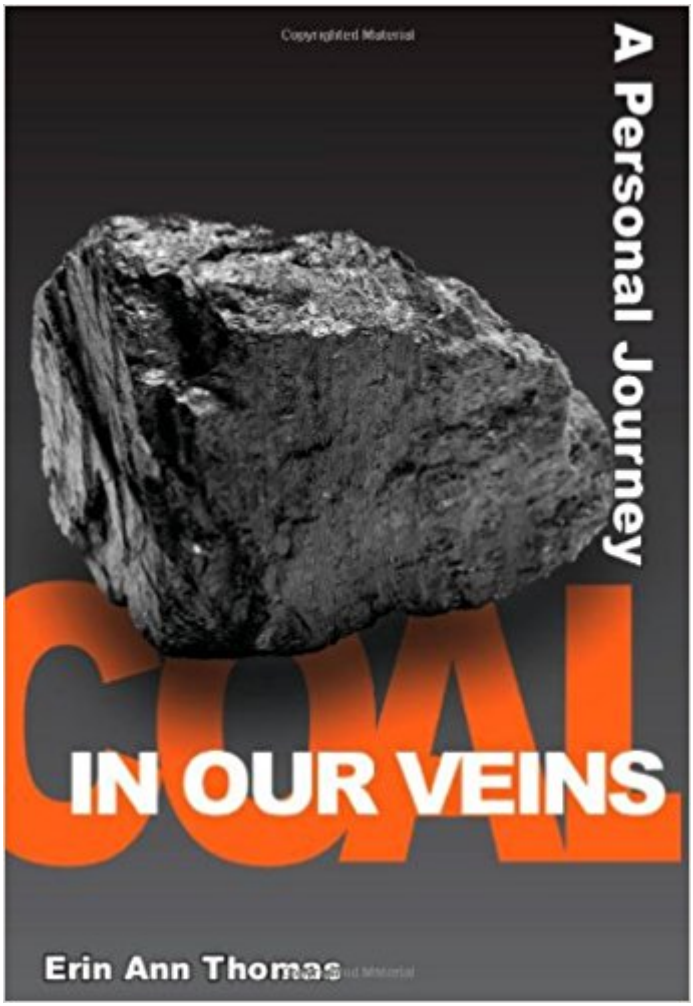
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Coal In Our Veins: A Personal Journey



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Synopsis

In Coal in Our Veins, Erin Thomas employs historical research, autobiography, and journalism to intertwine the history of coal, her ancestors' lives mining coal, and the societal and environmental impacts of the United States' dependency on coal as an energy source. In the first part of her book, she visits Wales, native ground of British coal mining and of her emigrant ancestors. The Thomases' move to the coal region of UtahÃ¢â ¬â •where they witnessed the Winter Quarters and Castle Gate mine explosions, two of the worst mining disasters in American historyÃ¢â ¬â •and the history of coal development in Utah form the second part.Then Thomas investigates coal mining and communities in West Virginia, near her East Coast home, looking at the Sago Mine collapse and more widespread impacts of mining, including population displacement, mountain top removal, coal dust dispersal, and stream pollution, flooding, and decimation. The book's final part moves from Washington D.C.Ã¢â ¬â •and an examination of coal, CO2, and national energy policyÃ¢â ¬â •back to Utah, for a tour of a coal mine, and a consideration of the Crandall Canyon mine cave-in, back to Wales and the closing of the oldest operating deep mine in the world and then to a look at energy alternatives, especially wind power, in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I cant say how angered I was after reading this book. If you want a book of well my grandfather was a miner and I went to BYU now I am researching my family genealogy finishing with we are all criminals for turning on a light this is the book for you. I found the authors style to be incredibly hard

to follow and that every paragraph floated to some other subject.Would like my money and my time back wasted on this book.

Wow! Erin Ann Thomas' book is a sobering and intriguing introduction to the coal industry. I've seen headlines concerning mining accidents and heard numerous reports about the economic questions surrounding coal, but I never really took into account the personal lives of those who've been affected by the coal industry. `Coal in Our Veins' does an excellent job illustrating that coal is more than a fuel, but rather has transcended to be the substance that defines generations of families.I'm a big policy buff, but my favorite part of this book is the personal touch that Thomas adds. This book is such a creative and unique way to share the history of the coal industry, and especially the less talked about culture surrounding coal. I loved the many lessons taught from the perspective of her Welsh ancestors turned American immigrants. She really does give life to the descriptions of her great grandparents and the generations that followed, which made the book feel like real life. Most books that explore the complexity of an industry tend to be dry and rather unreadable at times, but I was so enveloped in the account of the several generations of her coal-mining ancestors down to her own experiences with coal while researching the book, that I couldn't put it down.Thomas' style is a journalistic narrative of history through the present, and is defiantly a great read for anyone who enjoys history and learning about new topics. I feel that I've been well educated on Wales, coalminers, energy policies, coal as a fuel, and the coal industry as a whole. Don't pass this up.

This book reminds us of where we came from in so many senses of the phrase--it is an exploration of the migrations of our ancestors from Europe, a study in family history and inheritance, and a body of research on the history of the coal-powered electricity that enabled our modern society--starting at its very roots in the bellies of the mountains of Wales, Utah, and Appalachia. Thomas' clear, stylish journalistic approach paints the life and plight of the coal miner and the structure of the coal and electricity industry. Framing the history in the context of her own extended family's journey makes it accessible and personal. This book reminds us of where we came from, and makes us question where we are headed. The most disappointing thing about the book is that it was brought to press by Utah State University, and thus its publicity and distribution are limited. It ought to be carried in every major bookstore and top the wish lists every user.In the interest of full disclosure, I will admit that I am a friend of the author (a careful study of the book would eventually reveal this). However, I am also a member of her writing group--this means that although I may be her biggest supporter, I am also one of her most honest critics.

Thomas writes powerfully and personally at the same time - putting a human face to the otherwise anonymous thousands of colliers who through generations sacrificed their lives for their families and their descendants. Her writing inspires her reader to reach back to the previous generation and find out the unanswered whys of how they came to be while simultaneously drawing a landscape that captures the complexity of dependence upon coal and the inevitable tradeoffs for that dependence. Her writing rivals that of Speth's Red Sky at Morning and stirs the inner conflict that every individual living in this modern era must eventually face.

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