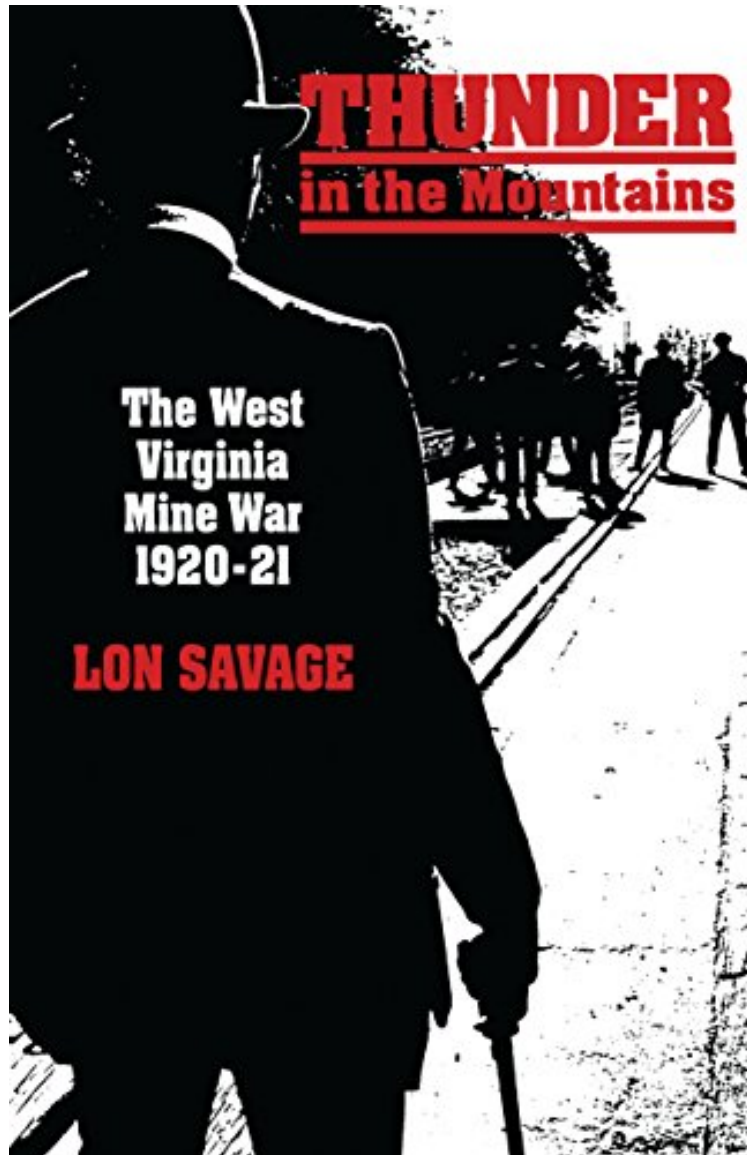


(Download) Thunder In the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920ndash;21

## Thunder In the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920ndash;21

*Lon Savage*

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**Lon Savage : Thunder In the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920ndash;21** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thunder In the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920ndash;21:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating piece of historyBy AletheuoThis was not a piece of history that I was familiar with until I had read the book. It is a fascinating historical event about the coal miners union

going to "war" with the middle class and the coal companies. Both sides had reputations for corruption and dastardly deeds. However, the murder of Sid Hatfield and a friend of his, set off a domino effect that ended up with over 10,000 (maybe up to 20,000) men going to war with each other in West Virginia. Ultimately the U.S. Military was called in to settle the affair and it ended, but not until a major firefight occurred at Blair mountain. Many of the men involved had served in the U.S. Army in WWI and some said that they had never experienced bullets flying in the quantity that they did for one particular day at Blair mountain. Savage is an excellent writer. I read this book in a few hours. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Thunder in the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920-21 By Frank E Jordan What do you think when you hear the term "red neck"? If you're like most people, you associate being a red neck with hicks and mountain folks (or Jeff Foxworthy). Were I to tell you it is a term of honor in the Southern West Virginia, Virginia and Kentucky coal fields you might not understand why. Coal shaped the development of West Virginia, and "absentee land lords" were determined to keep the UMW (union) out of the fields surrounding Matewan (the scene of much of the Hatfield-McCoy feuding on the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River). Meet "Two-gun" Sid Hatfield (my mother's uncle) who is the "somewhat" good guy in this true story. Meet the "bad guys," the hated Baldwin-Felts Mine Guards. Learn about the murders of innocent men and women, and the dropping of bombs by airplanes (a first in American history). Have you seen the movie "Matewan"? The shootout that has become "The Matewan Massacre" is portrayed in this book as is the Baldwin-Felts' revenge against Hatfield: his outright murder on the steps of the courthouse in Welch, West Virginia for which no one was ever indicted or prosecuted. Sid's murder was seen as the spark that caused the Mine War, yet there were other reasons too, most of which have been ignored by historians. You've heard of Mother Jones of course. Did you know this was her high water mark as a union organizer? Lon Savage explains how a lie she told miners entirely destroyed her credibility at least in the West Virginia coalfields that gave her most of her notoriety. Why has such an incredible story like this one been so overlooked? Thousands of pages could be written about the climactic Battle of Blair Mountain itself, yet there are few at all outside Logan, Mingo and Welch Counties who ever heard the story. Richmond, Virginia journalist Lon Savage meticulously researched all 167 pages complete with citations and first person accounts of the savagery. His concise reporting is offered with an eye to dramatic narrative (without taking sides). This is a short book packed with information. This is a history not only of the Red Necks, but of the rank and file miners who struggled to make a living underground. But their struggle was not just underground; it was above ground, against powerful politicians, tycoons, and spies. At any moment a union miner's family could be thrown into the streets. Hundred struggled throughout the cold winter to live in tents while being shot at by the thugs who used machine guns! Yet the story is not so black and white good vs. evil; there is fault enough on both sides of this war. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to know the history of the mining industry and the rise of unionism in West Virginia. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Martial law against labor By James D. Crabtree This book looks at the short conflict which took place in southwest West Virginia when violence escalated, first when private detectives in the pay of the coal companies got into a gunfight with locals in Matewan when the detectives came out to evict the families of miners trying to unionize. and then exploding when the local pro-labor constable, Sid Hatfield, was shot down on the steps of the courthouse in Welch by detectives in broad daylight as he was about to go to trial. The detectives were freed on bail. The situation rapidly spun out of control as miners collected their rifles and pistols and decided to march to free other miners being held on murder charges related to the Matewan incident. It became clear that state police could not stop the men and there was no National Guard in West Virginia at the time, so federal troops were brought in to restore order or, if necessary, fight the miners. General Mitchell sent fighters and bombers to suppress the uprising. The United States appeared to be on the verge of another civil war. This is an amazing story, one I was only vaguely familiar with. Mr. Savage has written a great book on this topic, bringing several of the characters to life discussing the political and social issues involved in coal mining in the 1920s. His book is detailed without getting bogged down in details. If you only want to read one book on this topic then this should be the one. Includes black and white photos.

The West Virginia mine war of 1920-21, a major civil insurrection of unusual brutality on both sides, even by the standards of the coal fields, involved thousands of union and nonunion miners, state and private police, militia, and federal troops. Before it was over, three West Virginia counties were in open rebellion, much of the state was under military rule, and bombers of the U.S. Army Air Corps had been dispatched against striking miners. The origins of this civil war were in the Draconian rule of the coal companies over the fiercely proud miners of Appalachia. It began in the small railroad town of Matewan when Mayor C. C. Testerman and Police Chief Sid Hatfield sided with striking miners against agents of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, who attempted to evict the miners from company-owned housing. During a street battle, Mayor Testerman, seven Baldwin-Felts agents, and two miners were shot to death. Hatfield became a folk hero to Appalachia. But he, like Testerman, was to be a martyr. The next summer, Baldwin-Felts agents assassinated him and his best friend, Ed Chambers, as their wives watched, on the steps of the courthouse in Welch, accelerating the miners' rebellion into open warfare. Much neglected in historical accounts, *Thunder in the Mountains* is the only available book-length account of the crisis in American industrial relations and governance that occurred during the West Virginia mine war of 1920-21.

From Library Journal This is a colorful account of the open warfare in West Virginia's dark and bloody coal fields in 1920 and 1921, triggered by the killing by company detectives of Matewan town officials friendly to the miners. Ultimately, thousands of strikers faced strike-breakers, private police, and law enforcement officers in pitched battle. It required the declaring of martial law and the calling up of not only the state militia, but also of federal troops, including United States Air Force reconnaissance planes, to restore order. The strike was broken, and the miners were forced back into the pits. Appalachian coal fields remained non-union until the New Deal days of the 1930s. This is a solidly researched account of the story, also the subject of a John Sayles film, but it is flawed by Savage's sometimes overwrought journalistic style. For subject collections.- Harry Frummerman, formerly with Hunter Coll., CUNY Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. "The lively narrative, written by a former professional journalist and first published in 1985, is preceded by an explanatory introduction by John Williams." International of Social History