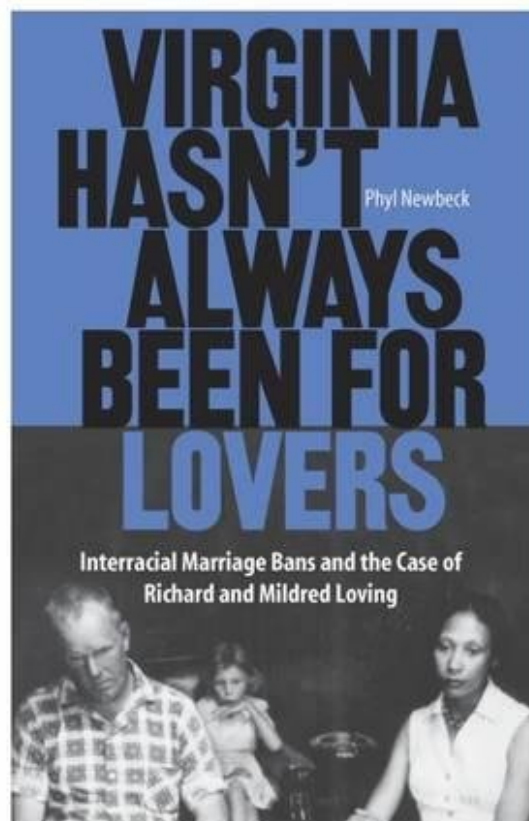


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## Virginia Hasn't Always Been for Lovers: Interracial Marriage Bans and the Case of Richard and Mildred Loving

*Phyl Newbeck*

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**Phyl Newbeck : Virginia Hasn't Always Been for Lovers: Interracial Marriage Bans and the Case of Richard and Mildred Loving** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Virginia Hasn't Always Been for Lovers: Interracial Marriage Bans and the Case of Richard and Mildred Loving:

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after this ruling, and the life of the Lovings and those involved. it is an excellent book. a very important book that everyone needs to read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. VA: Selective Memories and AmnesiaBy CW PeachAs a native Virginian, I, too, vividly remember massive resistance, Byrd Machine...Curious to know how state came up with VA is for Lovers after it's racist history,0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CustomerVery informative and eye opening.

This landmark volume chronicles the history of laws banning interracial marriage in the United States with particular emphasis on the case of Richard and Mildred Loving, a white man and a black woman who were convicted by the state of Virginia for the crime of marrying across racial lines in the late 1950s. The Lovings were not activists, but their battle to live together as husband and wife in their home state instigated the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that antiscegenation laws were unconstitutional, which ultimately resulted in the overturning of laws against interracial marriage that were still in effect in sixteen states by the late 1960s. American antiscegenation laws were first enacted in Maryland in the seventeenth century and continued to the year 2000 with a section of the Alabama Constitution forbidding the state legislature from legitimizing interracial marriage. An increasing number of citizens marry across racial lines today, and there have been radical changes in laws regarding interracial marriage in the past few decades. But even as other landmarks of the civil rights movement have been the subjects of numerous scholarly tomes and personal memoirs, this is the first comprehensive treatment of the Loving case and the only study to tell the Lovings story within the full historical context of interracial marriage bans. In *Virginia Hasnt Always Been for Lovers: Interracial Marriage Bans and the Case of Richard and Mildred Loving*, lawyer Phyl Newbeck describes how the laws banning intermarriage came about, how they were perpetuated, and how they were finally struck down. In addition to detailing the story of the courtship, marriage, and arrest of the Lovings, the volume describes the growth of antiscegenation legislation, the subsequent fight to eliminate racially discriminatory practices, and the litigations that continued years after the Supreme Court had ruled on the issue. With consummate skill, Newbeck looks at a generous and representative sampling of court cases that invalidated marriages and imprisoned couples during the twentieth century, including ones in which inheritance rights were severed and child custody was terminated due to interracial unions. She also discusses three court decisions that quashed antiscegenation laws in California, Nevada, and Arizona in the mid-twentieth century and the role that activist groups played in these changes. Drawing on legal research and historical, sociological, and political sources, Newbeck includes quotations from some of the statutes and explanations of why the laws were deemed necessary, covering an impressive amount of the case law pertaining to antiscegenation statutes from the early convictions to the later challenges. She asserts that *Loving v. Virginia* was not just about intermarriage but also about how the country defined people in terms of races. Her findings reveal how the specter of interracial marriage was used to perpetuate segregation, what percentage of blood was required to place someone in a forbidden group, and what penalties were imposed on the bride, groom, licenser, and clergy. *Virginia Hasnt Always Been for Lovers* also examines the relationship of antiscegenation laws to sexism and paternalism, social activism, family dynamics, and immigration. Based on dozens of interviews with attorneys who argued for and against antiscegenation statutes and with plaintiffs who successfully challenged the laws, *Virginia Hasnt Always Been for Lovers* also contains rare interviews with members of the Loving family, who have notoriously remained out of the public eye since their landmark case but whose quiet resilience to the legal indignities brought upon them by antiscegenation laws spurred an end to a shameful chapter in American history. Rich in detail, the resulting narrative is an invaluable resource and essential contribution to the history of race relations in America with particular relevance to contemporary issues regarding the rights of consenting adults to marry.

From BooklistThe legal challenge mounted by Richard and Mildred Loving, convicted in the 1950s of violating Virginia's ban on interracial marriage, led to the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that antiscegenation laws were unconstitutional. Newbeck, an attorney, examines this landmark case in the context of laws banning interracial marriage before and after Loving. But the most compelling part of this legal history is the personal recollections of a member of the Loving family, who had previously maintained public silence on the issue. Drawing also on interviews with attorneys who argued for and against such bans, Newbeck brings personal perspectives to the history, sociology, and politics of banning interracial marriage. She places the fervor over banning interracial liaisons within the context of historical sexual and racial politics and issues of social activism and family dynamics; and she places the Loving case specifically within the context of the civil rights struggle. This is an informative and insightful look at legal attempts to regulate marriage and is particularly timely given the current public debate about gay marriage. Vernon FordCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Phyl Newbecks *Virginia Hasnt Always Been for Lovers* is a clearly written, accessible, well-organized, and remarkably researched history of the path-breaking Loving case. It also stands as a comprehensive history of legal efforts to enforce antiscegenation laws and their ultimate demise. Of particular interest is Newbecks seemingly indefatigable effort to interview everyone involved in Loving and other significant cases and her assiduous efforts to track down the documentary record.Michael Meltsner, Harvard

