

Environmental History: An Overview

G. Tyler Miller's Living in the Environment 13th Edition

Chapter 2

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Key Concepts

➤ Four Major “Revolutions” in Human Culture

U.S. Environmental History

- Tribal and Frontier Era**
- Early Conservation Era**
- The Environmental Era**
- Aldo Leopold’s Land Ethic**

Cultural Changes and the Environment: Hunter-Gatherer Culture

- **Hunter-gatherers**
- **Nomadic: seasonal movement**
- **Limited and local environmental impact**
- **Generally work with natural processes**

Cultural Changes and the Environment: The Agricultural Revolution

- **Agriculture**
- **Slash and burn/
shifting cultivation (See Fig. 2-2 p. 23)**
- **Essentially sustainable resource use**
- **Increased environmental impact**

Refer to *Connections* on p. 24

Cultural Changes and the Environment: The Industrial Revolution

- **Industrial Revolution (mid-1700's)**
- **Shift to dependence on non-renewable resources**
- **Dramatic increase in environmental impact**

Refer to *Connections* on p. 25

Cultural Changes and the Environment: The Information Revolution/Globalization

- **Information Revolution**
- **Rate of information increase and speed of communication**
- **Globalization**
- **Decrease in cultural diversity**

Environmental History of the United States: The Tribal and Frontier Eras

- **Tribal Era: Native Americans**
- **Native Americans generally low-impact hunter-gather or agricultural societies**
- **Frontier Environmental Worldview: European Settlement (1607-1890)**
- **Significant impact as wilderness frontier was “tamed”**

Environmental History of the United States: The Early Conservation Era

- **Period: 1832-1960**
- **Concern over resource use**
- **Preservation of public lands**
- **Public health initiatives**
- **Environmental restoration projects**

Important Figures During The Early Conservation Era

- **Henry David Thoreau**
- **George Perkins Marsh**
- **John Muir**
- **Theodore Roosevelt**
- **Alice Hamilton**
- **Franklin Roosevelt**

Environmental History of the United States: The Environmental Era

- **Period: 1960-2000**
- ***The environmental movement***
- **The science of *ecology***
- **Spaceship Earth worldview**
- **1980's: anti-environmental movement**
- **1990's: environmental awareness**

Important Figures During The Environmental Era – Part 1

- **Rachel Carson: *Silent Spring* (1962)**
(See *Individuals Matter* on p. 33)
- **Richard Nixon: EPA; ESA**
- **Jimmy Carter: DOE, Superfund**

Important Figures During The Environmental Era – Part 1

- **Ronald Reagan: anti-environmentalist**
- **Bill Clinton: environmental concerns a priority**
- **George W. Bush Jr.: environmental concerns *not* a priority**

Case Study: Aldo Leopold and His Land Ethic

- **Individuals are interdependent**
- **Ethics: respect for land**
- **Shift from *conqueror* to *member***
- **Problems arise when land viewed as a commodity**
- **Preservation of the integrity, stability, and beauty of land is right**