

PRESS RELEASE

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“Tales of migration, mining disputes, mine-fire tours, and moonshine.”

Devil’s Oven: The Fire in the Heart of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds

New Straitsville, located in the foothills of the Appalachians in Ohio’s Hocking Valley, is home to “Devil's Oven” – a still-burning century-old mine fire, set during a labor dispute in 1884.

The fire’s origin tells a deep and troubling story of an age when the mining of fossil fuels, a prevailing concept of progress, and corporate power overtook the human capacity to provide fair and decent wages and working conditions, to plan for a sustainable market and industry, and to consider the short or long term consequences to the environment from which the ore was being extracted.

The story is told through the voices of current residents and scholars from Ohio University, and narrated by Bob Singleton. Featured are tales of migration, mining disputes, mine fire tours and moonshine.

The documentary focuses on the social, economic, and environmental context to the daily lives of people living in the area, past and present, in a collection of townships now known as the Little Cities of Black Diamonds. These small towns sprang up practically overnight, fueled by the boom of the nation’s coal industry. The area’s economy busted within fifty years, leaving thousands to seek survival by any means possible.

The legacy of the “Boom – Bust” era of the Hocking Valley Coal Field is evident today in the scared hillsides, polluted streams, and dying villages. Residents are working together with local organizations to initiate environmental and economic recovery programs as well as efforts to preserve their history.

Produced by Valda Lewis, and funded in part by the Ohio Humanities Council and the George Gund Foundation.

The documentary is 52 minutes in length.

For more information visit www.devilsoventhemovie.com, or contact Valda Lewis at vlewis@goodwinvideo.com. Tel: (216) 834 2407.