



# **Southern Stalemate: Five Years without Public Education in Prince Edward County, Virginia**

*Christopher Bonastia*

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In 1959, Virginia's Prince Edward County closed its public schools rather than obey a court order to desegregate. For five years, black children were left to fend for themselves while the courts decided if the county could continue to deny its citizens public education. Investigating this remarkable and nearly forgotten story of local, state, and federal political confrontation, Christopher Bonastia recounts the test of wills that pitted resolute African Americans against equally steadfast white segregationists in a battle over the future of public education in America.

Beginning in 1951 when black high school students protested unequal facilities and continuing through the return of whites to public schools in the 1970s and 1980s, Bonastia describes the struggle over education during the civil rights era and the human suffering that came with it, as well as the inspiring determination of black residents to see justice served. Artfully exploring the lessons of the Prince Edward saga, *Southern Stalemate* unearths new insights about the evolution of modern conservatism and the politics of race in America.

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