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# History for a Sustainable Future

A New Book Series from the MIT Press

## Series Editor:

Michael Egan, McMaster University

## Associate Editors:

Peter S. Alagona, University of California, Santa Barbara

Benjamin R. Cohen, Lafayette College

Adam M. Sowards, University of Idaho

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## Series Overview

It is hardly hyperbole to assert that we live in a state of environmental crisis. Human-induced climate change is already threatening plant and animal biodiversity and human habitats. Globally, there is an uneven distribution of environmental amenities and hazards. Our food and our bodies are increasingly burdened with a cocktail of toxic chemicals. Human population growth is seriously challenging the planet's carrying capacity. And we are consuming ever more natural resources at an unsustainable rate. At the same time, collective human ingenuity is introducing new forms of science, technology, economy, politics, and practices that seek to address and remediate these problems. These environmental engagements—both positive and negative—have histories that are ingrained in a human social, political, and technological past that we have yet to fully understand. But in order to fully understand the social, political, economic, and ecological context of contemporary environmental issues we need to be conscious of their historical contexts. Resolving local and global environmental quandaries requires careful thought and planning; future success depends upon a deeper appreciation of the past. This is the point: historicizing sustainable and unsustainable futures is based less on the notion that we should learn from past mistakes than on the premise that solving the environmental crisis will demand the most and best information available, and history provides valuable insight into the creation and proliferation of the environmental ills we hope to curb.

“History for a Sustainable Future”—a new series from the MIT Press—means to publish short, peer-reviewed monographs that provide valuable historical context that illuminates the nature of the current landscape of environmental problems, innovations, decisions, and futures before us. The series takes as its primary mission the dissemination of accessible historical information and resources for scholars and teachers, policy makers, activists, and concerned citizens. The driving theme behind this series involves making environmental history more relevant to 21<sup>st</sup> century concerns about the environment.

Building on the notion that history offers a vital perspective on contemporary environmental debate, “History for a Sustainable Future” solicits proposals and manuscripts that engage with environmental histories that speak directly to the broader complexity of contemporary environmental issues. Accessible writing and clarity of purpose will serve as the cornerstone for titles under consideration; manuscripts should be theory-influenced, but not theory-laden. The series' distinguishing features stem from its interest in producing short titles that contribute to environmental history's contemporary relevance. Books will be limited to **50000 words** (including notes and references) and firmly grounded in original, primary research. The editorial board also solicits and encourages co-authored works that draw on the multiple strengths made possible by the perspectives and expertise of more than a single author. While the series values timeliness, proposed topics and their delivery should have a lasting quality. In order for a manuscript to be considered for this series, it must speak very directly to contemporary environmental issues while remaining firmly grounded in historical analysis and methodologies. In addition to their topicality, manuscript submissions must

meet an exceptionally high standard of writing quality, scholarship, and accessibility to our stated audiences.

## **Submission Guidelines**

Proposals should be sent electronically to Michael Egan ([egan@mcmaster.ca](mailto:egan@mcmaster.ca)). In order to be considered, proposals must include the following:

1. Cover page, including:
  - a. Project title
  - b. Name(s) of author(s) and contact details (mail, electronic, phone, and fax)
2. Curriculum vita, including:
  - a. Institution and professional rank
  - b. List of previous publications
3. A brief synopsis of the book (250 words max)
4. A summary of the project (1000-1500 words), which:
  - a. Describes the project's driving questions and thesis
  - b. Outlines its narrative trajectory
  - c. Addresses its place in the existing historiography
  - d. Explains why it will be a valuable, and indeed necessary, contribution
  - e. Identifies its intended audience
  - f. Demonstrates its marketability
  - g. Shows why the author is well-suited to complete the proposed project
5. Table of contents
6. Brief chapter summaries separate from the table of contents (no more than 200 words per chapter)
7. Explicit statement (300 words max) on how the proposed manuscript addresses the premises of the series and why a shorter book project is the most suitable method of communicating your research
8. Description of the project's status, and a realistic projected timeline for completion

Every effort will be made to expedite the review process. Proposals will be reviewed by the editorial board of the book series in conjunction with the editorial office at The MIT Press. Authors should expect a timely response to their proposals with an indication as to whether the series will consider the full manuscript. Contracts will come from the press after the peer review process. We anticipate publishing three to four books a year.