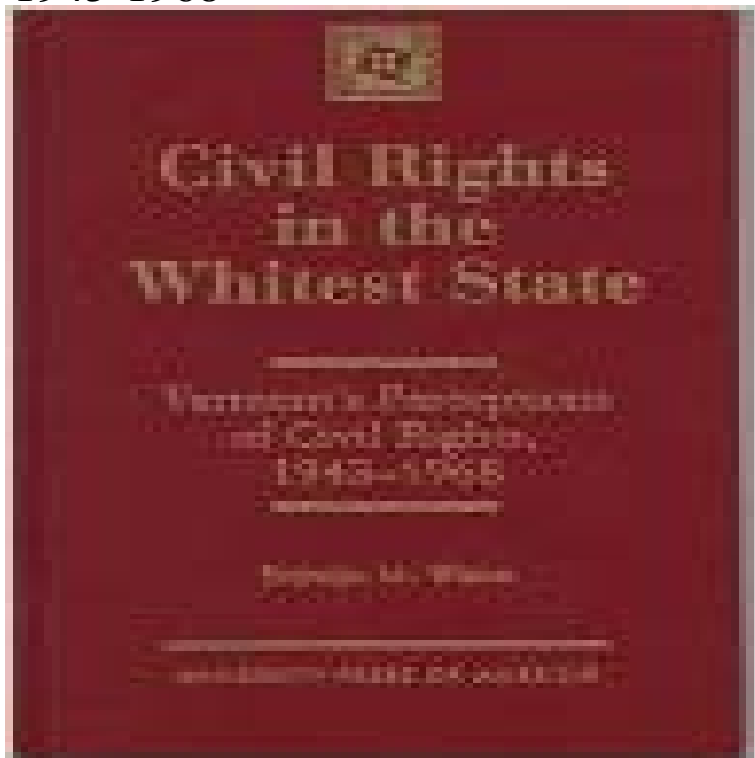


Civil Rights in the Whitest State: Vermonts Perceptions of Civil Rights, 1945-1968



This book convincingly demonstrates that the national struggle for black civil rights raged not only on the campuses, courtrooms, voting booths, and establishments of the South, but also as far north as Vermont. With 519 black residents in 1960, barely .1% of the states population, Vermont was considered to be the whitest state in the Union. As the first state to prohibit slavery and grant universal male suffrage, many of Vermonts citizens fancied themselves enlightened advocates of racial and political egalitarianism. Most considered the national movement for black equality to be primarily an effort to desegregate the South in the Norths image. In *Civil Rights in the Whitest State*, Stephen M. Wrinn explains why residents reactions to the movement did not conform to their self-perceptions of racial enlightenment. Using a wealth of primary evidence, the author shows how the movements shifting focus from voting rights to public accommodations and fair housing raised Vermonters apprehensions that compulsory integration threatened their rights of associations, privacy, and private property. Many Vermonters who supported a civil rights movement confined to the South resisted modifying their own practices and denied that racial discrimination existed in the state. Wrinn demonstrates how Vermont Senator George D. Aiken reflected the sentiments of many Vermonters at the national level by providing a crucial compromise that secured passage of the most comprehensive civil rights legislation in the nations history, the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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