15 mins. 2002.

Meet dental farmer Dr. Art Rybeck, a man who combines his passion for organic farming with dentistry in West Virginia. (outside Wheeling) Rybeck sees no reason why anyone should go without dental care, so he has set up a second clinic in a farmhouse with a pay-as-you-wish policy. Directors Ellen Brodsky and Dunya Alwan follow this "radical" dentist as he works and ponders life. It's both entertaining for its peculiar subject matter, and inspiring for Rybeck's vigor and good nature.

*Access: \$ 20. Ellen Brodsky 34 Sherman St Cambridge, MA 02138-6732 (617)547-2989 ellenbrodsky@comcast.net*

### **Elegy: The life and Work of Breece D’J Pancake**

2004 10 mins.

College filmmaker Jason Freeman never heard of a local great writer until he was in college. This film combines footage from Russ Barbour's earlier film and Freeman's own images filmed around Milton, his hometown, and Pancake's. Pinkney Benedict was an advisor on the film and read some of the excerpts. It was shown at the 2004 Roanoke Visions Film Festival and chosen to be part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rural Routes Film Festival held in NYC. . *Access: Steve Fesenmaier, WVLC*

### **The Fifth String**

2003 81 mins. American Film Partners Intl.

Pocahontas County musician Dwight Diller and Clay County musician John Morris play two brothers who love old time music. Diller, the older brother, is a professor of music and folklore who returns to Appalachia for the funeral of his uncle who raised him. Trapped in the mountains, he embarks on a confrontation with a past he has tried to forget. Filmed on location in Philadelphia, Clay, and Pocahontas Counties. Some locations in Pocahontas County include The Old Log Church; Moore's Cabins on Jericho Road; the Marlinton Presbyterian Church; the Marlinton home of Wilma Wilson and Jamie Wilson Pitze; places in the Huntersville and Beaver Creek area; the county jail; the high school; and the radio station. A number of local people are included, including some of Pam Lund's students, several local law enforcement deputies, Woody Schoolcraft, and others. *Access: www.thefifthstringmovie.com*

### **Harry Powers Murder Case**

1984 120 mins.

This is a filmed version of a local history play for the bicentennial of Harrison County. Moundsville-Clarksburg native Davis Grubb based his classic novel on West Virginia's most famous mass murderer, Harry Powers, but used the name Harry Powell in his book. The story first hit the newspapers in Clarksburg back in Depression-era 1931 and soon hit nationally. Powers and his wife ran a grocery store just south of Clarksburg in Alta Vista. During his arrest police found trunks filled with love letters and the personal effects of

one of his victims. Later they discovered 5 corpses - 2 women and 3 children buried in a drainage ditch behind his garage. Upon further investigation, police found that Power's had served time in other states for defrauding widows. A police investigation found Power's had befriended 2 women under the name of Cornelius Pierson, a wealthy civil engineer. He first abducted Asta Eicher and her 3 children from their home in Park Ridge Illinois. Powers reassured suspecting neighbors telling them that their children were in Europe. Dorothy Lemke of Northboro Massachusetts was Powers last victim, because police had traced Cornelius Pierson to a Clarksburg Post Office Box.

Due to overcrowding, the trial was held in Moores' Opera House in downtown Clarksburg and it took a jury only 2 hours and sentenced to hang on March 18, 1932. Power's became known nationally as the "Bluebeard of Quiet Dell". There was also a biography published in the 30's about Harry Powers. *Access: WVLC has only copy on VHS.*

### **Hearts of Glass – The Story of Blenko Handcraft**

1998 60 mins. Witek & Novak

Deborah Novak and Richard Witek directed this history of Milton, WV's famous glass company. A look at an immigrant's dream which has become the last great American glass factory where all the work is done by hand. It traces the company's history through four generations of the Blenko family.

Hot glass is a family obsession that began when William John Blenko emigrated from England during the gilded age of Stanford White and Louis Comfort Tiffany. In America, Blenko was a man of contradictions - both capitalist and socialist, worker and boss. Three times he tried to produce European-style stained glass and three times he failed. At the age of 67, he tried one last time and found the elusive formula for radiant medieval ruby glass. His discovery was the start of a company whose rainbow of more than 1300 colors would circle the globe. *Access: Blenko Glass Co.*

[www.blenkoglass.com](http://www.blenkoglass.com).

### **Inspired Folk: Outsider Art of West Virginia**

2004 57 mins. Augusta Heritage Center

Gerry Milnes examines the lifelong work of 10 exceptional West Virginia artists – their motivations, inspirations, obsessions, and their worldview. These are artists whose work is so unique that it makes us question all the ways we define art. To find answers the film takes the viewer deep into the artists' creative spaces and their minds. The 10 artists were found in such unlikely places as prisons, senior center, remote West Virginia hollows, and the streets of Baltimore. The art includes the work of a life in prison, a paranoid schizophrenic, a recluse chair maker, expressive wood carvers, an obsessive-compulsive collector, a race car driver/artist, a junk sculptor, a believer in faith healing and more. A nationally recognized authority on the subject helps put the work into the context of folk art in general and specifically outsider art. Co-produced by Mary Rayme

**Access: \$25 from Augusta Heritage Center.**

<http://www.augustaheritage.com/store.html>

### **John Marshall – Citizen, Statesman, Jurist**

2004 57 mins. MotionMasters

Marshall University and the WV Humanities Council produced this film about America's greatest Chief Supreme Court Justice. It presents his life from his early days on the Virginia frontier to his death in Philadelphia in 1835 when the Liberty Bell cracked, ringing for the last time. Experts and descendants discuss the importance of his life's work as the longest serving chief justice, emphasizing that it was he who made the Court the equal to the other branches of the federal government. *Access: A DVD copy was given to every WV public library. It can be purchased from Marshall University's Drinko Library.*

### **The Jolo Serpent Handlers**

1977 40 min. Karen Kramer

New York City filmmaker Karen Kramer began her fruitful career with this film made in Jolo, McDowell County, West Virginia. In 1979 she returned to the state, showing the film to students at WVSU and to people in Jolo and in Welch. She interviews several members of the church and shows church services involving the handling of snakes. Reference is also made to other signs from the Bible including drinking poison and walking on fire. This film is considered to be the best film on the subject of several that were made in the 1970s including "The Holy Ghost People." *Access: Karen Kramer [Kramerkar@aol.com](mailto:Kramerkar@aol.com)*

### **Kilowatt Ours**

2004 64 mins. Jeff Barrie

Jeff Barrie, director of "Arctic Quest" (2001), traveled across the Southern East states, looking at energy problems and solutions. He found that Americans are large users of energy, causing energy companies to use devastating mining techniques like mountaintop mining to maximize their efficiency. He also found that if Americans would conserve energy, this disastrous mining technique would not be necessary, and many other ills such as childhood asthma could be minimized. *Access: <http://www.kilowattours.org/>*

### **The King of Iron Town**

2004 Mickey Fisher

Indie filmmaker Fisher spent two years in post-production, finishing his tale about two brothers who live in Ironton, Ohio. They both enter a local Tough Man contest, only to discover that despite their differences, they still respect and love each other. *Access: <http://www.leospride.com/>*

### **The Last Hit**

90 mins. 2003

Huntington filmmaker Mike Fitzgerald spent a decade improving his martial arts film set in the area. The star of the film is from El Salvador where the film was shown in spring 2004. *Access: Buddha House Productions [www.mtfitz.com](http://www.mtfitz.com)*

### **The Legacy of King Coal**

50 minutes History Channel

This film is a comprehensive chronicle of this vital industry, featuring extensive footage of coal mining through the years. There has been a long history of labor unrest that often pointed the way for other industries. Despite countless technological advances and safety features, it remains one of the most dangerous of man's undertakings. In interviews, labor leaders and coal company presidents offer insights into this vital industry, while industrial historians trace the impact of coal on the American economy. *Access: The History Channel Store. Item Number: AAE-40237. \$ 24.95*

### **Litigating Disaster**

58 mins. 2004 First Run Icarus Films

Twenty years ago, on Dec. 3, 1984, the worst industrial accident in history took place in Bhopal, India. Thousands of people died immediately, and tens of thousands lives were seriously damaged. The ground water is still contaminated. Two decades latter the \$470 million paid by Union Carbide has not been given to the victims and their families. An Indian-American lawyer presents his case in logical fashion, interviewing witness, showing evidence, and presenting proof that despite UC's statements, the conditions in India were very different from that of its sister plant in South Charleston, WV. The key scene was filmed in the Film Services office of WVLC at the State Cultural Center where Wally Shafer, director of safety for the South Charleston plant looks at footage just filmed in Bhopal of their controls, and states that the ones in WV were all computerized. Recently two Bhopal activists won the \$100,000 Goldman Prize for Environmental Activism. A NY federal court will finally be hearing the claims of the victims. *Access: First Run/Icarus Films. <http://www.frif.com/>*

### **Lost Love**

1995 40 M. Soul Miner

NOTE: Preview-Adult Material West Virginia filmmaker David Claypool tells the story of a young man who discovers his murdered "object of desire," a local flower girl. He retrieves the body, turning her into literally a giant puppet. In the nightmare world of porno films and snuff movies, he finds both his dreams and the horrific truth that lead him to his bitter situation. Filmed on location in Charleston and Nitro. This film is indeed lost. Claypool made this film, but shortly thereafter disappeared from the local filmmaking scene. *Access: David Claypool - [dclaypool@charter.net](mailto:dclaypool@charter.net)*

### **Love Is Not an Angry Thing**

30 mins. 2004

WV film director Greg Harpold and WV playwright Dan Kehde have created another poignant film. This film is about violence by a high school boyfriend against his younger girl friend. The violence increases until she is murdered. The world premiere took place at The South Charleston Museum in October 2004 – Domestic Violence Month. Susan Hayden, WVLC adult services consultant, kicked off her statewide program to help selected public libraries combat domestic violence. *Access: Jaguar Educational*  
<http://www.jaguared.com/>.

### **Mary Ingles, Indian Captive**

1989 WSWP TV

Wayne Sourbeer directed this recreation of a famous story about Mary Ingles. Made possible by a grant from Maidenform, Inc. Originally broadcast as a television program by West Virginia Public Broadcasting. With actresses Susan Williams, Janet Worthington. The story of Mary Draper Ingles' captivity and escape from Shawnee Indians in 1755. Includes narration, interviews, and dramatized segments.  
*Access: WVLC 16 mm and VHS.*

### **Mine Wars**

2004 55 mins. Bill Richardson

Bill Richardson, director of last year's excellent documentary on the Hatfields and McCoys – "Feud" – continues his investigation of local history with this look at the age of mine wars in Southern WV, and their influence on American life. Using rare historical footage and letters written by participants, Richardson shows a positive view of the union struggle during this era, explaining what happened at the Matewan Massacre and the Battle of Blair Mountain. He interviews local experts including Dr. Lon Savage, Dr. Fred Barkey, Dr. Stuart McGhee and Dr. Bailey and Temple U. labor historian Dr. Ken Fones-Wolf. They all describe well-known events that have until now only been shown in film piecemeal. *See other WV films including Even the Heavens Weep, Matewan, Smilin Sid (also by Bill Richardson).* *Access: Bill Richardson, WVU Extension Office, Mingo County Courthouse, Room 3, Williamson, WV 25661. Call 304/235-0370 or e-mail [brichard@wvu.edu](mailto:brichard@wvu.edu)*

### **Modern Marvels: Coal Mines**

2004 50 mins. History Channel

Coal is an ancient source of energy. More than half our energy still comes from coal. WV State University historian Dr. Stuart McGhee (who starred in Gary Simmons' series, "The Rock that Burns,") talks about different ways that coal has been mined and how it is

mined now. New techniques like mountaintop removal mining are shown. Appalachian activists talk about the many risks coal mining creates including massive flooding of people's homes and neighborhoods. Industry leaders state their own position on these complaints. *Access: History Channel \$ 24.95 Product No. AAE-43704*

### **Modern Marvels: Engineering Disasters 5**

2003 50 mins. History Channel

Robert Gates footage of the Buffalo Creek Disaster is used in this film about the aftermaths of deadly disasters. Also included is the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

This film tries to answer the two big questions: what went wrong, and--more importantly--what did we learn from it? Visit the south coast of Louisiana, where a misplaced oil rig caused an entire lake to be sucked into a giant underground salt mine, taking 65 acres of land, a dozen barges, and (of course), the oil rig with it. Examine the tragic 1972 Buffalo Creek dam disaster, when blatantly bad engineering led to a flood that killed 118 people in the rugged mountains of West Virginia. And revisit the Exxon Valdez disaster to unravel the chain of human and technological errors that made it inevitable. *Access: History Channel \$ 24.95 Item Number: AAE-43938*

### **Mucked: Man-made Disasters--Flash Floods in the Coalfields**

52 mins. 2003 Omni Productions

Robert Gates has been making films about the effects of stripmining since his first film, "In Memory of the Land and People."(1977) Earlier he produced "All Shaken Up"(1998) about the effects of blasting from mountaintop mining on to the homes of people in the Southern coalfields. This film shows the relationship between mountaintop removal coal mining, steep slope timbering, and the wave of major regional flash floods that began on July 8, 2001 in Southern WV counties. Over 380,000 acres of land have been mined by this practice; valley fills have filled in 1,200 miles of streams. (Figures updated 9.04.) Six major regional flash floods and the Liburn Disaster have resulted as well as major impacts on 47 communities, 12,000 homes and businesses, and an estimated 1 billion dollars in damages. People have been killed in these floods.

Mucked was previewed at the Spring Fling conference for librarians in April 2002 and had its official world premiere in Nov. 2003 at the Shepherdstown American Conservation Film Festival. An earlier version, "Flood Stories," had its premiere at the Flooded Out Film Festival in October, 2002. It won honorable mention in the investigative reporting category at EarthVision, an international environmental film festival in California. It was shown in 2004 by Santa Cruz public television. "Mucked" was also shown on WBGN in Pittsburgh during the Independent Filmmakers series Nov. 16-20, 2003. Bob and journalist Penny Loeb (who did a US News story on MTR and is writing a book on it) frequently work together to document the impacts of mountaintop

removal and logging in the state of West Virginia. The flooding section of Penny's website- [www.wvcoalfield.com/flooding.htm](http://www.wvcoalfield.com/flooding.htm) -won second place in online reporting at the Society of Environmental Journalists 2003 awards ([www.sej.org](http://www.sej.org)). Penny has a column in Nov. 2003 Blue Ridge Country magazine. Bob was re-elected president of the WV Filmmakers Guild in Oct. *Access: (304) 342-2624 or e-mail him at: [omni@ntelos.net](mailto:omni@ntelos.net)*

### **Nightline – Mountaintop Removal Mining**

1998 25 mins. ABC News

Ted Koppel explores the effects of mountaintop removal mining with opponent Larry Gibson and proponents. Gibson shows how the constant explosions has affected his remaining land including the family cemetery. Proponents argue that the US needs more domestic energy from coal. *Access: WVLC*

### **One More Time – The Life and Music of Melvin Wine**

CD-ROM and DVD 2004 Augusta Heritage Center

Melvin Wine was born in 1909 and buried in 2003 at the mouth of Stouts Run, a hollow near Burnsville, in northern Braxton County. Hundreds of fiddlers learned about old-time mountain music from him during his 94 years. In 1991 he was honored as a National Heritage Fellow. For several years Gerald Milnes and Margo Blevin have worked on this project that includes four films – “Melvin Wine: Old Time Music Maker;” a film made on his porch at home; a Copen Community Center jam and dance; and Melvin’s last Augusta concert. The interactive CD-ROM contains many tunes, stories, photos, and biographical information. A tune can be slowed down or stopped to allow the viewer to study his playing and bowing techniques. *Access: Augusta Heritage Center, \$30. <http://www.augustaheritage.com/store.html>*

### **A Principled Man – Rev. Leon Sullivan**

57 mins. 2000 MotionMasters

Rev. Leon Sullivan is considered to be the most influential African-American leader after MLK. He created the Sullivan Principles that were used to bring down the apartheid system in South Africa. He was the first African-American to serve on a board of a Fortune 500 corporation. He also founded the national Industrial Opportunity Centers (OICs). He was born and raised in Charleston, and there is now a street named after him. Diana Sole of Charleston directed this award-winning film. *Access: Every public library in WV was given a copy. You can purchase it from UC Berkeley Center for Media and Independent Learning - <http://ucmedia.berkeley.edu/default.html>.*

### **Red Salt & Reynolds**

25 mins.      2003      Paradise Film Institute/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Exploration and settlement of the Kanawha Valley began in the late 1700's, fueled largely by the discovery of huge salt deposits and resulting in the development of the first large-scale extractive industry in the state. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has spent years excavating a site at the Marmet Lock Replacement Project and have uncovered the remains there of four salt furnaces. They also have identified the mansion of early industrialist John Reynolds, the cabin occupied by his slaves, and the cemetery where he and several family members were buried. Using historic and industrial archeology, bio-anthropology, and historic documents, this new film details the rise and fall of the Reynolds family and traces the fortunes of the local saline industry, which was once the largest salt producer in America. *Access: The video is available in DVD or VHS format for \$10, plus \$3 shipping, from West Virginia Archeological Society, P.O. Box 300, Hurricane, WV 25526.*

### **The righteous remnant : Jewish survival in Appalachia**

1997    50 mins.

Maryanne Reed, who grew up in Beckley, WV, directed this award winning film about how it was to grow up in a small Appalachian town being Jewish. Also filmed in Charleston, WV. Most of the eastern European Jewish immigrants who entered the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries settled into the burgeoning urban centers in the East and Midwest. Yet other Jewish Americans chose alternative living arrangements for themselves and their families. Some Jews, hearing about the opportunities in the "black diamond" mining and timbering industries, migrated across the Alleghenies into West Virginia. This film examines the history and present-day concerns of the small Jewish community in Beckley, West Virginia. The story of the Jewish citizens in Beckley is somewhat representative of the the narratives of other small Jewish communities in the southern part of the state. When the West Virginia coal industry was booming, Jewish people came to the area and established businesses that supported the coal-based economy. When the coal industry suffered decline in the late 1950s and '60s, many Jewish families, along with their Gentile neighbors, left the state for economic opportunities in other parts of the country. Typically, young adult Jews did not return, in part for economic reasons, but also because eof the cultural challenges they encountered as a matter of course in a small Appalachian communities. For example, Conservative Jews found it difficult to purchase Kosher foods, find a Jewish member of the opposite sex, or obtain a suitable Jewish education for their children. West Virginia Jews migrated to large cities like Charleston and Cincinnati, Ohio. Consequently, the Jewish population in the southern rural eastern counties declined dramatically after 1960. The film producer's great grandfather, Simon Fox, and his family were at one time the only Jewish family living in the small town of Davis in Tucker County. With no synagogue in the area, The Fox family attended a local church to experience a sense of religious community. The family never converted to Christianity, but they went to church in order to worship God in a corporate setting. Simon Fox and his family eventually left Davis because he wanted to find Jewish husbands for his daughters. The family settled in Akron, Ohio, where there was a significant Jewish population.

*Access: WVLC has several copies.*

Website - <http://are.as.wvu.edu/reed.htm>

## **Sludge**

2004. 55 mins. Appalshop

A documentary about the effects of the Martin County sludge flood in 2000, releasing 10 times more effluent into the environment than the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The film focuses on the reactions of Martin County residents and Jack Spadaro, the long-time mine safety engineer who is now under threat from the Bush Administration for refusing to sign the official report on this disaster. Spadaro is a native West Virginian, working for more than 30 years on coal mine safety in WV, most recently as director of the Mine and Health Safety Academy in Beckley, beginning his career as a mining engineer working on looking at the Buffalo Creek Disaster. *Access: Appalshop*

## **Stories from the Mines: How Immigrant Miners Changed America**

2001 57 mins. Films for the Humanities and Sciences

The first decades of the 20th century saw the rise of America to superpower status—ascendancy fueled in large measure by the social and industrial impact of anthracite coal mining in northeastern Pennsylvania. This meticulously researched program uses location footage, archival film, period photos, dramatizations, and academic commentary to examine the coming-of-age of American labor. The agitation and violent suppression that so characterized the times are vividly captured, as are the era's larger-than-life personalities. Precedents including wage and child labor laws and the right to collective bargaining are set against the stark backdrop of immigrant miners savagely exploited by laissez-faire industrialists. *Access – Films for the Humanities & Science. 800-257-5126*

## **Stranger With A Camera**

58 minutes, 2000 Appalshop

Appalshop's best film – shown at Sundance and on PBS. In 1967 Canadian filmmaker Hugh O'Connor visited the mountains of Central Appalachia to document poverty. A local landlord, who resented the presence of filmmakers on his property, shot and killed O'Connor, in part because of his anger over the media images of Appalachia that had become icons in the nation's War on Poverty. Filmmaker Elizabeth Barret, a native of Appalachia, uses O'Connor's death as a lens to explore the complex relationship between those who make films to promote social change and the people whose lives are represented in such media productions. Through first-person accounts of the killing and the perspective of three decades of reflection, *Stranger With A Camera* leads viewers on a quest for understanding - a quest that ultimately leads Barret to examine her own role as both a maker of media and a member of the Appalachian community she portrays.

*Access: Appalshop.*

### **Struggling to Survive**

2003 15 mins. Appalachian Media Institute/Appalshop

High school students at Appalshop won a national award for this film about workers in Eastern Kentucky struggling to survive on minimum wage incomes. A Letcher County, Ky. judge executive tries to institute a "living wage" of \$7.50 for all workers. *Access: Appalshop*

### **The Texture of Life - The Tusing Sisters of Branch Mountain**

28 mins. 2003 Real Earth Productions

Ray and Judy Schmitt present this portrait of two Hardy County, West Virginia Mennonite sisters based on a short story by their niece Kathleen Sholl. Through narration she tells the story of her annual summer visits to the homeplace on Branch Mountain while growing up in the Fifties. In 1972 the Smithsonian "discovered" the Tusing sisters and wrote an article on their weaving techniques and life outside the mainstream. They seldom left their two hundred-acre farm, not owning a car, and used little electricity except for a few light bulbs and a small radio. Music by the WV supergroup Gandydancer. *Access: Real Earth Productions.*

Website - <http://www.realearthproductions.com/>

### **True Facts...In A Country Song**

28 M. 1979 Burt/Chadwick

A rare look at the life of a West Virginia music family. The Lilly Brothers found fame in Boston and Japan, returning to West Virginia after a son's death. The true facts of an Appalachian family are revealed in their songs, including "Hide You in the Blood of Jesus," "Sailor Boy," "Come Early Morning," "Sitting on Top of the World," "We Shall Meet Again," "Gathering Shells From the Seashore" and "What Will I Leave Behind." *Access: PatchWork Films*

### **The True Meaning of Pictures: Shelby Lee Adams' Appalachia**

**2002 75 mins. Mercury Films**

Directed by Canadian doc filmmaker Jennifer Baichwal.

An introduction to the work of renowned photographer Shelby Lee Adams. Born in Eastern Kentucky, Adams has devoted 30 years of his life to visiting and making portraits of families living in Appalachia, those who have been misrepresented in the media and derogatorily referred to as "hillbillies." It delves into the controversy that surrounds Adams' work, with hot debate amongst the critics, and revealing commentary from his friends and subjects. It makes us question the meaning of art itself, and along the way, we get to know both Adams and the extraordinary people who stand in front of his camera. Many of his photographs can be seen in the book and PBS series, "The Appalachians." *Access: Amazon, New Video, etc.*

## **Whispers from Space**

105 mins. 1996 Facets

This "engagingly deadpan" (Dennis Harvey, *Variety*) documentary looks at UFO lore and one rather disreputable "researcher" in particular: Gray Barker, a self-stylized "expert" on strange phenomena, who not only didn't believe in Unidentified Flying Objects, but may have perpetrated a UFO-related hoax or two himself. Stills, home movies, location shooting and interviewees, ranging from Parker's surviving relatives to a former male lover, business associates, amateur sleuths and a local folklorist, offer their insight into the man from rural West Virginia who specialized in the flying saucer trade. Ralph Coon, the director of music videos in LA, came to WV to make this documentary. He worked extensively with Merle Moore who established the Gray Barker Collection at the Clarksburg-Harrison County Library. Both Moore and Steve Fesenmaier helped him make the film. It had its world premiere at the Spring WV Intl. Film Festival in Charleston in 1996. It was on the cover of *Graffiti* magazine. *Access: Facets Multimedia at facets.org, WVLC*

## **Win a Date with Tad Hamilton**

2004 95 mins.

Australian director Robert Luketic followed his hit romantic comedy, "Legally Blonde" (2001) with a tale about a good-hearted West Virginia teenager who wins a date with Hollywood heartthrob Tad Hamilton. Kate Bosworth, "the new Julia Roberts" (after starring in "Blue Crush") plays Rosalee Futch. Josh Duhamel plays tad. The story was set in Fraziers Bottom, Putnam County, but in fact some exterior scenes were filmed in Fayette County and elsewhere in WV. *Access: Amazon and other dealers.*

## **Wrath of God: Fire in the Hole! Mining Disasters**

50 minutes History Channel

It is one of the most dangerous, unforgiving jobs on earth. And despite decades of strict legislation and modern safety devices, mining can still turn deadly in an instant. Three of the worst mining disasters in history are explored. First is the December 5, 1907 explosion that claimed the lives of 175 men and boys in Monongah, West Virginia. Shock waves from the blast were felt eight miles away. Next is the Orient # 2 disaster in West Frankfort, Illinois, where 119 miners died while working the last shift before Christmas. Both these events took place in coalmines, which are particularly dangerous due to the presence of explosive methane gas. Last is the tale of survivors of the worst accident in the history of South African gold mining, when 177 men perished in a fire caused by a welder accidentally touching his torch to an acetylene cylinder. *Access: History Channel. Product Number - Item Number: AAE-42617*

**Wrong Turn**

84 mins. 2003

A Canadian company produced this teenage horror film supposedly set in West Virginia. Eliza Dushku stars in this tale of young friends who are stranded on an isolated road after trying to take a short cut to get back to “civilization” to meet a deadline. Stan Winston, Oscar-winning special effects man, is one of the producers. The film was actually filmed in Ontario and caused a front-page controversy about the negative portrayal of West Virginians as inbred bloodthirsty monsters. *Access: amazon.com and other distributors.*