



Spirits of Just Men: Mountaineers, Liquor Bosses, and Lawmen in the Moonshine Capital of the World

Charles D. Thompson Jr.

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Spirits of Just Men tells the story of moonshine in 1930s America, as seen through the remarkable location of Franklin County, Virginia, a place that many still refer to as the "moonshine capital of the world." Local characters come alive through this richly colorful chronicle of the Great Moonshine Conspiracy Trial of 1935, which made national news and exposed the far-reaching and pervasive tendrils of Appalachia's local moonshine economy. Charles D. Thompson Jr., whose ancestors were involved in the area's moonshine trade and trial as well as local law enforcement, uses the event as a stepping-off point to explore Blue Ridge Mountain culture, economy, and political engagement in the 1930s. Drawing from extensive oral histories and local archival material, Thompson's sensitive analysis examines the people and processes involved in turning a basic agricultural commodity into such a sought-after and essentially American spirit.

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