

William R. Green Biography

William R. Green

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

William R. Green Biography.....	1
Contents.....	2
Biography.....	3

Biography

William R. Green (1872-1952) was president of the American Federation of Labor during the stormiest period in United States labor history.

William Green was born on March 3, 1872, in Coshocton, Ohio, the son of English immigrants. He wanted to become a Baptist minister, but economic circumstances compelled him to enter the local mines. Soon the labor movement became his ministry.

Green rose gradually through the hierarchy of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). He passed from president of subdistrict 6 to president of the Ohio district union in 1906 and 5 years later to UMWA statistician. In 1913 Green was elected UMWA secretary-treasurer and later that year a vice president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). He served two terms (1911-1915) in the Ohio Senate, where he sponsored the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Green maintained excellent relations with the barons of the American labor movement but could not command the respect of more obdurate labor leaders. Basically accommodating, he proved unable to discipline quarrelsome union officials or to negotiate with strong antilabor employers.

When Samuel Gompers, the tough and resourceful president of the AFL, died in 1924, Green replaced him. Taking over the AFL at a time when it was declining, Green watched it sink even lower during the late 1920s and the Great Depression.

Although President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal promised labor great organizing opportunities, Green failed to command enough support within the AFL to launch a vigorous membership campaign. Devoted to the concept of the AFL as a harmonious family that could amicably settle its internal conflicts, he allowed the craft unionists, who dominated the executive council, to drive the industrial unionists out of the organization. Green thus became a party to the civil war between the AFL and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) that raged unabated from 1936 to 1941. Always loyal to his original union, the UMWA, in 1937 he was suspended from it because John L. Lewis, UMWA president, was leader of the CIO.

President of the AFL for 28 years, Green continually backed down under pressure from powerful craft union leaders. On Nov. 21, 1952, he died of a heart attack.