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## THE NATURE OF THE MIDWEST

### Environmental History, Regionalism, and the Future of Midwestern Studies

Held in May 2015, the inaugural conference of the Midwestern History Association corralled a group of scholars interested in grappling with the history of the region. Its organizers argued that the Midwest lacked broader scholarly focus, especially when compared to other regions such as the South, West, and New England. It was not long after that first meeting when I first became involved with the Midwestern History Association. Though I grew up in the Midwest, I attended undergraduate and graduate schools elsewhere (Utah and New York). I was immediately struck with diverse landscapes and environmental uses of the places that I encountered, juxtaposing those spaces against the landscapes of my youth. The history of the Midwestern environment, it seemed to me, was something distinct. The complex diversity of the region's environmental history did not always excite scholars I had met in Utah or New York, some of whom jokingly referred to the region as "flyover country." However, I was delighted to find individuals at regular meetings of the Midwestern History Association

who were eager to grapple with the region's nuances. Though the questions, themes, and locales differed, every scholar was interested in the same question: what historical and environmental changes made this space a distinct region and place?

These are questions well suited for environmental history. It is a field whose practitioners are interested in the historic relationship between humans and the natural world. This is not a one-sided relationship. Humans work on nature and nonhuman actors work on humans. Together, the human and nonhuman agents create space. These spaces can sometimes become places when they carry some sense of cultural meaning. One of those places is the Midwest. As with any place, scholars of the Midwest must historicize the material, and by extension environmental, conditions that informed the creation of the region. For example, the Midwest was born from two connected projects of the nineteenth century: settler colonialism and the rapid capitalist development of the North American interior centering around a singular metropole, Chicago, Illinois.<sup>1</sup> The experiences of these settler colonists established a shared experience among many—not all—in the region. It was at that exact moment when the *idea* of the Midwest was born. As Michael C. Steiner has argued, the "present day notion of the 'Middle West' entered the national consciousness in the thirty-year period between the 1880s and 1910s."<sup>2</sup> It was during this time that scholars, architects, and literary figures, embedded within those larger economic and political projects, attempted to delineate the twelve-state, middle region of the country into a cohesive whole. Their Midwest was a loosely defined region, hemmed in by the Appalachian Mountains to the east and the arid plains and rocky mountains of the American West. This vast continental "middle" was mostly flat and wet, with numerous, slow-churning rivers. That is not to say the region lacked in ecological diversity. The northern stands of mixed-coniferous forests remain a sharp contrast to the hardwood forests of the region's southeast—both of which remain distinct from the northern and southern plains that round out the region's borders.

The Midwest they described was so clearly shaped by the rise of industrial and commodity-based capitalism of the late nineteenth century. The entire region was flattened, drained, monotonized—made more economically efficient with grids, rails, roads, and market-based agriculture. It also developed into an industrial hub due, in large part, to the iron deposits in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin as well as the vast real rail network that ran through Chicago. Stippled with manufacturing sites, several large, mid-size, and small cities were

born of these distinct economic forces. Those same places often also bear another hallmark of the Midwest environment: chemical waste and toxic hazards.

These political, economic, and environmental histories remind us of the temporality of regionalism, more broadly. To read a cohesive, Midwest backward from the late nineteenth century is ahistorical and ignores the varied and competing ideas of space, place, and nature that indigenous, European, and American inhabitants connected to particular landscapes. I am aware that such a position overlooks several important scholarly works dealing with environments now called the Midwest.<sup>3</sup> But if historians do not seriously consider the temporality of regionalism, they are peddling in myths, in search of some metaphysics of place to reinforce their version of the Midwest. The Midwest has not always been and assuredly will not always be. The conservative, reactionary, and nostalgic lament this. The regional historian knows it.

With this in mind, I intend to provide an overview of Midwestern environmental history in this chapter. First, I will survey the field of Midwest environmental history in order to get a sense of the region's place in the development of the larger discipline. I believe this historiographic overview provides an important lens to understand how regional historians might consider environmental history a foundational component of their studies. Any examination of a region—a cultural geography tied to real, physical space—is intimately tied to the organization of nature. As such, environmental history has much to offer regional historians attempting to understand the ways humans relate to a place as well as to one another. Finally, I hope to offer suggestions for further intellectual exploration of the Midwest based on the history and gaps that still persist in the scholarship. My call for research is founded on the belief that if the field of Midwestern studies is to flourish, scholars must take seriously the influence of the environment in shaping the history and broader understanding of the region.

There is a common belief among many scholars of the American Midwest that the region's history has somehow been lost, forgotten, or overlooked.<sup>4</sup> Such claims can be appealing. They are often a default rhetorical reflex for many who have lived in the region. But after surveying the scholarship, it is clear that there is not much truth to the claim that Midwestern topics have been overlooked or ignored by environmental historians. In fact, an examination of the past leadership of the American Society for Environmental History reveals a legacy of scholars with an interest in the history of the region. Since the Society's formation in 1977, presidents have included John Opie, Donald

Worster, William Cronon, Nancy Langston, Gregg Mitman, and Kathleen Brosnan—all of whom have published on topics related to the history of the Midwest.<sup>5</sup> In the decades after its founding a wide range of academics have made the Midwest or Midwestern places central to their scholarly focus. These studies have focused on a range of topics, reflecting the complex and diverse histories of the region. However, much of the work has been organized into broad categories: agriculture, extraction, conservation/environmentalism/recreation, and industry/urbanity.

### AGRICULTURE

Environmental histories of the agricultural Midwest began to flourish in the 1980s when the larger field came into being. The connections seemed obvious at first. After all, if environmental historians wanted to understand the ways in which humans have shaped, viewed, and valued the natural world, then they would have to dive deeper into the environmental implications of agricultural changes. Donald Worster led the way with his iconic *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*.<sup>6</sup> Worster's book, though not the first history of this environmental crisis, helped to establish what the author would later call an "agroecological perspective" of history.<sup>7</sup> This method tasked historians with exploring the ways in which historical agents have reorganized ecosystems for agricultural and commercial purposes. By doing so, Worster argued, historians could further explore the complex social, economic, and technological influences behind these dramatic environmental changes. Within this framework, many historians have set out to demonstrate how the influence of industrial capitalism, immigration, and technological changes have shaped the agroecological history of the region. Though several works fall under this category, David Vail's *Chemical Lands: Pesticides, Aerial Spraying, and Health in North America's Grasslands Since 1945* deserves attention. In *Chemical Lands*, Vail captures the complex systems of crop specialization, technological innovation, and human health in the American Midwest.<sup>8</sup> This is an agricultural history to be sure; however, Vail demonstrates the environmental implications of practices used to propagate particular crops and preserve particular economic and social relations.

More recently, scholars of the Midwest have focused on the broader economic networks that have shaped agricultural practices in the region. For example, Courtney Fullilove's *The Profit of the Earth: The Global Seeds of American Agriculture* offers insights on the transnational influences that shaped many Midwestern agricultural practices as the region came of age.<sup>9</sup> Fullilove's work

compels historians to think more broadly about regionality as well as place-based agricultural practices. Less global in approach, Michael Lansing's work on wheat farming, carbohydrates, and cereals looks at the complex forces that shape agricultural practices in rural places. By writing a history of the popular cereal Wheaties, Lansing outlines the connected histories of wheat farming and urban industrial production within the broader story of mass consumerism.<sup>10</sup> Though the above works are different in scope and topic, they each answer Worster's call to consider the broader forces that have shaped the way Midwesterners viewed, restructured, and attempted to control ecological systems toward particular agricultural goals.

### EXTRACTION

Though agricultural landscapes define much of the American Midwest, the hinterlands have also been the site of other forms of resource extraction. The Upper Midwest, in particular, has a long history of mining and logging. Scholars who have focused on the mining regions of the Upper Midwest include Larry D. Lankton, Thomas W. Pearson, and Nancy Langston.<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey T. Manuel's *Taconite Dreams: The Struggle to Sustain Mining on Minnesota's Iron Range, 1915–2000* is representative of the potential that these histories offer scholars of Midwest. Blending environmental, economic, and legal history, Manuel tracks the history of mining communities as they experience the dwindling mining economy, the environmental movement, automation, and deindustrialization.<sup>12</sup> The history of logging and deforestation have also received considerable attention from environmental historians.<sup>13</sup> Several decades after its publication, *The Great Lakes Forest: An Environmental and Social History* still offers compelling essays that explore the interconnected histories of communities and their relation to extractive logging practices.<sup>14</sup> Theodore J. Karaminski's *Deep Woods Frontier: A History of Logging in Northern Michigan* tracks the long history of the logging industry in the region, demonstrating continuities in industrial pursuits alongside environmental changes in the north.<sup>15</sup> Moving beyond the forests and hills of the Upper Midwest, Margaret Beattie Bogue's *Fishing the Great Lakes: An Environmental History, 1783–1933* remains a field-defining resource toward understanding the development and near collapse of Great Lakes fisheries.<sup>16</sup> Histories of extraction are particularly important for scholars interested in the broader history of the Midwest given that the region came of age alongside the rise of industrial capitalism. Understanding the economy's influence on local environments is not just an important

component of the region's history—it is a foundational component in defining the region as a distinct place.

### CONSERVATION, ENVIRONMENTALISM, AND RECREATION

The industrialized landscape of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to a wave of concern at the local, regional, and national level. As such, much of the regional environmental history has focused on topics of conservation and environmentalism. James Kates's *Planning a Wilderness: Regenerating the Great Lakes Cutover Region* documents the efforts of foresters to restore the landscapes of the Upper Midwest after farmers' failed attempts to successfully farm in the region.<sup>17</sup> Histories of agricultural conservation also demonstrate the unique environmental and agricultural realities of the region.<sup>18</sup> Though Sarah Phillips's *This Land, This Nation: Conservation, Rural America, and the New Deal* is not solely focused on the Midwest, its significance for the region should not be overlooked.<sup>19</sup> Her exploration of the impact of New Deal policies in conservation, water preservation, and economic development has lasting implications for the history of the region. Examinations of prominent conservationists and environmentalists offer interesting perspectives in the relationship between Midwestern places and a particular environmental ethic. Susan Flader's *Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude Toward Deer, Wolves, and Forests* remains a thoughtful examination of Leopold and his perspective.<sup>20</sup> Bill Christofferson draws a connective thread between conservation and environmentalism in *The Man from Clear Lake: Earth Day Founder Senator Gaylord Nelson*.<sup>21</sup> Though many might recognize names like Leopold and Nelson, Gregg Mitman's research in *The State of Nature: Ecology, Community, and American Social Thought, 1900–1950* highlights the work of lesser-known ecologists from the University of Chicago whose embrace of the new science of ecology shaped their perspectives on nature and society.<sup>22</sup> The growing presence of indigenous voices in recent scholarship depicts a fuller and more accurate history of the region. Michael J. Chiarappa and Kristin M. Szylyan's *Fish for All: An Oral History of Multiple Claims and Divided Sentiment on Lake Michigan* as well as Nancy Langston's *Sustaining Lake Superior: An Extraordinary Lake in a Changing World* both outline the complicated histories of conservation and environmentalism of the region.<sup>23</sup>

As environmental attitudes shifted in the Midwest, the development of recreational landscapes began to emerge. The Upper Midwest, with its dense forests and numerous lakes, quickly garnered a reputation as a restful haven for regional

residents. Though several historians have explored this history, Aaron Shapiro's *The Lure of the North Woods: Cultivating Tourism in the Upper Midwest* remains exemplary.<sup>24</sup> By tracking the rise of the tourism industry in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, Shapiro historicizes the efforts of, and relationships between, local residents, tourists, as well as state and national governmental agencies who worked to *create* this region as a destination. Additionally, several scholars have written histories on the various public parks of the Midwest: Brian Kalt on the history of the Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes; Harold C. Jordahl Jr., Annie L. Booth, and James Feldman on the history of the Apostle Islands; and Fred T. Witzig on Voyageurs National Park.<sup>25</sup> There is still work to be done on the complex history of recreational landscapes in the Midwest. Works from Lewis Walker, Benjamin C. Wilson, and Ronald J. Stephens explore the history of Idlewild, an African American vacation community in Michigan, and demonstrate the racialized history of recreation and its legacy for the regional landscape.<sup>26</sup> The consideration of indigenous perspectives is still underexamined in recreational histories though Katrina Phillips's work provides a roadmap to continue to develop these histories.<sup>27</sup>

### INDUSTRY AND URBANITY

In the Midwest, the connection between hinterland and urban places is especially pronounced. William Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* not only transformed the field of American environmental history but refigured the way scholars of the Midwest understood the connection between urban and rural histories.<sup>28</sup> The American city—in particular Midwestern cities—is intimately connected to the hinterland through trade, industry, and production. Environmental histories of Midwestern cities explore the complex matrix of business, work, transportation, and production in order to better understand how urban spaces connect to rural ones. These ideas are further explored in a more recent history of Chicago, *City of Lake and Prairie: Chicago's Environmental History*, edited by Kathleen A. Brosnan, Ann Durkin Keating, and William C. Barnett.<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Grennan Browning's *Nature's Laboratory: Environmental Thought and Labor Radicalism in Chicago, 1886–1937* explores the divergent intellectual strands of environmental thought as industrial Chicago challenged traditional conceptions of labor, community, nature, politics, and society.<sup>30</sup>

Environmental histories of the urban Midwest are also related to the field of social history. Class, race, ethnicity, gender, and power not only shaped how

Midwesterners have lived in cities but also help us understand how different groups experienced and viewed the natural world in those places. Andrew Hurley's monumental *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945–1980* outlines how residents of Gary experienced the environmental harms of the postwar industrial era. By tracking the experiences of the white middle class, the white working class, and the African American residents of Gary, Hurley argues that environmental inequality was “firmly rooted in the dynamics of postwar social arrangements and power relations.”<sup>31</sup> The impact of Hurley's work encouraged similar studies in other American cities. Take for instance two important works on the environmental history of Detroit. Joseph S. Cialdella's *Motor City Green: A Century of Landscapes and Environmentalism in Detroit* tracks the long history of green space in the city, demonstrating that the creation of parks and gardens in Detroit reflected the unique realities of industrialization and deindustrialization, as well as racial and economic inequality.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, Brandon Ward's *Living Detroit: Environmental Activism in an Age of Urban Crisis* tracks the varied meanings of environmental activism in the Motor City. In doing so, he demonstrates the ways in which class, race, and work shaped views of environmentalism, activism, and, as a result, political priorities in Detroit.<sup>33</sup>

David and Richard Stradling's *Where the River Burned: Carl Stokes and the Struggle to Save Cleveland* further demonstrates the connection between urban politics and environmental realities in one Ohio city. By weaving together histories of the burgeoning environmental movement, the urban crisis, and the political priorities of Cleveland's first African American mayor, Carl Stokes, the Stradlings emphasize the centrality of environmental politics in that city's history. In *Landscapes of Hope: Nature of the Great Migration in Chicago*, Brian McCammack explores a defining era of Midwestern history through an environmental history lens. Settling into the Midwest, African American migrants found hope in the unfamiliar environments and industrial spaces of the Windy City. Encountering an entirely new social and often segregated landscape of the urban North, African Americans imbued many of Chicago's landscapes with a sense of optimism and hope for the future. By blending environmental, social, and cultural history, McCammack's scholarship provides an important framework to re-examine the unique experiences of African Americans throughout the urban Midwest—not only Chicago.<sup>34</sup>

Taken together, the environmental histories of the urban Midwest provide a fuller picture of the entire region. Binding together urban and rural, as well as

extraction, production, and consumption, this subfield of environmental history offers insights into the material components that bind the Midwest together as a cohesive region. Furthermore, an examination of the social aspects of urban environmental history offers a more thorough understanding of the unique and complex social landscape of the region's urban spaces during periods of economic growth and decline.

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Though much has been written on the environmental history of the region, there is still work to be done.<sup>35</sup> Though agricultural history is probably the most developed of the identified categories, there are still stories untold of particular communities, crop regimes, commodity networks, and the cultural and political histories tied directly to the soil. Additionally, the field would benefit from a deeper study of the environmental histories of the dozens of smaller and midsized urban locales of the Midwest. Not only would those histories give depth to a region often defined by a handful of metropolitan areas (Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, St. Louis) but they might establish a connective thread between the industrial and post-industrial histories of manufacturing locales. Another space for exploration might come from an examination of the history of competing visions of environmental use between residents within the region. Urban and rural divides, in particular, are undoubtedly shaped by local environmental histories that, in turn, manifest into heated divides about the environment and land use.

Scholars of the Midwest must broaden environmental histories to include voices of residents often overlooked in histories of the region. Such work would build upon the important recovery projects already underway. Take, for instance, work of the Black Midwest Initiative to center the Black Midwestern experience as a foundational element of regional history.<sup>36</sup> Other scholars interested in broadening the social history of the Midwest include Edward E. Curtis IV's work on Syrian immigrants in the region.<sup>37</sup> The development and success of the Latinos in Chicago and the Midwest series at the University of Illinois Press also marks a positive sign for the future of the field. As of now, these initiatives do not focus on the environment, but I suspect that will change. By examining the ways in which different communities view, experience, and interact with the natural world, scholars of the region will gain a deeper understanding of what made, or makes, the Midwest Midwestern.

This brings me to my final point regarding the potential of environmental history in shaping the future of Midwestern studies. Any attempt at regional studies of the American Midwest must take into account the environmental realities that shape the region into something cohesive. The cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan wrote that regions are usually "too big to be directly experienced by most of its people," meaning that any region "is primarily a construct of thought."<sup>38</sup> The Midwest is an idea bounded together by individuals who loosely agree on what qualifies as Midwestern. What brings them together, however, requires a deeper investigation of the environments where connections are formed. "In a large unit of space people may have common experiences of nature and work, feel the same cycles of heat and cold, see the same dusk, and smell the same air."<sup>39</sup> In short, regionalism and regional identity is a cultural idea formed by its inhabitants based on shared experiences with real, physical space. The creation of the Midwest is, in my mind, a story of humans, the natural world, and the networks that bond certain geographies together. That is, in part, an environmental history.

I do not intend to argue for a sort of environmental determinism that places rigid rules on what "nature" defines the Midwest. However, if historians of the Midwest believe, as I do, that regionalism is formed through the social, political, cultural, and economic ties with the physical landscape, then they must consider how the environmental history of particular places helped to define those spaces as Midwestern. We have examples of this type of work, albeit on a smaller, more narrow scale. Several environmental histories narrow the scope of their studies to particular rivers, valleys, or discernible bioregions. A few notable works include Lynne Heasley's *A Thousand Pieces of Paradise: Landscape and Property in the Kickapoo Valley*, John O. Anfinson's *The River We Have Wrought: A History of the Upper Mississippi*, and a recent collection of essays, *Heartland River: A Cultural and Environmental History of the Big Sioux River Valley*.<sup>40</sup> In all of these works, it is the landscape, or a particular feature of it, that is used as a lens to examine communities and the cultures that develop in relation to the environment. Molly P. Rozum's *Grasslands Grown: Creating Place on the U.S. Northern Plains and Canadian Prairies* is an exemplary model for how these questions of regionalism and placemaking might be studied on a broader scale.<sup>41</sup> Her work combines cultural, diplomatic, and environmental history to understand how a distinct region came into being.

By asking more direct questions about the environmental history of the region and its formation, scholars of Midwestern studies might have a better

understanding of its boundaries as well. Though lagging behind in number than more established regional studies, borderland histories of the Midwest are becoming more prevalent. These studies help to give shape to the region while providing more complex narratives of regional development. This is most clear when looking at environmental histories of the Great Lakes region.<sup>42</sup> Lynne Hoesly's *The Accidental Reef and Other Ecological Odysseys in the Great Lakes* creatively explores the unique—and surprising—environmental histories of the waterways shaped by the industrial, economic, social, and political realities of a borderland region. In *Negotiating a River: Canada, the US, and the Creation of the St. Lawrence Seaway*, Daniel Macfarlane tracks a history of international relations that has profoundly shaped the environmental and economic realities of the Midwest and Canada. Extractive industries and economic trade have relied on this international waterway for over a half a century.<sup>43</sup> The implications are clear. Diplomatic and international relations are central forces in shaping the environmental and economic realities of much of the Midwest. Continued exploration of Midwestern borders is the focus of *The Interior Borderlands: Regional Identity in the Midwest and Great Plains*.<sup>44</sup> This collection of essays is not explicitly an environmental history, but many of its contributors are interested in the geographic, natural, and cultural elements that separate the Midwest from other regions. Essays by Christopher R. Laingen, Natalie Massip, Brad Tennant, Julie Courtwright, and Michael Mullin connect the environmental realities of a particular place to larger questions of regionality. As a coherent whole, the collection compels readers to consider how a sense of place, unquestionably connected to the biological world, shapes the very concept of regionalism and its blurred boundaries.

This is the promise that environmental history offers to scholars of Midwestern studies. A study of humans and their relationship with the natural world is foundational to any serious consideration of regionalism. And for a region that is often defined, first, by its natural features—its farmlands, fields, forests, rivers, and lakes—a deeper examination of humans and their environments can reveal a great deal about the historic uniqueness of this place. This requires building upon existing scholarship while continuing to ask new questions about agricultural, urban, extractive, and social histories of the Midwest. In doing so, scholars might continue the project started at the “Finding the Lost Region” meeting of the Midwestern History Association in 2015 and continue to develop Midwestern studies.

## NOTES

1. Rozum, *Grasslands Grown* (see chapter 9, n. 19). For a related but important essay on regional history, see Michael J. Lansing, “Creation as Erasure: Wallace Stegner and the Making and Unmaking of Regions,” in *Wallace Stegner's Unsettled Country: Ruin, Realism, and Possibility in the American West*, ed. Mark Fiege, Michael J. Lansing, and Leisl Carr Childers (University of Nebraska Press, 2024).
2. Steiner, “Birth of the Midwest,” 6 (see chapter 4, n. 23).
3. Notably, I recognize this position means ignoring incredible scholarship on colonial and early American history of the area including, but not limited to, Elizabeth Fenn, Robert Michael Morrissey, Susan Sleeper-Smith, and Richard White—all of whom have written environmental histories on topics related to spaces that would later be called the Midwest.
4. A great essay that explores this tendency in recent scholarship is Klumpp, “Not a Revival” (see chapter 7, n. 11).
5. “ASEH Presidents,” *American Society for Environmental History*, December 27, 2023, <https://aseh.org/Presidents>. For a sampling of their works: Opie, *Ogallala* (see chapter 1, n. 16); Worster, *Dust Bowl* (see chapter 1, n. 6); Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis* (see chapter 1, n. 7); Nancy Langston, *Sustaining Lake Superior: An Extraordinary Lake in a Changing World* (Yale University Press, 2019); Gregg Mitman, *The State of Nature: Ecology, Community, and American Social Thought, 1900–1950* (University of Chicago Press, 1992); Kathleen A. Brosnan, Ann Durkin Keating, and William C. Barnett, eds., *City of Lake and Prairie: Chicago's Environmental History* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020); Brian Frehner and Kathleen A Brosnan, eds., *The Great Plains: Rethinking a Region's Environmental Histories* (University of Nebraska Press, 2021).
6. Worster, *Dust Bowl*.
7. This concept is further explained in Donald Worster, “Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History,” *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (1990): 1087–106.
8. Vail, *Chemical Lands* (see chapter 1, n. 6).
9. Courtney Fullilove, *The Profit of the Earth: The Global Seeds of American Agriculture* (University of Chicago Press, 2017).
10. Michael J. Lansing, “From Wheat to Wheaties: Minneapolis, the Great Plains, and the Transformation of American Food,” in *The Great Plains: Rethinking a Region's Environmental Histories*, ed. Brian Frehner and Kathleen A Brosnan.
11. Larry D. Lankton, *Hollowed Ground: Copper Mining and Community Building on Lake Superior, 1840s–1990s* (Wayne State University, 2010); Thomas W. Pearson, *When the Hills Are Gone: Frac Sand Mining and the Struggle for Community* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Nancy Langston has published numerous articles on the environmental impacts and history of mining in the Lake Superior region. Without proper space to list her truly impressive bibliography, I will list her most recent work: Langston, *Sustaining Lake Superior: An Extraordinary Lake in a Changing World*.

12. Jeffrey T. Manuel, *Taconite Dreams: The Struggle to Sustain Mining on Minnesota's Iron Range, 1915–2000* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
13. Other works not mentioned here include Agnes M. Larson, *The White Pine Industry in Minnesota: A History* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007); also, Michael Williams, *Americans and Their Forest: A Historical Geography* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).
14. *The Great Lakes Forest: An Environmental and Social History*, ed. Susan Flader (University of Minnesota Press, 1983).
15. Theodore J. Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier: A History of Logging in Northern Michigan* (Wayne State University Press, 1989).
16. Margaret Beattie Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes: An Environmental History, 1783–1933* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).
17. James Kates, *Planning a Wilderness: Regenerating the Great Lakes Cutover Region* (University of Minnesota Press, 2001).
18. For an interesting history on cutover and attempts to transform the region into agricultural land, see Robert Gough, *Farming the Cutover: A Social History of Northern Wisconsin* (University Press of Kansas, 1997).
19. Sarah Phillips, *This Land, This Nation: Conservation, Rural America, and the New Deal* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).
20. Susan Flader, *Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude Toward Deer, Wolves, and Forests* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).
21. Bill Christofferson, *The Man from Clear Lake: Earth Day Founder Senator Gaylord Nelson* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).
22. Mitman, *The State of Nature*.
23. Michael J. Chiarappa and Kristin M. Szylvian, *Fish for All: An Oral History of Multiple Claims and Divided Sentiment on Lake Michigan* (Michigan State University Press, 2003); Langston, *Sustaining Lake Superior*.
24. Aaron Shapiro, *The Lure of the North Woods: Cultivating Tourism in the Upper Midwest* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
25. Brian C. Kalt, *Sixties Sandstorm: The Fight over Establishment of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1961–1970* (Michigan State University Press, 2001); Harold C. Jordahl Jr. with Annie L. Booth, *Environmental Politics and the Creation of a Dream: Establishing the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2011); James W. Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness: Rewilding the Apostle Islands* (University of Washington Press, 2011); Fred T. Witzig, *Voyageurs National Park: The Battle to Create Minnesota's National Park* (University of Minnesota Press, 2004).
26. Lewis Walker and Benjamin C. Wilson, *Black Eden: The Idlewild Community* (Michigan State University Press, 2007); Ronald J. Stephens, *Idlewild: The Rise, Decline, and Rebirth of a Unique African American Resort Town* (University of Michigan Press, 2013).
27. See an important discussion of outdoor dramas in Ohio in Phillips, *Staging Indigeneity* (see chapter 2, n. 2); Phillips, "When Grandma Went to Washington" (see chapter 2, n. 2).
28. Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*.
29. Brosnan and Keating, *City of Lake and Prairie*.
30. Elizabeth Grennan Browning, *Nature's Laboratory: Environmental Thought and Labor Radicalism in Chicago, 1886–1937* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022).
31. Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945–1980* (University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 180.
32. Joseph Cialdella, *Motor City Green: A Century of Landscapes and Environmentalism in Detroit* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020).
33. Brandon Ward, *Living Detroit: Environmental Activism in an Age of Urban Crisis* (Routledge, 2021).
34. Brian McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope: Nature and the Great Migration in Chicago* (Harvard University Press, 2017).
35. More recently, Jennifer Stinson and I edited a special issue of the *Middle West Review* 10, no. 1 (2023).
36. "Black Midwest Initiative," The Black Midwest Initiative, accessed December 21, 2022, <http://www.theblackmidwest.com>.
37. Edward C. Curtis IV, *Muslims of the Heartland: How Syrian Immigrants Made a Home in the American Midwest* (New York University Press, 2022).
38. Yi-Fu Tuan, "Place: An Experiential Perspective," *Geographical Review* 65, no. 2 (1975): 158.
39. Tuan, "Place," 159.
40. Lynne Heasley, *A Thousand Pieces of Paradise: Landscape and Property in the Kickapoo Valley* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2005); John O. Anfinson, *The River We Have Wrought: A History of the Upper Mississippi* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Lauck, *Heartland River* (see introduction, n. 27); see also Lauck and Whitney, *North Country* (see introduction, n. 7).
41. Rozum, *Grasslands Grown*.
42. For an early essay calling for more investigation of the Great Lakes region, see James Feldman and Lynne Heasley, "Re-Centering North American Environmental History: Pedagogy and Scholarship in the Great Lakes Region," *Environmental History* 12, no. 3 (2007): 951–58.
43. Daniel Macfarlane, *Negotiating a River: Canada, the US, and the Creation of the St. Lawrence Seaway* (University of British Columbia Press, 2014). Another notable collection of essays is Lynne Heasley and Daniel Macfarlane, eds., *Border Flows: A Century of the Canadian-American Water Relationship* (University of Calgary Press, 2016); see also Ramya Swayamprakash, "Flotsam: Garbage Dumping, Pollution, and Legal Tensions in the Detroit River," *Water History* 12 (2020): 361–71.
44. Lauck, *Interior Borderlands* (see introduction, n. 24).