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### Oral History Interview: Jim Choknacki

Jim Choknacki

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**JIM CHOJNACKI**  
**June 28, 1988**  
**D.O.E. Public Hearing on Strip Mining**  
**Lincoln County, West Virginia**

Mr. Chojnacki, a sheep farmer in Lincoln County, gives a very brief opinion on strip mining in Lincoln County. He states his views on the poverty that will be faced should this practice continue, how the West will be having great difficulty in obtaining enough water, due to the pollution caused by herbicides, pesticides and nitrates of our water system, and how the influx of "new" money coming in from such practices will force natives to other areas and those left behind will be left to live in poverty.

WEST VIRGINIA STRIP MINING

WVSM - 24

PUBLIC HEARING CONDUCTED BY WV DEPT. OF ENERGY

JUNE 28, 1988

STATEMENT BY: JIM CHOJNACKI

and Mountain Black Diamond Coal Company to strip mine at Six Mile Creek in Lincoln County on June 28, 1988.

Statement by Jim Chojnakci:

My name is Jim Chojnacki, and uh, I raise sheep. Okay, we Lincoln Countians will consider how our actions today will affect our future. I believe we are being tested. Basically, our choice is this. If we patiently accept our poverty of today, we will be rewarded with prosperity for our children. If we impatiently and greedily choose prosperity for ourselves now, we will be punished by witnessing our children in poverty. So, it gives me hope for our children. It is by simply looking at a well-known social fact, in several years, the largest segment of American population will be nearing retirement age. This generation, known as the post World War II baby boom will go seeking a quiet, secluded and safe place to spend their retirement years, and retirement money. The northern states are too cold, North Carolina southward to travel. The west will be having great difficulty in obtaining enough water. Agricultural states will be polluted with herbicides, pesticides and nitrates. And industrial states are what these booms will be vacating. That leaves West Virginia, and particularly Lincoln County, with it's forested hollows and ridges. This influx of new money will radically alter our county; economically and socially. There is no doubt in my mind Lincoln County will be the envy of our nation. But strip our county now, bring in garbage dumps and toxic industries, and sell off our forests to Ohio and Japan, and we will be leaving this beautiful land locked in poverty forever. Thank you.