

RULE OF THE RIFLE

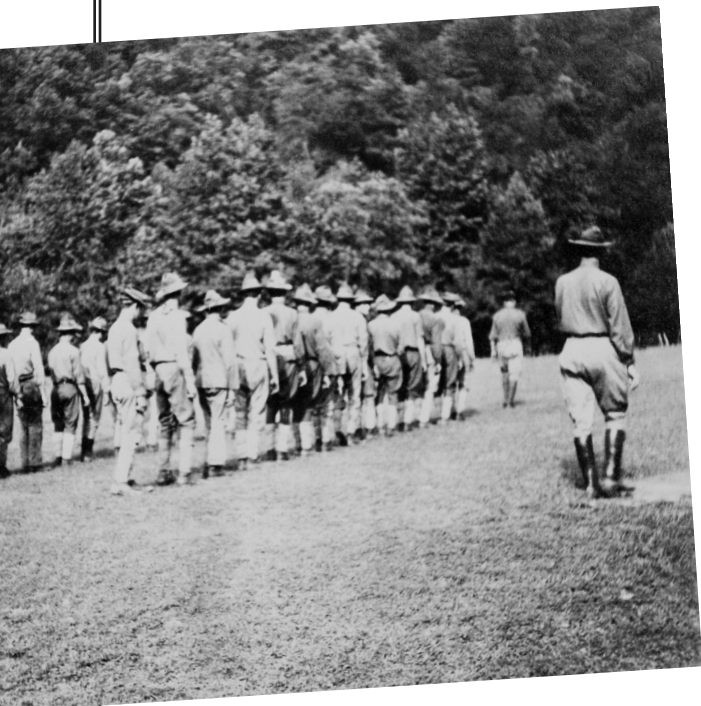
MARTIAL LAW, THE WV NATIONAL GUARD, AND THE 1921 BATTLE OF BLAIR MOUNTAIN

by Billy Joe Peyton
Board President

In 1889, the West Virginia Legislature enacted a new militia law that reorganized state military forces and placed them on a permanent basis with a new designation as the West Virginia National Guard. All able-bodied males between age 18 and 45 were subject to military duty as ordered by the governor, who served as commander-in-chief and could turn the organization over to the U.S. president if requested. In the early years, Guard forces were periodically called on to intervene in labor disputes between coal miners and operators. As in other states, the West Virginia National Guard entered active federal service during World War I. However, there was no coordination between federal and state authorities to reestablish National Guard organizations at war's end.

When armed miners threatened to march on Logan and Mingo counties in August 1921, Governor Ephraim F. Morgan sought to create a state military force to handle the rapidly devolving situation. He commissioned reserve officer William E. Eubank of McDowell County and assigned him to form companies to meet the miners' challenge. Colonel Eubank hastily organized volunteer companies at Williamson, Mount Hope, Welch, Logan, and elsewhere in southern West Virginia. Some companies were authorized by order of the adjutant general in late August, but the process of mustering men into the National Guard was not completed. Hence, they were described as volunteers rather than National Guard companies. At least one unit was sworn in as "deputy state policemen."

While the volunteer companies were not technically part of the West Virginia National Guard, Colonel Eubank took command of them during the Battle of Blair Mountain. When it became apparent that Eubank's hastily assembled forces were not sufficient to halt the marchers, Governor Morgan called on federal assistance as the situation was spiraling out of control. Lacking a state military force, he notified Secretary of War John W. Weeks that regular army troops might be required to keep the peace. After miners had begun to gather along Lens Creek in Kanawha County for their march on Logan, Governor Morgan wired Weeks that an armed insurrection was imminent and warned that the state legislature could not be "assembled in time to eliminate the possibility of clash and bloodshed."



ABOVE: West Virginia National Guard troops at drill on Paint Creek or Cabin Creek during the strikes of 1912-1913. This photograph was taken on the family Kodak camera of a young boy named Kyle McCormick, who later became the director of the West Virginia State Archives in the 1950s. In middle school in 1916, McCormick wrote a paper that vividly detailed the soldiers' camps and activities during this tense period of martial law.
West Virginia State Archives, Kyle McCormick Collection.

THE BROAD SIDE

In response to Morgan's pleas for help, Brigadier General Henry H. Bandholtz, a West Point graduate and career army officer, was dispatched to southern West Virginia.

When he arrived, Bandholtz conducted numerous surveys and interviews before recommending that federal troops be sent to the state. On September 1, 1921, U.S. troops were deployed from Fort Knox and Fort Thomas in Kentucky, and Camp Dix, New Jersey. Infantry regiments began to arrive in full battle gear the next day, and by noon on September 3 they had established contact with the miners' army. The miners had greater respect for the regular army than they did for the locally organized operators' force, and they immediately began to surrender their arms. The miners' march ended by September 4, 1921, and participants returned to their homes.

Even though not formally organized for service, activities in 1921 placed the West Virginia National Guard squarely in the coal operator's camp. Officers who raised volunteer companies to defend Logan County were automatically announcing that the service was in opposition to the miners' efforts to unionize. Decisions to mobilize state military forces depended upon the political leanings of the governor and legislature, the influence of business owners, and the locations in which companies were organized. In some towns and cities labor organizations had strong representation, while in others the members might be farmers or small business owners. Exacerbating the situation was the fact that many early National Guard officers were themselves prominent businessmen or coal operators, while enlistees came from working class backgrounds. In fact, an examination of over 700 enlistments from 1898 to 1917 reveals that most recruits defined their occupation as "laborer," including coal miners in southern counties, despite the use of the National Guard in labor disputes.

There can be little doubt that many of those who responded to the call for the defense of Logan in 1921 would not have been sympathetic to the miners' cause. There was clearly no effort to be objective, as was the case when state military forces were used in earlier strikes. One significant exception was the 1912 Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike in Kanawha County, when the reputation of the National Guard suffered damage over its involvement in evictions, by the presence of members in a newly formed private guard force, protracted Guard presence in the strike zone, and the declaration of martial law.

While miners and their supporters refrained from association with the West Virginia National Guard following the events of 1921, the organization in subsequent years received more support from the business community and coal companies. Businessmen in Logan built an armory and leased it to the state, while in Mount Hope another group of businessmen largely financed building a second armory. Hence, it is little wonder that West Virginia National Guard members received the enmity of the working class in the 1920s, which made recruitment efforts difficult for years to come.

Passage of the National Guard Act of 1933 made the National Guard a reserve component of the U.S. Army in peacetime and in war. The act made the country's Guard forces immediately available for federal service in a national emergency and provided for their intact return to the states after mobilization. In essence, it created the modern structure of the National Guard as a reserve force under mixed state and federal control.

HARDY COUNTY'S CROSSROADS

by Michele Moure-Reeves
Hardy County CVB, Executive Director

[Ed: Crossroads: Change in Rural America is part of the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street program, and is the latest Council-sponsored Smithsonian tour in the state. From the end of August 2021 to June 2022, it will visit seven sites across West Virginia—starting in Hardy County at Moorefield High School. In addition to the Smithsonian exhibit itself, its host communities commit enormous time and energy into creating additional programming which complements the exhibit's central themes.

To celebrate each site's unique approach to this programming, The Broad Side will be featuring a series of articles written by their respective project directors, describing their community's creative and collaborative process, and a slice of what visitors can expect to see.]

Here in Hardy County, we were curious about how our community would address the exhibit's central theme of "change" through various project ideas. Change can be scary, and as a result some people take refuge in history rather than use it to ask more questions. Local history is then sometimes passed down and validated through the generations without much interrogation.

Acknowledging that change has happened, or anticipating change to come, gathered momentum as our ideas developed. The further along we got, the more we realized that talking about our history meant talking about our present and future. And so, what began as a multitude of projects soon began winnowing down. Sometimes several ideas would even merge into a single new concept.

To explore what we saw as these budding interrelationships, we've decided to publish weekly articles in the Moorefield Examiner beginning September 1st. In doing so, we're supporting the voice of our local journalism, and entering this communal dialogue into a newspaper of record—a step that may be even more important now, in this transient digital age.

Here are a few things you can expect to find when you visit Moorefield to see Crossroads:

Agriculture: Hardy County is the number one agricultural producing county in West Virginia, and its importance to our local identity is on display in several projects. A look at our agricultural history, traditions, and new practices will include the Ag Innovation efforts supported by Eastern WV Community & Technical College (EWVCTC), and the South Branch Stockyards, open since the 1920's and central to the community's social life for decades. The Hardy County Historical Society will present an exhibition about the regional importance of local beef and poultry industries. Farms Work Wonders will host weekly student-led tours of historic Frye Farm, discussing early hunters/gatherers, traditional agricultural practices, then moving to the Wardensville Garden Market to explore their current, certified organic farming practices.

Adaptive Re-use: An article about the preservation and adaptive reuse of our built environment will look at the unforeseen ways that historic structures are being developed. Hickory Hill, partnering with West Whitehill Winery, will offer a wine tasting and exhibition about the farm's 200-year history and its current use as a social event venue. An exhibition in the 18th century Higgins House, soon to become a small museum, will highlight the house's architectural history and its original owner's role in the Revolutionary War.

Have you seen...: Photographs record people, events, and places, and freeze time. Almost 30 years ago, Phoebe Heishman, publisher of the Moorefield Examiner,

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HARDY COUNTY CROSSROADS

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took rides with her family and photographed sites in a four-county area. Heishman's photos were printed in the Examiner and Penny-Saver, which asked readers to identify these unusual or overlooked sites. A young South Fork Valley resident began to collect these articles and preserved them in handmade scrapbooks. Currently, the Bishoff Collection, comprised of approximately 200,000 images and negatives housed at the Public Library, is being cataloged and researched. These photographic images, scrapbooks and archives stand as crucial documentation of the people and places around us. The scrapbooks themselves will be displayed in the Chamber of Commerce windows during Crossroads. In addition, the library will continue to post many of these images on Facebook—seeking identities and community insights into the photographs of yesteryear.

Land use and protection: An issue fraught with strong opinions, land use and protection consitutes a critical conversation in a county where the primary industry is agriculture. Changes in land usage over time will be illustrated in a mapping exhibition at EWVCTC featuring copies of historical maps and examples of contemporary mapping practices. By introducing new business initiatives, Hardy County farmers are protecting their land while sustaining agriculture; and the Cacapon Lost River Land Trust, the largest local land trust in WV, quietly works with landowners to maintain healthy rivers, protect forests and farmland, and preserve rural heritage for present and future generations.

These projects interweave and overlap with each other, emphasizing together the need to preserve our sense of place, as defined by our history, traditions, rituals, and stories. This knowledge of ourselves must be explored, scrutinized, and protected. After all, it may give all of us—residents and visitors alike—a better understanding of the place we call home.

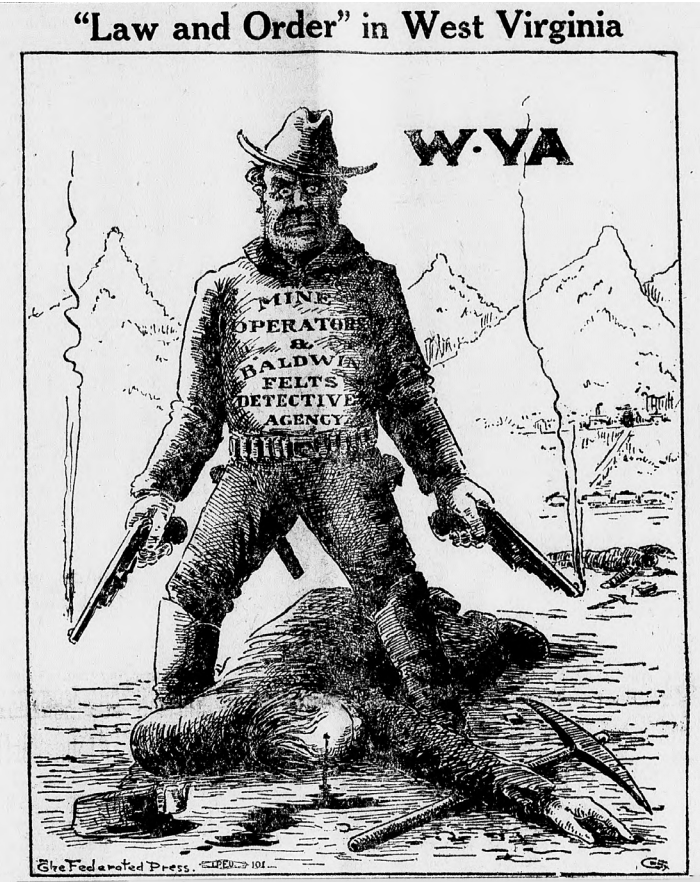
Crossroads will open in Moorefield on August 30. For more information about Hardy County's Crossroads programming, contact the Hardy County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

For general information about Hardy County, go to visithardywv.org
 For more information on the Crossroads tour, visit wvhumanities.org

THE
 BROAD
 SIDE

RIGHT: A political cartoon criticizing the predominance of armed Baldwin-Felts mine guards in West Virginia in the years leading up to the Battle of Blair Mountain. Originally circulated in Montana's Butte Daily Bulletin, a pro-labor publication. Library of Congress.

One of many upcoming Blair Centennial events is **Museums, Labor, and Social Activism**, a public symposium about the challenges institutions face when teaching industrial and workers' history. Funded in part by a Council mini-grant.



A MOUNTAIN OF BLAIR

Beginning with a kick-off event in Charleston on Friday, September 3rd, this Labor Day Weekend will see an unprecedented amount of public commemoration to honor the Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial. From film screenings, lectures, and exhibits to reenactments, concerts, and marches, the slew of activities spans from Morgantown to Matewan. See the *Events* section below for a selection of those funded by Council grants, and visit www.Blair100.com for the full slate.

EVENTS AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021

Always check with the venue or hosting organization of an event before attending, as schedules may change without the knowledge of the Council. For more information, you can also visit the calendar on our website, www.wvhumanities.org.

<p>Aug 2-6 Artist in Residence with Heather Schneider - Prickett's Fort State Park, Fairmont.</p> <p>Aug 5 Delbert Bailey: "Working in the Coal Mine" - living history presentation. Richwood Heritage Center, Richwood. 1pm</p> <p>Aug 7 Ostenaco and Gabriel Arthur - History Alive! Presented by Cass Scenic RR State Park, Cass. 11:30am and 3:30pm</p> <p>Aug 6 Sterling Spencer: Hunter, Soldier, Carver, Philosopher - living history presentation. Richwood Heritage Center, Richwood. 1pm</p> <p>Aug 21 The Amazing Mr. Pratt, Our Mister Richwood - living history presentation. Richwood Heritage Center, Richwood. 1pm</p> <p>Aug 28 Scotts Run Street Fair - book signing and presentation. Scotts Run Museum and Trail, Osage. 10am</p> <p>Sept 1-30 Appalachian Writer-in-Residence Marie Manilla - Shepherd University, Shepherdstown. Full schedule at www.shepherd.edu/abwirweb/manilla/schedule</p>	<p>Sept 3 Blair Mountain Centennial Kick-Off - Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. For tickets and full schedule, visit www.blair100.com. 4pm-9pm</p> <p>Sept 4 Museums, Labor, and Social Activism - symposium presented by the West Virginia Association of Museums. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Charleston. 9am</p> <p>Sept 11 Marian McQuade and the McQuade Family Help Celebrate Grandparents Day - living history presentation. Richwood Heritage Center, Richwood. 1pm</p> <p>Sept 18 - Jan 16 Huntington Sesquicentennial Exhibit - Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington.</p> <p>Sept 23 WV Folklife Apprenticeship Showcase - Old-time banjo and fiddle, by Kim Johnson, Cody Jordan, Joe Herrmann, Dakota Karper. MacFarland-Hubbard House, Charleston. Outdoors, weather permitting. 5:30pm-7:30pm</p> <p>Sept 25 Hickory Hill Crossroads of Change - Exhibit and wine tasting. Hickory Hill Farm, Hardy County. 11am-1pm</p>	<p>Sept 25 Heritage Weekend Open House - Robert Higgins House, Moorefield.</p> <p>Sept 25 Gabriel Arthur and Ostenaco - History Alive! Presented by Big Coal River Heritage. John Slack Park, Racine. 11:00am and 2:00pm</p> <p>Sept 25 Abigail Adams - History Alive! Presented by Hardy Co. Tour and Crafts Assoc.. Hardy County, venue TBA. 11:00am</p> <p> The Council's Folklife Program is producing a new film series in partnership with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and filmmakers Mike Costello & Amy Dawson. For more information on the films below, visit https://tinyurl.com/WVFoodways. Virtual premieres will occur at noon on the date listed. </p> <p>Aug 18 Foraging and Relations with Jonathan Hall</p> <p>Sept 1 Kimchi Fermentation with Marlyn McClendon</p> <p>Sept 15 Ravioli and Sauce with Lou Maiuri & Turkish Cuisine with Mehmet Öztan</p> <p>Sept 30 Homegrown Foodways in West Virginia with State Folklorist Emily Hilliard and Filmmakers Mike Costello and Amy Dawson</p>
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The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonpartisan nonprofit, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council is supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia. The Broad Side is ©2021 by the West Virginia Humanities Council. All rights reserved. Copyright of individual articles is retained by their respective authors. Images used with permission. Additional graphics and lineart obtained from Vecteezy.com.