

# The Environmental Historiography of the Maritime Peninsula

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## REVIEW ESSAYS/NOTES CRITIQUE

### The Environmental Historiography of the Maritime Peninsula

IN HIS 2014 PUBLICATION *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England*, Richard Judd referred to the region stretching from Long Island Sound to the Gaspé Peninsula as a “landform known as the Maritime Peninsula.”<sup>1</sup> Archaeologists use the term “maritime peninsula” to illustrate connections between pre-European-contact Native people in what is today New England and Atlantic Canada, and this is the context in which Judd used the term in his book. Earlier, in the introduction, Judd described New England as a “giant peninsula,” although without reference to Atlantic Canada (2). In the introduction to their collection of essays, *Land and Sea: Environmental History in Atlantic Canada*, Claire Campbell and Robert Summerby-Murray write: “For some time, environmental historians have argued against writing history within the confines of national boundaries . . . . Some scholars have suggested that we look not to nation-states but to bioregions.” Pointing to their own region, the authors note that “Atlantic Canada itself is a wonderful example of the artificial nature of political boundaries. Originally an invention of bureaucratic convenience, the region has rarely been anything approaching an organic alliance.”<sup>2</sup>

Such statements build upon a large collection of scholarly work from across disciplines that have identified New England and Atlantic Canada as a borderland – a region of shared cultural and social history and economic connections that are somewhat artificially divided by the political border separating the United States and Canada. Although this analytical framework has faded somewhat in recent years, with the most recent edited collection of essays utilizing it appearing in 2005 – Stephen Hornsby and John G. Reid’s *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons*<sup>3</sup> – it still retains important methodological guidance for environmental historians. Among all sub-disciplines of history, environmental history might be the least dependent upon contemporary political borders. Yet even here most of our work still struggles to jump that border. Campbell and Summerby-Murray note the importance of balancing this approach with an appreciation for the uniqueness of locality: “Environmental historians must be true to these particular places, the distinctive features of the local” (4). By comparing local stories across a bio-region, or a borderland, the editors argue that “these common sensibilities create a regional sense of place” (4). But their regionalism is confined to Atlantic Canada. Within the essays themselves there is no breaking of international borders – only

1 Richard Judd, *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 21.

2 Claire Campbell and Robert Summerby-Murray, eds., *Land and Sea: Environmental History in Atlantic Canada* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2013), 2-3.

3 Stephen Hornsby and John G. Reid, eds., *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005).

provincial ones – and rarely at that. Graeme Wynn notes this in his epilogue, wondering if such regionalism does not “ride roughshod over more locally rooted sensitivities and attachments to place” (236).

Despite claims to stretch their studies across borders, most environmental historians of New England and Atlantic Canada remain largely confined to a politically defined place. A comprehensive review essay on the environmental history of New England and Atlantic Canada, therefore, has to draw upon the historiography of each region separately in an effort to then develop connections between scholars across the regions who themselves were very much grounded in their own largely politically identified region. It is thus necessary to compare and contrast different regional approaches to environmental history, which might then force scholarship into categories not originally envisioned by the authors.

The overarching commonality of the recent (since 2010) environmental histories of New England and Atlantic Canada is the acceptance, even celebration, of the deep, multiple forms of human uses of nature. In these regions, or this region if we want to hold onto the borderland analytical framework for a bit longer, historians cannot reduce their analysis to one that contrasts first and second nature. Despite Judd’s title, two layers simply is not enough. Environmental historians of New England and Atlantic Canada deal with landscapes and seascapes that have been worked, settled upon, abandoned, reworked, and even restored. While in other regions environmental historians have suggested that the line between first and second nature is blurred, in New England and Atlantic Canada the line does not even exist. This longer and more diversified use of the same environment, what Judd refers to as the “post-pioneer” history (x), provides a complex connection between culture and nature because so many people assert competing understandings of nature. Each of these understandings affirm certain ethical groundings for their claim, which prohibit the environmental historians of New England and Atlantic Canada from crafting simple narratives of good versus bad uses of nature or the inevitable decline of the purity of the natural environment. In short, the environmental history of New England and Atlantic Canada is far more complex than a simple duality between first and second nature.

This review essay will look at some of the most far-reaching works on the environmental history of New England and Atlantic Canada. There are plenty of other books published within the last five years that could have, and maybe even should have, be included in this review; but for the sake of management and length this review will focus on those books that made the biggest theoretical or methodological leaps in the field and posed the best analysis for moving the environment history of this region to the forefront of the continental conversation: Claire Campbell and Robert Summerby-Murray’s edited collection *Land and Sea: Environmental History in Atlantic Canada*, Richard Judd’s *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England*, Christopher Pastore’s *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England*, and Richard Judd and Stephen Hornsby’s edited *Historical Atlas of Maine*.<sup>4</sup>

4 See Christopher Pastore, *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) and Richard Judd and Stephen Hornsby, eds., *Historical Atlas of Maine* (Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 2015). Other

Ironically enough, Richard Judd's *Second Nature: The Environmental History of New England* largely disproves the value of understanding environments as either first or second nature. Indeed, the picture that he paints is one of far greater complexity. Instead of successive layers of environmental history, his book shows a muddled, overlapping, and intermixing of uses and understandings of the environment to the point that there is no first or second nature. Judd does not claim to provide an exhaustive history of the environment in New England, but instead hopes to set the stage for future scholarship of the region. His book provides several key analytical frameworks within which deeper analysis of any one specific topic could fit. These frameworks set the environmental history of New England as distinct from that of other North American regions while also establishing important premises for all environmental historians to consider regardless of where their subject matter might take them. As such, *Second Nature* does what a work by a senior scholar should do – it opens doors. It provides a much-needed guide for the next generation. Instead of definitively answering questions, it poses key analytical models within which to work out those answers.

First, Judd moves beyond both the environmental determinism of early-20th-century scholarship on environment and nature as well as the cultural determinism we see in late-20th-century scholarship. Judd opens his book with a rich analysis of existing scholarship on New England by organizing it into two broad camps. On the one hand there were those who saw the uniqueness of the New England environment as determining the emerging Yankee culture of the late colonial period. On the other hand there were those who saw New England's emerging culture of individualistic capitalism as driving the environment into exhaustion and degradation. Moving beyond the limits of New England, Judd concludes from this assessment of the field that "given these confusing changes, it is not surprising that environmental historians have so far failed to develop a generalized formula for integrating the history of nature into the history of humanity . . . . Environmental history has neither defined its own historical benchmarks nor established a model of causal relations widely accepted by historians outside the field" (11).

Second, by abandoning both environmental and cultural determinism Judd is able to see New England's environmental history as a balance between culture and nature that resulted in a "blended landscape" of farms, fields, factories, cities, and suburbs that should not be so easily dismissed as culture's triumph over nature for better or worse. Instead, Judd argues New Englanders developed society in balance with limits imposed by nature and crafted a human landscape that accepted nature and recognized the importance of nature – a "half-wild, half-domesticated world" (94).

books that could have been included are John Cumbler's recent *Cape Cod: An Environmental History of a Fragile Ecosystem* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014); Blake Harrison and Richard Judd's *A Landscape History of New England* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); Ellen Stroud's *Nature Next Door: Cities and Trees in the American Northeast* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2105); Anthony N. Penna and Conrad Edick Wright's *Remaking Boston: An Environmental History of the City and Its Surroundings* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); and Matthew McKenzie's *Clearing the Coastline: The Nineteenth-Century Ecological and Cultural Transformation of Cape Cod* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2011).

Even in the epic period of industrialization in New England, the region remained intimately dependent upon nature in ways far more pronounced than other industrialized places: “Shut out of the industrializing economy, they invested in small, multiple-purpose woodworking mills and fishing vessels, spread their activities across a broad range of forest and sea products, and took advantage of their familiarity with the local environment to stay competitive in the age of giant industry” (96).

Third, Judd argues that the region’s long “post-pioneer” history provides a unique culture that is not separate from nature but one of continued interaction. This is perhaps the most important analytical model established by the book – the “distinguishing feature of New England environmental history is the length, continuity, and intensity of Euro-American settlement” (11-12). Judd seems to echo Campbell and Summerby-Murray’s observation regarding Atlantic Canada when he writes that this longer period of post-pioneer history “brings to light a series of oscillations: deforestation and reforestation, depletion and renewal, settlement and abandonment, pollution and recovery” (12). As such, Judd’s work suggests, and many scholars of environmental history of New England and Atlantic Canada have elsewhere asserted, that nature remains a key force throughout the history of the region – always resurgent. It was the acceptance of the persistent power of nature that shaped New England’s culture: New Englanders “adapted and continued a way of life closely attuned to the patterns of weather, season, and resource availability” (114). Nature limited the ways in which New Englanders could use capital to completely overturn that nature, and thus New England’s culture is more rooted, Judd asserts, in smaller acquisitions of wealth from nature: “The sea and forest offered multiple opportunities that no single company could monopolize, and by taking advantage of these opportunities, New Englanders preserved in a distinctive way of life inseparable from the natural environment” (116).

The fourth key analytical framework established by Judd’s work is that environmental history need not be a declension story. Instead, environmental historians should recognize the value of the humanized landscapes that New Englanders built within the confines of an active nature. There is value to the farmscape, the pasture, the woodlot, and even the more heavily built environments of mills, waterfronts, cityscapes, and suburbia. To dismiss them as culture’s triumph over nature, Judd believes, is too simplistic. Rather, environmental historians might value landscapes not based on how much first nature was lost, but the “degree to which the new humanized ecology is sustainable and affords the diversity and richness that all societies – and all natural ecosystems – require” (xi).

By abandoning the declension narrative so dominant in environmental history, Judd shows us that New England’s nature never stopped adapting itself to the harm inflicted upon it by New Englanders. Judd asserts that this adapted nature should be no less celebrated and understood as the first nature that New Englanders (both Native and those of European origins) first encountered. Furthermore, New Englanders never stopped working with, and often within the confines of, that second-nature, thus producing perhaps endless layers of nature well beyond the limits of first and second nature. Nature never stopped being a resilient force. As a consequence, it was this unique humanized landscape that still embraced the limits of nature that became a core component of New England culture. As such, when it

came time to preserve nature, New Englanders were concerned about cultural landscapes at the outset in contrast to westerners' idealization of purely wild places. Judd's abandonment of the declension narrative is really an overdue recognition by historians that New England's early conservationists largely never bought into that declension narrative in the first place: "New England offered little in the way of true first-nature wilderness, but it contained several iconic second-nature landscapes, ranging from working woods to rolling farmland, each with a distinctive humanized but functioning ecosystem. This hybrid world of farms, woodlands, cut-over forests, and past-enshrouded fishing outports, all centuries in the making, was the focus of New England environmentalism" (241). Perhaps New England's most unique contribution to environmentalism was the region's efforts to not only protect the bits of remaining wild places but also to shelter the "farms, villages, and woodlands – New England's classic second-nature landscapes – from urban sprawl and other land-use threats" (177).

Aside from these four basic frameworks, one of the most rewarding aspects of Judd's work is how effectively he incorporates other scholars' work into his own narrative. We see this throughout the book as Judd introduces the reader to key historians, archeologists, and anthropologists. He explains their theories and research, sets their work within the context of their own discipline, and shows how these ideas have changed over time with new evidence and new analysis. By doing so, Judd's book becomes an exceptionally useful teaching tool because he effectively utilizes historiography and shows students the process of history writing. As such, Judd's work recognizes what Campbell and Summerby-Murray also note in *Land and Sea* as necessary for Atlantic Canada – multidisciplinary work.

Like many collections of essays, *Land and Sea* is a diverse collection of largely independent parts that closely examine specific local regions. The essays are thorough investigations of localized events; yet, collectively they do conjure up some significant overall themes – themes that encourage the making of "connections between these scales of landscapes, seeking shared historical patterns in exploration, settlement, and the use of natural resources"(4).

First, like Judd's work, it is clear that these are all human landscapes rather than the often-celebrated beauty of untouched wild places. The essays reject the older dualism of culture versus nature that places humanized landscapes, or cultured places, outside of the wrongly assumed non-humanized or uncultured wilds in the same manner as Judd as "places that have been occupied and abandoned, harvested and rearranged, recorded and represented" (1). This involves the complex multiple uses of nature and a similarly careful desire to avoid a declension perspective. Although most of the histories in this volume tend to focus on the misuse of the environment via pollution, over-use, failed science, or commodification, collectively the authors offer the reader a story that is "far more complex than simply one of industrial triumph or resource exhaustion" (5). Indeed, they seek to go beyond the first and second natures explored by Judd to illuminate numerous other connections between nature and culture.

For example, in their study of eastern white cedar Lanna Campbell and Colin P. Laroque note that the species is more than just a tree; it is a "piece of living natural history . . . [and] to allow naturally occurring eastern white cedar to disappear from the Nova Scotian landscape would be to allow a piece of living natural history to fall



to the way side, removing a significant cultural icon that connects us with the past” (232-3). Wilderness is the least common element of environmentalism within the region. In his essay on the history of tourism in Prince Edward Island, Edward MacDonald notes that the Island’s environmental history is distinct in Canada “not only because of its small scale but also due to its absent ‘wilderness.’ . . . There might be wilderness of a sort – woodlots and sand dunes, marshland and peat bog – but there is little that is ‘wild.’ All bore the visible marks of human intervention” (61, 63). Instead of wilderness, environmental awareness on Prince Edward Island centered on a garden imagery – “a working landscape – a landscape dotted with the figures who had created it and who now toiled to wrest a living from it. There was nothing in it to inspire awe, yet it had a subtle appeal for visitors as the Island’s first tourism marketers soon discovered” (63).

This is not to say that the wilderness imagery is totally absent from the region’s environmental history. Alan MacEachern notes in his study on public reaction to the Miramichi fire of 1825 that “the elements of the tragedy were sure to captivate. Here were small communities of British settlers living on the edge of a vast wilderness, experiencing a holocaust of apparently unprecedented size and ferocity, and who, having survived, looked forward only to the loss of home, the loss of livelihood, and a cold winter” (166). Beyond MacEachern’s study, however, and perhaps Bill Parenteau and Mark J. MacLaughlin’s studies on New Brunswick forestry policy, there is virtually no wilderness in any of these essays. Instead of wilderness, the central topic, or type, of environment under investigation is connected to resource economics whether the authors examine fish, timber, agriculture, mining, mud harvesting, or other resources. While Campbell and Laroque note “natural resources are *resources* only because humans rely on them for their benefit” (232), such resources proved essential to the region’s economic success and cultural sense of itself. Heather L. MacLeod notes that it was the fish and timber, which were “valuable international commodities,” that received the closest scrutiny from early European investigation into the region (12). The diversity of the resources available, MacLeod further notes, “created a wide range of altered landscapes with associated ecological impact” (26).

Second, once we accept that there are numerous and equal layers of use open to investigation by environmental historians, and the central importance of not wilderness but resource in that history, we inevitably realize the complexity of internal conflict over how to best use resources. Some of this conflict emerged from the inherent “borderland” aspect of the region, which reveals multiple politically identified groups competing in the same place for the same resource. Allan Dwyer notes this in his investigation into 18th-century Notre Dame Bay, Newfoundland, which he asserts was “an integrated environmental precinct – a borderland – where labourers from two European empires clashed in their quest for marketable species and where Europeans as a group interacted with the indigenous Beothuk residents of the area” (28). More commonly, however, internal conflict pitted representatives from different socio-economic classes or occupational groups rather than national affiliation.

Jonathan Luedee explores the internal debate in Newfoundland over the use of cod seines and notes “most fishers in the community cautioned against such intensification of fishing effort. Investment in the capital-intensive cod-seine fishery

divided fishers and produced local tensions around emerging capitalist relations” (83). Contrary to the class divide illustrated by Luedee, Joshua D. MacFadyen argues that the conflict over access to mussel mud in Prince Edward Island revolved more around occupation. MacFadyen posits that access to the valuable resource “became flashpoints for confrontation. . . . The protests that followed split farmers and fishers, neighbours who might not otherwise have put themselves in disparate camps” (100, 107). In his study of Progressive-Era forestry policy in New Brunswick, Bill Parenteau identifies the internal conflict as based neither on socio-economic class or occupation but on struggles between elite economic leaders of the community: lumber barons who controlled the woods during most of the 19th century and those who controlled the new highly capitalized and highly concentrated pulp-and-paper industry. This conflict was about much more than just economic control over resources, because “the pulp industry was considered by some local lumber barons to be a threat to their economic and, perhaps, social and political positions” (129). Similarly, Alan MacEachern’s investigation into the conflicting views of a post-fire Miramichi illustrates cultural divides between forestry and agriculture. Despite New Brunswick’s reliance on forestry, the government commission sent to the Miramichi valley following the 1825 fire argued “farming remained the proper activity of new settlers even on the marginal farmland of northeastern New Brunswick and even if the great fire had made farming a more dubious prospect than ever” (177). For MacEachern, the internal conflict was one over image and assumed cultural identity rather than the reality of work in northeastern New Brunswick. Thus, internal conflict in Atlantic Canada over resource use came in several forms.

Third, by intensely focusing on these rather localized stories and the internal conflict over local resources, the *Land and Sea* essays illustrate the central importance of local knowledge, skills, and ability. The more intimate connections workers had with local environments provided them with an intense understanding of that environment that often superseded those from outside, whether they were corporate, government, or scientific interlopers. Many of these essays also suggest that conflict over use and understanding of the local environment was usually not an internal affair, but one generated only after the introduction of some outside force of capital or knowledge that brought in new ways of seeing and understanding that nature.

Heather MacLeod notes in her essay “the experience of nature for many people was intimately connected with working the farms, forests, mines, or coastal waters for a living” (15). In his study of 19th-century naturalist Titus Smith Jr., Richard Field notes that Smith took close observations of the local inhabitants and “proselytized about the moral benefit of work and its ability to enhance character” (48). Jonathan Luedee shows how fishing labourers “developed a nuanced understanding of local cold-ocean ecosystems and the complex composition of northern cod stocks” (88). Joshua MacFadyen states “The farmers relied on their own knowledge of place to locate the best shell beds, and they hauled the mud home to their own fields and spread it over the winter snows with shovels and sleighs. . . . These efforts to understand the nature and location of estuarine resources indicate that farmers had extensive knowledge of the river bottoms” (105). Such close investigation of local ecological knowledge, or traditional ecological knowledge,



and their conflict with external forces, is not unique to the environmental history of Atlantic Canada, but it is the long and diverse use of the environment – the post-pioneer history – that allows the environmental historians of this region to more fully develop this idea as the central component of their argument.

The fourth key theme to this collection is that these internal and external battles over the use of natural resources largely revolved around the extent to which the local users of the resources would accept or reject more highly commercialized or capitalized use of natural resources. The histories of these conflicts illustrate that local resource users were often able to gain capital from nature while rejecting a fuller transition to a solely commercialized understanding of the nature from which they drew their wealth. Instead, settlers looked for long-term sustainability rather than a quick profit. MacLeod illustrates that early European settlers in Nova Scotia sought out meadowlands for potential farms and pastures, and that “permanent occupation was the goal rather than a quick and seasonal exploitation of resources, as was the case for early mercantile interests in the cod fishery” (16). Luedee shows how this unfolded along class lines in his investigation of internal debates over the use of cod seines in Newfoundland and how the ultimate “development of capitalist relations of production [in Newfoundland’s inshore cod fisheries] led to the erosion of the moral economic regulation of fisheries in Newfoundland’s outports” (83). This is not to say that Luedee argues that those inshore fishermen who protested the use of seines were hardened anti-capitalists. They still sought profit, but did so in balance with the long-term sustainability of the resource. As has been articulated in Judd’s environmental history of New England, such early stewardship of resources should be understood as one of the key foundations of modern conservationism and environmentalism. Richard Field’s assessment of the limited historical investigation into 19th-century natural scientist Titus Smith, Jr., is in part due to his “strident anti-capitalist rhetoric . . . which did not endear him to the business and political interests of his day” (45). The essay notes Smith should be reconsidered as a central thinker for modern conservation because he “saw human need and purpose linked to the stewardship of nature, and during the last decades of his life combined his empirical sensibilities with his Christian beliefs to counter the two emerging giants of the 19th century – capitalism and industrialization – that together exploited the natural world for profit” (45). Finally, in his investigation into the public outrage against pesticides in New Brunswick’s forestry policy, Mark J. McLaughlin places New Brunswick’s forests into the larger story of the emergence of environmentalism in the late 20th century by recognizing the “growing ecological and environmental awareness of many New Brunswickers” (143).

Other scholars in this collection, however, note that we should be careful about the celebration of the assumed folk use of nature or early grassroots campaigns that we might identify as environmentalism. Edward MacDonald claims that the tourist celebration of Prince Edward Island’s Arcadian landscape allowed tourism marketing to “eulogize the consequence of economic stagnation as a restorative, antimodernist escape from North Americans’ urban-industrial angst” (61). Yet this celebration of antimodernism was in fact deeply capitalist as “it increasingly commodified the visitor experience in a manner that arguably trivialized the complexities of both the pastoral landscape and the culture associated with it” (62).

We need to recognize this counter-thesis: the clearly industrialized use of natural resources. In his study of mussel mud digging in Prince Edward Island, MacFadyen partially rejects the often-celebrated folk use of the resource. Instead of the image of a self-sufficient yeoman looking for local fertilizer, MacFadyen argues, "in reality, mussel mud digging was also, or perhaps even primarily, a market activity, and people who went into the business of commercial mud digging were early adapters to new forms of energy and technology" (105). Parenteau also rejects the folk use of resources in his study of forest conservation in New Brunswick when he notes the importance of "a new corporate agenda for natural resource development that was related to a broad movement toward the consolidation of raw materials in the hands of large, sometimes multinational, firms" (121). Parenteau also notes that Progressive-era forest conservation policy was "skewed heavily toward those that were practical and efficient from an economic standpoint, as opposed to those that promoted sustained yield but added costs to the harvesting operations of companies" (123).

The fifth key theme to this collection is that by accepting alternative, albeit still capitalist, uses of nature, the essays provide another avenue by which to rethink the traditional declension narrative of environmental history. This might be the weakest of the conclusions one can glean from the individual arguments of each essay. Campbell and Summerby-Murray state in their introduction: "Our relationship with our environment in this region . . . has been far more complex than simply one of industrial triumph or resource exhaustion" (5). Wynn returns to this idea in the epilogue by reminding us that there is now a well-established body of literature that proves that there "was no pre-modern, pre-industrial golden age in which people lived in idyllic unchanging harmony with nature" (237). Instead, research shows that early European farmers and fishers, as well as Native people, were not "proto-environmentalist" but people who had "intimate knowledge of local environments" and used that knowledge to manipulate the environment for their own ends (239, 237). Wynn further notes that the scholarship clearly articulates that "although newcomers had a marked and seemingly ever-escalating impact on the environment of the region through the 18th and 19th centuries, they were not engaged in simple, mindless plunder." Instead, "most lived their lives in intimate engagement with the natural world." Although historians should not ignore the environmental damage done by increased use of natural resources, Wynn argues "it is too simple, and misleading, to infer that such outcomes reflect a widespread, uncomplicated, unsophisticated, and fundamentally spendthrift set of attitudes toward nature" (242-4).

The sixth major theme of the collection is that all of these chapters seek to understand the role that the history of nature and environmental use can play in shaping contemporary understanding and policy. It is placed at the forefront of the agenda when the editors close their introduction by stating "we do indeed have something to offer the national project, especially as the voice of experience, for the long histories of environmental change in the Atlantic region offer timely and urgent insights and guidance for policymakers"(5). Nearly every essay openly asserts its potential contribution to environmental policy. Heather MacLeod writes that her analysis of colonial descriptions of nature "suggests an historical basis for our present-day interactions with changing environments" (11). Allan Dwyer asserts that "viewing the entirety of the bay as a borderland with discrete and definable economic, social, and environmental challenges can help present-day observers to

distinguish the intricate contours of human ecology during a period of wrenching change” (29). And Richard Field states “Smith developed ideas about environmental sustainability, the stewardship and management of natural resources, and the improvement of agricultural practices that resound profoundly through our modern-day ecological debates” (59). Yet in almost every one of the essays this effort to find contemporary relevance is rather weak – often seeming much like an afterthought or an effort to fulfill a requirement that the authors were not wholly behind. Almost every reference to this contemporary value could have easily been deleted with no detrimental effect on the quality of the essays or their significance to our understanding of the past.

Some of the essays’ relevance to contemporary policy, though, is more appropriate given their subject matter. Edward MacDonald does this well when he shows how dangerous the “artless anti-modernism” of Prince Edward Island tourism today is as it creates a “widening disjunction between tourism image and lived experience in the ‘Garden Province’” (62). Noting the overcrowding of the Island, MacDonald concludes “the most potent threat to the pastoral landscape on Prince Edward Island is not ecological but demographic” (76). Jonathan Luedee also emphasizes his essay’s relevance to policy by illustrating that the contemporary collapse of the North Atlantic cod fisheries is “not an historical aberration . . . [as] cod stock depletion caused by overexploitation likely occurred in Newfoundland’s inshore fishery as early as the mid-19th century” (82). But it is Holmes and Hollander’s essay on the redevelopment of brownfields and de-industrial landscapes of Moncton and Sydney that probably does it best largely due to the subject matter and the fact that the essay was specifically geared to “help to inform policy developments” (203). This essay’s focus on the urban environment is something no other essay tackles and, as such, it is an excellent counterweight to the dominance of resource economics as the central focus of the environmental history of Atlantic Canada. It is important to note, as Holmes and Hollander do, that these industrial, and now deindustrialized, places were, and are, important “iconic images for the communities.” As such, policymakers wrestling with important questions on what to do with these crumbling “brownfields” need to consider the “heritage of the region” and embrace “a community planning process and not just a site-planning process” (202, 217).

Campbell and Summerby-Murray’s edited collection of essays stands as the sole effort in recent years to come to some understanding of the environmental history of Atlantic Canada as a region. Of the six overarching themes in this collection, the key is the first – the understanding that there is no dualism in environmental history, and particularly so for a region with such a long and diverse history of environmental use. The essays’ collective effort to understand the long and diverse layers of use in the end destroys the concept of layered use altogether. Instead, what we get from this collection is the realization that human use of the environment is ever-changing – not in a layered way, but in a much more muddled way of continued mixing, overlapping, and conflicting use and understanding of nature.

Christopher Pastore applies this key understanding of the complexity of uses to an environment most often understood as timeless: the marine environment. Like many of the essays in *Land and Sea*, Pastore’s *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* is a case study that begins with local circumstances in an effort to build broader understandings of the exchange between

culture and nature. But Pastore's work is different because of the specific aspect of his localized study. The margin between land and sea, the ecotone of coastal environments, proves to be a rich field of investigation. Pastore states: "A deeper understanding of these littoral dynamics reveals the ways coastal cultures were often torn between two dominant epistemologies concerning the natural world. The first considered the ocean (and to some extent water in general) unchanging, eternal, and somehow exempt from human influence. The second believed that terrestrial land could be – and often must be – 'improved.' It was the push and pull of these two conceptions of nature that shaped coastal space" (3). Yet, the book is far less about a conflict between two environmental spaces as it is about a bridging of those spaces. In Pastore's work the coastal zone is a place with deep connections to both the terrestrial world and the marine world, a place rich with human and natural history, and a place upon which the larger region of New England built a cultural sense of itself. In Pastore's work we see that New England is neither marine nor terrestrial, but both. This somewhat obvious conclusion is shocking only in that historians have never so openly stated it as Pastore does.

Most of Pastore's book is rooted in the colonial era. Its best chapters deal with the wampum trade and colonial efforts to control the New England coast. In his chapter on wampum Pastore builds on past scholarship that shows how wampum gained political and financial currency with both Native and European groups, but he also adds significant insight from the methodologies of environmental history by clearly showing that both groups valued the currency because of "the watery origins of the shells from which they were made . . . [and that] wampum held value because it was mined from the edges of an 'unknowable' sea, a space that embraced all the mystery of the divine" (16). By associating wampum with the sea, the currency gained important cultural value for both groups and facilitated trade. Pastore goes even further when he links this currency, with all of its environmentally vested power, to the destruction of the beaver and the eco-zones that the species created. It was the proliferation of wampum that provided the currency needed for the beaver trade. By doing so, Pastore reveals the central impact that both cultural understandings of the environment and the physical reality of those environments had on colonial New England history.

After a brief and interesting chapter on animal husbandry, Pastore deals with his second major contribution to the historical profession. In the middle chapters of his book Pastore illustrates how Europeans tried to rationalize the ecotone of coastal New England by transforming it from a fluid margin into a fixed edge. Pastore shows how – via cartography, lighthouses, and military power – "the coastal landscape was remade to meet the demands of an expanding Atlantic world" (164). This process was key to the transformation of the natural world: military and political power overlaid the existing intellectual and economic manipulation of the natural world to create something more completely, although not wholly, under human control. Within his discussion on the military conflict in colonial Narraganset Bay, Pastore refers to this new rationalization of the coastal ecotone as a "second nature" (173). Yet, the broader implications of his work actually call into question this two-layered approach to environmental history. As in the essays in Campbell and Summerby-Murray, Pastore documents the multi-use of the environment over a long period that results in a much more complicated environment.

Such elongated views of the past are typical among historical geographers. Early in their work, Campbell and Summerby-Murray recognize the importance of the traditional history-geography multidisciplinary approach to understand the environmental history of Atlantic Canada. Richard Judd and Stephen Hornsby's *Historical Atlas of Maine* brings us back to that essential foundation. Richard Judd's understanding of the environmental history of New England is most certainly present in nearly every plate in the atlas, and is most pronounced in part three – "Industrial Maine, 1850-1910" – which deals more directly with his previous work on the industrial use of natural resources. As influential as Judd's ideas must have been in crafting this work, it is actually Stephen Hornsby's name that we most often encounter throughout the work. Hornsby's previous work on Atlantic World trade is clearly present in part one of the atlas – "From Ice Age to Borderland, 13,000 BP-1790" – and the methodologies and analytical structure of his historical-geography background is pronounced in nearly every plate. Because of this shared faith in both text and visual depictions of data, the plates in the atlas do a superb job at conveying historical knowledge in a manner that is both scholarly and popular. The historian Judd and the geographer Hornsby, along with the assistance of the cartographer Michael Hermann, have crafted a compelling multidisciplinary depiction of a borderland state deeply rooted in its own environment and geographic location.

The most important aspect of the *Historical Atlas of Maine* is its depiction of the state's borderland presence between New England and Atlantic Canada, and in many ways the work links the ideas of Campbell and Summerby-Murray with those of Judd and Pastore. As Hornsby and Judd assert: "Bounded by Canada on three sides, Maine is examined in its larger international and geographic context" (xiii). Within this larger framework, the editors present three central themes carried throughout all the plates. The first highlights the continued presence of Native peoples throughout Maine's history. Whereas many histories of New England and Atlantic Canada provide at least adequate coverage of Native history during contact and colonial eras, the *Historical Atlas of Maine* carries Native history throughout the entire chronology of the state. The archeology of Native sites is well depicted in the pre-contact period (plates 1-4), while the ethnohistory of Native peoples appears in a plate depicting European exploration and settlement in Maine (plate 7). Native peoples also appear in 19th-century plates on disputes and treaty negotiations (plate 23), Native mapping (plate 39), and reservations (plate 61), as well as in a 20th-century plate on Native land claims (plate 75). Although Native peoples certainly played a central role in Maine's history, and perhaps more so than in other New England states, identifying Native peoples as one of the three key themes is ultimately too narrow. Instead, the editors may have selected a broader definition of ethnicity as a better theme to link several plates together. Although Maine remains one of the "whitest" states in the United States, more attention should have given to Irish, French, and other ethnic minorities that were so central to Maine's history. Alongside those plates depicting Native peoples, an ethnicity theme could have included the plates on French surveyors (plate 11), Irish migration (plate 24), French settlement in the Upper Saint John River Valley (plate 27), and French Canadian immigration (plate 42) – all plates that seem outside the editors' three identified themes. The central theme that links the plates on Native peoples – that Native culture remains resilient in Maine – could certainly have been expanded to include



other ethnic or racialized groups. The popular contemporary view of Maine certainly needs more focus on the state's ethnic diversity and, considering the editors' stated effort to find a balance between academic scholarship and popular appeal, they should have broadened this theme beyond Native people.

The second key theme the editors identify in their introduction is the importance of resource economics in the development of Maine throughout its history. This is certainly the strongest of the three themes. It is most obvious in those plates that deal directly with the state's key resources: lumber (plates 15, 25, 31, and 50), fishing (plates 9, 33, 52, and 70), and agriculture (plates 26-27, 29-30, 53-56, and 67-68). But beyond these there is hardly a single plate that does not have some reference to resources, landscapes, or the environment. The narratives behind these plates seem to be shaped by Judd's past work on the environmental history of Maine and New England. The central argument that links these resource-oriented plates together is that such resources provided Maine early capital and credit badly needed for the state's development. Mills and processing plants became central economic units that exported a wealth of natural resources while bringing in investments from outside the state. As Maine modernized, however, these resources became increasingly controlled by a few wealthy groups and thus less community oriented and less sustainable. Nonetheless, the plates combine this standard history of industrialization of natural resource economies with a uniquely Maine (or, if you read Judd's *Second Nature*, a uniquely New England) balance between large-scale and highly capitalized industries and more traditional and localized production. We see this most predominately in part three – "Industrial Maine, 1850-1910" – which chronicles Maine's transition from simple resource extraction to a more diversified and modern industrial state while retaining important traditional enterprises.

The third theme of the atlas is environmental awareness. Maine's contemporary iconography as Vacationland, the great north woods, and L.L. Bean have sound historical roots. Plates throughout the entire atlas depict environmental awareness well beyond just 20th century notions of environmentalism. Plates on exploration (plate 5-6) and surveying (plates 11, 16-17) during the colonial period convey an interest beyond just claiming sovereignty over territory; there was also a desire to gain knowledge from a particular environment. Similar exploratory efforts are seen in the 19th century (plate 22), with the added influence of the burgeoning romanticism of 19th-century New England (plate 57-58). Environmentally based tourism began in the 19th century with coastal cottage retreats (plate 59) and hunting and fishing trips into Maine's interior (plate 60). Finally, modern environmentalism emerged in the 20th century with the twin influences of recreation into assumed "wild" places (plates 72-73) and an increasing awareness of and campaign against industrial pollution (plate 74). In combination, the key lesson these plates teach us is that Maine's environmental awareness goes well beyond Henry David Thoreau, Frederic Edwin Church, and the campaigns to protect the Allagash or to clean up the Penobscot. Environmental awareness in Maine, instead, seems to be rooted in everyday experiences of explorers, farmers, fishermen, lumbermen, quarry men, and even urban and suburban residents.

These three themes may or may not be distinctive to Maine. Although certainly present in other regions of North America, the editors assert that they unfolded in unique ways in Maine and "the future development of Maine will depend greatly on



finding the right balance among interests of Native peoples, utilitarian needs of industry, and demands for environmental protection” (xiii).

The changing nature of Maine’s economy, from the 17th- and 18th-century focus on mercantile commerce to the 19th-century concentration on industry, as well as the subsequent change to the 20th-century focus on service and tourism, is perhaps the most compelling narrative carried throughout the atlas. If there is a central thesis to the atlas, which the editors never identify, this would most likely be it. It is Maine’s adaptation to the changing national and international economic context that makes the state so unique. In his introduction to part three, Judd states “By 1910, Maine’s economy was a mixture of new and traditional enterprises. . . . This diversity was the basis for Maine’s prosperity: struggling traditional industries provided a labor-intensive economy that sheltered Maine’s largely rural population against the winds of modernism, while newer industries – textiles, paper, and tourism among them – smoothed the transition to the industrial age” (21). But if we take this argument, and this atlas more broadly, within the context of the works in Campbell and Summerby-Murray, Richard Judd’s other works, and Christopher Pastore’s recent publication, not to mention a dozen or so other equally insightful environmental histories on New England and Atlantic Canada, then the assertion of the uniqueness of Maine appears to be equally accurate for the entire “Maritime Peninsula” as identified by Richard Judd in *Second Nature*, thus suggesting a real potential for a regional approach to environmental history.

So what are the final lessons from a reading of the environmental history of New England and Atlantic Canada?<sup>5</sup> First, the regions’ long post-pioneer histories provide a more diverse collection of land and sea use. In both regions we see not one or two or three layers of use but many intermixed trends of discovery, use, abandonment, regrowth, and reuse. This multi-faceted aspect of human use of nature provides historians with the opportunity to better understand any one culture’s assumptions about nature as well as the use of nature within the context of other sets of cultural assumptions while remaining grounded in the same base landscape or seascape.

The second lesson is built on the first. Because of the long and diverse chronology of use, environmental historians of New England and Atlantic Canada can more effectively, and probably more rightly, focus on the local. As such, these

5 Before we get to that, though, we should not make too much of the unique approaches of these regions’ environmental historians as compared to those working on the subject from other regions in North America. At times, Judd overstates the extreme differences between New England and the rest of the continent that seems almost like a throwback to Yankee exceptionalism. Judd’s celebration of the uniqueness of New England’s cultural use of nature is very much rooted in colonial ascetics and his celebration of the rural. Thus there seems to be a temporal limit to his Yankee idealism. Furthermore, there are plenty of good environmental histories of the American South and the American West that deal with the human landscape, mixed use of natural resources, local stewardship, and ethically grounded conservationism. These histories most likely came from their own investigations independent of any New England influence on their methodologies and analysis. Nonetheless, there are some interesting themes of these eastern regions that bear consideration. The University of Georgia Press produces some excellent works on the environmental history of the American South. See, for example, Paul Sutter and Christopher J. Manganiello, *Environmental History and the American South: A Reader* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

histories seem to capture a sense of place more profoundly central to their arguments than what we might see in other regions that perhaps have more new arrivals and visitors in direct and immediate contact with nature. This is what Judd refers to as the “post-pioneer history” of New England, but we also see it in many of the essays in *Land and Sea*. This is not to say that the region’s environmental history/histories are too provincial. Clearly regionalism is an important aspect throughout these works, but all of them at least begin with connections between local, region, nation, and continent.

Building from the first and the second lesson, the third key lesson of the regions’ approaches to environmental history is that they offer more opportunities to see the functioning of alternative uses other than a purely capitalistic and industrial use of natural resources. In both regions there are plenty of examples of locals seeking sustainable use of nature so as to steward both nature and community, resources, and culture, in contrast to more highly capitalized ventures launched from away or even from within. This is the result of that long and diverse use of nature – the post-pioneer phase that gave more power to a sense of belonging to and of the region and its natural environment. This is the true contribution of the region’s environmental history to the continent.

BRIAN PAYNE

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