



Trapped : The 1909 Cherry Mine Disaster (Illinois)

Karen Tintori

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Inspired by a refrain of her girlhood -- "Your grandfather survived the Cherry Mine disaster" -- Karen Tintori began a search for her family's role in the harrowing tragedy of 1909. She uncovered the stories of victims, survivors, widows, orphans, townspeople, firefighters, reporters, and mine owners, and wove them together to pen *Trapped*, a riveting account of the tragic day that would inspire America's first worker's compensation laws and hasten much-needed child labor reform.

On a Saturday morning in November of 1909, four hundred and eighty men went down into the mines as they had countless times before. But a fire erupted in the mineshaft that day and soon burned out of control. By nightfall, more than half the men would either be dead or trapped as officials sealed the mine in an attempt to contain the blaze. Miraculously, twenty men would emerge one week later, but not before the Cherry Mine disaster went down in history as the worst ever coal mine fire in the U.S. -- and not before all the treachery and heroism of mankind were revealed.

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