



The Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and Political Culture in Worcester County, Massachusetts 1713-1861

John L. Brooke

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One of the central controversies in our understanding of early America involves the place of republican and liberal thinking in polity and society. The Heart of the Commonwealth presents a synthetic view of the social grounding of republicanism and liberalism in Worcester County, Massachusetts, from its settlement after the Peace of Utrecht to the eve of the Civil War, as this country's people passed through the formative fires of both national and industrial revolution. Drawing upon a wide range of sources and methods, the book examines the unfolding relationships among ideological discourse, political action, and the institutions and structures of everyday life. Most broadly, the book argues that a broad transition from a republican - or Harringtonian - consensus to a liberal - or Lockean - consensus was conditioned by countervailing episodes of insurgency, running from the Land Bank and the Great Awakening in the 1740s to the rise of political antislavery a century later.

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