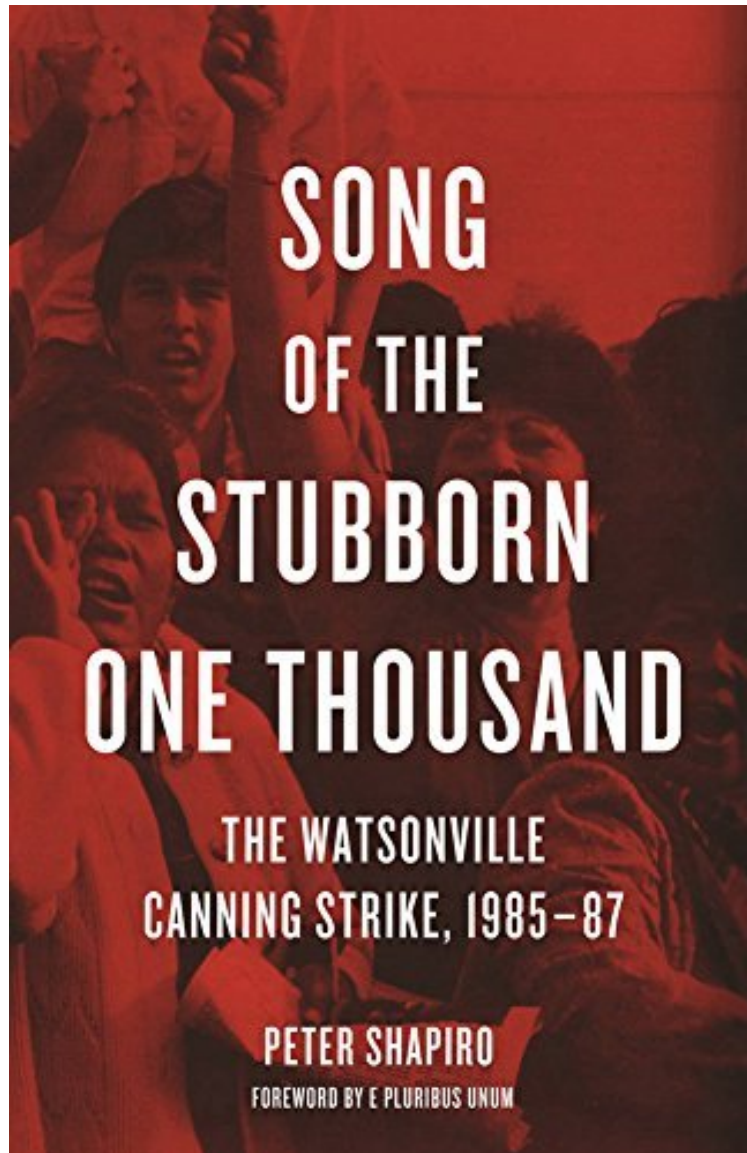


(Download pdf) Song of the Stubborn One Thousand: The Watsonville Canning Strike, 1985-87

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Peter Shapiro

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Peter Shapiro : Song of the Stubborn One Thousand: The Watsonville Canning Strike, 1985-87 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Song of the Stubborn One Thousand: The Watsonville Canning Strike, 1985-87:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Eesha WilliamsThis is an outstanding book.

On September 9, 1985, one thousand mainly Mexican women workers in Watsonville, California, the frozen food capital of the world, were forced out on strike in response to an attempt by Watsonville Canning owner, Mort Console, to break their union. They returned to work eighteen months later. Not one had crossed the picket line. A moribund union has been revitalized, and Watsonville's Latino majority emerged as a major force in local politics. At a time when organized labor was in headlong retreat, the Watsonville Canning strike was a dramatic show of the power of women workers, whose struggle became a rallying point for the Chicano movement. Apart from its sheer drama, the strikers' story illuminates the challenges facing a group of ordinary working people who waged a protracted and ultimately successful struggle against seemingly insurmountable odds.

[W]ell-written, fast-paced, and inspiring.... This masterpiece of the genre is simultaneously an education in labor organizing in the multinational workplace and a stirring tale of struggle by some of U.S. capitalism's most exploited workers. Haymarket Books, is probably the best current publisher of labor history; with this book both Haymarket and the author Peter Shapiro have outdone themselves. CounterPunch "Peter Shapiro has written an important book of how 1,000 Latina workers in Watsonville, California won an 18-month long strike in the 1980s against one of the biggest canning companies in the state. It is an inspiring tale about the unity and perseverance of immigrant women against a corporation backed by big lawyers and a big bank during high tide of Reagan-era union busting. But it is much more for labor activists and labor historians alike know that while solidarity is critical, it is often not enough. Shapiro offers keen insights into the complex world of this strike, in which a vast array of players—the workers, Teamster union leaders and their opposition, community and church activists, and Leftists of various stripes—engaged in what Shapiro provocatively calls a "laboratory" for different styles of leadership, and what these meant for the workers' desire to shape their own destiny." Mae M. Ngai, Author of *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* "Peter Shapiro combines wonderful story telling with a sharp historian's analysis to explain an important but little-known corner of the US labor movement. *Song of the Stubborn One Thousand* is a story of hope and inspiration. It's a must read for anyone interested in the power of working people and minorities." Freelance journalist Reese Erlich, who covered the strike for the *Christian Science Monitor* "I've waited nearly 25-years for this book. Against all odds, for 18-months, the mostly Latina strikers sacrificed, built their union, and no one crossed their picket line. With attention to detail, patience, and most of all empathy Shapiro takes the readers on the 18-month peregrination with the *Stubborn One Thousand*. This is a book that every organizer needs to read." Fernando E. Gapasin, co-author of *Solidarity Divided* "Peter Shapiro has written a powerful book about one of the most important labor and civil rights battles since World War Two - the Watsonville strike. He shows clearly that workers won because of the interaction between the mostly Mexican immigrant strikers, the reform movement in the Teamsters, and organizations and leaders on the left. It was this synthesis, with all its problems, that gave the strike its power, and has made it a touchstone for radical strategy and tactics since. It is an inspiring story, told skillfully through the eyes and words of its participants. Read this book." David Bacon, author of *Children of NAFTA and Illegal People* "The cannery workers struggle chronicled by Peter Shapiro, in this well-written and insightful book, occurred three decades ago. But trade unionists of all kinds face similar challenges today whenever they go on strike. Shapiro shows how workers faced with management resistance and union ambivalence can overcome both with strong rank-and-file leadership, independent shop-floor organization, and active community support." Steve Early, former organizer for Communications Workers of America and author of *Save Our Unions*