



# From Textbooks to Tea Parties: An Appalachian Antecedent of Anti- Obama Rebellion

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## ABSTRACT

The excitement over a new radio documentary about a 1974 curriculum dispute in Kanawha County, West Virginia, blended with the excitement over anti-Obama administration tea party gatherings in the summer of 2009. By fall of that year, people were listening to “The Great Textbook War of 1974” on West Virginia Public Radio and declaring that “Kanawha County Held the First Tea Party 35 Years Ago.” This essay argues that the famous textbook controversy was one among many precursors to the current conservative rebellion, and warns against romanticizing or demonizing West Virginia protesters whose links to national organizers and conservative supporters, which are often overlooked, strengthen their likeness to today’s tea partiers. Drawing from more extensive arguments in *Reading Appalachia from Left to Right: Conservatives and the 1974 Kanawha County Textbook Controversy*, this essay situates the conflict in the evolving right-wing discourses of the times, as well as in the context of cultural assumptions about Appalachia. Doing so helps acknowledge the influence of the West Virginia dispute on today’s uprisings without reducing the multiple issues and variety of protesters involved then and now to a simplistic, dualistic feud.

## ARTICLE

The excitement over a new radio documentary about a 1974 curriculum dispute in Kanawha County, West Virginia, blended with the excitement over anti-Obama administration tea party gatherings in the summer of 2009. By fall of that year, people were listening to “The Great Textbook War of 1974” on West Virginia Public Radio and declaring that “Kanawha County Held the First Tea Party 35 Years Ago.”<sup>1</sup> This essay argues that the famous textbook controversy was one among many precursors to the current conservative rebellion, and warns against romanticizing or demonizing West Virginia protesters whose links to national organizers and conservative supporters, which are often overlooked, strengthen their likeness to today’s tea partiers. Drawing from more extensive arguments in *Reading Appalachia from Left to Right: Conservatives and the 1974 Kanawha County Textbook Controversy*, this essay situates the conflict in the evolving right-wing discourses of the times, as well as in the context of cultural assumptions about Appalachia.<sup>2</sup> Doing so helps acknowledge the influence of the West Virginia dispute on today’s uprisings without reducing the multiple issues and variety of protesters involved then and now to a simplistic, dualistic feud.

## QUICK COMPARISONS

At first glance, there are some compelling similarities between the Kanawha County textbook controversy and tea party protests. For instance, the earliest objections to the controversial language arts curriculum were made in 1974 by Alice Moore, a white conservative Christian woman whose maternity functioned as de facto moral authority. Tea party hero and 2008 vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin bears a striking historical resemblance to her in terms of conservative agendas and controversy surrounding their gender. The *Charleston Gazette* implied a connection when it reported in 2010 that “at the age of 69, [Moore] paid \$560 to cheer Sarah Palin at the National Tea Party Convention at Nashville. Moore told reporters that troubles arose because 1960s radicals became schoolteachers

and warped the young. ‘This is what led us to the election of this president,’ Moore said.”<sup>3</sup> Without explaining the cultural logic behind this statement, the paper documents that Palin and Moore not only oppose the Obama administration, but also suggests that the two conservative women have naïve views of politics.

In addition, the vehemence of tea party confrontations in the summer of 2009 seemed to recall the violence that erupted in Kanawha County in 1974. Angry town hall meetings about health care reform seemed to harken back to angry public hearings about multiracial textbooks. However, according again to the *Gazette*, which then as now admonished protesters, the tea party “movement is gentle by comparison. We haven’t heard of any tea partiers throwing dynamite into schools or firing bullets into schoolbuses.”<sup>4</sup>

Those who opposed the textbooks in 1974 suggest that their protest was an originary moment, the point at which people began to wake up and start a conservative revolution. Avis Hill, a minister who led protests against the curriculum, said in 2009 that “the 1974 upheaval launched America’s conservative ‘culture war’ that is continued today by Tea Party protesters.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, some opponents of the multiracial books proposed in 1974 in Kanawha County have forthrightly claimed the tea party movement as the legacy of their grassroots protests thirty-five years earlier. But there remains some doubt as to whether the protests of 2009 or 1974 are best described as grassroots because of ties to national organizers and wealthy conservative supporters.

Critics of the tea party movement have questioned the grassroots nature of today’s conservative rebellion, a reaction to the Obama administration. “Commenters such as Paul Krugman have cited the presence of FreedomWorks inside the Tea Parties as proof that the Tea Parties are an ‘astroturf’ phenomenon—a sleight-of-hand effort manufactured by inside-the-Beltway organizations to concoct the appearance of grassroots support. This suspicion is not completely unfounded.”<sup>6</sup> It is well documented that elite conservatives such as former House majority leader Dick Armey (through his organization, FreedomWorks) and the billionaire brothers David and Charles Koch (supporting, for example, Scott Walker, the Wisconsin governor

from the tea party) have financially backed different tea party efforts.<sup>7</sup> This kind of support for conservative campaigns should shock no one familiar with right-wing movements in America.<sup>8</sup> With the particular case of the Koch brothers, for example, the bankrolling of conservative causes is a family tradition. Their father, Fred Koch, was active a generation before them, serving on the National Advisory Committee of the Christian Crusade, a right-wing organization committed to promoting free enterprise while opposing communism, those perceived to be communists, and progressive education, especially sex education.<sup>9</sup> The financial backing of conservative campaigns by the Kochs or FreedomWorks, however, does not necessarily mean that there is something inauthentic about tea partiers, the people who engage in those conservative causes. “It would be an analytical mistake of the first order,” we are rightly warned, “to conflate FreedomWorks’ corporate machinations with the grassroots insurgency of the Tea Parties.”<sup>10</sup>

So, too, it would be a mistake to suggest that the 1974 book protesters in Kanawha County were inauthentic in their actions or motives because national organizations and famous conservatives were connected to them. The fact, for example, that the aforementioned Christian Crusade hosted Alice Moore at its headquarters, flying her to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to give a speech, and using the audiotapes and direct-mail referencing Kanawha County for fund-raising, does not discount Moore as a truly concerned, self-motivated conservative.<sup>11</sup> She was not a mere tool or puppet of the Christian Crusade, even if they profited from her visit. Acknowledging connections among the protesters in West Virginia and national conservative entities does not delegitimize anyone. Rather, it shows how influential the textbook controversy was in helping to shape today’s conservatism, a history lesson useful to all regardless of political persuasion.

It also shows the value of situating the West Virginia battle in the contexts of conservative organizations, discourses, and anxieties of the day. The textbook controversy drew from a rich array of conservative, populist, and even revolutionary ideas, tactics, and rhetoric, including those expressed by such diverse organizations



and nationally known individuals as the John Birch Society, Citizen Councils, the American Party, the Ku Klux Klan, the Heritage Foundation, National Alliance, Max Rafferty, Carl McIntyre, and the Christian Crusade, among others. But recent media representations commemorating the textbook controversy's thirty-fifth anniversary largely ignore these multiple contexts and precursors in order to present the conflict in a dualistic manner.

As coda to *Reading Appalachia from Left to Right: Conservatives and the 1974 Kanawha County Textbook Controversy*, this article argues that, in assessing the extent to which the famous Kanawha County textbook controversy of 1974 is a precursor to current and recent populist protests, it is imperative to address multiple influences and not to fall into old stereotypes about Appalachians, such as their supposed inherent violence, intolerance, and penchant for feuding. Equally important is to avoid more romantic stereotypes that glorify Appalachians as noble frontiersmen, and courageous resisters to modern corruptions. It may be true that the earlier dispute in Kanawha County played a pivotal role in shifting the country toward conservatism. But without proper attention to the broader national contexts and the deployment (for good or ill) of cultural assumptions about Appalachia, tracing such a historical genealogy runs the risk of romanticizing or demonizing both the textbook protesters of thirty-five years ago and the tea partiers of today. What follows is a description of the Kanawha County textbook controversy, an analysis of the 2009 radio documentary that revived interest in the conflict of 1974, and a case study of one of the West Virginia textbook opponents, Avis Hill, whose story emblemizes the shift to conservatism that millions of Americans made in the last thirty-five years. In conclusion are suggestions for further research that can continue to clarify rather than romanticize or demonize this aspect of West Virginia history.

#### A CONTROVERSY UNFOLDS<sup>12</sup>

In April 1974 the Kanawha County board of education gathered for a routine meeting in Charleston, West Virginia. On the agenda

was a report from a textbook selection committee that had worked ten months to decide which new language arts curriculum to recommend for adoption for all levels, through grade twelve. The curriculum they chose included more than three hundred titles from mainstream publishers.<sup>13</sup> In dutiful fashion, the selection committee described the books they chose and their procedures for ensuring that the books met a state-sanctioned mandate to include multiethnic and multiracial literature in the new curriculum. Everyone seemed surprised when the only female board member, Alice Moore, objected to the selection committee's report by raising questions about the books, even though she admitted she had not yet read them. With a flurry of accusations about the committee's purpose, its relationship to national "anti-American" trends, and particular concerns over lessons in dialect that she and others referred to as "ghetto" language, Alice Moore sparked the controversy.

She succeeded in delaying but not stopping the purchase of the curriculum, which proponents saw as tools to teach reading and writing as artful communication in relevant multiethnic social contexts. Book supporters did not mind that this new language arts curriculum eschewed phonics, replacing them with "reading for meaning" and "look-say" methods. But opponents of the curriculum were skeptical of the methods and contents; they said the books advocated unprincipled relativism, promoted antagonistic behavior, contained obscene material, put down Jesus Christ, and upheld communism. Throughout the spring and summer, thousands of protesters mobilized, objecting to the books as well as the board's selection process. At a board of education hearing on June 27, 1974, more than a thousand citizens showed up to debate the new textbooks. After listening to them for nearly three hours, the school board voted three to two to purchase the books.

During the June meeting, testimony from the protesters varied in terms of emotionalism and argument, with some articulating points regarding the duty of elected officials to serve the people's will, and others raising precise questions about appropriateness of content. Internal documents demonstrate that pro-textbook board members

considered closely some of the specific complaints against the new curriculum.<sup>14</sup> At least one board member, Harry Stansbury, was concerned enough by charges about an elite conspiracy of educators that he noted the backgrounds of each of the teachers who served on the original textbook selection committee. What he learned was that all five teachers were raised and educated in West Virginia; two were not born in West Virginia but had been residents since at least high school. The selection committee members, all women, had bachelors' degrees and some graduate credentials from such familiar local institutions as Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia State College in Institute, Concord College in Athens, Morris Harvey College in Charleston, and West Virginia University in Morgantown. Therefore, to Stansbury, protesters' claims of infiltrating elites seemed far-fetched. But the question of parental involvement in book selection was a salient point that the board would not fully consider until forced to later. Alice Moore and protest leaders felt ignored by the board's June decision to purchase the curriculum and kept mobilizing Kanawha County residents throughout the summer.

When the academic year began in the fall, organized protests increased. In late August, parents agreed to boycott the schools and some businesses. According to local reporters, during the first week of September, "nearly twenty-five percent of the county's 45,000 students did not report to the first class day of the school year"; about "2,000 people attended an anti-textbook rally at Campbells Creek"; "3,500 coal miners walked off jobs in a wildcat strike not due to start until November" to show support for the opposition; and "protesters shut down the city bus system, leaving 11,000 customers without transportation."<sup>15</sup> Facing these profound demonstrations of dissent, the school board closed the schools for three days, removed the controversial books from classrooms, and called for a group of citizens and parents to review the books.

In October and November, tensions were so high that members of both sides of the controversy issued threats and committed acts of violence. Gunshots were fired from book opponents and proponents at picket sites and schools. Arson and bombs briefly closed down four elementary schools. School buildings were vandalized,



sometimes with Klan and Nazi insignia. Fifteen sticks of dynamite caused significant damage at the board of education office building. A federal grand jury indicted several men for conspiring to blow up more schools and television and radio towers.

Parents continued boycotts amidst continuing protests. A march organized in favor of academic freedom attracted about one thousand supporters of the books and of the school board. Two days later, four times as many protesters walked three miles from the Civic Center to the state capitol in a formidable show of resistance. Some students staged counter-protests and claimed their right to read. Private Christian schools were set up as alternatives to the public school system. Meanwhile, the review committee approved by the board of education could not reach a consensus (a majority recommended accepting “all but 35 of the 325 books”; a minority recommended banning 180 of the books). With the committee’s input, the school board took a vote on November 9, 1974. The ruling was in favor of returning almost all of the controversial books to the classroom, with the exception that “the 35 most controversial books were . . . placed in school libraries to be read only by students with parental permission.”<sup>16</sup>



Legitimate comparisons of the 1974 Kanawha County textbook controversy and today's populist rebellions may note that the former heralded a shift away from local protest culture that favored labor rights, away from Old Right conservatism that spoke in terms of anticommunism, and toward a New Right narrative against secular humanism. As we see here, during the textbook controversy, generations of protest merged as youth with long hair and bell-bottom jeans marched alongside right-wing demonstrators carrying Confederate and Klan flags. The local legacy of leftist resistance gave way to conservative campaigns in Kanawha County in 1974. *Sunday Gazette-Mail*, December 1, 1974.



By 1974, media were accustomed to framing Appalachian “class warfare” as matter for entertainment and pathos. Photographs echoed documentary styles from the great depression and the war on poverty, and images like this circulated internationally despite the fact that no one asked this woman her name or reported what specific rights she felt denied. Recent representations of the 1974 controversy as the first modern tea party follow contemporary media trends to “bluewash the mountaineer,” striving to jettison hillbilly stereotypes but still portraying the multifaceted conflict as a violent two-sided feud. *Charleston Daily Mail*, September 3, 1974.

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In December, a West Virginia teachers’ association invited the National Education Association to Charleston to investigate the chaos. At approximately the same time, the Ku Klux Klan made its first public support for the textbook protests when a grand dragon arrived from Ohio to discuss the issue on a Huntington radio station. By this point, national news teams had visited the area; Kanawha County became the subject of discussions on the CBS news magazine *60 Minutes* and the biggest talk show of the time, *Donahue*. In

January 1975 national Ku Klux Klan leaders made a media splash on the West Virginia capitol steps and legal hearings regarding the October bombings of schools began. But, by and large, the direct action of marches, rallies, and vandalism waned.

Perhaps the protests subsided in January because attention to the Klan and the bombings were tainting the Kanawha Valley as a place of extremists. Or perhaps protesters felt they had substantial victory in forcing the board to create a review committee, in getting the most objectionable books out, and in compelling some school board officials to resign. Or maybe it was just the drizzly winter that kept the masses from gathering. When spring came, the coal strikes were over, the big rallies were gone, and the books were in the classrooms.

REPRESENTING THE CONTROVERSY, 2009

In the fall of 2009 “The Great Textbook War of 1974,” a radio documentary produced by John Kay III, premiered amidst a flurry of publicity and events.<sup>17</sup> The Kanawha Valley Historical and Preservation Society launched a traveling exhibit about the textbook controversy and organized an October 6 panel discussion that brought together some of the people featured in the radio documentary, which aired on National Public Radio on October 22 and 29 and again on November 26, 2009. By spring 2010, the documentary had won two prestigious awards; a revised version of the program was distributed by American Radio Works.<sup>18</sup> “The Great Textbook War of 1974” included many voices that were featured in Calvin Skaggs’s 1995 PBS television documentary on the conflict, an episode of *With God on Our Side*, which chronicled the rise of the right since the 1960s. Namely, those central figures were James Lewis and Kenneth Underwood (representing those who supported adoption of the new curriculum), Alice Moore and Avis Hill (representing those who opposed the books), and Connaught (Connie) Marshner, whose relationship with Kanawha County protesters was only suggested by Skaggs’s pairing, in one episode, the events of the textbook controversy with a later protest of Jimmy Carter’s White House Conference on Families, which Marshner

helped orchestrate. The panel discussion on October 6 also featured the same people, including Skaggs himself.

Despite its similarity to Skaggs's work, many saw the documentary's emphasis on exploring the points of view of protesters as a revelation. Editor of the *Charleston Gazette* newspaper Jim Haight, for example, praised the radio program for "details and incidents" he was unaware of: "Now I understand the mentality of the protesters better."<sup>19</sup> During the October 6 event, which also aired on WVPB, the panelists' dialogue elicited some important changes from earlier discussions, indicating new perspectives that had evolved over the years.

For example, Alice Moore was not referred to as "sweet Alice" in the derogatory way she had been or attacked in the sexist fashion of the 1970s. Moreover, she was forthright about condemning "secular humanism"—a term just becoming *au courant* during the time of the textbook controversy. This was important because the concept of secular humanism became solidified during the years of the Kanawha County protest and was subsequently popularized by the Heritage Foundation through publications and campaigns such as those written and organized by Connie Marshner. In a 1978 book Marshner had offered Alice Moore as an exemplar for parents—mothers especially—to organize against so-called secular humanists. During the panel discussion Marshner was accosted for using Kanawha County residents during the textbook controversy as a means of raising money for the Heritage Foundation. However, at the time of the conflict, it was Marshner's Heritage Foundation colleague, James McKenna, who was publicly resented as the outsider coming into Charleston to exploit a local dispute. Despite these novelties (the explicit mention of secular humanism from Moore and the direct confrontation of Marshner) which had not been part of the public discourse in 1974-1975, some felt that the panel discussion pretty much followed suit—so much so that one of the weary panelists threatened to walk off because he had heard it all before. Moreover, no person of color served on the panel to discuss a conflict that had erupted over the multiracial literature curriculum. In terms of racial representation, then, the panel



unfortunately continued to paint the textbook controversy as a white-on-white conflict instead of exploring the effect of the dispute on African American residents of Charleston.

Likewise, the radio documentary itself follows established patterns and draws (consciously or not) from some existing representations of the textbook protest, such as it being “a storm in the mountains,” and of Appalachians in general, especially that of feuding. These were very effective notes to strike because people like a good story about feuding “hillbillies,” those iconic people of American culture and letters. The more violent the feud, the better. The stronger the voices, the better. The more entrenched the fight, the better. And by better, they mean more authentic, more entertaining, and more marketable. So “The Great Textbook War of 1974” has a great sound. The documentary reintroduced the 1974 dispute as a fascinating drama to today’s listening and internet audience, a public primed to receive it because it follows established and new trends in media representations of mountain people.

As suggested earlier, the yearlong dispute was an intense uprising. Historical records attest to a remarkable array of protest tactics (marches, boycotts, strikes, arson, gunfire, pickets) and an equally interesting variety of arguments against the books. Archival materials reveal that some arguments against the books were issued from neo-Nazis bemoaning purported Jewish-controlled publishing, some from racists who wanted the “nigger books out,” some presuming the books were pushing communism and pornography, some calling for parental rights to oust ineffective school officials, some fearful of Satan, others still suggesting that the books portended a new threat called humanism. But despite this variety of tactics and arguments against the curriculum, media have persisted in portraying the multilayered, nuanced controversy as a mainly violent feud between only two camps, book opponents and book supporters. Through the years the protesters have been explained in toto as working-class warriors, racist reactionaries, or righteous fundamentalists refusing to relinquish traditional values.

Featuring some new first-person accounts of what it was like to grow up in the area during the fight, “The Great Textbook War of

1974” repackages the conflict for a new generation of Hillbillyland consumers. This is not to say that it simply replaces one stereotype of the hillbilly fool with its flipside, the noble mountaineer. On the contrary, the documentary follows a very contemporary trend of representing Appalachia.

As Douglas Reichert Powell explains in *Appalachian Journal*, contemporary television has “bluewashed” Appalachian characters, avoiding the either-or depictions of the hillbilly fool/noble frontiersman. Shows like *My Name is Earl* and *The Office* indicate “a bellwether shift” in pop-culture representations of Appalachians, presenting the “hillbilly imagined not in terms of his difference from the rest of the world but in terms of his involvement in it.” There is a new assimilation of “hillbillies into a larger culture.”<sup>20</sup> Powell situates this new representation in politics, recognizing that the cultural work it does is to move us closer to a “breakthrough on the cultural-political deadlock of Red v. Blue.”<sup>21</sup> Recent depictions of Appalachians prompt viewers, who otherwise might stereotypically consider them too conservative and backward, to “wonder out loud if maybe we haven’t been a little too hard on these folks.”<sup>22</sup> Likewise, “The Great Textbook War” recuperates the usually denigrated protesters of 1974 by situating them in the red versus blue thinking that dominates contemporary popular media and by bemoaning the “whirlwind” of feuding which results from it. The documentary goes so far as to suggest that the Kanawha County dispute was the original sin that begat today’s blue versus red feud. To do so, however, it has to veer away from historical documentary and move more into the realm of local color fiction.

Setting is crucial to this move. “The Great Textbook War” emphasizes Kanawha County’s geography as a cultural divide, opening with a description of “the affluent part” of Charleston, West Virginia—as if there were only one section of the city with wealthy residents. We hear “the Hill” described as being “like Anywhere Suburbia, USA—kids playing on cul-de-sacs, dads cooking burgers on outdoor grills.” Juxtaposed to this setting where neighbors are likely to be “doctors, lawyers, business people” who attend “mainstream churches” are “the outskirts of Charleston.”

“The twisting, bumpy roads wound through hills and hollows past small towns and mining camps. There are general stores and filling stations, men in grease-covered overalls and dozens of little churches filled to capacity on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings.” From this beginning, the documentary provides a dichotomous setting, and it ends that way, too. After fifty-seven minutes of listening to increasingly violent protests, we hear the soothing sounds of babbling brook and learn that the Kanawha River “ages ago cut a deep winding valley,” carving what would become Kanawha County into two parts—ostensibly “the Hill” and the “outskirts of Charleston.” This depiction of the urban/liberal versus rural/conservative setting of the 1974 Kanawha County textbook controversy is fiction, not because it is prettily told, but because it defies the fact that only some of the protesters were based in the rural, working-class communities near Charleston.

The most moneyed and influential of book opponents were from South Charleston, St. Albans, and Nitro, areas that are technically on the outskirts of Charleston, but are also urban and suburban rather than rural and Mayberry-like. Alice Moore, for example, who sparked the conflict, lived in the city of St. Albans, and did not “venture into the coal mining portion of the county,” opting instead to rally “the mothers of the affluent western portion of it.”<sup>23</sup> As for the working-class ministers who organized mass rallies and marches throughout Charleston, Moore once said, “I draw back, I get a little embarrassed by . . . crowds, by marching in parades, by emotionalism, by anything like that, by marching in the streets.”<sup>24</sup> But exploring differences among protesters is not a priority for “The Great Textbook War.” It glosses over the fact that the rural Campbells Creek residents were an embarrassment to people like Moore and Elmer Fike, a Nitro-based chemical industrialist and local conservative columnist who wrote a great deal during the conflict, bringing it to the attention of political elites.

“The Great Textbook War” acknowledges the role of such Washington insiders in its interview with Connie Marshner and Larry Pratt, two members of the nascent D.C.-based Heritage Foundation that used the controversy as a fund-raising cause. Pratt,

whose ties to white supremacist and militia groups forced him to resign as cochair of Pat Buchanan's 1996 presidential campaign, discusses helping out the West Virginia protesters in 1974. We also hear Marshner explain that in 1974 viewers saw "the network stories on Kanawha County all over the country . . . and said, 'Oh, I'm not the only one who has these problems, it's not just my school district, it's not just my family, I'm part of something bigger.'" We do not hear what she wrote earlier, which was that "blacks are proud to be blacks, and want their public education system to foster that pride in their offspring; Chicanos want Chicano language, customs, and attitudes taught to their children. Middle-class whites do not agitate for 'white studies' courses; the equivalent demand is for traditional American and Christian values."<sup>25</sup> For Marshner and the nascent New Right, "traditional American and Christian values" equaled a "neo-ethnicity" of whiteness without calling it white.<sup>26</sup>

"The Great Textbook War" thus handles the issue of race without deep exploration. For a dispute that erupted over multiracial literature and the state's mandate that called for a curriculum more inclusive of something other than white guys, it seems unbalanced to devote only about two minutes of a sixty-minute documentary to the voices of African Americans who lived in Kanawha County at the time. We hear the lead opponent of the books, Alice Moore, suggest that blacks were against the books because they lowered standards of good grammar and provided bad role models. Listeners do not hear her purport, as she did in a 1975 interview, that the outcome of the new curriculum "would be that middle-class students would learn to speak in ghetto dialect," that is, black vernacular.<sup>27</sup> And, as the few African American voices in the documentary indicate, the local NAACP did not oppose the books or find Moore a credible spokesperson for them. If Moore felt that the educators who selected the books were talking down to her, a high-school graduate, it apparently had no effect on her own paternalistic impulses to tell the black parents of Charleston which writers their children should read.

That is not to say that Moore and other book opponents were not belittled. She especially suffered rampant sexism and deserved better portrayal in the media than what she received. "The Great

Textbook War of 1974” goes far to remedy unfair portrayals. Indeed, the documentary produces empathy for the West Virginia protesters. But, as Douglas Reichert Powell says of *The Appalachians*, another recent documentary pertaining to the region, it “generates empathy at the cost of the facts of the case.”<sup>28</sup>

“The Great Textbook War” re-manufactures the sense of a feud between two camps alone: poor downtrodden traditionalists who are “not going to take it any more,” and a seemingly omnipresent “liberalism.” But, lest we forget, in 1974 the establishment was comprised of old right conservatives whose power was being challenged by leftist politics, liberal reform (including education reform, of which the new textbooks were a product), an emergent New Right, a reawakened organized white supremacist movement, and newly politicized evangelicals. We would not know that from listening to “The Great Textbook War,” which does not recognize the changing definitions of conservatism and other political ideologies since the 1970s. The goal is good radio, not historical precision.

This is evident as the documentary moves toward its conclusion with the idea that today’s tea party protesters have it better than their textbook protester forebears, those pioneers breaking a civilizing path through a supposedly liberal wilderness. We hear former textbook protester Avis Hill say how much better it is now that the country has swung further to the right. “In 1974 when we got started, there was no Fox News, there was no Rush Limbaughs, there was no Sean Hannitys.” But the records show that there were Carl McIntyre, Max Rafferty, Billy James Hargis, William Pierce, Robert Whitaker, Robert Hoy, and most locally, Elmer Fike and George Dietz, all of whom had well-oiled publicity machines that fueled the flames of the West Virginia protest with right-wing populism.<sup>29</sup> By ignoring all of these influences and by consistently portraying an us-versus-them situation, when in fact there were many factions and numerous issues in flux, “The Great Textbook War of 1974” comes across as another story of a feud in the Appalachians, another storm in the mountains, a “whirlwind” of conflict in the Kanawha Valley.

“The Great Textbook War of 1974” is great listening because of the



quality of the voices as well as the content of the story, which heavily emphasizes violent episodes of the dispute. We hear disrupted meetings, yelling, brawls, news reports of bombings and gunfire, tales of mobs gathered to fend off blacks who were purportedly coming to rumble with the book opponents, and the courtroom disclosure of a plan for more violence that could have resulted in killing school children. We hear “anarchy.” It sounds familiar. By placing the old textbook controversy in the new context of the tea party protests, “The Great Textbook War” amplifies those voices that suggest we should consider vociferous town hall meetings of 2009 as something that originated in 1974 from so American a place as Appalachia, and is really, therefore, a righteous prophecy come true.

It may be difficult for some to accept such a romantic re-contextualization. The documentary closes like a mournfully didactic fable: “Sometimes it seems we sit with our own tribe on the opposite banks of the river, believing that the world would be better if the other side simply went away.” In the contemporary media trend of recuperating the mountaineer image—a trend of which “The Great Textbook War of 1974” seems unwittingly to be part—many may find comfort in this pastoral idea that what happened in West Virginia years ago can explain today’s multiple struggles. Instead of creating an oversimplified vision of the textbook controversy and the tea party gatherings as a red-versus-blue feud, or as two tribes sitting on opposite banks of the river, we can compare the two protest movements using the abundance of historical data available.

Oral history interviews conducted after the textbook controversy offer fresh insights that are truer to the historical moment. Unlike retrospective interviews conducted today or newly penned personal narratives that reflect on events and feelings of thirty-five years ago, archived oral histories of those involved in the textbook controversy are sources that have not been influenced by recent events or alliances, or fogged by failing memory and willful forgetting. Especially in a time when political spin encourages historical amnesia—for example, conservatives recently incredibly asserted that there had been no terrorist attacks while George W. Bush was president<sup>30</sup>—it is all the more important to cross-reference any new

statements with existing ones. Doing so reveals a more nuanced and detailed picture that can not only report what happened but also analyze how. In particular, examining the textbook controversy as historical precursor to today's culture wars should entail an analysis of how people came to see the textbooks as evidence of epic corruption and infringement of rights. What compelled people to join the fight against the textbooks? What arguments and alliances were most persuasive? And who was promoting those arguments and alliances?

Just as many observers of the tea party have pointed to the orchestration of apparently grassroots “folk” by political elites such as Dick Armey, it would be historically inaccurate to ignore the way Washington-based organizers attempted to package the West Virginia protest as solely an independent, organic uprising even as they sought to shape it. We can see in the story of one of the most vocal of the “veteran” Kanawha County protesters, Avis Hill, an example of such effective mobilizing. Much can be learned by examining Hill's coming to faith as it transformed into a coming to politics.

#### COMING TO FAITH, COMING TO POLITICS

Thirty-five years after the textbook controversy, Pastor Avis Hill appeared again in Charleston newspapers. Traveling from his home in Florida, Hill helped organize a reunion of textbook protesters in August 2009.<sup>31</sup> Retaining much of the revolutionary rhetoric he used in the 1970s, Hill is consistent in perceiving society's downfall in apocalyptic terms. His story is exemplary of the historical and discursive process by which one man made the transition from an apolitical evangelical to a member of the Christian Right. In particular, his life illustrates how the New Right emphasis on secular humanism, combined with political agitation from right-wing populists, reproduced working-class Christians as advocates for right-wing causes. In a 1985 interview, Hill recounts not only his own coming to faith from a life of sin by accepting Christ as

his savior, but also extends that story to express how he became politically connected to the New Right.

About a year after Hill was “saved” and experienced a conversion to evangelical Christianity, “the Lord called me into the ministry.” He began organizing meetings in the tent revival tradition that attracted “a tremendous outpouring of young people” in the St. Albans area, adjacent to the city of Charleston. Hill suggested that he was reluctant to join such campaigns because “I felt that God was wanting me in evangelism particularly.”<sup>32</sup> Taught for years to distinguish between politics and preaching, Hill considered electoral officials to be unavoidably crooked: “If you’re a good man that goes into office, he’ll be crooked before he gets out.” Like many Christian fundamentalists before the New Right and Christian Right gained any influence, Hill felt political campaigns to be worldly work that conflicted with his more Godly work and that he should “let the politicians handle the politics and I’ll handle church.” But Hill was repeatedly approached throughout the summer of 1974 to become involved with local issues: “Oh, yes, a number of times” they approached him. At first he rejected how “they were trying to get me involved” in the textbook controversy by remaining faithful to the worldview he was brought up with: “No, I really don’t have time, I’m into the ministry. I’m into the work of the Lord and I’m evangelizing.” So organizers whom Hill does not name asked if he would lead a prayer at the opening of the next protest meeting of about 250 people. It was there that he began to shift his opinion on working in local disputes.

Shown “the language of [*sic*] the textbooks had to offer,” Hill began to reflect on his own daughter’s educational experiences. In particular, he recalled how she received a failing grade for a report on creationism that she gave in defiance of the assigned report on evolution. At the time, Hill did not think much of the incident, but, in the context of the textbook controversy, “then it dawned on me.” According to Hill, “at that time, everyone was talking about a generation gap,” which, in light of his daughter’s experience, Hill began to see as a disconnection not between parents and children but between teachers and students, just as right-wing,

anticommunist discourse had been saying for nearly two decades. But Hill's rendition of the *What They Are Doing to Your Children* and *Why Johnny Can't Read* rhetoric from the 1950s and 1960s reflects the important shift that happened around the time of the textbook controversy. Instead of demonizing communists it blames secular humanism. In Hill's version of the New Right narrative, parents are "packing Johnny's lunch bucket, combing his hair, patting him on the head and say[ing], 'Honey, you go to school today now. You mind what your teacher says.'" But parents are oblivious that, according to Hill, "the philosophy of the textbooks [is] secularism." He believed that "the attitudes of evolution and all that is being thrown into their heads. And then coming home and the parents having another standard. So there was a generation gap. There was a pulling apart thing. And I thought, 'Hey, here's where the trouble is.' So that's the day I got involved" in the local campaign to protest books in Kanawha County.

In the context of secular humanism, Hill's daughter's encounter with evolution in school seems to become something more sinister than a lesson in the history of science. The teacher's response appears as something more suspicious than the very common response to a student who fails to do the assignment. It becomes, instead, a sign of the conspiracy of (in the lingo of Connie Marshner's book) "educational professionals" exercising their "blackboard tyranny."<sup>33</sup> The New Right narrative of secular humanism reads the young Hill girl as a heroic resister to dreaded tyranny and the teacher as a nefarious accomplice for assigning a report on evolution, the single most influential scientific theory of the nineteenth century. Avis Hill, moreover, appears as the unwitting parent who sees the light of such tyranny at last, after numerous attempts to convince him to abandon his desire to keep "preaching behind the pulpits and in the churches and leave the politicking up to" the politicians.

But more than local agitators came to call on Hill. When asked about whether Alice Moore's invitation to get Texas textbook monitors Mel and Norma Gabler involved was a good move or not, Hill answered in a way that emphasized that conservative strategists

came without invitations. “Yes, I think [Moore’s requesting the Gablers to come to Charleston] was a good move. I think it was a fine move. The fact of the matter, the reason why we probably went out of the state and brought people, not necessarily that did we go out and get them, but they came to us. . . . But they saw that there was an opportunity, a chance here in Kanawha Valley because of the Bible Belt and the fundamental beliefs of the people and the miners. Then they saw the opportunity for them. So they wanted to pull their alliance with us because we had the largest number of people” among other textbook skirmishes elsewhere in the nation. “But they came to us more than we came to them.” Hill mentions the Heritage Foundation and discusses how he traveled to Boston, McKeesport, and other places where Washington conservatives aimed to aid grassroots uprisings.

In particular, Robert Whitaker and Robert Hoy of the Populist Forum helped Avis Hill connect politically with other groups nationally. The Populist Forum was a small organization, consisting primarily of Hoy, Whitaker, and Whitaker’s wife, Brigitte. Its goals were to mobilize or agitate on the local level, connect those smaller uprisings regionally, and build bridges internationally among what Hoy referred to as “populist militants.”<sup>34</sup> In this way, the Populist Forum was an interesting organization whose projects and members were involved in both New Right conservatism and ultra-right white supremacy.

Hoy, for instance, not only had a key role in Avis Hill’s protesting work, but “was also meeting with nationalist groups influenced by national socialism,” that is, Nazi ideology.<sup>35</sup> This led to praising “various neo-Nazi nationalist movements in *Spotlight*, an anti-Semitic newspaper controlled by the quasi-Nazi Liberty Lobby in Washington, D.C. Hoy’s photographic essays and articles for *Spotlight* have praised neo-Nazi skinhead groups, the fascist National Front in Great Britain, and other similar groups.” Despite this engagement in ultra-right activities, Hoy was welcomed in the New Right set. For example, he “contributed an essay to *The New Right Papers*, where he called for ‘seizing the time’ to make a right-wing ‘revolution,’ noting that Americans had ‘made one revolution



in 1775. If no alternatives are offered, they can make another one today.”<sup>36</sup> Although such “revolutionary” rhetoric may have been seen as alarmist to some Washington conservatives, New Right readers were encouraged to entertain it as “an alarm worth hearing.”<sup>37</sup>

In his essay in *The New Right Papers*, which was edited by his Populist Forum partner Whitaker, Hoy explains his approach to local groups, including the Kanawha County textbook protesters.

We spent several years trying to channel the energy and resentment of many sporadic uprisings against the establishment into some kind of enduring alliance. Wildcat miners, textbook protesters, despairing farmers, opponents of busing: These and others came under our purview.

We sympathized heartily with the pressing concerns of these grassroots activists, and made it an unvarying point of honor to begin by asking each group, “What can *we* do for *you*?”—especially since no one else had dreamed of asking them that. In the back of our minds, however, we maintained perspective. When the time was right, when fearful hearts and minds were at least partially won, we began prodding: “What can *you* do for other groups around the country which share a common neglect? What can the miner do for the farmer? How can the busing foe in South Boston express solidarity with the textbook protesters in West Virginia?”

We posed these questions sincerely because we were always looking for the formula which would unify the disparate protest groups into something lasting and cohesive. We saw The Populist Forum as a vehicle for unity—a catalyst for unifying those we had brought together. Beyond a certain point, people must make things happen for themselves—or you’re talking some brand of elitism, not populism.

Besides bolstering morale and functioning as an introduction service among otherwise isolated groups around the country, The Populist Forum arranged extensive media coverage.<sup>38</sup> Whether or not it was all arranged by Hoy is hard to know, but the media attention paid to Kanawha County was indeed extensive. Through local intervention and publicity work, the Populist Forum in some capacity “helped to transform the controversy from a local dispute over a few textbooks into a debate with national implications about basic questions of power and cultural destiny.”<sup>39</sup>

Avis Hill was the Populist Forum’s media darling at one of three marches on Washington that “brought together some 15,000 parents from across America and attracted major media attention,” according to Hoy.<sup>40</sup> In March 1975, seventy protesters left on chartered buses from Kanawha County and hundreds were supposed to “drive all night from West Virginia to be on hand.” It is unclear who financed the transportation. A press conference at which Hoy and Hill were featured “was given political overtones by the presence of an adviser to Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace and a representative of the National Conference on American Ethnic Groups who said his members never would vote for a presidential candidate who favored school busing.”<sup>41</sup> Thus the group spoke under the auspices of ethnicity and with the hope of thwarting racial integration in schools. Hoy described the larger gathering that followed the press release, doting on Hill: “Speaking before a gathering of 5,000 parents during our third march on Washington, ‘little Avis’ warned: ‘If they can break us in our mountain home, if they can break us in the farm towns of Jefferson County [Kentucky], if they can break us in the streets of South Boston, then they can break us anywhere.’”<sup>42</sup> In addition to getting Hill out of West Virginia to speak to crowds and press meetings in Washington, D.C., Hoy was also intent on fomenting more protest in Kanawha County, even as the textbook controversy was considered by locals to be largely done.

In the spring of 1975, the textbook controversy was all but finished as far as the board of education was concerned. The superintendent, Kenneth Underwood, had resigned under the pressure of being perceived as an outsider, a secular humanist,

and/or a socialist. Protesters saw this as a major victory offsetting the fact that most of the contested books had been returned to the classrooms and that a federal grand jury had come down hard on those indicted for bombing schools in October. Due to a radical decrease in demonstrations and reports of violence, students, teachers, and school board members experienced a major shift, if not psychological closure. Despite this feeling and general agreement that the battle was over, Avis Hill continued to plan rallies. By the summer of 1975, Hill appeared wearing a coonskin hat at a sparsely attended rally. The look harkened back unmistakably to the frontier icons of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett and mirrored the mountaineer mascot for sports teams from West Virginia University. It coincided with a new effort to rally protesters as fans of right-wing populist dissent.

In June and July 1975, “The Populist Forum helped Pastor Hill to record and produce an album which set his people’s case to bluegrass music.”<sup>43</sup> Robert Hoy claimed that he “wrote six songs” that appear on the album,<sup>44</sup> including one that was denounced in the pages of the *Washington Post* for unfairly attacking “liberals, the National Education Association, communists, and the Supreme Court. Actually,” Hoy clarified, “the point of my song, entitled ‘Kanawha County Uprising,’ was precisely that these great powers, and a number of others were united against a relative handful of parents in one rural county of America.”<sup>45</sup> Hoy thus intended the songs on Avis Hill’s record album to narrate the protesters as facing “united” forces of “great powers” in Kanawha County (here misidentified as a “rural” county rather than more accurately characterized as the state’s most industrialized county containing its urban capital).

Aside from producing the record album, there was relatively little financial support from the Populist Forum, according to Hill. Hill reported that “we didn’t have big monies,” despite people “talking about us being mass funded.” This is credible testimony if we take into account Hoy’s aforementioned statement that he operated “the Populist Forum as a vehicle for unity—a catalyst for unifying those we had brought together. Beyond a certain point, people must make things happen for themselves—or you’re talking some brand of

elitism, not populism.”<sup>46</sup> Lest Hoy and his network, which extended both to the Washington conservatives of the New Right and the ultra-right fascists of the National Front, be considered elitist, the Populist Forum apparently did not extend large sums of money to Hill, who continued to organize even after the language arts curriculum was in use and protest activities about the books had died down.

“I operated the textbook controversy in the Kanawha Valley out of my office from the ’74 period up until ’76 or ’77,” Hill attests. “During all that time, there was about \$18,000 came across our books.” When Hill attended Washington events, he withstood the glaring inequalities of class stratification in order to meet and mingle with higher-ups in conservative politics. “We sacrificed. Whenever the Republicans and Democrats were in Washington, D.C., having their national conventions, and for every forum I was there, trying to speak. When they were having their . . . caucuses in their hospitality suites, I was there. And they couldn’t understand where I was coming from. But they didn’t understand the fact that I’d slept in my van, I had hamburger at McDonald’s the night before and went to a service station and washed my face and shaved in a mirror in the service station in order to be there, you see. As long as they could live . . . in the Hilton and have their expense accounts and fly in by jet and get out by jet, why they thought, ‘Hey man, you can’t do it, don’t do it that way.’ So they couldn’t understand how—the sacrifice we were making.”

If it felt strange to hobnob in the hospitality suites at the Hilton, Avis Hill was willing to make the sacrifice because breaking down class stratifications was not his stated aim. Maintaining the revolutionary rhetoric of the cover of his album, Hill told his interviewer, “I believe we started a revolution in education. I really do. I believe we fired the shot that was heard around the world. And I believe, maybe not in my lifetime, but somewhere down the road, these old West Virginia hillbillies are going to be looked upon.” The sentence is incomplete, reflecting the same anticlimax of his political career.

Avis Hill became active in politics—local and national—and took

up conservative causes because of the Kanawha County textbook controversy. His story epitomizes how working-class people shifted to the right in the 1970s, and highlights the strong role that the New Right narrative of secular humanism played in his decision to become involved. Despite his Christian upbringing that taught him politics were essentially corrupt and no place for evangelicals, he got involved in right-wing campaigns. Despite the financial “sacrifice” he made (“I lost \$54,000 the first year, I lost my business,” he said), Hill aligned with conservatives who would for the next twenty-five years establish policies that would economically support those already with hospitality suites at the Hilton. Hill persisted in mobilizing in the populist mode despite the violent threats and acts that he endured locally, possibly from the Klan whom he refused to endorse publicly. Despite having “to rake and scrape to get the filing fee,” Hill ran for Congress in 1976, receiving only 10 percent of the vote. “I ran, I ran to speak my point of view,” he explained, “to get me a pulpit, really,” not necessarily to win. Hill’s aspirations were always evangelical. Thus his Christian convictions and Appalachian identity, shaped as they were by New Right narratives and the ideology of “populist militants” like Hoy, overrode Hill’s concerns about material needs and class solidarity. For Hill and the millions of other evangelical Christians in the 1970s, political involvement was transformed from the dubious dealings in corrupt activity to the heroic salvation of the “souls of our children.” Protesting the textbooks in Kanawha County was a key one of many stories that reproduced evangelicals and Appalachians as political subjects of the Right.

To read Avis Hill or any of the evangelical ministers as mere dupes of the Right is to repeat the problem of portraying dissenting Appalachian people as victims rather than as organized rebels and, in the process, to obscure the powerful history of Appalachians’ resistance.<sup>47</sup> It also renders the textbook protesters inculpable of the political decisions they made. Inspired by the narrative of secular humanism, Hill allied himself with right-wing advocates, as did millions of Christian evangelicals throughout the 1970s. In 1974, a tradition of protest culture turned decidedly right in West



Virginia, replacing class solidarity with a cultural conservatism and right-wing revolution.

It may well be true that Kanawha County was an early skirmish in the culture wars of the 1980s and thereafter. Such a formulation re-establishes the ideal of Appalachia as a frontier, and claims that wild revolutionary space for the Right. The impact of the Kanawha County textbook controversy thus lies ultimately in its representation. Each telling of the story is a matter of reinventing Appalachia in relation to America, and of reproducing a sense of ethnicity, of the people involved.

Of course, as education historians know, curriculum disputes in America have always been a means by which “the people” and our “national story” have been defined and redefined.<sup>48</sup> In the spring of 2010, conservative curriculum reformers in Texas garnered the same kind of attention as conservatives who protested liberal curriculum reform in the 1970s, prompting the *New York Times* to declare “Identity Politics Leans Right.”<sup>49</sup> Alongside the claims that the Kanawha County textbook protesters were the precursors of the tea parties thirty-five years later, this pithy idea of right-wing identity politics opens the doors for historians who want to understand more than a headline or a sound bite can deliver. Is the recent success of conservative curriculum reform an indication that Kanawha County book protesters were justified in believing an anti-Christian, anti-American evil force was corrupting children via multiethnic texts? Or is it an indication that the Kanawha County protesters represented the first wave of a cumulative shift in America that occurred because of politicized evangelicals, wealthy conservatives, mobilized Christian women, and militant populists? Avis Hill’s story helps explain the role that the Kanawha County textbook controversy played in *how*, thirty-five years later, the idea of an anti-Christian, anti-American, evil force is plausible to more people than it was in 1974.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

West Virginia historians, dissertators, and preservationists have opportunities for further fruitful research. First, no scholar has examined in detail the biographical realities and organizational, professional, or familial ties of textbook opponents and curriculum defenders. For example, much could be learned from extensive oral history work with the African American community in Charleston; as it stands now there are only a handful of interviews with African Americans available in archives. Obtaining full records from the Charleston NAACP and the West Virginia Human Rights Commission could also yield some insights into how the black community dealt with the conflict. Second, ironically, most neglected by researchers were the coal miners. As much as the press of the time erroneously presumed this was a miners' fight by simple virtue of it taking place in West Virginia, there were fewer discussions with those who decided to strike than one might think.

Third, currently the scales are tipped toward the protesters in terms of historical representation. In other words, there has been so much focus on the protesters and so little about those who selected and defended the books. What, indeed, were the political, ideological, and philosophical values of the textbook advocates, and to what, if any, degree were the protesters justified in allegations of the advocates' anticapitalist and collectivist leanings? If there were no actual socialists or communists playing major roles among supporters of the curriculum, then the question becomes, did such allegations of socialism or communism—red-baiting—function the same way in 1974 as they did in the McCarthy era? Moreover, in the context of accusations of President Obama's purported socialism and romanticized retrospectives of the textbook controversy, how does red-baiting differ today, in the age of blogs, tweets, websites, desktop publishing, vanity presses, and Facebook? Do red-baiting and other right-wing smear tactics carry today the same social stigma as they did earlier?

As conservative politics and right-wing populism continue to evolve, the 1974 Kanawha County textbook controversy will

continue to prove important to scholars, who have already noted its significance to American history.<sup>50</sup> West Virginia historians are in the unique position of conducting further research without reducing complex conflicts to dualistic feuds, and with an insider's sensitivity to the difficult issues of representing mountaineers without romance or rancor.

## NOTES

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1. *Charleston Gazette*, Aug. 24, 2009.
2. Carol Mason, *Reading Appalachia from Left to Right: Conservatives and the 1974 Kanawha County Textbook Controversy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).
3. *Charleston Gazette*, Feb. 15, 2010.
4. *Charleston Gazette*, Oct. 26, 2009.
5. Ibid.
6. Devin Burghart and Leonard Zeskin, *Tea Party Nationalism: A Critical Examination of the Tea Party Movement and the Size, Scope, and Focus of Its National Factions* (Kansas City, MO: Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, 2010), 19.
7. In addition to Burghart and Zeskin's comprehensive study, there are numerous journalistic accounts of wealthy conservative funders of the tea party. See, for example, Rachel Weiner, "What Is the Tea Party? A Primer," *Washington Post*, Sept. 15, 2010; Matt Taibbi, "The Truth about the Tea Party," *Rolling Stone*, Oct. 14, 2010.
8. For more on businessmen's contributions to conservatism, see Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: Norton, 2009). Please note that I use "right-wing" as an umbrella term encompassing a broad scope of political ideologies including conservatism. See Mason, *Reading Appalachia*, Appendix.
9. Oral Eugene Faubus Collection, University of Arkansas. See box 589, file 8, which contains a memorandum attached to a letter from Hargis to Faubus, July 7, 1961, that identifies Fred C. Koch as a member of the Christian Crusade's board.
10. Burghart and Zeskin, *Tea Party Nationalism*, 19-20.
11. Arguments made by Moore helped to refashion the Old Right's fears of conspiring communists and racial integrationists, replacing them with a

new conspiracy featuring secular humanism that motivated the New Right. See chap. 3, "Sweet Alice and Secular Humanism," in Mason, *Reading Appalachia*, 91-132. For Moore's connections with the Christian Crusade, see Mason, *Reading Appalachia*, 38-39, 105, 110, 153.

12. This description of events is reproduced from Mason, *Reading Appalachia*, "Prologue," and compiled mainly from three sources: "Text Controversy—Beginning to Present," *Charleston Gazette*, Nov. 1, 1974; "Textbook timeline," *Charleston Daily Mail*, <http://www.dailymail.com/static/speciassections/lookingback/lb09073.htm>; Ann L. Page and Donald A. Clelland, "The Kanawha County Textbook Controversy: A Study of the Politics of Life Style Concern," *Social Forces* 57.1 (Sept. 1978): 265-81.
13. James Moffett, *Storm in the Mountains: A Case Study of Censorship, Conflict, and Consciousness* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), 13.
14. Mason, *Reading Appalachia*, 4-5.
15. Page and Clelland, "The Kanawha County Textbook Controversy," 269.
16. Ibid.
17. "The Great Textbook War of 1974," West Virginia Public Radio, airdated Oct. 22 and 29, 2009; Nov. 26, 2009. Producer Trey Kay. Audio available at <http://www.wvpubcast.org/newsarticle.aspx?id=11860>. Revised program available at American Radio Works.
18. All references to and quotations from the radio documentary "The Great Textbook War of 1974" are specifically drawn from the original broadcast on West Virginia Public Radio, not the version of the program made available by American Radio Works.
19. Henry Battle, "Travelin' On: 'Textbook War' Hits the Road," *Up and Down the Valley*, Newsletter of the Kanawha Valley Historical and Preservation Society (Autumn 2009): 1-2.
20. Douglas Reichert Powell, "'Bluewashing' the Mountaineer: A Recent Television Trend," *Appalachian Journal* (Winter 2007): 206-14.
21. Ibid., 209.
22. Ibid.
23. Joe Kincheloe, "Alice Moore and the Kanawha County Textbook Controversy," *Journal of Thought* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 24.
24. Alice Moore, interview by Bill Longan, Aug. 23, 1975, transcript, Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
25. Connaught Marshner, *Blackboard Tyranny* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House Publishers, 1978), 264.
26. Ibid.
27. Moore, interview by Bill Longan, Aug. 23, 1975.
28. Powell, "'Bluewashing' the Mountaineer," 212.

29. For more on Dietz and Pierce and their connections to the textbook controversy, see Mason, *Reading Appalachia*, chap. 2. For more on Elmer Fike, see *ibid.*, 143-45.
30. *New York Times*, Mar. 13, 2010.
31. *Charleston Gazette-Mail*, Aug. 22, 2009.
32. Avis Hill, interview by James Deeter, Mar. 12, 1985, transcript, Oral History of Appalachia Collection No. OH 64-236, Special Collections, Marshall University. All quotations from Hill in this section, unless otherwise noted, are derived from Deeter's interview with Hill and reproduced from Mason, *Reading Appalachia*, chap. 4.
33. Marshner, *Blackboard Tyranny*.
34. Robert J. Hoy, "Lid on a Boiling Pot," in *The New Right Papers*, edited by Robert W. Whitaker (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 100.
35. Russ Bellant, *The Coors Connection: How Coors Family Philanthropy Undermines Democratic Pluralism* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 71.
36. *Ibid.*
37. Hoy, "Lid on a Boiling Pot," 84.
38. *Ibid.*, 88.
39. *Ibid.*, 90.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Charleston Gazette*, Mar. 19, 1975. The role of George Wallace advocates and the American Party in Kanawha County needs further clarification. White supremacist George Dietz, who operated a press that printed flyers for book protesters as well as anti-Semitic publications he distributed internationally, also was a distributor of John Birch Society materials. In late 1974 he organized the state's chapter of the American Party and recruited, among others, Ezra Graley, an anti-textbook minister, as the Kanawha County chair. See Billy James Hargis Collection, University of Arkansas, MC 1412, box 122, letter printed from Dietz in *American Voice* 5, no.12 (Dec. 1974): 11, and the update on "West Virginia" in *American Voice* 6, no. 8 (Aug. 1975): 6.
42. Hoy, "Lid on a Boiling Pot," 90-91.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*, 93.
45. *Ibid.*, 91.
46. *Ibid.*, 88.
47. Allen W. Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990), 198.
48. Joseph Moreau, *School Book Nation: Conflicts over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

49. *New York Times*, Mar. 21, 2010.
50. In addition to books by Moffett and Mason, see Lisa McGirr, "A History of the Conservative Movement from the Bottom Up," *Journal of Policy History* 14.3 (2002): 331-39.