

When We Were Good: The Folk Revival (Paperback)



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Reviews

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(Lauren Quitzon)

WHEN WE WERE GOOD: THE FOLK REVIVAL (PAPERBACK)



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HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, United States, 1997. Paperback. Condition: New. New edition. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. In 1938, in Pick Britches Valley, North Carolina, a young mountaineer sang a ballad about an infamous murder for a visiting singer and collector of folk songs. Twenty years later, nearly every American within range of a radio was hearing about Tom Dooley from the Kingston Trio - and a folk tradition dating back to the days of the minstrel show had intersected with the emergent youth culture of the late-50s. How did Tom Dooley get from Pick Britches to the top of the charts in 1958? When We Were Good traces the many and varied cultural influences on the folk revival of the 60s from early 19th-century blackface minstrelry; the Jewish entertainment and political cultures of New York in the 1930s; the Almanac singers of the wartime crises of the 1940s; the watershed record album Folkways Anthology of American Folk Music ; and finally to the Cold War reactionism of the 1950s. This drove the folk-song movement, just as Pete Seeger and the Weavers were putting On Top of Old Smokey and Goodnight, Irene on the hit parade, into a children s underground of schools, summer camps and colleges, planting the seeds of the folk revival to come. The book is not so much a history as a study of the cultural process itself, what the author calls the dreamwork of history . Cantwell shows how a body of music once enlisted on behalf of the labour movement, antifascism, New Deal recovery efforts, and many other progressive causes of the 1930s was refashioned as an instrument of self-discovery, even as it found a new politics and cultural style in the peace, civil rights and beat movements. In...



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