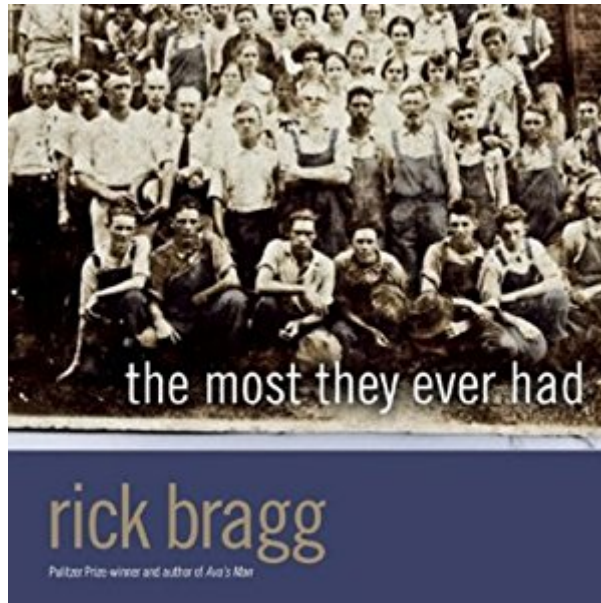


The book was found

# The Most They Ever Had



## Synopsis

In these real-life stories, Rick Bragg brilliantly evokes the hardscrabble lives of those who live and die by an American cotton mill. In 2001, a community of people in the Appalachian foothills had come to the edge of all they had ever been. Across the South, padlocks and chains bound the doors of silent mills. It seemed a miracle to blue-collar people in Jacksonville, Alabama, that their mill still bit, shook, and roared. The mill had become almost a living thing, rewarding the hard working and careful with the best payday they ever had but punishing the careless and clumsy, taking a finger, a hand, or more. They served it even as it filled their lungs with lint and shortened their lives. In return, it let them live in stiff-necked dignity in the hills of their fathers. This is a mill story, not of bricks, steel, and cotton, but of the people who suffered it in order to live. --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 4 hours and 15 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.

Audible.com Release Date: October 7, 2009

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Best Sellers Rank: #56 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Manufacturing #58

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## Customer Reviews

I don't know what someone who is not from the South will think of this book. I am from there, from the places Rick Bragg writes about. I am from those people. I come from the red clay and the black dirt. This story of the mill people resonates in my bones, in my genes. It hums and throbs like those machines. It cuts through me like the mill whistle in my home town pierced through the air. This is not a story about the economy. Not a microcosm for what is happening all across the country. It is a story about the people in one small mill town. It is a story about what they felt, and what they knew, and what they had to do. It is a moving story. It is real. Bragg is eloquent as he listens to these people telling their stories, eloquent in letting their silences speak.

If you are not already a Rick Bragg fan, this book will make you one. I read an announcement in the paper that Bragg was going to be signing books at a local store. In this article, he apologizes for this book being a THIN volume. Do not be misled by the size. The stories are HUGE.

I have tried to read absolutely every thing Rick Bragg has written. When I find a new title, its a no-brainer buy. This book, however, was not what I would call entertainment, but rather "LIFE" as I know it. You see, I'm living this story! The factory I work in is full of these type folks who have given their lives..their backs..their lungs..their all for a Friday paycheck. At the end of the week, they drag themselves to the parking lot full of older, well worn vehicles that might or might not get them all the way home only to wish that overtime was being offered on a Saturday..."cause I ain't got nothing to do at home, and I need to work 'cause all my friends are here at work!" He told of a couple of guys that escaped the factory floor. The percentages are low for those that can. I will be one of them next year. I'm escaping the factory floor after 27 years to draw my retirement!!!

Rick Bragg is a remarkable storyteller and writer. This small volume chronicles the stories of hardworking, ordinary people in the small town south. Their stories are poignantly revealing, unearthing the lives of those left behind in the name of progress and profit. Like his earlier works, his writing honors the values of his people with poetry and craftsmanship. Bragg writes "working people live on in ledgers" but he ensures here that their stories will be remembered. This is a book worth reading.

It's a quick read that leaves you laughing, crying and wondering how does anyone write like that. Although very poetic in his story-telling, Bragg still brings to consciousness how we as a county were quick to legislate our precious jobs overseas yet slow to protect the voiceless factory worker through the decades. His stories about the eccentric mill manager are hilarious and leave you wondering if they could really be true until Bragg insists they are true. His other stories from the aging mill historians will leave you wondering how many other stories are treasured in the hearts of our southern elderly. His Twain-flavored story-telling is visual and priceless. Order the book.

I've been a fan of Bragg's since I read the first word he put onto the page in "All Over But the Shoutin." I went to a recent booksigning in Georgia and found him to be just as down to earth as his writing indicates. I'm glad that the millworkers had such a skillful interviewer as he talked with them

about what it was like to grow up in a milltown and to work in the cotton mills that dot the south. Some stories and images will stay with me forever.

When I first saw the front cover of this book I cried. The faces of these people brought back so many memories of the past. My mother's mother went to work at Cone Mills in Greensboro, N.C. when she was nine years old, school was forgotten and she never learned to read or write. All her family worked in the mills, White Oak, Proximity. They lived in company houses, bought almost everything at the company stores. I remember the hot dogs sold there for ten cents each. I thank you, Rick Bragg, for this wonderful book and all the other books you have written. No other writer has touched my heart like you have. Please don't stop writing. Your brother Sam would be a great inspiration for your next book.

Rick Bragg's prose is spare, haunting and elegant. Nobody can do more with fewer words and he's my favorite non-fiction writer for just that reason. I just finished *THE MOST THEY EVER HAD* and was left wishing there was even more. This lean and muscular portrait of the generations of cotton mill workers who labored at the Profile mill is beautifully drawn and unforgettable. I proudly add it to my collection of Rick Bragg's work where it's earned a spot right next to my favorites *AVA'S MAN* and *THE PRINCE OF FROGTOWN*.

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