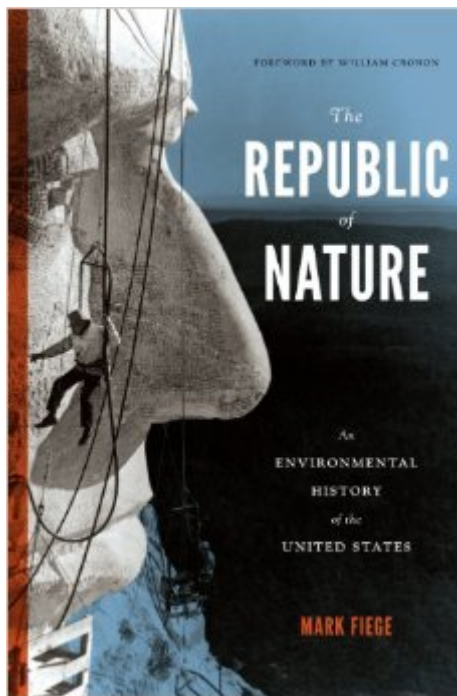


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The Republic Of Nature: An Environmental History Of The United States (Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books)



Synopsis

In the dramatic narratives that comprise *The Republic of Nature*, Mark Fiege reframes the canonical account of American history based on the simple but radical premise that nothing in the nation's past can be considered apart from the natural circumstances in which it occurred. Revisiting historical icons so familiar that schoolchildren learn to take them for granted, he makes surprising connections that enable readers to see old stories in a new light. Among the historical moments revisited here, a revolutionary nation arises from its environment and struggles to reconcile the diversity of its people with the claim that nature is the source of liberty. Abraham Lincoln, an unlettered citizen from the countryside, steers the Union through a moment of extreme peril, guided by his clear-eyed vision of nature's capacity for improvement. In Topeka, Kansas, transformations of land and life prompt a lawsuit that culminates in the momentous civil rights case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. By focusing on materials and processes intrinsic to all things and by highlighting the nature of the United States, Fiege recovers the forgotten and overlooked ground on which so much history has unfolded. In these pages, the nation's birth and development, pain and sorrow, ideals and enduring promise come to life as never before, making a once-familiar past seem new. *The Republic of Nature* points to a startlingly different version of history that calls on readers to reconnect with fundamental forces that shaped the American experience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a sojourn in history that is genuinely a seductively enticing read. It wanders the tapestry of America's past, ingeniously searching out and showcasing some of the grittiest bits to reveal their inspiration from the environment. The deeper one immerses, the more the realization emerges that the author's focus deals exclusively with finding only the distasteful half of the human coin. Native annihilation, Gaia abuse, slavery, war, Euro-man debauchery, racial discrimination, toxic pollution, demon oil, greedy industrialists, downtrodden workers, on and on. Like dominoes intentionally aligned to drive the subsumed theme. Missing from the author's palette are the true foundational motivations, aspirations and goals of past humanity's moments in the sun. Instead they are attributed to exploitation, greed, murder, theft, rape, and the like. This is intentionally searching for something to whip. A balanced understanding and judicious weighing of the particulars of history teaches us lessons. Peering only into the darkness spawns dogmatic chimera. Grasping the need to survive, to thrive, as being the prime directives of all life, provides understanding, no matter how flawed we might view past choices and actions. Nature inspires all creatures, large and small to utilize and modify their environment for their own best interests. Failing this understanding is blaming humanity for its innate drive to exist. To be sure there have been and are excesses in most endeavors, but they do not drive the American adventure. The slog of everyman reaching for betterment for himself and family are the prime movers. And just what of all the positives inspired by our environment ?

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