



Reconstruction's Ragged Edge: The Politics of Postwar Life in the Southern Mountains (Civil War America)

Steven E. Nash

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In this illuminating study, Steven E. Nash chronicles the history of Reconstruction as it unfolded in the mountains of western North Carolina. Nash presents a complex story of the region's grappling with the war's aftermath, examining the persistent wartime loyalties that informed bitter power struggles between factions of white mountaineers determined to rule. For a brief period, an influx of federal governmental power enabled white anti-Confederates to ally with former slaves in order to lift the Republican Party to power locally and in the state as a whole. Republican success led to a violent response from a transformed class of elites, however, who claimed legitimacy from the antebellum period while pushing for greater integration into the market-oriented New South.

Focusing on a region that is still underrepresented in the Reconstruction historiography, Nash illuminates the diversity and complexity of Appalachian political and economic machinations, while bringing to light the broad and complicated issues the era posed to the South and the nation as a whole.



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