



With March 28 Little Lecture, Humanities Council anticipates Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial

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Charleston, WV — Many West Virginians have an ancestor who was involved in the Battle of Blair Mountain, an uprising against maltreatment of coal miners in 1921 that culminated in several days of hard fighting on the wooded slopes of Logan County. As many as ten thousand miners may have been involved, making it the largest armed insurrection in American history since the Civil War. The battle's centennial will arrive this September, with a number of groups planning commemorative events.

Historian and author Charles B. Keeney, who kicks off the West Virginia Humanities Council's beloved Little Lectures series this year, has a closer relationship with those century-old events than most: Keeney is the great-grandson of Frank Keeney, a union organizer and crucial figure in the events surrounding Blair Mountain. More than that, in the 2010s, the younger Keeney also played a key role in saving the battlefield as it was under threat from surface mining—which would have destroyed any remaining archaeological record of one of the most important sites in American coal history.

During his Lecture, which will be broadcast virtually on YouTube, Facebook, and the Council's website, wvhumanities.org, Keeney will talk about the grassroots coalition that came together to protect Blair Mountain for future generations, as well as the process of writing his new book, "The Road to Blair Mountain: Saving a Mine Wars Battlefield from King Coal," available now from West Virginia University Press.

The lecture, which is free to watch and participate in, will premiere online at 2:00 PM on Sunday, March 28. Mr. Keeney will be available during the premiere to answer questions live in the comments and chat on Facebook and YouTube.

For more information visit www.wvhumanities.org or contact Kyle Warmack at 304-346-8500 or warmack@wvhumanities.org. For information on Blair Centennial events, visit www.blair100.com.

The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonpartisan nonprofit institution, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. With the support of the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and contributions from the private sector, the Council's mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.