



Members of the Brookside Women's Club. Harlan County women visited the Brookside mine when as many as 60 strikebreakers were crossing the picket line and persuaded them to stay home. It was the first turning point in the strike. Lois Scott is second from left.

Photo: United Mine Workers Journal (Earl Dotter)

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It was still dark that cool morning in early August 1974 when the pickets began to gather in front of Mac's Grocery Store in Evarts. People were standing around in small clusters drinking coffee and stamping their feet, trying to shake off sleep and the morning chill. Lois Scott and Crystal Ferguson of the Brookside Women's Club and Bob Davis, a leader of the striking miners at Eastover-Duke's Highsplint Mine, were moving through the growing number of people, taking care of last minute details of organizing that morning's picket line.

I wondered why nobody said anything about the strike at Highsplint or Brookside. But the people there had lived it for so long, they didn't have to. Some of them were kind of joking around about how this or that scab had been spanked by the women, or about other events that had been taking place that week. But otherwise they seemed to be just taking it for granted that they were going to outlast Eastover-Duke and win the strike. I don't think I had that absolute optimism at first myself, but I became more convinced during my stay.

While we were waiting for the other people to arrive, I asked one of the Brookside miners why they had decided to picket Highsplint. He told me how the mine at Brookside had been shut down since late February, but that Eastover was still taking coal out of the Highsplint mine. The same company owns both mines.