

BOOK REVIEWS

1862, when the 105th went on campaign, Kate's nursing duties ended; she returned to Brookville, where for the remainder of the war she served as editor of her father's newspaper, a publication supportive of the Lincoln administration.

Having narrated Kate's wartime service, author Briggs does a fine job detailing her post-war accomplishments, which include the authorship of two books: a regimental history of her beloved 105th Pennsylvania Infantry, and a comprehensive history of Jefferson County. Briggs' research also reveals that in the decades preceding Kate's death in 1911, she immersed herself in the activities of Civil War veteran associations and that in 1890 she was elected postmaster (postmistress) of Brookville, an uncommon attainment for a woman in that era.

Controversy, however, enveloped Kate's legacy nearly 100 years after her death, when she was linked to John Wilkes Booth in the aforementioned book *Dark Union*. The piece of "evidence" linking Kate to Booth, according to the authors of *Dark Union*, is a 1910 deposition to early Lincoln scholar Osborn Oldroyd in which she "admitted to bearing a child of John Wilkes Booth on December 8, 1865." It is this document that is subjected to close scrutiny — literally line-by-line — by Scott's biographer Carole Briggs in an effort to confirm its veracity.

After a thoughtful investigation by Briggs, the document's veracity is shown to be sorely lacking. The author argues "that Kate never gave this deposition to Osborn Oldroyd" and this reviewer is convinced that Carole Briggs is spot-on in her conclusions, but read it for yourself and decide. Whatever you conclude, you'll still get a very good biography of a fascinating woman who—so wrote the *Brookville Republican*—lived a life "devoted to the friends and causes she so loved." ★

David M. Neville is a military historian, the former publisher of *Military Images* magazine, and coauthor with Michael Kraus and Kenneth Turner of *The Civil War in Pennsylvania, A Photographic History* (2012).

A Colony Sprung From Hell: Pittsburgh and the Struggle for Authority on the Western Pennsylvania Frontier, 1744-1794

By Daniel P. Barr

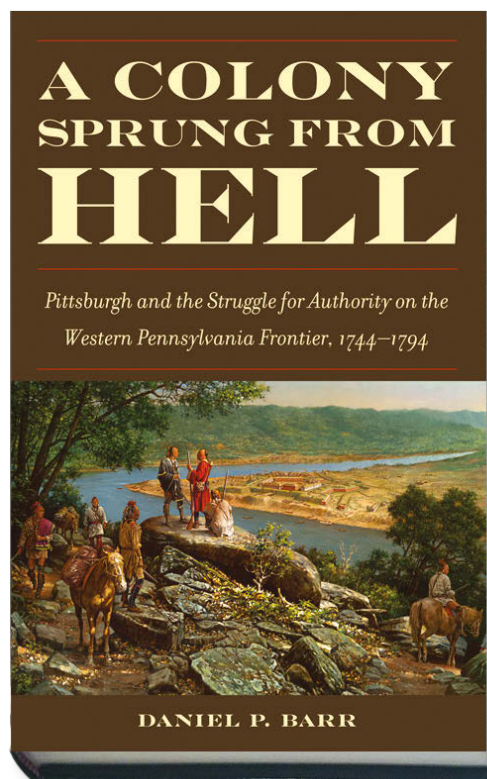
Kent State University Press, 2014

500 pps.

\$65 hardcover

Reviewed by Aaron O'Data, Duquesne University Public History program alumnus

Often at the center of discussions on livability, Pittsburgh today receives high marks for its green spaces, food scene, cultural amenities, and more. The Pittsburgh at the center of author Daniel P. Barr's book, however, was quite a different place. In the mid-1700s, American colonists from Pennsylvania and Virginia began moving to the area around the Forks of the Ohio. They brought with them hopes of economic opportunity and a unique attitude of frontier independence. Lacking any formal auspices of governance, the lawless and chaotic village that formed around the walls of Fort Pitt was described by Col. Henry Bouquet as "a colony sprung from hell for the scourge of mankind." In this book, which adapts Bouquet's description for its title, Daniel Barr explores the rich and complicated fabric



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of Pittsburgh's early history. There, British, Pennsylvanian, Virginian, and American forces fought between each other and struggled to exert authority over Pittsburgh and its surrounding region.

A Colony Sprung From Hell is broken into three sections that outline the "three discernibly different phases" of "the struggle for authority on the western Pennsylvania frontier." The first part, "Competition," outlines the rivalry between land speculators, colonial officials, and traders as they fought both to gain possession of and exert authority over the Western Pennsylvania frontier. As the struggle between these interests intensified, international conflict broke out in the form of the Seven Years War, which brought with it aggression from various Native American tribes. Familiar actors of this narrative include George Washington, who at the time was a prominent and wealthy land speculator, motivated to ensure Pittsburgh's place within the colony of Virginia for his financial benefit.

In part two, "Regulation," Barr weaves a tale of British imperial motivations to secure peace on the frontier in the post-Seven Years War colonial world. Incensed by what was perceived to be a distant government acting arbitrarily with no notion of local concerns, settlers worked to pursue economic

endeavors and maintain political autonomy.

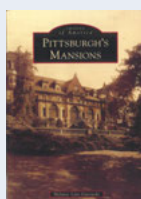
Part three, "Revolution," rounds out the book as frontier tensions came to a head leading up to, throughout, and following the American Revolution. As a center for Continental military power, Fort Pitt and its leaders consistently failed to see what Barr describes as the concerns of the local population. Commanders from the outside were unable to grasp the desire of the settlers for political autonomy based on self-interest and military protection against the Native Americans, who were simultaneously feared and hated. This final section also challenges the idea that American colonists were united behind a common ideal of nationhood against the British, as Pennsylvania and Virginia came close to declaring war on each other over control of Pittsburgh while also at war with England.

A Colony Sprung From Hell successfully brings the reader into the world of the early frontier of Western Pennsylvania. Barr both honors and explains the deep and complex issues at the heart of the founding of Pittsburgh. Readers of any background will gain an understanding and appreciation of the turbulent origins of what is now called "A most livable city."

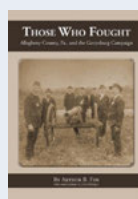


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