



Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic (Early American Studies)

Simon P. Newman

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Throughout the 1790s, the streets and public places of the new American republic were alive with often elaborate, sometimes unruly parades, feasts, and festivals. Simon Newman vividly evokes the celebrations of America's first national holidays in the years between the ratification of the Constitution and the inauguration of Thomas Jefferson. He demonstrates how, by taking part in the festive culture of the streets, nonelite American men and women were able to play a significant role in forging the political culture of the young nation. The creation of many of the patriotic holidays we still celebrate coincided with the emergence of the first two-party system, Newman observes; as leaders of the Federalist and Democratic Republican factions vied to take fullest advantage of the parades and festivals that filled the public sphere, the participation and support of a wider public became vital to their parties' success. With the political songs they sang, the liberty poles they raised, and the partisan badges they wore, ordinary Americans helped shape a new national politics destined to replace the regional practices of the colonial era.

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