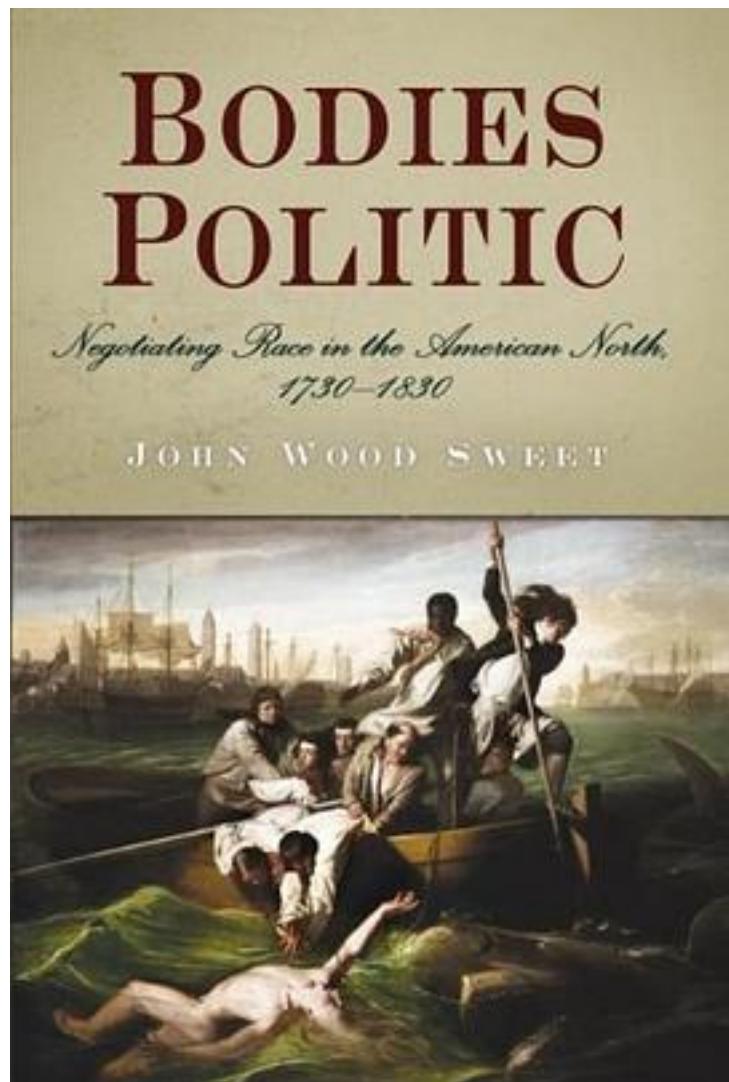


Bodies Politic



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出版者:Johns Hopkins Univ Pr

出版时间:2003-10

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780801873782

A century after the Pilgrims' landing, the ongoing interactions of conquered Indians, English settlers, and enslaved Africans in southern New England had produced a closely interwoven, though radically divided, colonial society. In *Bodies Politic*, John Wood Sweet argues that the coming together of these diverse peoples profoundly shaped the character of colonial New England, the meanings of the Revolution in the North and the making of American democracy. Grounded in a remarkable array of original sources—from censuses and newspapers to diaries, archival images, correspondence, and court records—this innovative and intellectually sweeping work excavates the dramatic confrontations and subtle negotiations by which Indians, Africans, and Anglo-Americans defined their respective places in early New England. Citizenship, as Sweet reveals, was defined in meeting houses as well as in court houses, in bedrooms as well as on battlefields, in medical experiments and cheap jokes as well as on the streets. The cultural conflicts and racial divisions of colonial society not only survived the Revolution but actually became more rigid and absolute in the early years of the Republic. Why did conversion to Christianity fail to establish cultural common ground? Why did the abolition of slavery fail to produce a more egalitarian society? How did people of color define their places within—or outside of—the new American nation? *Bodies Politic* reveals how the racial legacy of early New England shaped the emergence of the nineteenth-century North—and continues, even to this day, to shape all our lives.

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