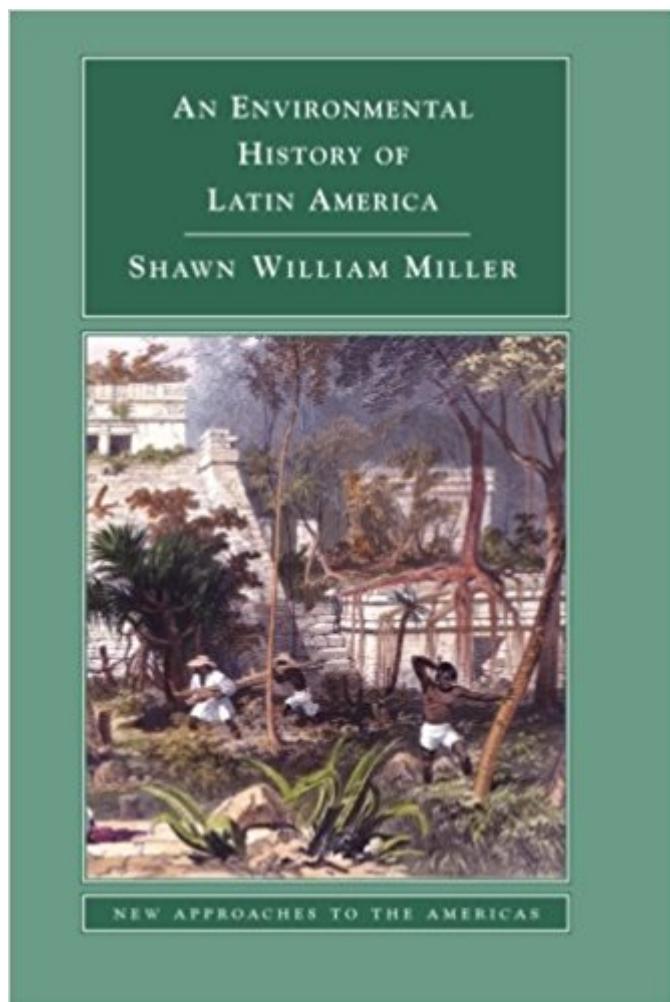


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An Environmental History Of Latin America (New Approaches To The Americas)



Synopsis

This book narrates the mutually mortal historical contest between humans and nature in Latin America. Covering a period that begins with Amerindian civilizations and concludes in the region's present urban agglomerations, the work offers an original synthesis of the current scholarship on Latin America's environmental history and argues that tropical nature played a central role in shaping the region's historical development. Seeing Latin America's environmental past from the perspective of many centuries illustrates that human civilizations, ancient and modern, have been simultaneously more powerful and more vulnerable than previously thought.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An Environmental History of Latin America is a short, vigorous, engaging introduction to the story of human beings' endeavor, before and after European contact, to survive and thrive in a region that Miller dubs the "Neotropics." Miller ranges widely in time and space, exploring topics as diverse as Mesoamerican farming on chinampas and bicycle commuting in contemporary South America. He is particularly illuminating on the size and complexity of pre-contact Native American civilizations and the puzzling question of how early European explorers overlooked them. The prose is strong and though Miller's tone is occasionally more personal than one expects in an academic work, the effect is engaging, not jarring. All in all, this is a great book, accessible and interesting even to readers who are not experts on Latin America.

This book is excellent. Eminently readable, it moves swiftly but provides impressive depth regarding the topics selected. Those desiring to study in greater depth will be pleased with the lists for further reading, provided in the back. Miller explains the roots of current environmental problems, punctures popular current myths about the ecological past of native peoples, and shows that the survival of civilization has always involved trade-offs, whether in human or environmental terms. Miller is also adept at explaining cultural differences in perception, so that I was easily able to understand the differences. I checked this book out from the library, but I will certainly be buying this for my own shelves. In sum, this is a quick and easy read, but certainly not a light-weight.

I recommend this book for everyone involved with environmental or energy issues in the Americas. In my eyes, the quality of human life depends on the health of the whole biosphere. This book covers Latin America at contact with Europe to current day concerns for the monarch butterfly. Tupi, Aztec and Inca cultures altered the natural environment for subsistence and prestige goods. Miller uses Archaeology, Historical documents, Biology and Geography to keep one absorbed in the flow of reading. Miller writes about the complexities of culture and nature interactions, and the destruction both can cause the other. California's Central Valley has prime agricultural land, but housing and water diversion projects threaten this provider of food. Miller's book is a comprehensive survey of the battle between conspicuous consumption and environmental justice. I have a Bachelor degree in Biology, from the 1970s, and this book entices me to study further in Environmental History.

I found this book browsing the Latin American history section. I really enjoy reading about Latin American history and this book was an interesting perspective on that topic. The environment is a powerful but often overlooked actress in history. Miller elucidates very well the indispensability of nature in shaping Latin American society, even before it was Latin America, but also how both we and the pre-Columbians significantly shaped it. This book is fascinating and presents interesting information and historical anecdotes. The narrative flows on nicely even while jumping from one topic to another. I would recommend it to anyone interested in history, and especially if you've never read any environmental history. Heaven only knows why we don't include the environment in our history lessons! Miller also explores the multiple dimensions involved in the interplay between humanity and the environment, including politics, economics, ideology, as well as art. The book was instrumental in exhibiting the importance in appreciating the dynamic between nature and society as two inseparable things that condition and mold each other and need to be treated with respect.

Miller does a few times take a personal tone in the book which felt slightly weird but it's alright. The most important thing about this book, however, is that it motivates me to go out and fight for the environment and repel the maleficent forces of civilization before they annihilate us all.

Spanning the precolonial to modern day, this book provides vignettes from the Caribbean, Middle-America and South America. Very readable with valuable insights.

Amazing, comprehensive, straight-forward, objective, and super interesting. I'd love to meet this guy in a classroom or a backpacking trip across L.A.

Really interesting, really easy to read! Purchased for my Environmental History of Latin America class.

If you love history and want to get deep into the real issue that mark our history today buy this book

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