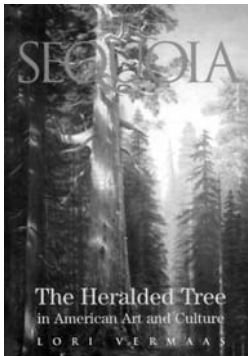


BOOKS OF INTEREST

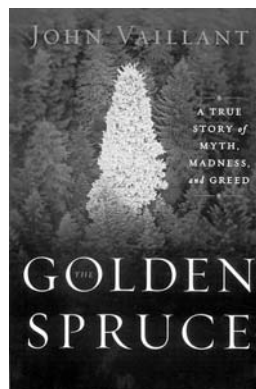
By Elizabeth Hull



The symbolic value of trees is explored in two recent but very different publications. *Sequoia: The Heralded Tree in American Art and Culture* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2003; \$39.95 cloth), by Lori Vermaas, is a broad and innovative analysis of the cultural meaning of the California sequoias. The author insightfully traces American perceptions of nature from the 1800s to the present through these iconic trees, revealing their simultaneous functions as artistic inspiration, tourist attraction, and emblem of national identity and heritage. She examines depictions of Pacific Coast sequoia trees in stereographs, lithographs, engravings, illustrations, paintings, photographs, films, and literature from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, discussing symbolism associated with sequoias in works by Carleton E. Watkins (1829–1916), Edward Vischer (1809–1879), Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902), Darius Kinsey (1869–1945), Ansel Adams (1902–1984), and others. With this book, Vermaas offers an evocative and timely meditation on the environment and American culture with the power to change not just our relationship with trees, but also our perspective on the environmental struggles we continue to face.

The 1997 felling of a beloved giant golden spruce tree in British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands takes on broader significance in John Vaillant's journalistic *The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness, and Greed* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2005; \$24.95). In an intensive look at this extraordinary act of eco-vandalism, Vaillant examines the forces that

drove the offender, Grant Hadwin, an ex-logger turned rabid environmentalist, to topple the one-of-a-kind spruce in an act of protest against the destruction of British Columbia's old-growth forests. The tree, a source of fascination to scientists, was also sacred to the Haida, a seafaring tribe based in the Queen Charlotte Islands. Vaillant recounts the bloody history of the Haida

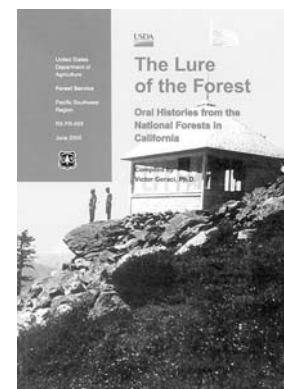
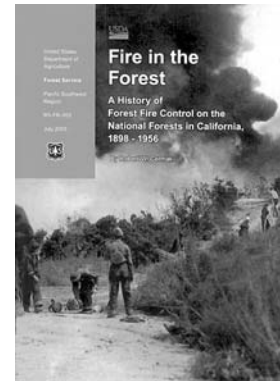


and the early fur trade, and provides disturbing details of the physical dangers of logging work. Writing in a fast-paced, evocative style, Vaillant provides an entertaining narrative of this complex crime, a compelling portrait of modern logging, and a unique examination of the larger relationship between man and nature. Illustrations, maps, notes, and a bibliography supplement the text.

The Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5) has been on the leading edge of many changes in the history of the U.S. Forest Service, at times on its own initiative, and



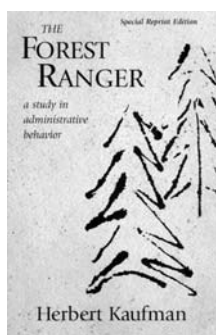
at other times encouraged by external forces. Three regional histories of the National Forests in California have been published in honor of the Forest Service's 100th anniversary, officially celebrated on July 1, 2005. *The Ever-Changing View: A History of the National Forests in California, 1891–1987* (Vallejo, California: USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, 2005; \$27.95) by Anthony Godfrey provides a comprehensive administrative history of the region in a chronological, issue-oriented narrative unified by the theme of conservation. In *Fire in the Forest: A History of Forest Fire Control on the National Forests in California, 1898–1956* (\$24.95), author Robert W. Cermak provides a bottom-up



view of ground-level fire control work, describes how Region 5 provided nationally significant direction in fire control, and places the regional story of fire control in the context of national and world events. Victor Geraci compiles more than fifty oral

interviews from selected members of the region's past workforce in a third publication, *The Lure of the Forest: Oral Histories from the National Forests in California* (\$15.95). Interview segments are synthesized into sections based on common themes, such as the motivations behind people's decisions to dedicate their lives to stewardship of forest resources, the increasing specialization of the profession, conservation, and everyday working conditions of Forest Service employees and their families from the 1930s to the 1970s. Supplemented by maps, indexes, and historical photos, these three histories take a long and wide view of one of the defining regions of the Forest Service.

Also relating to Forest Service history, a Special Reprint Edition has been issued of Herbert Kaufman's *The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behavior* (Washington, DC: RFF Press, 2005). Since its original publication in 1960, Kaufman's book has become an essential work in the fields of forestry, public administration, and



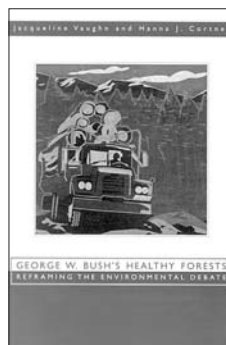
organizational history. Writing at a time when the Forest Service was enjoying a reputation for discipline and success, Kaufman offered an indispensable model for shaping the work and behavior of field officers into a unified, driven, and coherent program. His warning that an agency so entrenched might face problems adapting to social change have proven remarkably accurate, however—the environmental, civil rights, and women's movements have all posed challenges to the character and purpose of the Forest Service. New forewords by Harold K. Steen and Richard P. Nathan and an afterword by the author provide valuable context and assess how the work has held up over time.

Part philosophical, part scientific exploration of forests and forest management in the United States, Chris Maser's *Our*



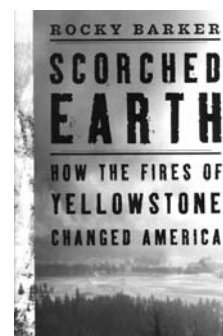
Forest Legacy: Today's Decisions, Tomorrow's Consequences (Washington, DC: Maisonneuve Press, 2005; \$19.95 paper), offers a history of twentieth-century perceptions of forests and public lands combined with specific, real-world recommendations for changes in management that reflect the author's concept of the forest as a "living trust." Maser argues that each generation bears responsibility for ensuring the integrity of forests for future generations, and that if we are to successfully change the way we manage our forest resources, we must first change the way we think about forests. These inspiring and thought-provoking arguments led Jim Furnish, retired Deputy Chief of the National Forest System, USDA Forest Service, to inquire: "Might this book be another *Silent Spring*?"

A different take on current debates over forest management is presented by Jacqueline Vaughn and Hanna J. Cortner in *George W. Bush's Healthy Forests: Reframing the Environmental Debate* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005; \$24.95 paper). Vaughn and Cortner analyze forest policy under the Bush administration, especially the context and legal effects of the 2003 Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act, presenting Bush's first-term policy as "anything but environmentally friendly." Examining the use of rhetoric and political strategy in the joining



of administrative appeals and wildfires in the forest health issue, Vaughn and Cortner argue that the administration's focus on process and streamlining decision-making have in effect restricted public and scientific involvement in environmental decisions as well as limited opportunities for analysis, administrative appeals, and litigation. This highly accessible analysis identifies the players, stakeholders, events, and strategies that advanced the change in policy, offering valuable context both in terms of the president's career and of legislative and administrative history. The shift in the terms and direction of the environmental debate forced by the Bush administration, say the authors, has profound implications for public lands and public process in America.

As raging forest fires destroyed more than a million acres in Yellowstone National Park in 1988, longstanding conflicts over fire management dramatically came to a head. The National Park Service and Forest Service debated questions of whether to suppress fires immediately, and of acceptable levels of risk when firefighters' lives were at stake. In Rocky Barker's new book *Scorched Earth: How The Fires of Yellow-*



stone Changed America (Washington, DC: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2005; \$24.95 cloth), he argues that many current issues of fire and the nature of public land find their origins soon after the Civil War. Barker, an environmental reporter who was on the ground during the 1988 fires, weaves a clear yet dynamic narrative with a colorful cast of characters including General Philip Sheridan and his soldiers, intrepid explorer John Wesley Powell, and prominent conservationists like Aldo Leopold, as well as lesser-known investors, railroad men, naturalists, and firefighters. With his dramatic accounts of the famous fires that have raged in Yellowstone, the heroes who fought to protect it, and the

management strategies that developed in consequence, Barker gets at the very heart of debate over human attempts to control nature. *Scorched Earth* offers an engaging examination of fire and environmental policy in national and global contexts.

Two new books celebrate and personally document vanishing aspects of early twentieth-century forest history. *The Traveling Timber Towns* by Fayrene Benson, Jimm Jacobs, and Bob Burke (Oklahoma City: Commonwealth Press, 2004) captures logging camp life in the “traveling towns” of Clebit and Alikchi, Oklahoma, owned by the Choctaw Lumber & Coal Company. The coming of the Dierks timber towns (1910–1968) launched an era of large-scale harvesting of vast regions of virgin short-



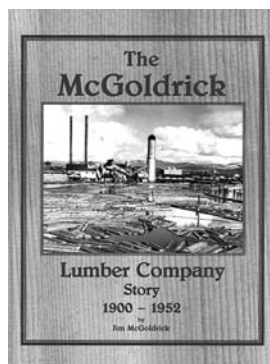
leaf pine that stretched from the Oklahoma-Arkansas border westward to Atoka, Oklahoma. The authors focus on the men, women, and children who inhabited the traveling lumber camps and highlight their contributions to the timber industry in Oklahoma. Based on oral histories, this detailed, innovatively designed and generously illustrated book pays homage to the hardworking people who endured difficult working conditions to supply logs to the Choctaw Lumber Company and Dierks Forests operations.

In *Above the Smoke: A Family Album of Pocahontas County Fire Towers* (Dunmore, WV: Pocahontas Communications Cooperative, 2005; \$12.00 paper), authors LeAnna Alderman and Eleanor Mahoney offer a portrait of the men and women who worked the fire lookout towers in West Virginia's Pocahontas County, a wooded, mountainous community in the eastern Allegheny highlands, from roughly 1915 to 1980. Presenting oral history accounts of long and lonely hours spent on West Virginia mountaintops, as well as historic photographs of the structures, the authors examine the history, development, and key



role of lookouts in the suppression and prevention of forest fires. With their evocative recreations, the authors of both books ensure that the memories and legacies of these hardy woods workers will not be forgotten.

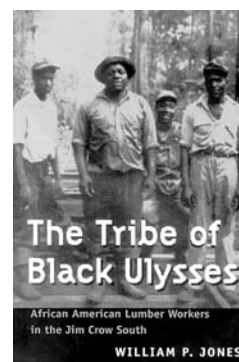
Another welcome local and industrial history comes with the publication of *The McGoldrick Lumber Company Story, 1900–1952* (Spokane, Wash.: Tornado Creek Publications, 2004), by Jim McGoldrick, grandson of the company's founder, James Patrick McGoldrick. The book traces the history of the company from its beginnings in Minneapolis in 1900, through its relocation to Spokane, Washington in 1905, where its white pine and ponderosa lumbering operations grew into the city's major employer and largest industry, to the ultimate demise of the business after a disastrous sawmill fire in 1945. Highlighting McGoldrick's book are the many reproductions of fascinating original records (including articles, newspaper clippings, photographs, and correspondence) con-



cerning the McGoldrick family and business operations, which document the story in an authentic and first-person fashion. Based on his 2002 report to the Timber Initiative Committee of the Eastern Washington State Historical Society/Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, a joint venture with the Forest History

Society, McGoldrick's work is a wonderful illustration of the value and importance of collecting and preserving the records, history, and memorabilia of forest industry.

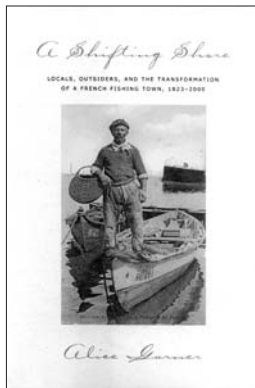
African American men formed the majority of the workforce in the southern lumber industry during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, yet those laborers and their impact on economic, social, and industrial history have been largely overlooked by scholars. William P. Jones aims to address this omission with his new book, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005; \$20.00 paper). A remarkable marriage of cultural and labor history drawing on oral history interviews, manuscript sources, local newspapers, and government documents, Jones explores the changing relationship of black men and women to industrial work in three sawmill communities: Elizabeth-



town, South Carolina; Chapman, Alabama; and Bogalusa, Louisiana. As they transitioned from seasonal to long-term work in lumbering, many black workers brought their families with them when they settled in these sawmill towns; rather than developing separately from black family and community life, Jones powerfully argues, southern industrialization was in many ways defined by it. By restoring black lumber workers to the history of the rural South, Jones' book fundamentally challenges the notion of black southerners in the first half of the twentieth century as incompatible with modernity.

Joining a growing field of inquiry that explores the history of leisure and tourism, Alice Garner's *A Shifting Shore: Locals, Outsiders, and the Transformation of a French Fishing Town, 1823–2000* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005; \$34.95 cloth) traces the evolution of one

of France's most popular beach resorts from its roots as a traditional fishing community. Bassin d'Arcachon, a prime fishing and oyster-farming site in southwestern France, was strikingly transformed over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by diverse interest groups including developers, vacationers, investors, and engineers. Drawing on a rich variety of sources such as guidebooks, newspapers, bylaws, engineers' reports, medical pamphlets, postcards, and vacationers' accounts, Garner explores how locals resisted developments that threatened their livelihood, identity,



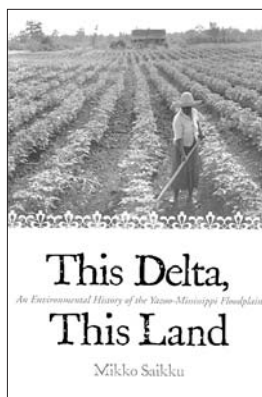
and/or sense of belonging, and how they adapted to the changing environment and to their new roles as guides and hosts. Supplemented by notes, a bibliography, and an index, this meticulously researched and abundantly illustrated book has much to contribute to a more developed, comparative understanding of relations between locals and visitors in all seaside communities.

Regional environmental history, particularly concerning the American Southeast, is an area of increasing scholarly interest. One of several rich new additions to the burgeoning regional scholarship is Megan Kate Nelson's *Trembling Earth: A Cultural History of the Okefenokee Swamp* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005; \$34.95 cloth), an innovative history that reveals how the peculiar and ambiguous ecology of the Okefenokee shaped the borderland culture of southern Georgia and northern Florida, from the formation of the Georgia colony in 1732 through the end of the Great Depression. Coining the term "ecolocalism" to describe how local cultures form out of ecosystems and in relation to other communities, Nelson offers a novel perspective on the swamp and the conflicts among its divergent inhabitants,



from rice planters to timber barons to fugitive slaves. Supplemented by illustrations, notes, bibliography, and an index, Nelson's book embraces the messiness and complexity of the region's past, reminding us that it is from such sites of collision and uncertainty that unique cultures are born.

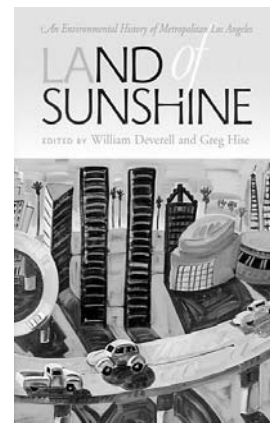
Moving further to the north and west, the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta—the floodplain between two great rivers in the northwestern corner of Mississippi—has changed enormously in the past 150 years thanks to human activities including agriculture, lumbering, and flood management schemes. Mikko Saikku's *This Delta, This Land: An Environmental History of the Yazoo-Mississippi Floodplain* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005; \$54.95 cloth; \$22.95 paper) is a comprehensive environmental history of the Delta, placing the economic and cultural history in an environmental context. The author argues that a long-term view across thousands of years, rather than the typical approach which privileges the period since the Civil War, is necessary to understand the region's complexities and



remarkable transformation. Saikku examines successive human occupations of the Delta, making distinctions between Native Americans and Euro-Americans in their

economies, modes of production, and land-use patterns, and drawing connections between environmental and social problems in various societies. Using a wide variety of sources, including travel literature, government records, archaeological data, and correspondence, Saikku deals with the human aspects of the region's natural history, including land reclamation, slavery and sharecropping, and other issues of race and ethnicity.

Urban environmental history is another area ripe for investigation. Usually associated with smog, sprawl, and traffic jams, a new book reveals the complexity of the historical relationship between nature and the mega-city of Los Angeles. The nineteen essays included in *Land of Sunshine: An Environmental History of Metropolitan Los Angeles* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005; \$34.95 cloth), edited by William Deverell and Greg Hise, address important questions regarding the origins, development, present situation,



and future viability of this large metropolitan region. Working forward from ancient times and ecologies to the very recent past, the authors—leading geologists, ecologists, and historians—examine how changing perceptions of nature, urban growth, and cultural diversity have made Los Angeles what it is today. The essays, supplemented by photographs, tables, maps, notes, a bibliography, and an index, cover specific topics including prairie ecology, watershed management, pollution, flood control, zoning, and cultural attitudes towards animals. The result is a compelling examination that can serve planners, communities, and environmentalists as they look to the past for ways to enhance the quality of life and sustainability of today's cities. □