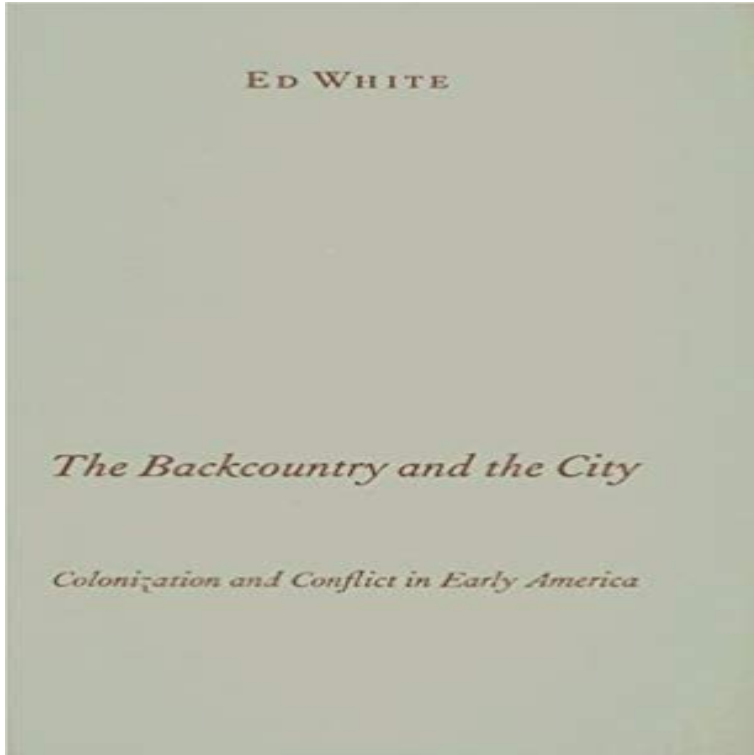


# The Backcountry and the City: Colonization and Conflict in Early America



What would an account of early America look like if it were based on examining rural insurrections or Native American politics instead of urban republican literature? Offering a new interpretation of eighteenth-century America, *The Backcountry and the City* focuses on the agrarian majority as distinct from the elite urban minority. Ed White explores the backcountry-city divide as well as the dynamics of indigenous peoples, bringing together two distinct bodies of scholarship: one stressing the political culture of the Revolutionary era, the other taking an ethnohistorical view of white-Native American contact. White concentrates his study in Pennsylvania, a state in which the majority of the population was rural, and in Philadelphia, a city that was a center of publishing and politics and the national capital for a decade. Against this backdrop, White reads classic political texts such as Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*, Franklin's *Autobiography*, and Paine's *Agrarian Justice*, alongside missionary and captivity narratives, farmers' petitions, and Native American treaties. Using historical and ethnographic sources to enrich familiar texts, White demonstrates the importance of rural areas in the study of U.S. nation formation and finds unexpected continuities between the early colonial period and the federal ascendancy of the 1790s. Ed White is associate professor of English at the University of Florida.

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