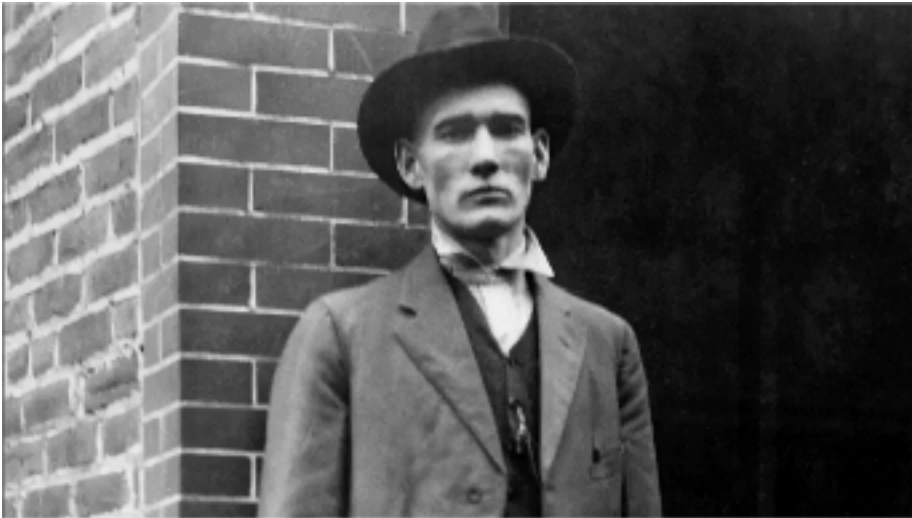


NEWS ARCHIVE

On this Day in History Sid Hatfield, the Miner's Friend, was born.

Born in Pike County, Kentucky, Sid worked as a blacksmith and a coal miner before enlisting to serve in World War I. Having the reputation of a rough-living man, some citizens were surprised when Mayor Cabel Testerman named him Matewan's chief of police. But he and Testerman shared an unyielding commitment to the miners' right to organize. **Both men would put their lives on the line for that belief.**



Hatfield was a staunch union supporter, a man of iron will and steely resolve, and a man not given to debates. **He was a man of action.** Unlike many town officials, he, along with Mayor Testerman, turned down lucrative bribes offered by the agents to allow the installation of machine guns on city buildings even though Matewan was an independent town. The companies and their agents had no authority within the city limits. On May 20, 1920, a showdown between the Baldwin-Felts agents and Hatfield, Mayor Testerman, and striking miners and townspeople resulted in the Battle of Matewan that left seven of the agents, two unarmed miners, and the mayor dead. One of the only lawmen to side with the miners and their families, **Sid became the miner's hero.**

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Fourteen months after being found not guilty of murder, Sid and Deputy Ed Chambers were brought to trial on charges of conspiracy in McDowell County. The Baldwin-Felts agents claimed that they conspired to shoot up a tippie in the company town of Mohawk. Others claim the mine guards themselves shot up the tippie in order to frame the men, but Sid and Ed still found themselves on trial in Welch, the seat of McDowell County. Having been promised safe travel, Sid and Ed came to court unarmed. **As they climbed the courthouse steps, they were met by several Baldwin-Felts agents who shot and killed the two men.**

More than two thousand people attended their funeral, two martyrs to the union cause. **Less than a month later, more than 10,000 striking miners tied red bandanas around their necks and set out for Mingo County.** It had been a long time coming, and for many the death of Hatfield and Chambers was the last straw. **Sid Hatfield's name became forever enshrined in West Virginia history as a true miners' friend when so few were to be found.**

y Birthday Smilin' Sid! Happy Birthday Smilin' Sid! Happy Birthday S

For More Information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmtQqUPT-B0> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmtQqUPT-B0>)

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/matewan-massacre.htm>
(<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/matewan-massacre.htm>)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rytb5sAU-Ig> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rytb5sAU-Ig>)

The following related resources are available for purchase in the Museum Shop.

Books

The Devil Is Here in These Hills by James Green

Thunder in the Mountains by Lon Savage

The West Virginia Mine War 1920-21 by Lon Savage



When Miners March by Bill Blizzard, Edited by Wess Harris

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DApK9bWwgn/>

Law and Order vs. The Miners 1906-1933 by Richard Lunt

The Matewan Massacre in Goldenseal Magazine, June 2020

Videos

Matewan Written and Directed by John Sayles

The Mine Wars The American Experience

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Courage in the Hollers: The Museum Joins a Nationwide Public Memory Cohort! (</news/2022/5/18/courage-in-the-hollers-the-museum-joins-a-nationwide-cohort>)

Older Post

Happy Birthday to West Virginia Legend, Frank Keeney! (</news/2022/1/19/happybirthday-9atjz>)

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