Pathways to the Present

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Introduction

Writing in his diary on May 29, 1943, Dr. Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi of the Japanese Imperial Army observed, “All the patients in the hospital were made to commit suicide. I am only 33 years old and am to die. Have no regrets. Banzai to the Emperor. I am grateful that I have kept the peace of my soul which Enkist [Jesus Christ] bestowed on me at 8 o’clock.” The medical officer stationed with the Japanese occupation force on Attu, one of Alaska’s far-western Aleutian Islands, Tatsuguchi correctly foresaw his future. He tried to surrender to American soldiers who were retaking the island on May 30, shouting to them in English, “Don’t shoot! Don’t shoot! I am a Christian!” His actions were misunderstood. The Bible he waved in one hand was mistaken for a weapon, and Tatsuguchi was killed.¹

By the time of World War II, Tatsuguchi and his family had moved back and forth across the Pacific Ocean on numerous occasions. Native to Hiroshima, Tatsuguchi’s father had emigrated to California in 1895. There the elder Tatsuguchi converted to Christianity and attended Heraldsburg College, specializing in dentistry. In 1907, he returned to Hiroshima as a medical missionary for the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church, where he married. Paul was one of six children. He attended college in California, graduating from Pacific Union College in 1932. When his parents died a year later, Paul returned to Japan to settle family affairs. In 1933, however, he went back to California to enroll in the College of Medical Evangelists at Loma Linda College, graduating four years later. In 1938, he returned to Japan with a bride who was the daughter of a SDA pastor in Honolulu. In Tokyo, Tatsuguchi concentrated on medical work in a tuberculosis sanitarium and, with his wife, on SDA church activities. Drafted in 1941, he found himself on Attu with Japan’s invading forces a year later.²

The Tatsuguchi family story, nonetheless, was not one of unmitigated tragedy. At the close of World War II, Tatsuguchi’s wife found employment
with American forces occupying Japan. In 1954, she moved with her two daughters to Honolulu to work as a translator, with the three of them becoming naturalized American citizens. Still later, the three moved to California. One of the daughters followed in her father’s footsteps, graduating with a degree in nursing from Loma Linda College and then returning to Japan as the wife of an SDA church member who served as the temperance secretary for the Japan Union Conference in Tokyo. The other daughter, also a registered nurse from Loma Linda College, married a California businessman and settled in the Golden State.⁵ Although unusual in the frequency of their movements across the Pacific, members of the Tatsuguchi family typified the growing mobility of Pacific peoples. In their travels between California, Hawai‘i, Japan, and Alaska, the Tatsuguchis illustrated the increasing military, economic, and social integration of the Pacific.

Dealing with the Pacific as a distinct region, not simply looking at the Pacific Rim or the Pacific “donut” empty in the middle, my study analyzes relationships among business developments, cultural changes, and environmental alterations in United States’ possessions across the Pacific created by that integration.⁴ World War II militarized most of the Pacific, and after that conflict the affected areas had to chart new developmental courses, which often differed substantially from both prewar and wartime situations. The result was several trajectories. Still, there were commonalities.

My thesis about those developments is simple, at least in outline. World War II, building on alterations often already under way, accelerated and intensified major changes in the Pacific, among the most important of which was increased geopolitical and economic integration.⁵ That integration—especially the trade ties and, in some areas, the rise of tourism—brought faster economic development. The growing presence of the American military, as American policy makers came to view the Pacific as an American lake, also brought some forms of economic growth to the region and, of course, eliminated domination of areas such as Micronesia by the Japanese military. While American military spending became an important source of economic expansion and rising standard of living for many people, not all benefited from it equally. Many of the profits went to handfuls of developers, often outsiders. Moreover, growth impinged on traditional lifestyles, especially for indigenous peoples. Not surprisingly, there arose considerable resistance to some forms of American military and economic developments, especially, as time progressed, on environmental grounds. That opposition set the stage for conflicts, from which compromises usually emerged, and with agreements came the creation of important parts of today’s Pacific.
My book explores how and why people worked in the ways they did to influence their economic, social, and physical environments, and what the consequences of those labors have been. The question was never whether America's Pacific possessions were going to be developed. Rather, questions included: In what ways would they be developed? Within what limits? For whose benefit? And, of course, it is important to bear in mind that considerable development had occurred in earlier times. Individuals, the many organizations they formed, including businesses, and governmental agents emerge as key actors in answering these questions. In examining the actions of individuals and groups throughout the Pacific, I hope my work will contribute to our knowledge of environmental history, business and economic history, Pacific history, and the history of the American West.⁶

Environmental historians have created a field of study over the past generation. Environmentalism has assumed various forms, and developments in the Pacific illustrate well the movement's complexity. Historians have increasingly related the development of modern environmentalism to alterations in society, politics, and culture. For example, Adam Rome has found the wellsprings of American environmentalism in the 1960s in “the revitalization of liberalism, the growing discontent of middle-class women, and the explosion of student radicalism and countercultural protest.”⁷ Similarly, in her 2003 presidential address to the American Society for Environmental History, Carolyn Merchant observed links among environmentalism, social and cultural changes, and the writing of environmental history. As she has pointed out, a growing number of scholars have become involved in documenting America’s environmental justice movement, a campaign begun in the 1970s and 1980s to address the placing of garbage dumps, hazardous-waste sites, power plants, and other nuisances in neighborhoods populated mainly by poor people of color.⁸

Developments in the Pacific resonate with environmental efforts elsewhere. As my study shows, much of what took place in the Pacific connects especially with America’s environmental justice movement. Not all wanted to rid the Pacific of Americans. Exactly how Pacific peoples viewed trade-offs between economic development and environmental protection matters varied from place to place and from time to time, but one common denominator was their dislike of outside influences and, as many viewed matters, colonial oppression. In the post-1945 era, that determination meant for many trying to lessen or end American dominance in the region, especially as memories of World War II waned. Issues of sovereignty were involved.

Some scholars looking at the development of environmentalism have re-
cently stressed its origins in colonial possessions. In his pathbreaking work, Richard H. Grove has cogently argued that much of modern environmentalism has its sources not in the United States or western Europe, but rather in experiences in the colonies. “As colonial expansion proceeded,” he has stated, “the environmental experiences of Europeans and indigenous peoples living at the colonial periphery played a steadily more dominant and dynamic part in the construction of new European evaluations of nature and in the growing awareness of the destructive impact of European economic activity on the peoples and environments of the newly ‘discovered’ and colonized lands.” He concludes, “Any attempt to understand the foundations of western environmental concerns actually involves writing a history of the human responses to nature that have developed at the periphery of an expanding European system.” Similarly, Peder Anker has traced concerns about ecology to experiences in the British Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, observing that “broad ecology owes its success to its patrons in the economic administration of the environmental and social order in the British Empire.” Like these studies, my work looks beyond the “center” to the “periphery” to find some of the origins of modern environmental actions in the work of indigenous peoples as well as in that of colonizers.

My study seeks to contribute to business history as well as environmental history. Business historians have been slower than many scholars to examine environmental issues. Focusing especially on the business firm and its management, they have not probed deeply into the externalities that helped frame business actions. As historians Christine Rosen and Christopher Sellers have observed, “Business history has never paid much attention to the environment” and in fact has given “little attention to the effects of resource extraction and use on plants, animals, land, air, or water, much less entire ecosystems and climate.” That situation has begun to change, as business historians increasingly look at connections among business firms, their societies, and their cultures. Such an approach is a fruitful way to understand many Pacific developments, including relationships among tourism, environmental changes, and cultural alterations.

While some of the findings of my study connect with those of the works of business and environmental historians, they also illuminate efforts by scholars to deal with the Pacific as one large region of the globe, thus increasing our understanding of Pacific history. Although it is difficult to speak just yet of a trans-Pacific community in quite the same senses that Fernand Braudel has written of the Mediterranean Sea or as Bernard Bailyn and many other scholars have written about a transatlantic community, there have long
been extensive linkages throughout the Pacific, and those connections have increased since World War II. My study contributes to work done by historians, geographers, anthropologists, and others in rethinking Pacific history over the past generation.¹² There is tremendous diversity in the approaches and conclusions of these scholars, but several major themes stand out: a need to view Pacific history through non-western eyes; a need to see the Pacific as a major unified region of the world; and a need to examine interactions among Pacific peoples, their natural environments, and their economies. Some connections have been mainly economic in nature—trade and tourism, for example. Others have been more social and cultural in orientation—such as the movement of peoples, often called a “Pacific diaspora.” Standing behind many of the linkages has been the military presence of the United States in the Pacific, which has motivated transnational protests by Pacific peoples.¹³

The United States’ Pacific possessions shared major elements of history in common with other parts of the Pacific. Because they were American-owned or American-controlled, however, their histories also diverged in some ways from those of other sections of the Pacific. Historians have long looked at parts of the Pacific as an American frontier, sharing developments with those of the evolution of the trans-Mississippi West. As Americans moved across the North American continent and then traveled farther west into the Pacific as explorers, whalers, traders, and fishermen, they took with them familiar patterns of thinking and acting.¹⁴ Capitalistic development based on the rapid exploitation of natural resources was the norm in Alaska, Hawai‘i, and Guam. Extractive industries, which tended to create boom-and-bust economies with little thought for the future, dominated developments in the American West and in the American Pacific.¹⁵ In the twentieth century, especially after about 1970, tourism seemed to offer a chance for economic diversification and stabilization at little cost to the environment in the West and in the Pacific. Tourism became the leading industry in Guam and Hawai‘i and was important in the other regions as well. Leaders in Hiroshima considered leaving the ruins of their city intact as a form of nuclear tourism. Yet, tourism brought neither economic stability nor unadulterated environmental progress to either the West or the Pacific. Still other themes connect western American history to the history of America’s Pacific: the importance of federal government and military spending in both regions (and, conversely, local attitudes that were often hostile to that government); and the fact that economic growth was very uneven, usually benefiting indigenous peoples—Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, native Hawaiians, and
the Chamorros of Guam—less than other groups. After enduring repression or neglect for decades, members of indigenous groups became important actors in the decision-making process on economic and environmental issues.¹⁶

Six chapters compose my study. To set the stage for the rest of the volume, Chapter 1 offers a brief survey of the history of the Pacific. The chapter shows that a considerable degree of integration existed before the coming of Euro-Americans to the region but looks in most detail at connections forged after World War II. It focuses especially on postwar changes caused by America’s growing Pacific presence. Taking the Hawaiian Islands as the center of American activities in the Pacific, Chapter 2 looks at interactions among native Hawaiian, developmental, military, and environmental issues in the archipelago after World War II.¹⁷ The chapter examines land-use matters concerning Kaho‘olawe, one of the eight major Hawaiian Islands. Environmentally degraded by western ranching, the island was further damaged by the U.S. Navy, which used it as a shelling and bombing range until 1990. Most recently, Kaho‘olawe has been partially restored by native Hawaiian groups. Viewing their efforts as having broad implications, some native Hawaiian leaders took what they saw as their anticolonial campaign to other parts of the Pacific. The chapter closes by comparing developments on Kaho‘olawe to conflicts about naval live-fire ranges elsewhere in the Pacific and Caribbean, for the Kaho‘olawe controversy had trans-Pacific and transnational ramifications.

Moving to the United States’ Pacific Coast, Chapter 3 examines explosive growth in the Seattle region and the San Francisco Bay area, especially Silicon Valley. High-technology developments have often been seen as “green,” having minimal environmental downsides. However, events on America’s Pacific Coast, my study shows, belie this easy assumption. As in the Hawaiian Islands, specific land-use and water-use matters intersected with more nebulous quality-of-life concerns to generate policy controversies in northern California and the Puget Sound region. Environmental-justice matters surfaced, as immigrant workers, often Hispanic and Asian women, suffered. Then, too, Native Americans were hurt by high-technology developments, particularly in the Seattle region. Chapter 3 also compares efforts to create high-technology districts in the San Francisco Bay area and Seattle to attempts to construct them in South Korea and the Hawaiian Islands.

Chapter 4 looks at economic development and environmentalism in
Alaska through the lens of changes occurring along the Aleutian Islands. Because their state remained particularly dependent on extractive resources, Alaskans faced controversies that revolved mainly around how those resources should be exploited and who should benefit from that exploitation. In the Aleutians, heated conflicts pitted groups of fishermen against each other, and fishermen against oil prospectors. Still, even in Alaska general quality-of-life matters were of significance, as revealed in efforts to create the Beringia Heritage International Park. Until recently, Alaskan Natives found themselves pushed aside in efforts to develop Alaska’s resources, including parks used for tourism, much as happened to native Hawaiians in the rush to develop their islands.

From Alaska, my study moves southwest. Chapter 5 examines developments in Hiroshima after its destruction by the atomic bomb in 1945, looking at why residents chose a new type of future for their city and how they implemented their wishes. Americans were very influential in Japan for about a decade after World War II, and their ideas helped to reshape Hiroshima. Hiroshima’s residents tried to combine urban-planning concepts, including environmental protection measures, with economic development. How they resolved conflicting goals resonates with urban developments in the Pacific, one-third of the globe.
San Francisco Bay and Seattle regions. In the resolution of their conflicts, Hiroshima's citizens generally ignored the wishes of minority groups, again raising environmental justice concerns. Chapter 5 also investigates efforts to recreate Hiroshima as a high-technology city in the 1990s, attempts inspired by the perceived success of Silicon Valley. Finally, the chapter describes post-war planning efforts on Okinawa, where American influences were particularly strong, and compares them to those in Hiroshima.

Chapter 6 examines developments in Guam, particularly issues raised by the growth of tourism and the use of Guam for military purposes. Specific questions arose about where to place a new ammunition dock for the U.S. Navy, how to construct a national park to commemorate the Pacific campaigns of World War II, where to locate a national seashore, and how to deal with the brown tree snake, an alien species accidentally introduced by the American military. Questions on these matters intersected with concerns about what kinds of lives the residents of Guam, including Chamorros, wanted to have and the roles the American government might play in turning those desires into reality. Chapter 6 also compares what occurred on Guam to developments in the Philippines to the west and American Samoa to the south.

Common themes permeate my work. The study's chapters focus on twentieth-century developments, especially on economic and environmental choices made since 1945. As historian John McNeill has shown in his remarkable global environmental history, the pace of change greatly accelerated in the twentieth century, making that time period “something new under the sun.”¹⁸ Change was certainly the case for the Pacific possessions of the United States. The chapters of my study look at varied areas of the Pacific in an attempt to see whether there has been something unique to economic and environmental developments in this region. All examine American territories or American-dominated regions in the Pacific. Even Japan was such an area between 1945 and 1952, and Okinawa for an additional two decades. The chapters probe relationships among American military desires, economic development, environmental issues, and peoples' rights, the last especially as defined by indigenous groups. The areas dealt with in this volume were chosen to represent the many aspects of America's postwar presence in the Pacific: in urban and rural regions, parts of the eastern and western Pacific, near-tropical to near-arctic areas, and mainland and island regions. Still, this work does not examine all of the many places in America's Pacific in detail, probably omitting as much as it includes. The book is not meant to be fully inclusive. Indeed, it is my hope that this work will stimulate future
research about the United States’ developmental and environmental impacts on Pacific areas. More generally, I also hope that my study will encourage research into the interactions between economic development and environmental protection issues globally, for many of the changes occurring in the Pacific have, of course, been taking place elsewhere in the world. Throughout, my work differentiates among local, regional (that is, pan-Pacific), and global developments.

To foreshadow my arguments a bit, let me close this introduction with a listing of my study’s major findings. First, the Pacific, at least American territories in the Pacific, may be considered as composing one major region, especially in modern times. Second, within this region World War II and the Cold War acted as major catalysts for changes, but those alterations occurred within the long scope of earlier regional developments. Third, many of the changes resulted from the reactions of local residents, including indigenous peoples, against western political and economic colonialism and, more specifically, against America’s massive postwar military presence in the Pacific. Fourth, the state was often the arena within which actions were worked out. Politics and governmental policies mattered.

We begin our voyage by examining in Chapter 1 the development of the Pacific from pre-contact times to the present. Several themes stand out in this investigation: first, that large parts of the Pacific have long contained elements of integration; but, second, that since World War II the degree of integration has increased; and, third, that even now that integration is incomplete. It is essential to look at the degrees and types of integration in various time periods, because it was these connections that formed the platforms on which people made decisions about economic development and environmental protection.