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Reading Appalachia from Left to Right: Conservatives and the 1974 Kanawha County Textbook Controversy

By Carol Mason

Cornell University Press, United States, 2009. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 226 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. In Reading Appalachia from Left to Right, Carol Mason examines the legacies of a pivotal 1974 curriculum dispute in West Virginia that heralded the rightward shift in American culture and politics. At a time when black nationalists and white conservatives were both maligned as extremists for opposing education reform, the wife of a fundamentalist preacher who objected to new language-arts textbooks featuring multiracial literature sparked the yearlong conflict. It was the most violent textbook battle in America, inspiring mass marches, rallies by white supremacists, boycotts by parents, and strikes by coal miners. Schools were closed several times due to arson and dynamite while national and international news teams descended on Charleston. A native of Kanawha County, Mason infuses local insight into this study of historically left-leaning protesters ushering in cultural conservatism. Exploring how reports of the conflict as a hillbilly feud affected all involved, she draws on substantial archival research and interviews with Klansmen, evangelicals, miners, bombers, and businessmen, a who, like herself, were residents of Kanawha County during the dispute. Mason investigates vulgar accusations of racism that precluded a richer...


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