

# A Guide to the William C. and Bill Blizzard When Miners March Coal and Labor Collection , 1934-1985

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A Collection in University Archives, McConnell Library, Radford University AC 010  
University Archives, McConnell Library, Radford University

## History

**Processed by:** Gene Hyde, Molly Chamblin, Wes Hess, and Adrian Whicker, Winter-Spring 2011-12.

## Title Statement

A Guide to the William C. and Bill Blizzard When Miners March Coal and Labor Collection , 1934-1985

**Subtitle:**

**Collection:** AC 010

**Author:** Gene Hyde, Molly Chamblin, Wes Hess, and Adrian Whicker, Winter-Spring 2011-12.

## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

### Collection number

AC 010

### Language

English

### Abstract

The When Miners March William Blizzard Coal and Labor Collection contains materials from the personal collection of union leader Bill Blizzard and his son, author and journalist William C. Blizzard. Full details of the [collection](#) is available. This collection has been [digitized](#).

### Creator

Bill Blizzard and William C. Blizzard

### Physical Characteristics

19.0 Linear feet.

### Location

Locked in compact shelving, Level, shelves 31 A, C-D

### Repository

University Archives, McConnell Library, Radford University

## Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

An appointment for research is required. All materials in the collection are available for research. No interlibrary loan. A related collection is the [William C. Blizzard Photography Collection](#), portions of which have also been [digitized](#).

## Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

## Acquisition Information

Purchased from Wess Harris in 2011.

## Processing Information

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## Preferred Citation

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## Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

## Custodial History

The collection was purchased from Wess Harris in 2011 at the same time as the William C. Blizzard Photography Collection.

## Biographical Information

William H. (Bill) Blizzard (Sep 19, 1892-July 31,1958) was a coal miner and union organizer who achieved fame by leading an army of 10,000-15,000 miners in a march from Blair Mountain into Logan County, WV against local law enforcement, strike breakers, and ultimately National Guard forces in what became known as the Battle of Blair Mountain. As a result, Blizzard was tried for, but acquitted of, treason and murder. Charges against him were subsequently dismissed.

Following his acquittal he served as legislative representative for the United Mine Workers and as vice president and president of the United Mine Workers District 17 based in Charleston, WV. Blizzard retired from public life in 1955 following a disagreement with United Mine Workers president John L. Lewis and his brother Raymond. Blizzard died of cancer in 1958. Blizzard was the son of Timothy Cumming Blizzard, a coal miner, and Sarah Rebecca (Mother) Blizzard, a union organizer. Bill Blizzard began working in the mines with his father at the age of 10 and became involved with the United Mine Workers during the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike in 1912-13.

Bill Blizzard's son, William C. Blizzard (December 22, 1916- December 29, 2008) was a journalist, historian, and photographer. Over the course of his career he worked as a photographer and features writer for the Charleston Gazette, as well as publications such as The Nation and Labor's Daily. He also published articles and photographs in many magazines and newspapers. The narrative that would become When Miners March was originally published as a series of articles in Labor's Daily in the 1950s. Wess Harris worked with William C. Blizzard to publish When Miners March as a book in 2004.

## Scope and Content

The When Miners March William Blizzard Coal and Labor Collection contains materials from the personal collection of union leader Bill Blizzard and his son, author and journalist William C. Blizzard. Materials include items related to William C. Blizzard, the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain and subsequent trial, United Mine Workers local union activity in West Virginia, and the writing of When Miners March: The Story of Coal Miners in West Virginia (by William C. Blizzard, edited by Wess Harris, Gay, WV: Appalachian Community Services, 2004). The collection also contains materials collected by Ulysses Elwood Maples, a retired coal miner and field representative for UMWA Local 29. Maples collected official materials from his job, but also wrote histories and sketches of miners. He also typed transcriptions of various addresses, essays, and other writings by West Virginians, printing them in upper-case type on multicolored paper.

## Arrangement

The first section of this collection (Box 1) contains biographical documents and materials about the life and work of William C. Blizzard.

Boxes 2-5 include materials related to the Battle of Blair Mountain, the subsequent trial, and the original version of *Struggle and Lose...Struggle and Win! - The Story of Coal Miners in West Virginia* By William C. Blizzard, which was published in the newspaper *Labors Daily* in 1952-53.

The next nine boxes contain correspondence and documents from Bill Blizzard's work as an official of United Mine Workers of America, District 17, in West Virginia. Box 6 contains correspondence from and to Bill Blizzard, and box 7 contains correspondence to and from Van Bittner, District 17 President, and John L. Lewis, UMWA president. Boxes 8-9 contain grievances and other materials from local unions in District 17. Box 11 contains assorted union ephemera, box 12 contains various writings and material from Elwood Maples, while boxes 13-15 contain assorted UMWA documents and publications.

Boxes 16-20 contain various writings, photographs, and correspondence of William C. Blizzard. Boxes 21-24 contain various assorted materials from the personal collection of William C. Blizzard, including various articles and materials on mining in West Virginia. The collection also includes 27 books from William C. Blizzard's personal collection, including works on socialism and communism. (The finding aid includes a link to these titles in the library's online catalog.)

Box 1: Biographical material about Bill and William C. Blizzard. Articles and journalism by William C. Blizzard (unless otherwise noted)

Box 2: *Struggle and Lose...Struggle and Win! - The Story of Coal Miners in West Virginia* By William C. Blizzard. This was the original text of what became *When Miners March*, as originally run in *Labors Daily* in 1952-53.

Box 3: West Virginia Mine Wars trial transcripts and related legal documents

Box 4: Court Transcript: *Red Jacket Consolidated Coal and Coke Company, et. al, vs. John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers, Mary (Mother Jones) Harris, et. al. - Transcript of the Record. 1927 federal court case, Vol.ume 1: Pleading (1919 pages)*

Box 5: Scrapbook containing newspaper clippings from 1921-22 covering treason trial of William Blizzard and other miners at Blair Mountain.

Box 6: Bill Blizzard, Correspondence

Box 7: Van Bittner, Correspondence, and John L. Lewis, Correspondence

Box 8: Local Union Correspondence

Box 9: Local Union Correspondence

Box 10: Local Union Correspondence

Box 11: Assorted Correspondence and Ephemera collected by Elwood Maples

Box 12: Elwood Maples: Writings, Transcriptions, and Assorted Union and Mining Company Information

Box 13: Various UMWA materials collected by Elwood Maples

Box 14: *International Policy of the UMWA - March 1941 - Input and resolutions from local unions in District 17; Plus Scale Committee grievances and petitions from local unions*

Box 15: Assorted UMWA documents and related materials

Box 16: Assorted Correspondence and Photographs of Bill and William C. Blizzard

Box 17: Photographs of and by Bill and William C. Blizzard

Box 18: *The Felon*, a play by William C. Blizzard based on the life of Eugene V. Debs

Box 19: Notes on Coal-Mining Novel

Box 20: *West Virginia 100: Centennial edition of the Sunday Gazette-Mail.*

Box 21: Additional supplementary material

Box 22: Assorted Newspapers and publications

Box 23: Assorted Publications

Box 24: Connie West, artist

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