

Articles and videos about Harlan County, Kentucky

The following materials offer windows into the history of Harlan County, Kentucky.

- “Harlan County, USA” – An outstanding, gripping Academy Award-winning documentary that documents the coal miners' strike against the Brookside Mine of the Eastover Mining Company in Harlan County, Kentucky in June 1973. The Brookside mine was just east of the town of Harlan, where the ASP center is.
 - See the official film trailer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PfaE4R4eA4&t=56s> .
 - The movie DVD is available in the Hennepin County Library.
 - You can also watch the full length movie for free on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhvTD2dSwVM> .
 - Read about the documentary at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlan_County,_USA .
 - Oral history interview about the Brookside mine strike – https://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/L-0064-9/excerpts/excerpt_8975.html

- “Which Side Are You On” – Protest song written by Florence Reese, wife of a miner, during the violent mine struggle in Harlan County in 1931. The song has become an iconic protest anthem and is often cast in the context of other conflicts.
 - Read Florence’s brief account of the incident that prompted her to write the song at <https://www.laborheritage.org/power-of-songs/> ; scroll down to the section on Florence Reece.
 - Hear Florence sing the song at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzudto-FA5Y> . She also sings the song in the documentary “Harlem County, USA”.
 - Hear an early popularization of the song by the Almanac Singers at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJGleVt1UeM>.
 - Pete Seeger recordings – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iAIM02kv0g> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XKMwWZVpPE>

- 1931 mine conflict in Harlan County that gave it the name “Bloody Harlan”
 - “Harlan County War” – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlan_County_War
 - “Remembering Bloody Harlan” – Recalls the mine violence in Harlan county in the 1930s. Has personal reflections of miners in the area and their families. <https://parallelnarratives.com/remembering-bloody-harlan/>
 - “The Battle of Evarts, KY, 1931” – Describes the armed conflict between the miners and the mine officials that led to the name “Bloody Harlan”. <https://theclio.com/entry/12137>
 - The Harlan County Coal Wars 1931-1939 – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwfn3lh16m8>

- 2019 coal mine protest – In 2019 the Blackjewel Coal Company filed for bankruptcy, closed the mine in Cumberland, Ky, in Harlan County, and refused to pay the miners. Shortly after, a neighbor who lived near the mine notice that a train was loading coal dug

earlier by the miners. The coal company was trying to ship out over \$1M in coal. Miners and their families protested non-violently with sit-ins on the track to prevent the train from leaving.

- “Laid off and owed pay: the Kentucky miners blocking coal trains” – <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/sep/17/harlan-county-coalmine-train-protest>
 - “2019 Harlan County coal miners’ protest” – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Harlan_County_coal_miners%27_protest
 - “Blackjewel Bankruptcy Leaves Damaged Lands, Miners’ Compensation in Limbo” – <https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2021/03/22/blackjewel-bankruptcy-finalized/>
- The Fall of the Coal Economy – What Happens Now?
 - Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Zfx0u0Ne2c
 - Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbweFJSR5zI>