Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict

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Main content

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In April 1993, an armed standoff between federal law enforcement agents and members of the Branch Davidian sect in Waco, Texas, ended in disaster. Stuart Wright has assembled fifteen essays by nineteen prominent scholars to try to explain what happened. While, as with any edited work, the essays are a bit uneven, overall this is a valuable resource for understanding both the incident in Waco and the broader social context of alternative religious groups in the United States.

Employing a mixture of both theoretical and empirical studies, the authors are able to maintain a common theme while approaching the conflict from a variety of perspectives. Beginning with the historical background and social context, the book explores the roles in the conflict played by the media and anti-cult movements, the theology and group dynamics of the Branch Davidians, and the strategies of the law enforcement agencies. It concludes with three essays on legal and constitutional issues. Two of the most valuable chapters are by "insiders" - James Tabor, who participated in the negotiations during the standoff, and Nancy Ammerman,...

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Armageddon in Waco book. Read reviews from world’s largest community for readers. On February 28, 1993, the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and... Chapters show how the Davidians came to trouble authorities, why the group was labeled a "cult," and how authorities used unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse to strengthen their case against the sect. The media's role is examined next in essays that considering the effect on coverage of lack of time and resources, the orchestration of public relations by government officials, the restricted access to the site or to countervailing evidence, and the ideologies of the journalists themselves. Start your review of Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict. Write a review. Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict. Edited by Stuart A. Wright. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. xxvi + 394 pp.
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