

Carsel Blanton wrote the song 'Four Mile Explosion' soon after the explosion occurred. The story goes that he was coming from Wallins Creek in Harlan County, where he grew up, traveling by train. It may have been the day of the mine accident or the day after. The train stopped in Pineville and there was much consternation over what had happened. The people of the town were so grieved and devastated and this affected him very deeply. There was apparently a layover of several hours of the train in Pineville. After the train proceeded on its journey toward Barbourville and Corbin, he began to write his song; that I believe God put upon his heart. What he wrote that day, he said he wrote between Pineville and Barbourville. According to Mr. Blanton's eldest daughter, he would go to his father-in-law's home each evening - after his arrival back home - and listen to news of the mining disaster on their battery-operated radio. Afterwards, he would go back home and add more verses to the song until it was apparently completed on January 6, 1946; it was also the day the six surviving miners were released from the hospital in Pineville. It was a time of great sorrow for the people of Pineville and Mr. Blanton, who was a Pentecostal Preacher, spent many hours on his knees praying for the miners and their families and loved ones.

He never recorded the song he wrote, even though he sang it often over the years. His Son, David R and wife, Goldie H Blanton, recorded the song on an album at a later date.

Can you imagine how we felt when we saw recently, on the Four Mile Mine Site that a Mr. Bob Hensley of London was listed as the one who wrote or was claiming our daddy's song - we would love to know who he is and why the site shows him as being the owner of the song. I am enclosing a copy of a picture of the monument that Carsel's grandson did in his memory - with the words to the song on it; and, also, a picture of Carsel Blanton, his wife and 8 of their 12 children; the youngest of which did not survive. This photo was made around the time of the mining accident and shows how Mr. Blanton looked at that time. He was born at Wallins Creek in Harlan County where he married and raised his family and lived all of his life. He passed away in September of 1997 at the age of 87, after having been married to the former Doxie Brock Blanton for 64 years.

The above letter was received from a daughter of Mr. Blanton who had found our internet website version which was first put together from taped recordings which were produced locally during the time of the explosion. When someone comes forward with questions, suggestions or related material, we gladly update our records accordingly. Therefore, when Irene approached us, a lovely daughter of the writer, it started a search that has resulted in locating "Rick" who happened to find a long-play album with the song as well as a story and photo of the singers. With their permission, we are including a picture of the cover (front & reverse) of the album and the song as recorded thereon. I recently had the honor of having the song played on the local radio station. It was dedicated to me and the other relatives of miners who were involved in the disaster!!! We apologize to any persons involved and/or living relative for any inconvenience this may have caused as well as appreciate those whose efforts have helped in placing this song in its proper historical and factual place. It may be well to note that this song may have been written because Mr. Blanton was a passenger on the L&N Railroad train that was halted in Pineville during the explosion while authorities were ensuring that it was safe to continue thru Fourmile. He heard many rumors and learned much of what had happened that when his journey to Rockcastle County was permitted to continue, he began penning the song.. It appears that God Himself may have put the words to the song upon his heart as he could not rest until it was completed; and to the family's knowledge, this was the only song he ever wrote. Later, with his son's help, music was added and so the song was recorded and somehow made it's way to our radio station and became an instant hit locally. A grandson has etched the words to the song on a

stone monument, in honor of his grandfather, who passed away in 1997. This monument stands behind the Blanton home, where Mrs. Blanton still resides; a photocopy of which is attached.