



Crossroads of Empire (Regional Perspectives on Early America)

Ned C. Landsman

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This work examines the Middle Colonies -- New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania -- as a region at the center of imperial contests among competing European powers and Native American nations and at the fulcrum of an emerging British-Atlantic world of culture and trade. Ned C. Landsman traces the history of the Middle Colonies to address questions essential to understanding their role in the colonial era. He probes the concept of regionality and argues that while each territory possessed varying social, religious, and political cultures, the collective lands of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania came to function as a region because of their particular history and their distinct place in the imperial and Atlantic worlds. Landsman demonstrates that the societal cohesiveness of the three colonies originated in the commercial and military rivalries among Native nations and developed further with the competing involvement of the European powers, eventually emerging as the focal point in the contest for dominion over North America. In relating this progression, Landsman discusses various factors in the region's development, including the Enlightenment, evangelical religion, factional politics, religious and ethnic diversity, and distinct systems of Protestant pluralism. Ultimately, he argues, it was within the Middle Colonies that the question was first posed, What is the American? An insightful and valuable classroom synthesis of the scholarship of the Middle Colonies, *Crossroads of Empire* makes clear the vital role of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in establishing an American identity.

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