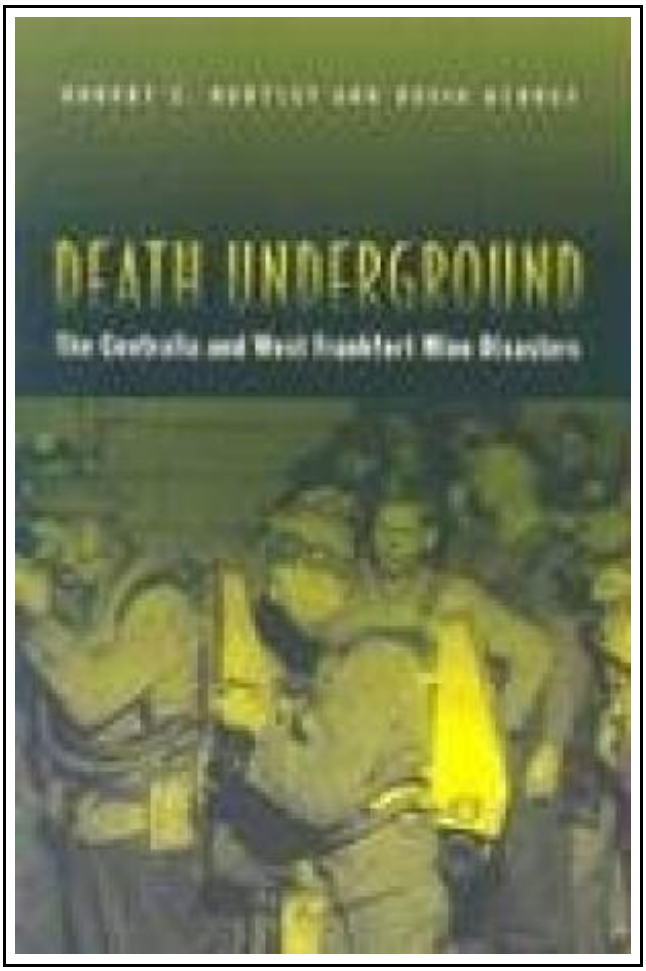
Death Underground: The Centralia and West Frankfort Mine Disasters



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DEATH UNDERGROUND: THE CENTRALIA AND WEST FRANKFORT MINE DISASTERS

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Southern Illinois University Press, 2006. Book Condition: New. Brand New, Unread Copy in Perfect Condition. A+ Customer Service! Summary: Illinois possesses a fascinating labor history that offers historians an opportunity to explore the working lives of men and women in a variety of trades and industries over the course of many decades. Robert E. Hartley and David Kenney have made a useful addition to that history in their collaborative monograph Death Underground: The Centralia and West Frankfort Mine Disasters. Hartley and Kenney present a detailed account of these two mine tragedies of the mid-twentieth century when coal mining was still a major industry and trade for the state''s working class. The authors take the reader on a journey into the mines, the state bureaucracy of mine inspections and party politics, and into the lives of the miners and their families. This comprehensive history is both academically sound and interesting to read. The voices of the historical actors are present throughout the narrative, making this a work of history that could appeal to a popular audience as well as to students of Illinois and labor history. The authors set the context for the Centralia and West Frankfort mine disasters with a brief history of mining in the United States, but most appropriately in Illinois. They examine the early coal industry in the state, its first workers and communities, mining accidents, and union organization. John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) feature prominently in this introductory chapter and in later sections of the book. In part one, the local history of mining really begins. Centralia''s origins as an important rail stop for the Illinois Central and an early coal source as railroads transitioned from wood to coal as locomotive fuel demonstrates the town''s long association with coal mining....

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