



William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture

By Ian Dyck

Cambridge University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 332 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.1in. x 0.9in. This is the first rural and cultural study of the great English countryman William Cobbett (1763-1835). It binds Cobbett's radical career to his rural heritage and to the experiences and politics of agricultural workers during the early nineteenth century. As a radical, Cobbett's first quest was to represent the hardships of the labouring poor, and he adopted the labourers' cultural experiences and class consciousness as the basis of his political platform. He revolutionized press history by joining the pedlars' pack, from where he dispensed his two-penny broadsheets along with other varieties of popular literature. The rural labourers understood Cobbett because he articulated their beliefs and values as expressed in their own folksongs and broadside ballads. They embraced Cobbett as a radical leader and as an educator, heeding his moral instruction, his treatises on cottage economy, and his prescriptions on the recovery of Old England. Cobbett lived and moved among the labourers, and knew their political or economic grievances; thus long before the Captain Swing rising he forecast the date and patterns of the revolt. His predictions came to pass and he became the single most...

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