



Matewan Before the Massacre: Politics, Coal and the Roots of Conflict in a West Virginia Mining Community (West Virginia & Appalachia)

Rebecca J. Bailey

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
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On May 19, 1920, gunshots rang through the streets of Matewan, West Virginia, in an event soon known as the “Matewan Massacre.” Most historians of West Virginia and Appalachia see this event as the beginning of a long series of tribulations known as the second Mine Wars. But was it instead the culmination of an even longer series of proceedings that unfolded in Mingo County, dating back at least to the Civil War? *Matewan Before the Massacre* provides the first comprehensive history of the area, beginning in the late eighteenth century continuing up to the Massacre. It covers the relevant economic history, including the development of the coal mine industry and the struggles over land ownership; labor history, including early efforts of unionization; transportation history, including the role of the N&W Railroad; political history, including the role of political factions in the county’s two major communities—Matewan and Williamson; and the impact of the state’s governors and legislatures on Mingo County.

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