

A Crisis of Community: The Trials and Transformation of a New England Town, 1815-1848

Mary Babson Fuhrer

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In the first decades of the American republic, Mary White, a shopkeeper's wife from rural Boylston, Massachusetts, kept a diary. Woven into its record of everyday events is a remarkable tale of conflict and transformation in small-town life. Sustained by its Puritan heritage, gentry leadership, and sense of common good, Boylston had survived the upheaval of revolution and the creation of the new nation. Then, in a single generation of wrenching change, families, neighbors, church, and town descended into contentious struggle. Examining the tumultuous Jacksonian era at the intimate level of family and community, Mary Babson Fuhrer brings to life the troublesome creation of a new social, political, and economic order centered on individual striving and voluntary associations in an expansive nation.

Blending family records and a rich trove of community archives, Fuhrer examines the "age of revolutions" through the lens of a rural community that was swept into the networks of an expanding and urbanizing New England region. This finely detailed history lends new depth to our understanding of a key transformative moment in American history.



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