

The hopes, the practices, and the powerful sense of history of five Revolutionary New England ministers as they worked to ease their flocks through the bewildering passage to political independence are here revealed in a fresh and imaginative reading of their manuscript sermons, diaries, and letters. Drawing together the methodologies of literary criticism and recent advances in symbolic anthropology and narrative theory, *Rhetoric and History in Revolutionary New England* allows us to step inside the consciousness of Revolutionary preachers to understand how they experienced the Revolution and how they translated that experience from their pulpits to their people.

This extraordinary look inside the mental worlds of the patriot ministers proposes an entirely new intellectual framework for discussing religious and political discourse during the Revolution. Through its uniquely close examination of the manuscript sermons of individual preachers it highlights the continuities in preaching modes from the Awakening to the Revolution, revealing how ministerial discourse anticipated the eventual displacement of the evangelical clergy to the margins of social and communicative power by the end of the 18th century.

A study in literary-historical style as an index to religious affiliation, a sensitive portrait of the psychic landscape of the Revolutionary clergy at the height of their oratorical powers, and a provocative analysis of the breakdown of narrative during a time of cultural crisis, *Rhetoric and History in Revolutionary New*

England is a fascinating reevaluation of one of the most intensely debated episodes in American history.

About the Author

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