



Building the Bay Colony: Local Economy and Culture in Early Massachusetts

James E. McWilliams

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Historians often consider transatlantic trade and the export of staples to have been the driving forces behind economic development in virtually all of colonial America. In *From the Ground Up: How the Massachusetts Bay Colony Achieved Economic Success*, James E. McWilliams challenges this assumption, showing how internal economic development, rather than exports that shareholders hoped would provide a handsome return on their investments, actually served as the backbone of the Massachusetts economy.

Starting with the basics—the building of farms, fences, stables, roads, and bridges—McWilliams demonstrates through careful analyses of farmer and merchant account books how these small infrastructure improvements established the foundation for more ambitious, overseas adventures. Using an intensely local lens, McWilliams explores the century-long process whereby the Massachusetts Bay Colony went from a distant outpost of the incipient British Empire to a stable society integrated into the transatlantic economy.

An inspiring story of men and women overcoming adversity to build their own society, *From the Ground Up* reconceptualizes how we have normally thought about New England's economic development

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