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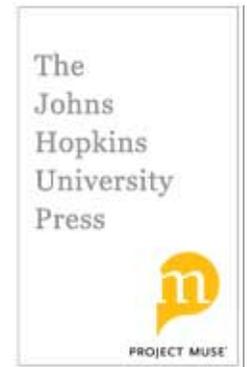
Natural States: The Environmental Imagination in Maine,
Oregon, and the Nation (review)

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though the book is not directly aimed at historians of technology, and does not provide any new analytic approaches to this field, it is a useful synthesis of information about a variety of tools and technologies used in the early modern world.

The major weakness of Richards's book is in fact its analytic content. *The Unending Frontier*, as Richards explains in the preface, grew out of his teaching of environmental history and world history and reflects his deep commitment to world history as both a pedagogic and scholarly field. The book is an invaluable resource for anyone teaching similar courses, and also useful for classes in early modern European history, Atlantic history, or colonial American history. However, its breadth does not lend itself to close and rigorous argument, even in the chapter on the Mughal Empire, which is Richards's field of expertise. At times repetitious, this lengthy volume would have benefited from more careful editing, especially in the chapter on Russia, which conflates the time line of events and is likely to confuse the general reader. This does not prevent Richards from setting forth interesting insights in individual chapters—showing, for example, that in colonial Mexico and Brazil, Spanish and Portuguese settlement initially reduced pressure on land resources rather than increasing it, although this entailed devastating effects on the native populations.

Readers of *The Unending Frontier* cannot fail to be persuaded by the amount of evidence presented for Richards's main contention, that during the early modern period there was a strong trend toward human control and use of the natural environment, and that this development altered this environment irreversibly.

KAREN OSLUND

Dr. Oslund, who received her doctorate from the University of California at Los Angeles, is a research fellow at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. She is working on a book about the cultural and environmental history of Iceland, Greenland, and the Arctic as a European frontier from the eighteenth to the twentieth century.

Natural States: The Environmental Imagination in Maine, Oregon, and the Nation.

By Richard W. Judd and Christopher S. Beach. Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, 2003. Pp. xv+317. \$32.95/\$19.95.

Mainers and Oregonians, like many Americans, proclaim their environmental politics on their car bumpers. Maine license plates advertise the state as "Vacationland," while Oregon motorists sport stickers that condemn logging or tout salmon fishing. The force that drives us to declare our affinity for nature is what historians Richard Judd and Christopher Beach label the "environmental imagination": the intertwining of politics with the power of place in daily life. In their innovative study, Judd and Beach argue that, con-

trary to most histories of American environmentalism, “the dialectic of popular consciousness and political action began at the local and state level, where citizens first voiced their frustration” and later found empowerment (pp. xi–xii). State residents, especially in progressive Oregon and Maine, promoted innovations and trends long before they were embraced by national organizations or the federal government. While *Natural States* does not systematically analyze the relationship between technology and environment through time, it does point in a number of tantalizing directions.

Judd and Beach begin by investigating the emergence of the environmental imagination from the tensions between older pastoral ideals and rapid industrialization and urbanization following World War II. Regional authors drew from a deep well of antiurban sentiment in their literary depictions of each state’s bucolic landscapes. The two states diverged, however, in how they embraced this Arcadian vision, thanks to their dissimilar economic trajectories. Wealthier Oregon benefited from federal largesse during the New Deal and the cold war to diversify its economy; meanwhile, poorer Maine kept its faith in its traditional enterprises of logging and fishing, even as tourism became another important industry. Despite their different histories, residents of both states, regardless of their social background, imagined how to keep life the way it should be (to paraphrase a present-day Maine slogan).

The adhesive power of the environmental imagination was sorely tested in battles that almost tore each state apart. Crusades against aquatic pollution united citizens in the 1950s, but the wilderness cause—which propelled efforts to set aside Oregon’s Rogue and Maine’s Allagash as pristine rivers in the 1960s—set allies against one another. Subsequent struggles to save coastlines and restrict growth along the congested Willamette and Kennebec Rivers pitted a new recreational class, who saw nature in terms of leisure, against rural residents who knew nature in terms of labor. At their core, these debates bared a dilemma: would Oregon and Maine lock up lands in exclusive preserves, or would they keep their communities “cast in amber” as “authentic representatives” of an Arcadian past (p. 177)? What they found was a middle way.

Instead of telling a typical tale of decline, Judd and Beach emphasize complexity, pointing to how each state’s unique geography and political culture yielded innovative, if sometimes imperfect, solutions by the 1970s. Oregonians, blessed with ample public land and united against so-called Californication, embraced some of the nation’s most comprehensive land-use planning, while Mainers, suspicious of outsiders “from away” and keen to protect property rights, helped pioneer the land trust movement. The environmental imagination persists, the authors conclude, even as Americans forget the legislative achievements of the pre-Reagan era, because the personal has become the political. Many Americans now know nature through consumption, carrying their environmentalism with them in

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backpacks and car trunks as they light out for vacation homes and hiking trails.

It is here that the book's promise for historians of technology and environmental historians reaches its apogee—and falls short for the former group. Judd and Beach suggest that new recreational technologies abetted new forms of experiencing nature, but they never develop this argument in any depth. Moreover, they fail to evaluate how changing modes of extractive industry, from fishing to forestry, may have begotten the nostalgic pastoral so central to modern environmentalism. (Curiously, the authors make no reference to Richard White's or William Cronon's pioneering work in this vein.) Absent, too, is any discussion of how other technologies—from pollution abatement to the automobile—may have further refashioned the environmental imagination.

To be fair, Judd and Beach are writing for several audiences; their choice of publisher is testament to their noble ambitions. *Natural States* is deeply grounded in the relevant scholarship and rich primary research, and it is also a call for policy change as much as it is a work of academic history. What this book demonstrates, however, is the need for still more scholarly work on the reciprocal relationship between technology and nature that defines so much of American consumerism and environmentalism. The unexpected gift of this surprising and thoughtful book is to reveal what other roads scholars might explore.

MATTHEW KLINGLE

Dr. Klinge, assistant professor of history and environmental studies at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, is currently finishing a book on the environmental and social history of Seattle.

After the Smoke Clears: Struggling to Get By in Rustbelt America.

By Steve Mellon. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002. Pp. 136. \$29.

Legendary photographer Eugene Smith arrived in Pittsburgh in 1955 to capture “the city as a living entity” and “the people who give it heart and pulse,” as he told the Guggenheim Foundation. Thirty-six years old, Smith had just left the staff of *Life*, where he had established his reputation as America's premier photojournalist, for editorial independence and the opportunity to take the measure of Steel Town at full blast. What Smith called a “man-breaking city” nearly broke him, financially and physically. He never completed his elegy to heavy industry and its human toll. Yet his images of midcentury Pittsburgh at work and worship, its public ambitions and private anxieties, remain an indelible portrait of American manufacturing at high noon, a gray, grim, gritty place where smoke and smokestacks define the skyline.

Steve Mellon lost his job as a photographer when the *Pittsburgh Press*