

There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975

By Jason Sokol

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During the civil rights movement, epic battles for justice were fought in the streets, at lunch counters, and in the classrooms of the American South. Just as many battles were waged, however, in the hearts and minds of ordinary white southerners whose world became unrecognizable to them. Jason Sokol's vivid and unprecedented account of white southerners' attitudes and actions, related in their own words, reveals in a new light the contradictory mixture of stubborn resistance and pragmatic acceptance–as well as the startling and unexpected personal transformations–with which they greeted the enforcement of legal equality.

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There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975 By Jason Sokol Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #557721 in Books
- Brand: Sokol, Jason
- Published on: 2007-08-14
- Released on: 2007-08-14
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.99" h x .90" w x 5.17" l, .93 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 464 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
The experiences of white Southerners during the period of the Civil Rights movement have, until now, gone largely unexplored. Sokol, a doctoral candidate in history at UC-Berkeley, traces the process of desegregation by drawing on public records and interviews conducted with white Southerners as they faced the tide of change brought by *Brown* v. *Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Sokol actively resists easy generalizations or stereotypes of the men and women whose rejection of equal rights created the central tension of the Civil Rights movement. Instead of stock characters, Sokol presents individuals—such as Ollie McClung, whose opposition to integration stemmed, at least in part, from a belief in personal liberty—as well as hundreds of voices for whom change meant "their world would never be the same." Sokol never apologizes or attempts to mitigate the often brutal and violent consequences of Southern racism. His eloquent presentation, with all of its complications, provides an invaluable and much-needed addition to our understanding of how the Civil Rights movement was actually lived. Photos. *(Aug.)*
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From Booklist
Historian Sokol examines how the civil rights movement challenged long-held notions among southern whites about the character and circumstances of their black neighbors and workers and their own place in society. The movement for racial equality changed race relations and altered attitudes, transformed institutions and towns, and upended tradition. It also caused profound changes in whites as individuals. Drawing on recorded interviews and published and unpublished articles chronicling the turbulent times between 1945 and 1975, Sokol presents a portrait of white people in the frontline southern towns, from Little Rock and Atlanta to Birmingham and rural North Carolina. Sokol illustrates the complexity of the human drama behind the civil rights movement from the perspective of those whose cherished way of life was gone forever, those who felt liberated, and those who found new, subtler ways to practice their hate. This is a fascinating look at a side of the civil rights movement that has not been a widely explored aspect of one of the greatest social transformations in U.S. history. *Vanessa Bush*
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Review
“Fascinating and remarkably empathetic.” —*The Atlantic Monthly*“[*There Goes My Everything* is] on my personal list of the year’s best books.” —Jonathan Yardley, *The Washington Post* “A richly documented, often compellingly dramatic narrative, whose strength is its absence of polemic.” —*Dallas Morning News*"As eye-opening a look at race relations in the Civil Rights Era as anything this side of Dr. King's own *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*."—*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*“Simply stunning…This is one of the few books about the civil rights movement…that gets it right…Deserves to be read by every American.” —*Tucson Citizen*

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