Fred Mooney (Miner)
You were born in a log cabin in rural Kanawha County and went to work in the mines starting at age 13. During a strike in 1902 you joined the United Mine Workers of America and have been an active member since then. During the current strike, you have organized meetings and given speeches to encourage miners to join the union. You give fiery speeches about the evils of the coal bosses and the dignity of miners work saying “These men of wealth, ground their employees into profits in order that they might fare (eat) sumptuously and clothe their offspring in purple and fine linen… Each dollar… [they spent] represented anguish, pain, misery…the groans of overworked and underfed employees… and the whines of starving babies.” In 1912, you left your wife and family in the tent camp at Holly Grove, and took to the hills with Dan Chain and others launching guerilla attacks on the mine guards and company property by night and organizing the striking miners by day.

Frank Keeney (Miner)
You were born on Cabin Creek, the site of the current strike, and worked in the mines since age 9. You and your family (wife and 4 children) were thrown out of your homes when the strike started, and have been living in a tent at Holly Grove since then. You were instrumental in bringing Mother Jones and Socialist Party organizers to come help organize the miners after the union office in Charleston refused to help your strike because they had no money. Eventually, you were recognized by your fellow miners as a strike leader and you command the respect and admiration of most, and the hatred of the company bosses. You give inspiring speeches and the miners recognize that you have been in the mines with them. In one such speech you said, “I am a native West Virginia, and we don’t propose to get out of the way when a lot of capitalists from New York and London come down here and tell us to get off the earth. We don’t propose to be pushed off.”

Newt Gump (Miner)
You have worked in the mines since you were eleven years old. In May of last year, during the strike, you saw company guards throw the belongings of striking miners out of company housing while the miners attended a funeral at a church. When you and the miners left the funeral, you found all their furniture and belongings piled up beside the church door. Across the street mine guards had set up a machine gun that was pointed at the door of the church. This intimidation really made you angry, even though you were already on the side of the union. Soon after the event at the church, you moved with the evicted miners to the tent camp at Holly Grove. You were arrested the previous winter by the National Guard and sent to prison for five years by a military court for assaulting a strike-breaker, but were recently released by the governor.
E.S. Hurst (Miner)
You were born in the Appalachian mountains in western Virginia, but moved to Sharon on Cabin Creek 13 years ago, and have worked in the mines since. You do not mine coal, but you are a tracklayer, and get $2.75 per day in wages for nine hours of work, which is considered a good wage. Overall, you are quite happy with your job and wages. You think the mine guard system is the cause of the labor trouble. You described the mine guards this way, “Their duty is, so far as I know, simply watchmen over the company’s property and to enforce the law, and they make arrests and beat people up, and they do several things. They never have beaten me up, but they tried—they drawed a gun on me and made me get off the road, and I walked three steps and got on again.” You also witnessed a mine guard named Michaels shoot an African American miner named Miller who was just leaning against a light post with his hands in his pockets.

Dan Chain, alias “Few Clothes Johnson” (Miner)
You are a respected union miner, valued by all miners, especially African Americans like yourself. It is rumored that you may have served in the army, and were discharged after a member of your African American regiment was framed for murder in Texas, and you and your fellow soldiers refused to lie on behalf of the accusers. That is perhaps where you learned to use a gun. When the strike started you became part of the “dirty eleven” an elite group of miners who launched attacks on the mine guards and company property during the strike. However, at over 250 pounds, you are equally skilled at using your fists and frequently fight strike breakers that the company brings in. In one case you apparently single-handedly fought 50 strike breakers, all of whom eventually decided to board the train and leave town rather than fight you. In November 1912, you were tried by a military court and sentenced to prison for attacking strike breakers and sent to prison, but you were pardoned in January 1913. You then appeared in Charleston at the union headquarters still proudly wearing your prison outfit, and this stunt earned you the nickname “few clothes.”

Rocco Spinelli (Miner)
You came to the West Virginia from the southern Italian region of Calabria in 1905 and settled in Eskdale to work in the coal mines. Soon after you met and married your wife Nellie Bowles who had grown up on Cabin Creek. Though quite short, the scars on your face earned from numerous brawls tell people that you mean business. You and your wife were involved in the strike on Cabin Creek as soon as it started. In your native Italy labor unionism was strong and often quite radical. Being used to labor strikes from the old country, you and your wife were especially effective in convincing recent immigrants from Italy to join the strike (many of whom did not speak English). You also famously have convinced dozens of strike breakers brought in from Italy to quit their jobs and join the strikers and the union. Some of these strike breakers had no desire to work in the mines but were promised work and put on a train and sent to Cabin Creek. This past winter, you were arrested along with Newt Gump and Dan Chain (and your wife Nellie) for harassing strike breakers, although you were recently released from prison by the governor.
Bill Blizzard (Miner)
You were born on Cabin Creek to a family of immigrants from Ireland. When you were young, your family was evicted from company housing in Fayette County, so your mother Sarah Blizzard, decided to move the family to a house in Eskdale, which was a “free” town because the company did not own it. You began working in the mines at age 10, and as a teenager became active in the union movement. You and your family housed many evicted union miners in tents on your family’s property. You are respected by many miners, although some think you are too “hot-headed” at times, your dedication to the union is beyond a doubt.

Lawrence “Peggy” Dwyer (Union Organizer)
You are a militant UMWA organizer. You have been jailed many times for speaking out against company abuses and trying to get miners to join the union. Well known since you have worked in the area for a long time, you are also immediately recognizable because of the wooden peg you wear in place of your left leg that you lost working in the mines. While radical and dedicated to the union, you have a cool head and often hold positions of responsibility in the union and are a friend of Mother Jones.

George H. Edmunds (Union Organizer)
You are the UMWA’s most skilled African American organizer. You have travelled across the country to speak to and help organize miners across the Midwest, the Deep South, and West Virginia. You are especially gifted at speaking to strike breakers brought in from the South and encouraging them to join the union and the strike. You are equally dedicated both to the union and to the rights for African Americans, and believe that the success of both are critical in improving race relations. Your decision to encourage African Americans to join mostly white labor unions, puts you at odds with some important leaders like Booker T. Washington.

Maud Estep (Wife of a Miner)
You, your husband, a miner named Francisco Francesco “Cesco” Estep and your young son were evicted from company housing when he joined the strike in 1912. Before this you had already lost two children as infants probably due to the unsanitary conditions and poor wages. After living with friends you and Cesco found a cabin near Holly Grove to rent, and you invited strikers to pitch tents in your yard. On February 7th you were sitting in your front room with Cesco and several friends when bullets came crashing through the cabin walls. You quickly realized it was the “Bull Moose Special” an armored train that the company used to bring in strike breakers. When the shooting started you rushed to the cellar. After the shooting stopped, you crept out of the cellar with a lantern and found your husband dead on the living room floor.
Ralph Chaplin (Union Organizer)
You were born in Kansas in 1887, at the age of seven you saw a railroad striker in Chicago killed, and that event had a big influence on your life. As a writer and artist you traveled widely including to Mexico where you saw the events of the Mexican Revolution. You then became part of a union organizing committee led by Mother Jones, which brought you to West Virginia. During the strike you have been constantly impressed by the community the striking miners shared. You have also been inspired by other miners in neighboring Fayette county who already have a union who have come to help the miners on Paint Creek and Cabin Creek with supplies, and sometimes to help fight mine guards.

Eugene V. Debs (Union Organizer)
You were born in Indiana in 1855. Although you come from a wealthy family of recent immigrants from France, you dropped out of school at age 14 to work on the railroad. You soon joined the railroad workers union and played an important role in a national railroad strike. The President declared that strike illegal, and because of your leadership role in it, you were sentenced to federal prison. During your time in jail you read about socialism, and became interested in socialist politics. After prison, you went on to found the Socialist Party, and ran for President four times, most recently in 1912 when you received 6% of the national vote. You are an inspiring speaker, and people travel from far away to hear you speak. As the leader of the Socialist Party, your support was crucial in the early days of the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike when the UMWA was not ready to support Keeney and other union radicals. However, you now have met with Governor Hatfield and some think you might support ending the strike and accepting the “Hatfield Contract.”

Mary Harris “Mother Jones” (Union Organizer)
You were born in Ireland in 1837, as a teenager your family left Ireland due to famine and moved first to Canada, then to the United States. Eventually you moved to Memphis, Tennessee where you married a union ironworker named George Jones in 1861. Tragically, a yellow fever outbreak in Memphis killed your husband and your four young children. You then moved as a widow to Chicago and opened a dressmaking business, but this burned to the ground in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. After this you dedicated your life entirely to helping organize workers in unions, and for the Socialist Party. In 1902 you made your first trip to West Virginia to help organize the United Mine Workers of America during a strike. Your charismatic speeches that often quote the Bible in one breath and swore like a sailor the next made you famous, and led to you being called “the most dangerous woman in America.” You formed many bonds during your early work in West Virginia, and when the Paint Creek Strike broke out in 1912, you left your organizing work in California and came to West Virginia to help. You famously show special concern for working with the UMWA because it is one union organization that does not discriminate against African Americans, and usually tries to avoid racial divisions. In February, you were arrested, court marshaled, and held under house arrest in a boarding house in Pratt, Kanawha County.
Thomas Cairns (Union Organizer)
You are the President of District 17 of the UMWA (the area that includes Southern West Virginia) and the striking miners at Paint Creek and Cabin Creek. You have been mostly conservative in your approach to organizing the coalfields. Some say this is because you are too friendly with the coal operators since you live and work in Charleston. Others believe it is because you are afraid of the kind of bloodshed seen during the current strike, and have lost many good union organizers because the owners and mine guards have almost total power.
When governor Hatfield summoned you to a meeting to end the strike, he gave you an ultimatum to accept the “Hatfield Contract” or go to prison along with the entire membership of the union. With this threat you agreed to his demands, though some think it is because you still are being too conservative.

Cleve Woodrum (Miner)
You were born in Kanawha County in 1884. When the strike started, you were living in a house near Cabin Creek with your wife Laura and your five children. One evening, during the fall, when the governor had declared martial law, your wife was pregnant and when the doctor arrived to deliver the baby it was already dark. Because of the martial law decree, all the lights were supposed to be out. Mine guards arrived and told you to turn out the light, when you explained that your wife was giving birth and refused to turn out the light, they shot the light out and your baby was delivered in total darkness. Because of this and other affronts, you have a real resentment of the mine guards.

Giacomo Alicata* (Miner)
You were born in Southern Italy, and as a boy worked in the sulfur mines there. While in Italy, you were part of a radical union movement that was sweeping the country at the time. After being refused work in Italy, you came to Boomer in Fayette county. In 1908 you were one of the large group of Italian miners who during a strike marched through Fayette County singing Italian radical songs and carry a red and black flag with the words “Victoria o morte” (Victory or Death). You have organized the Italian miners in Fayette county to help smuggle supplies and weapons into Cabin and Paint Creek, and sometimes join in fighting. During one of these missions to Kanawha county, your friend Donato DiPietro was killed.

A.D. Lavinder (Miner)
You are a middle-aged miner from Mount Carbon who came to Paint Creek to help organize for the union and the Socialist Party. You say that you feel that capitalism is “on the way out” and convinced a lot of miners to join the union with this idea. In addition to the unfairness of the company town system and the poor work conditions, you also don’t like how the development of coal has caused much of West Virginia’s forests to be cut down. You want the government to work on a plan to plant new trees to “make West Virginia a more beautiful place to live.”
Lazlo Solyom* (Miner)
You were born in the Hungarian town of Pecs in 1888, where your family were also coal miners. With the promise of better wages, you came to West Virginia in 1908, where you ended up in Holden. However, you were unable to leave because you could not pay back the debt you owed for your ticket to America. After several difficult years, you finally raised the money and sent for your wife to come join you in America and you moved to Paint Creek. You were not very political before the strike began, hoping simply to make enough money for your wife and children, but you do dislike the mine guard system especially, and find it very difficult to make enough money to save for the future.

Rimantas Stankevichius* (Miner)
You were born in a small village in Lithuania in 1886. In 1904 you left your village because you were about to be drafted into the Russian Army. When you reached the capital of Vilnius, you were recruited by an agent looking for workers to come to the mines in southern West Virginia. You arrived along with another group of strike breakers in Fayette county. But since then you moved to Paint Creek and have been working in the mines there for the past several years. You now have a good command of English and have helped translate for union organizers although you are not overly political you support the ideas of the union for the most part.

Nellie Bowles Spinelli (Wife of a Miner)
You were born and raised on Cabin Creek. In 1905 you met a miner from Italy named Rocco Spinelli, fell in love and were married that year. You and your husband have played a key role in the strike, reaching out especially to Italian miners and incoming strike breakers from Italy. In one instance you met a group of around fifty Italian strike breakers who had been brought to Paint Creek with the promise of easy work as a time keeper. They did not know they were expected to mine coal. You organized this group to travel to the middle of Charleston near the capitol building and set up camp there. This became a sensation in the newspapers and caused much public opinion to turn against the coal companies. In the previous fall, you were sentenced to one year in prison for harassing strike breakers, but were pardoned a few months ago.
Sarah “Mother” Blizzard (Wife of a Miner)
You were born in Edmond, Fayette County in 1864. Your husband, Timothy, worked in the mines, and you both were active in the union movement. In 1902 you were evicted from your home for your family’s activism. You then moved to Cabin Creek and insisted that your husband buy a house so that you could not be evicted again, which you did in the “free” (non-company town) of Eskdale. When the strike broke out, you allowed many families to camp on your property after they were evicted, and you are a vital organizer of strikers, especially women. You recognize that women have a vital role in the strike because they are tasked with making sure everyone is fed by gathering wild plants and planting secret gardens in the mountains. You also organized, along with Mother Jones, an “umbrella march” when pro-union women marched through the valley with umbrellas. Allegedly you even hit a policeman with yours. After the company started using the “Bull Moose Special” armored train to attack the camp at Holly Grove at night, you led a group of women out to the railroad line and pulled up the tracks so they train could not return.

Thomas Felts (Mine Guard)
You were born in 1868 in Galax, Virginia. You were a lawyer until 1900 when you moved to Charleston to serve as legal advisor to the Baldwin Detective Agency, which mostly investigated railroad robberies, and provided security to trains. On one of your first assignments you were shot in the chest by an escaped murderer in McDowell County. By 1910, you became co-partner to the firm and it changed its name to the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. In 1912, your firm was hired by the coal operators on Cabin Creek to carry out evictions, protect strike breakers, and (unofficially) threaten striking miners and force them to give up the strike. You sent 150 of your detectives to carry out the work. However, the brutality of your detectives was already well known, and the miners had secretly armed themselves. After they were evicted and living at Holly Grove, the miners launched frequent attacks on your detectives and have killed several so far. When the miners first attacked a heavily guarded building in Mucklow in the first weeks of the strike, you retaliated by setting up machine guns at important points and creating heavily armed patrols to search the woods for armed miners. This has earned you the hatred of many miners.

Ernest “Tony” Gaujot (Mine Guard)
You are from Mercer County, but after the Spanish-American War (1898) you were part of occupying army in the Phillipines, serving as a sergeant. During the occupation, you fought against Filipino nationalists who wanted independence from the US, in a bloody guerilla war. You were the commander of the Bladwin-Felts detectives on Cabin Creek, and have evicted many miners and their families. As the commander of the mine guards you are hated by most of the miners, and have had frequent complaints made against you that you threatened people simply because you are powerful. This tough reputation however, makes you an important part of the company plans to force the striking miners out of Holly Grove and back into the mines.
Lee Calvin (Mine Guard)
You had previously worked as a Baldwin Felts detective, bringing strike breakers via train up Cabin Creek. However, one night you refused an order to “shoot anyone that moves,” and were then fired. One evening mine bosses and the Kanawha County Sheriff, Bonner Hill, recruited you for work. They had specially equipped a train with armor and a machine gun, and nicknamed it the “Bull Moose Special.” The train was meant to bring in strike breakers, but that evening it was full only of Baldwin Felts Detectives and other hired guards. As the train approached Holly Grove, the detectives started passing out rifles. As it passed Holly Grove, the lights were dimmed several detectives opened fire with rifles and the machine gun. After you passed, the train came under fire too, and you heard Quinn Morton yelling to tell the engineer to back up and fire on Holly Grove again. However, the sheriff ordered the train to keep moving. You refused to take part in this and are extremely angry at Morton for what he did.

Captain Guy Levy (Mine Guard)
You are an officer in the National Guard from Charleston, and were sent in by the governor last year to establish order. After the Governor withdrew the National Guard you, like many of your fellow National Guardsmen, were hired on as “watchmen.” You were put in charge of the watchmen at Mucklow employed by mine owner Quinn Morton. You and your men have created a fortress at Mucklow complete with watch towers and machine guns, yet you still face constant attack from the miners, especially in spring and summer when the leaves are on the trees. On one instance Morton was at the fortress at Mucklow when striking miners shot down on the fort from the surrounding hills. Morton angrily sent you out to find the men responsible. You and your patrol then encountered over seventy armed miners on the ridge above you and you quickly retreated.

Bonner Hill (Politician)
You are the Sheriff of Kanawha county, and are well respected in the business community and also with the progressive politicians like Governor Hatfield. You also are charged with keeping order in the county, and the strike and violence on Paint Creek has been a big challenge for you. You, and your friends are very frustrated with your inability to restore order. One day when coal company owner Quinn Morton told his workers in Mucklow were under attack by striking miners, you agreed to call in the “Bull Moose Special” an armored train from Huntington to deliver reinforcements. There is much uncertainty about how much you knew, but the train fired on the tent colony of striking miners at Holly Grove one evening in February. Some say because it was fired on first, others say it was because you and Morton wanted to break the strike. However, after the train attacked Holly Grove, and Quinn Morton wanted the train to back up and attack again, you ordered the train to continue onward.
Fred Michaels (Mine Guard)
You were born in Bluefield in 1890 and recently got work with the Baldwin-Felts Detective agency as a detective. You escort strike breakers, and stand guard outside company property. You also have evicted the families of striking miners from their homes. You are recognized by many miners on Paint Creek as being quite ruthless and rough, and often have insults and sometimes even rocks thrown at you. One day during the strike, you got off a train in Eskdale with Major Payne, a Baldwin Felts detective. You claim that while you were standing there someone threw an iron bolt and hit you in the head and so you shot the person responsible. However, witnesses say that they did not see anyone throw anything at you and the man you shot and killed was an African American man minding his own business with his hands in his pockets. Only a last minute intervention by a pro-union sheriff kept you from being attacked by angry miners. However, once arrested you were released and have yet to be summoned to court.

Quinn Morton (Owner)
You are the owner of several mines on Cabin Creek and the President of the Cabin Creek Coal Operators Association. You have taken a very hard line against the strikers and the union. Your resolve against the strikers was in part influenced by the fact that during earlier this year you were in the mine guard fort at Mucklow when it came under fire from dozens of miners hiding in the hills. On February 7, you were in Charleston when you got a call from Mucklow that said the town was being “shot up” by strikers and there were only six men defending it without rifles. You spoke with sheriff Bonner Hill and both agreed that something needed to be done. The sheriff said he called the railway office in Huntington and requested a special armored train nicknamed the “Bull Moose Special” to take up to help protect Mucklow. You then bought 30 rifles and organized a group of around a dozen mine guards to go with you and the sheriff. Then you claim that as the train approached Holly Grove you saw a large group of women and children outside the camp, and assumed there would be trouble because the miners had sent them away. As you passed the camp you claim the train came under fire, and that your men, including the machine gun, fired back. However, you deny the claim of Lee Calvin that you told the engineer to reverse and make a second attack.
Blanka Solyom* (Wife of a Miner)
You were born in a small village in Hungary in 1890 and married Lazlo Solyom in 1906. After just two months of marriage, Lazlo left for the US to find work with the hopes of either returning with enough money to start a family, or with enough money to pay for you to join him in America. Things were very difficult for the first years he was in America because he made almost no money in the coal mines as most of his wages went to repay his debt for his trip to America. However, eventually in 1908 he sent money for you to come to join him. You then moved to Cabin Creek, making the entire journey across the ocean on your own, and navigating the trains from New York City to Cabin Creek although you spoke almost no English. Since then you have learned some English, but continue to teach your children Hungarian as well as the traditions of your homeland. The strike has been very hard on you, because like the other strikers you were evicted from your company owned house. While your husband joins the men in meetings and on pickets, you have to keep your little tent clean, and your three children fed on the small amount of supplies you receive from the union. Like most of the other women, you also have a secret garden hidden up in the mountains to help keep your family fed, and the local women from Cabin Creek have shown you and the other Hungarian women where to find wild plants to collect to feed your families. One of these women “Mother Blizzard” organized a group of you to go out and tear up the railroad tracks after the armored train, called the “Bull Moose Special” attacked Holly Grove, and you joined them enthusiastically because you saw it as the only way to protect your children from being shot in the night.

Maria Gorofalo* (Wife of a Miner)
You were born in southern Italy in 1880 and came to the US with your husband in 1908. He had worked in the sulfur mines, but wages were low so you left with your four children and moved to America. He soon found work on Paint Creek in the coal mines. Life has not been easy for you here either however. Wages are too low to fully support your family and you have kept a secret garden and learned where to gather wild plants to feed your large family. When the strike happened, your husband joined with most of the other Italian miners after hearing a speech from Rocco Spinelli that encouraged them to join the union and the strike. Since the strike you were evicted from your home and have been living with your family of 6 in a single tent in Holly Grove. It has been very difficult keeping everyone fed, even with support from the union and your garden in the mountains. This past winter, one of your children, Giuseppe, got sick and died. You believe this was because of the lack of good food and warm shelter, and many other mothers have faced a similar fate of burying a child, although thankfully, none of them from violence. You think it was a miracle that you and your family survived the attack by the armored train called the “Bull Moose Special” unscathed.
Heather Lester (Wife of a Miner)
You were born in 1892 and grew up in a coal camp in Fayette County, although your grandparents had a cabin and small farm not far from Cabin Creek. It was while visiting them several years ago that you went to a dance in Eskdale that you met Sam a miner on Cabin Creek who you married in 1911. You have been living in Cabin Creek since then and trying to take care of your overworked husband and your new baby. It has been even more difficult since the strike started and you were evicted from your house. After moving to Holly Grove you have been living in a tent in Mother Blizzard’s yard along with dozens of other striking miners and their families. Since your family is small, you manage fairly well on the supplies from the union, but you worry that your baby is not getting enough milk and the cold has caused him to be a fairly sickly child. At first you were upset that your husband went on strike with the union, but after you saw your neighbor Anne thrown out of her house and roughed up by mine guards you have changed your mind. Since then you have become one of the ringleaders with Mother Blizzard in gathering up camp women to tear up the railroad tracks and keep the armored train called the “Bull Moose Special” out of the hollow. You also have organized, along with your friend Nellie Spinelli, a group of women to go to the train station in Mucklow and meet trains of strike breakers and threaten and insult them to tell them to go home or join the strike. You’ve had some success, but since Nellie was arrested for doing this, you’ve become worried of what would happen to your children if you got arrested too.

Juraj Jakubisko* (Miner)
You were born in Slovakia in 1885 and worked in a coal mine from age 13. You came to the US in 1902 and worked for several years in mines in Fayette County. That is where you met your wife Daniela in a coal camp near Mount Hope. Her family was also from Slovakia. After you were married, you moved in search of work several times eventually ending up on Paint Creek in 1910. When the strike started, you were not eager to join, but the union eventually sent an organizer who was also Slovakian and could speak to you and the other Slovakian miners. He explained the need for a union to protect their safety, get a fair wage, and end the mine guard system. You were especially enthusiastic about ending the mine guard system, because you do not like the way you have to get out of there way when you walk down the street, and they sometimes harass you just because of your accent or because they are bored. When you joined the strike, you and your family were evicted and forced to move to the tent colony at Holly Grove where, unlike in the coal camps, your family lives side by side with miners from West Virginia, Italy, and African Americans from the South.
Daniela Jakubisko* (Wife of a Miner)
You were born in Slovakia in 1890, but came to the US with your parents as a child in 1902. Your family came to the coal camps around Mount Hope in Fayette County, where there were many other Slovakian families. You therefore grew up speaking very little English for your first years in America, and even still sometimes struggle to understand what others are saying. After you met Juraj, a Slovakian miner, and married him you moved to Paint Creek. Here, you often miss the tight knit Slovakian community you grew up in. However, since the strike started and you were evicted and forced to live in a tent in Holly Grove, you have been slowly making friends with people from many other places. They have been a great help in making sure you know where to gather wild plants and how to cook them to make sure your children are fed. They even sometimes share their supplies with you and your children. You feel the strike has been hardest on the children and you worry constantly about their health, but you also worry about Juraj’s safety when he goes to picket or do other union work since several miners have been killed. However, since the Bull Moose Special fired on Holly Grove, you have come to despise the company and especially the mine guards and their cruelty.

Wesley Evans* (Miner)
You were born in rural Alabama in 1880 to parents who were former slaves. Your parents were sharecroppers, which meant they did not own the land they farmed, but paid rent on it by giving a share of the cotton crop they raised each year to the owner. However, every year, due to rising prices of seed, supplies, and food at the local store (that was owned by your parents’ landlord) they fell deeper and deeper into debt. In order to help your struggling parents you and your brother Frank left Alabama in 1900 after a traveling preacher recruited you to move to West Virginia to work in the mines. Upon arrival in Paint Creek, you found yourself living in a racially segregated town, but you found that underground there was no segregation so you and your brother quickly made friends with miners from West Virginia, Italy, and Hungary. After several years in the camp, you met and married Sarah whose family was from the area. Five years ago, your brother was killed in the mines when a poorly supported roof collapsed on him. When the strike started, you were hesitant to join since your parents relied only on you to survive since your brother died. However, when the union sent in an African American organizer who talked about how ending racial discrimination started by gaining a fair wage and safe working conditions you agreed to join the strike, and were evicted with your family. You have been living in a tent in Holly Grove for a year now with your wife Eliza and two children. You often go to the station to meet strike breakers and if they are from Alabama try and use your connection to encourage them to leave or join the strike. If that doesn’t work, you sometimes use your fists to encourage them.
Eliza Evans* (Wife of a Miner)
You were born in Malden in Kanawha county in 1893. Your father had worked in the salt works and eventually the coal mines that powered them, and he even knew the famous Booker T. Washington as a boy. In 1910 you met Wesley and were married that year. When the strike started you were mistrustful that he should join since you would have to move out of your house into a tent. However, after hearing an African American organizer, Wesley was insistent. Since then you have been living in a tent trying to care for your small children. While initially you did not support the strike, after the mine guards killed your friend Sarah’s husband, you have grown to hate the mine guards and have worked hard to support the other women like Sarah who have lost family members to the violence and disease in Holly Grove.