

tiny person standing far away.

The guards carried Winchester rifles. At a signal they started walking at a fast pace toward Franklin. The Green River was 200 feet from the road, and the men could look down and see the water. The cliff was steep, going down into great depths. When they crossed Section Eight, they stopped and rested.

A winding switchback wound up into Franklin. The men sang as they walked on and looked down on Franklin. There were the houses, stores, and schoolhouse. They seemed to cling to the places on the land, their houses dotting the flat land in the low town. Long flights of stairs climbed all the way up the face of the cliff. The men reached the bridge, regrouped, and went on toward the unseen whites. Several houses were passed with no sign of people. At a fence corner half a dozen men were gathered. They stared silently and sullenly at the black invaders. Some of them jeered. One man whispered but didn't turn his head from the armed Negroes. "They're armed to the teeth." Several kids climbed the tallest trees, and covered by the foliage, they watched the line of colored men march, then turn to the right, and begin the ascent of the mountain. A dog barked, breaking the silence; his master stared from the doorway. From a hill overlooking the upper town, a crowd of perhaps a dozen men looked down on the scene. Anger won out in the form of words. "Look at the nigger slaves." The words received only a laugh. The Negroes marched up the hill toward the store. They sang as they marched, "I'm Going Through." The hill was so steep they needed all of their breath for climbing, and the music stopped. The entrance had been made without violence. To keep the peace between the two races, guards stood watch along the newly raised fences. The whites were told not to leave the road running through the town. Newly strung barbed wire ran along the path leading to the school, making the play ground off limits to the miners, who used the level area as a meeting place. The whites and blacks alike agreed the hundred white and fifty black guards kept the peace.

The newspaper wrote: "The darkies in terror of Indians. Women jeer at the immigrants as the colored host march from the train to the mines. So be it on Sunday, May 17, 1891. Armed fence between races at Franklin, Washington."

The store in Franklin was made available to the men. Mattresses were laid down on the floor so there would be a place for the women and children to sleep when they arrived in the evening. The engine room had more mattress space, and some empty houses were made available.

The women changed trains in Seattle from the Northern Pacific to the Columbia Puget Sound Railroad that was owned by the coal company, The Oregon-Washington Improvement Company. The train came through Renton, Maple Valley, Black Diamond, and to

Franklin, Washington. They had to pull their shades down when they came to Black Diamond because rocks were thrown at the windows.

On May 17, 1891 seven hundred Negroes arrived in Franklin, Washington with two ministers, about forty single women, and miner's families.

The next day a large food kitchen was built to feed all of the people. White children could not go to school because of the eight foot fence laid from the store up to the woods.

On Monday, May 18, 1891 the white miners were quiet and sober, thought the saloons were open said the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Committees from all the coal towns in King County conferred with Seattle Central Labor Union. In a special report it was said, "The Negroes have already taken possession in earnest of the work of mining coal at Franklin. They began work this morning without any interference from any person. More men will be gradually put to work until all are employed. Peace was undisturbed, and the conflict was confined to an occasional hard word. Those not yet working were occupied with building shanties for themselves. They seemed to have come to stay, though the locked-out men hoped that they would wander away until none were left. They did not interfere with the whites at all and kept within the lines drawn for them, but their leaders sought by persuasion to turn their hearts. Yet the more angry men could not avoid 'tackling' the guards and telling them what they thought of them.

"The headquarters of the Negroes are at the old slope. On one side a long building of rough boards has been erected with open side and rough tables and benches. This is the eating house, and it is in charge of a white-capped Negro cook and a force of waiters and other attendants. From an early hour this morning, the Negroes were pouring into this building where they were plainly but bountifully fed. Their principal sleeping quarters were in the engine house. The floor was covered with beds all around the big engine in double rows. Here some of them had been up late 'shooting' craps and playing poker; they slept late that morning. They also were crowded into some of the vacant houses when they arrived, and several joined in putting up a board cabin on the hillside.

"The most bitter complaint of the white miners was in regard to the building of a barbed wire fence in front of the schoolhouse, leaving only a narrow alley by which the building could be reached and prevented the children from passing directly from the door to the playground. It was designed to prevent crowds from assembling on the playground, which was the largest level space in the upper town. The miners claimed that this action was illegal, as the ground was donated by the company for that purpose, and with that understanding was cleared and graded by the miners themselves. The