



A Stronger Kinship: One Town's Extraordinary Story of Hope and Faith

Anna-Lisa Cox

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In the heartland of the United States 150 years ago, where racism and hatred were common, a community decided there could be a different America. Here schools and churches were completely integrated, blacks and whites intermarried, and power and wealth were shared by both races. But for this to happen, the town's citizens had to keep secrets, break the laws of the world outside, and sweep aside fear and embrace hope.

In a historical-detective feat, Anna-Lisa Cox uncovers the heartening story of this community that took the road untaken. Beginning in the 1860s, the people of Covert, Michigan, attempted to do what then seemed impossible: love one's neighbor—regardless of skin color—as oneself. Drawing on diaries, oral histories, and contemporary records, Cox gives us intimate glimpses of Covert's people, from William Conner, the Civil War veteran who went on to become Michigan's first black justice of the peace, to Elizabeth Gillard, who, shipwrecked and washed onto Covert's shores, ultimately came to love the unusual community she would call home. In bringing these and other stories of this small town to light, Cox presents a vision of what our nation might have been, and could be.

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