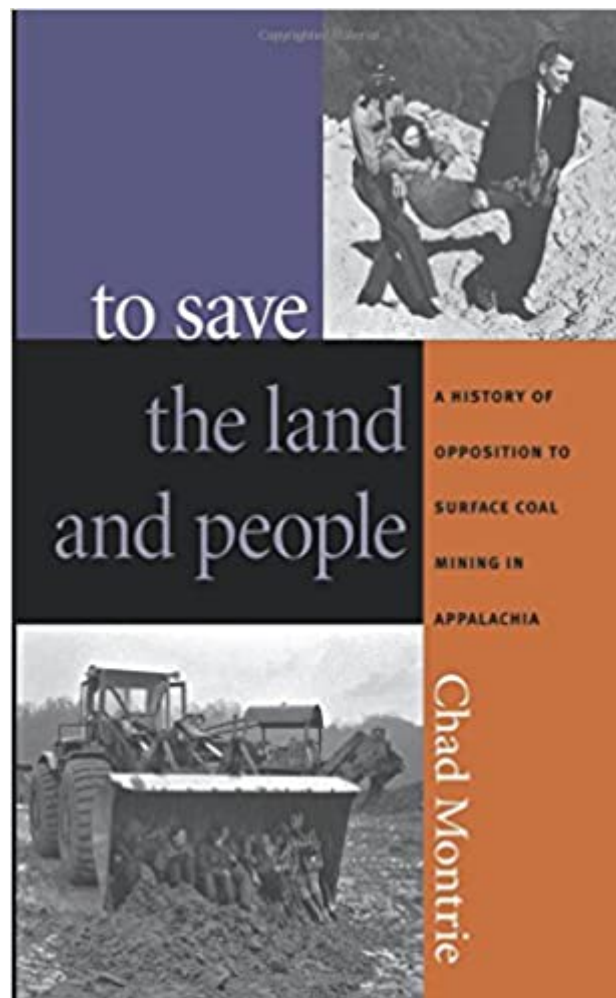




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# To Save The Land And People: A History Of Opposition To Surface Coal Mining In Appalachia



## Synopsis

Surface coal mining has had a dramatic impact on the Appalachian economy and ecology since World War II, exacerbating the region's chronic unemployment and destroying much of its natural environment. Here, Chad Montrie examines the twentieth-century movement to outlaw surface mining in Appalachia, tracing popular opposition to the industry from its inception through the growth of a militant movement that engaged in acts of civil disobedience and industrial sabotage. Both comprehensive and comparative, *To Save the Land and People* chronicles the story of surface mining opposition in the whole region, from Pennsylvania to Alabama. Though many accounts of environmental activism focus on middle-class suburbanites and emphasize national events, the campaign to abolish strip mining was primarily a movement of farmers and working people, originating at the local and state levels. Its history underscores the significant role of common people and grassroots efforts in the American environmental movement. This book also contributes to a long-running debate about American values by revealing how veneration for small, private properties has shaped the political consciousness of strip mining opponents.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Chad Montrie offers a look at real grassroots environmental activism by real people, showing a long-neglected dimension of American environmentalism.... A moving story."An excellent and timely study of resistance, courage, and disappointment. (Ronald Eller, University of Kentucky)Montrie

offers a look at real grassroots environmental activism by real people, showing a long-neglected dimension of American environmentalism. (Hal Rothman, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)Contains many worthwhile lessons for those who continue the ongoing struggle to halt the utter destruction of this fragile and beautiful region through unsustainable resource extraction practices. (Albert J. Fritsch, director of Appalachia--Science in the Public Interest)With uncommon eloquence, Chad Montrie tells the important and moving story of the efforts of the farmers and working people of Appalachia to put a halt to the strip mining that was despoiling their land and their livelihoods. (Frances Fox Piven, City University of New York )"An excellent and timely study of resistance, courage, and disappointment." -- Ronald Eller, University of Kentucky"Montrie offers a look at real grassroots environmental activism by real people, showing a long-neglected dimension of American environmentalism." -- Hal Rothman, University of Nevada, Las Vegas"Contains many worthwhile lessons for those who continue the ongoing struggle to halt the utter destruction of this fragile and beautiful region through unsustainable resource extraction practices." -- Albert J. Fritsch, director of Appalachia--Science in the Public Interest"With uncommon eloquence, Chad Montrie tells the important and moving story of the efforts of the farmers and working people of Appalachia to put a halt to the strip mining that was despoiling their land and their livelihoods." -- Frances Fox Piven, City University of New York"A valuable contribution to the history of the region . . . raises interesting questions about what happened, about the role of the local, state, and national environmental groups, and about the effects of class differences among membership in these groups." -- "Journal of Appalachian Studies"

What a long overdue addition to the body of books about Appalachia, and how fabulous that someone of Chad Montrie's sensibilities stepped forward to take on the challenge.--Appalachian HeritageAn excellent and timely study of resistance, courage, and disappointment. At a time when the nation and the region continue to struggle with the consequences of surface mining in mountain environments, this is a welcome addition to the literature.--Ronald Eller, University of KentuckyA valuable contribution to the history of the region . . . raises interesting questions about what happened, about the role of the local, state, and national environmental groups, and about the effects of class differences among membership in these groups.--Journal of Appalachian StudiesWith uncommon eloquence, Chad Montrie tells the important and moving story of the efforts of the farmers and working people of Appalachia to put a halt to the strip mining that was despoiling their land and their livelihoods. This struggle necessarily moved beyond the usual tactics of lobbying and petitioning that were easily ignored to civil disobedience and strategic violence. This is a

movement that reminds us of the great historical struggles of ordinary people.--Frances Fox Piven, City University of New York

*To Save the Land and People* is a must-read for all environmental historians. Chad Montrie offers a look at real grassroots environmental activism by real people, showing a long-neglected dimension of American environmentalism. It hasn't only been elites who support environmental goals; Montrie shows us ordinary people with ordinary lives in a struggle for all they hold dear. Linking surface mining activity to their economic decline, they seized on environmental objectives to save their way of life. A moving story that will revise how environmentalism is regarded.--Hal Rothman, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

An admirable study of real importance to historians of the environment and Appalachia.--*Journal of Southern History*

Montrie's book will no doubt find a welcome spot on the shelf of many an Appalachian scholar. Anyone with broad interests in twentieth-century American environmentalism, mining history, and environmental justice also will find it a compelling read. Meticulously researched and highly readable, *To Save the Land and People* tells a story that needs to be heard.--*Environmental History*

Montrie's study of the resistance by the farmers and people directly affected by surface strip mining is an important study for environmental activism. Using a wealth of sources such as manuscript collections, oral histories, government documents, and other primary sources, he provides a thorough examination of the efforts to control surface coal mining in Appalachia by a coalition of forces.--*Enterprise & Society*

Montrie's study not only provides us with an excellent understanding of the history of America's strip-mining debate but offers guidance for dealing with it in the future.--*Journal of American History*

*To Save the Land and People* makes a clear and concise contribution to our understanding of environmental activism and adds yet another chapter to the (in)famous story of coal mining in America.--*Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*

This book tells the untold story of some of the heroic activists who attempted to abolish or restrict surface mining in Appalachia. It contains many worthwhile lessons for those who continue the ongoing struggle to halt the utter destruction of this fragile and beautiful region through unsustainable resource extraction practices.--Albert J. Fritsch, Director of Appalachia--*Science in the Public Interest*

[Montrie] has produced a first-rate history of the campaign to abolish strip mining. . . . Well written and carefully researched, the book captures the ebb and flow of reform coalition building, and is a welcome addition to the growing literature on business and the environment.--*Business History*

Thank you Chad. America should know this "awful truth". By the way, we in Appalachia are still holding the same protest signs that these brave people held up in this book 30 years ago. Help us

America.

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