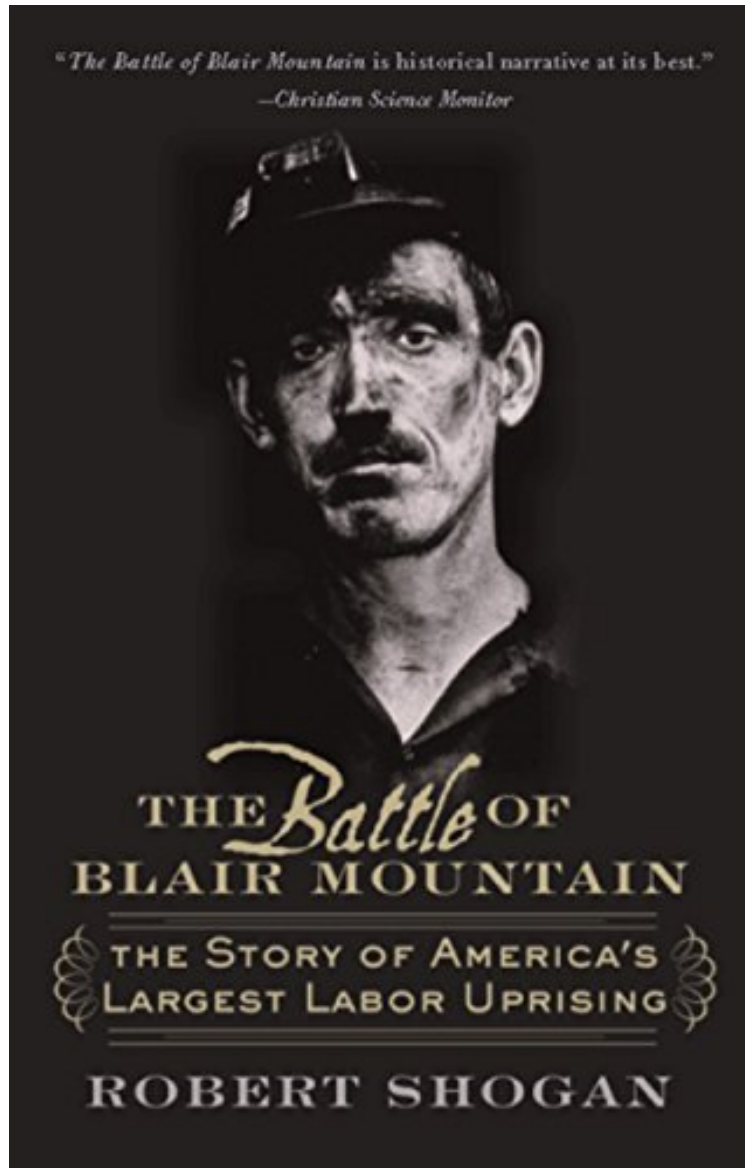


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The Battle of Blair Mountain: The Story of America's Largest Labor Uprising

Robert Shogan

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Robert Shogan : The Battle of Blair Mountain: The Story of America's Largest Labor Uprising before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Battle of Blair Mountain: The Story of America's Largest Labor Uprising:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good, but not quite enough By Marty G. Price Having read Denise Giardina's fictional account of events surrounding the battle (Storming Heaven), having seen John Sayles' film

"Matewan," and having viewed the account as offered in the West Virginia documentary of a few years back, I was hoping for some fairly extensive background into the conflict. Some background is provided -- the book is not a waste for those who have some familiarity with the events. For those without fairly extensive knowledge, the book should prove an eye-opener. Yes, there was a time in this fair nation when corporations had rights and individuals -- human beings who suffered the ignominy of not being rich -- did not. The economic schism we are plunging into presently existed before, and men whose only crime was demanding to be paid fairly for their work were treated as criminals and rebels. Shogan provides some insight into the political world that allowed these injustices as well as a good account of the Battle and the events leading up to it. Again, not quite as much background as I had hoped for, but the book is more than good enough to make an impression. Valuable reading!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A story about labor that must be remembered

By Jim Bartholomew

The Battle of Blair Mountain tells one story in the long history of American labor unions. It is a story that few Americans know, or were aware of even at the time that the events occurred. It shines a bright light on the struggle of the United Mine Workers to organize mine workers in West Virginia, in the face of opposition from an ownership concerned only with maximizing their profits. It tells how mine owners used their political clout, the desperation caused by the Great Depression, hired "detectives" and the fear raised by the rise of Communism in Europe, to disenfranchise and defeat union organizers and members. It illustrates clearly the difficulty in maintaining individual rights and protections for laborers when wealthy corporate interests collude with weak and often corrupt local government officials. As well as being an important story, this is a well-written and extremely interesting book. There is enough background provided to provide the reader with an understanding of how such a story could be left out of most history textbooks, and yet the narrative isn't bogged down by asides or details. It is very readable and I recommend it highly.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Appalachian slaves to northern industrial lords

By acat1234

A detailed account of the struggles deep miners had in getting a reasonable wage for the dirty and dangerous job they had. The more you learn the clearer the understanding that these people were slave, bound to a dirty, dangerous job, paid on company script that was worthless anywhere but in the company stores. The government cooperated by purposefully keeping education nonexistent in order to insure a steady supply of workers with no other option. This is what kept the northern industrial complex profitable and insuring a comfortable life for millions of people while the miners and their families lived in abject poverty! Slaves in all respects except by name.

In 1921, some 10,000 West Virginia coal miners-- outraged over years of brutality and exploitation-- picked up their Winchesters and marched against their tormentors, the powerful mine owners who ruled their corrupt state. For ten days the miners fought a pitched battle against an opposing legion of deputies, state police, and makeshift militia. Only the intervention of a Federal expeditionary force ended this undeclared war. In *The Battle of Blair Mountain*, Robert Shogan shows this long-neglected slice of American history to be a saga of the conflicting political, economic, and cultural forces that shaped the power structure of twentieth-century America.