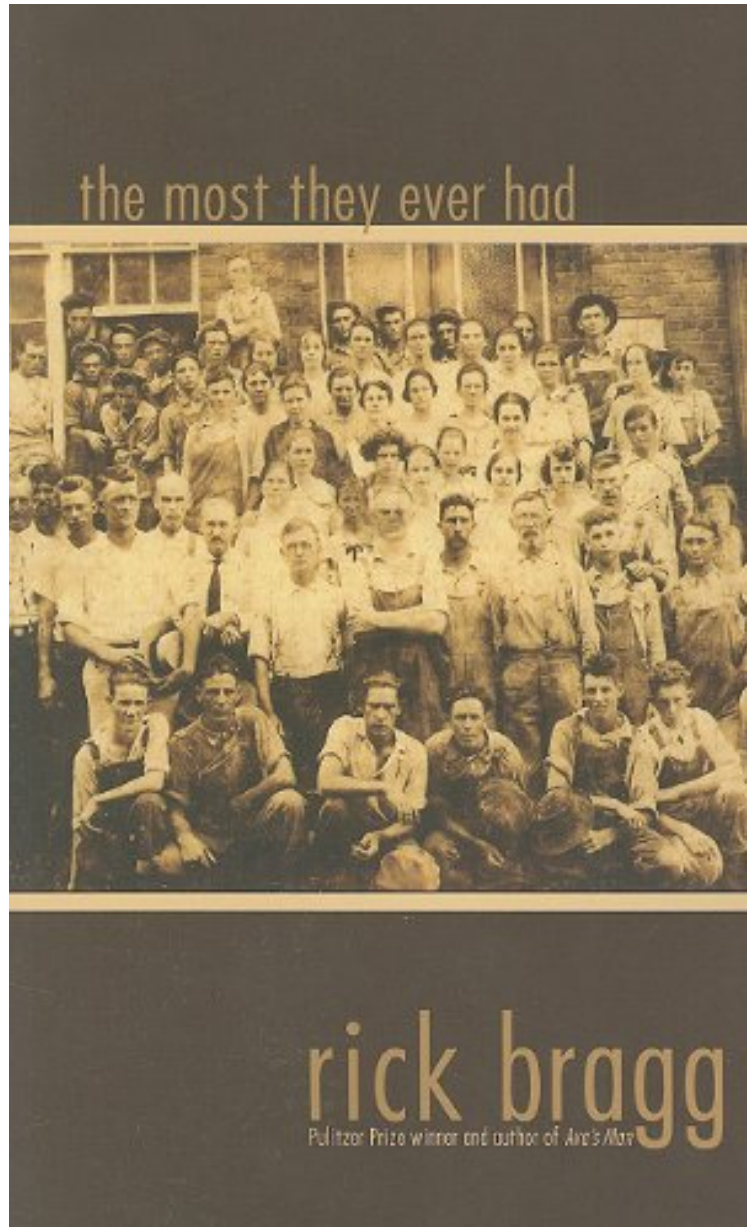


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The Most They Ever Had

Mr. Rick Bragg

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In the spring of 2001, a community of people in the Appalachian foothills of northern Alabama had come to the edge of all they had ever known. Across the South, padlocks and logging chains bound the doors of silent mills, and it seemed a miracle to blue-collar people in Jacksonville that their mill still bit, shook, and roared. The century-old hardwood floors still trembled under whirling steel, and people worked on, in a mist of white air. The mill had become almost a living thing, rewarding the hardworking and careful with the best payday they ever had, but punishing the careless and clumsy, taking a finger, a hand, more.

It is hard to think of a writer who reminds us more forcefully and wonderfully of what people and families are all about. New York Times Book