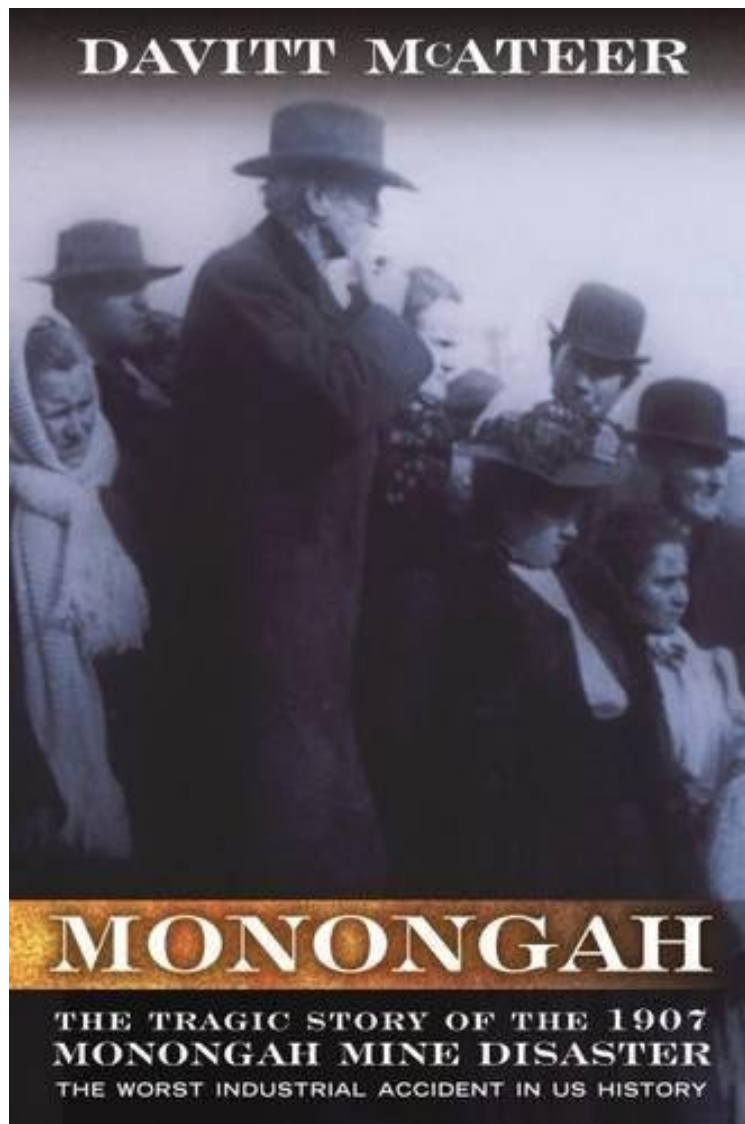


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Monongah: The Tragic Story of the 1907 Monongah Mine Disaster (WEST VIRGINIA APPALACHIA)

DAVITT MCATEER

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DAVITT MCATEER : Monongah: The Tragic Story of the 1907 Monongah Mine Disaster (WEST VIRGINIA APPALACHIA) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Monongah: The Tragic Story of the 1907 Monongah Mine Disaster (WEST VIRGINIA APPALACHIA):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. BOOK REVIEW: MONONGAH EXAMINES CULTURE OF

WEST VIRGINIA COAL MINE OPERATIONS AS WELL AS 1907 DISASTER THE WORST INDUSTRIAL ABY
David Kinchen Davitt McAteers *Monongah: The Tragic Story of the 1907 Monongah Mine Disaster*: West Virginia Appalachia, Book 6) (West Virginia University Press, 352 pages, with an introduction by former labor secretary Robert Reich, who once was the authors boss; index, illustrations, \$24.99) is a complete examination of the Dec. 6, 1907 Monongah explosion that killed at least 500 men and boys. In his preface to the new paperback edition (the book was published in 2007 to commemorate the centennial of the disaster) McAteer ties in the 1907 disaster to the Easter Sunday, April 5, 2010 explosion at the Upper Big Branch (UBB) mine operated by Massey Energy. This illustrates the authors central theme that cost-cutting and concentration on bottom-line thinking by the owners of the Monongah Mines near Fairmont, WV Consolidation Coal Co. and Massey Energy at UBB in Raleigh County were the contributing factors to both disasters. McAteer, former head of the of the mine safety agency under Labor Secretary Robert Reich in the Clinton Administration, conducted an independent investigation of the UBB disaster. This is discussed on page 161 and following in another book recently published by WVU Press, *Thunder on the Mountain*. Leading up to the disaster that killed at least 500 men and boys at Monongah, McAteer devotes a great deal of space to describing the development of the Pittsburgh seam of coal in northern West Virginia and the role of Johnson Newlon Camden and others in the growth of Consolidation Coal Company commonly known as Consol which operated the Monongah mines. In those pre-trust-busting days, Consol, John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Co. and the Baltimore Ohio Railroad were all inked in a relationship to produce and distribute coal at the lowest possible cost, the Devil take the Hindmost when it came to safe operating conditions. McAteer also describes how the mine operators recruited poor Italian and Slavic workers to labor in their mines for the lowest possible cost. Also discussed is the anti-union attitude of the mine owners, and the role of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in attempting to organize the workers at the mines in north central West Virginia. Unlike mines in Pennsylvania, where the UMWA had success, they experienced total failure in the greater Fairmont area, despite valiant efforts by Mother Jones and others, McAteer writes. The narrative leading up to the disaster shows how the tentacles of the mine operators reached every part of the life of the miners, from the houses they rented from the company to the company stores where they bought the necessities of life, to the company-owned interurban railroads that took them to Fairmont and other cities and to their jobs at the mines. Nearly thirty years of exhaustive research have led McAteer to the conclusion that close to 500 men and boys many of them immigrants lost their lives that day, leaving hundreds of women widowed and more than one thousand children orphaned. Something I didnt know: The Monongah disaster led to the formation of the Fathers Day holiday. So West Virginia can claim both Mothers Day and Fathers Day! McAteer delves deeply into the personalities, economic forces, and social landscape of the mining communities of north central West Virginia at the beginning of the twentieth century. The tragedy at Monongah led to a greater awareness of industrial working conditions, and ultimately to the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, which Davitt McAteer helped to enact. If youre a history buff or if you want to understand how, in many ways the French saying the more things change, the more they stay the same (plus a change, plus cest la mme chose) when it comes to mine safety, Monongah is the go-to book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An important historic record of one of the worst mining tragedies By GSEng An important historic record of one of the worst mining tragedies, human suffering and grief. Very well put together, factual and accurate. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great book about this mining disaster By bcjj515 Excellent read!

New paperback edition with an introduction by Robert B. Reich *Monongah: The Tragic Story of the 1907 Monongah Mine Disaster* documents the events and conditions that led to the worst industrial accident in the history of the United States. This mining accident claimed hundreds of lives on the morning of December 6, 1907 and McAteer, an expert on mine and workplace health and safety, delves deeply into the economic forces and social-political landscape of the mining communities of north central West Virginia to expose the truth behind this tragedy. After nearly thirty years of exhaustive research, McAteer determines that close to 500 men and boys many of them immigrants lost their lives that day, leaving hundreds of women widowed and more than one thousand children orphaned. The tragedy at Monongah led to a greater awareness of industrial working conditions, and ultimately to the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, which McAteer helped to enact. This new paperback edition includes an introduction by Robert B. Reich, Chancellors Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and Secretary of Labor during the Clinton administration.

McAteer skillfully analyzes the tragedy, examining players on the company side from the upper levels of the rich and powerful to the mine supervision and operations level, while giving equal weight and voice to the immigrant groups that provided the vast majority of the victims... It is fortunate that a man of David McAteer's caliber undertook to tell the tragic story." Charles McCollester, *West Virginia History: A Journal of Regional History*