



# **A Colony Sprung from Hell: Pittsburgh and the Struggle for Authority on the Western Pennsylvania Frontier, 1744-1794**

*Daniel P. Barr*

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The early settlement of the region around Pittsburgh was characterized by a messy collision of personal, provincial, national, and imperial interests. Driven by the efforts of Europeans, Pennsylvanians, Virginians, and Indians, almost everyone attempted to manipulate the clouded political jurisdiction of the region. *A Colony Sprung from Hell* traces this complex struggle. The events and episodes that make up the story highlight the difficulties of creating and consolidating authority along the frontier, where the local population's acceptance or denial of authority determined the extent to which any government could impose its will. Ultimately, what was at stake was the nature of authority itself. Author Daniel P. Barr demonstrates that deep divisions marked efforts to exercise power over the western Pennsylvania frontier and limited the effectiveness of such attempts. They developed roughly along provincial lines, owing to a fierce competition between Pennsylvania and Virginia to incorporate the region into their colonies. This jurisdictional dispute permeated many social and political levels, impacting all those who sought power and influence along the western Pennsylvania frontier. Individuals, businesses, provincial governments, and British policymakers competed for jurisdiction in the political and legal arenas, while migrants, settlers, and Indians opposed one another on the ground in a contest that was far more confrontational and violent. Although the participants and the nature of the conflict changed over time, the fundamental question—who was going to make the important decisions regarding the region—remained unsettled and unanswered, resulting in a consistent pattern of discord and contention.

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