



Inventing Eden: Primitivism, Millennialism, and the Making of New England

Zachary McLeod Hutchins

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Previous scholars have noted the Puritans' edenic descriptions of New World landscapes, but *Inventing Eden* is the first study to fully uncover the integral relationship between the New England interest in paradise and the numerous iconic intellectual artifacts and social movements of colonial North America. Harvard Yard, the Bay Psalm Book, and the Quaker use of antiquated pronouns like *thee* and *thou*: these are products of a seventeenth-century desire for Eden. So, too, are the evangelical emphasis of the Great Awakening, the doctrine of natural law popularized by the Declaration of Independence, and the first United States judicial decision abolishing slavery. Be it public nudity or Freemasonry, Zachary Hutchins convincingly shows how a shared wish to bring paradise into the pragmatic details of colonial living had a profound effect on early New England life and its substantial culture of letters.

Spanning two centuries and surveying the works of major British and American thinkers from James Harrington and John Milton to Anne Hutchinson and Benjamin Franklin, *Inventing Eden* is the history of an idea that irrevocably altered the theology, literature, and culture of colonial New England -- and, eventually, the new republic.

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