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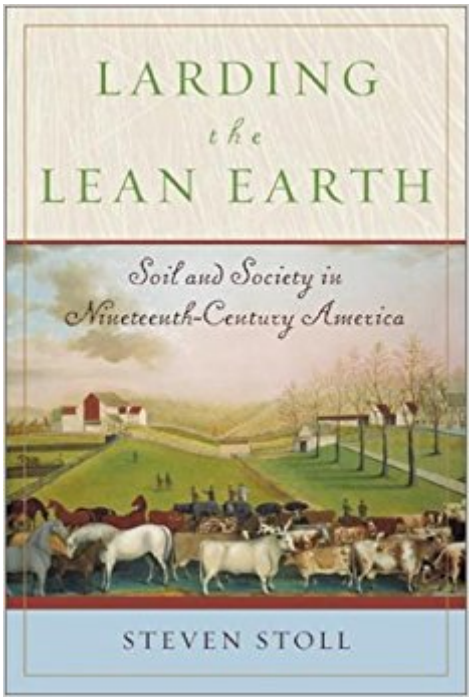
Larding The Lean Earth: Soil And Society In Nineteenth-Century America



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Synopsis

A Major History of Early Americans' Ideas about ConservationFifty years after the Revolution, American farmers faced a crisis: the failing soils of the Atlantic states threatened the agricultural prosperity upon which the republic was founded. Larding the Lean Earth explores the tempestuous debates that erupted between "improvers," intent on sustaining the soil of existing farms, and "emigrants," who thought it wiser and more "American" to move westward as the soil gave out. Larding the Lean Earth is a signal work of environmental history and an original contribution to the study of antebellum America.

Book Information

Paperback: 287 pages

Publisher: Hill and Wang; Reprint edition (July 3, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0809064308

ISBN-13: 978-0809064304

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #635,360 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #107 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > Soil Science #127 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > Agronomy #596 inÃ Â Books > Textbooks > Science & Mathematics > Agriculture

Customer Reviews

Historian Stoll deepens the increasingly urgent discussion of the more alarming aspects of agribusiness in a study of soil, the substance that unifies "the gases of the atmosphere, the minerals of the lithosphere, and the organisms of the biosphere." Although it takes centuries to form, soil can be lost in mere decades, a scary reality European settlers discovered by 1820, when the soil of the original colonies was so depleted that farmers either headed west to use up yet more land or stayed put and learned how to "improve" their homesteads by working in harmony with natural processes. With great felicity of language and a firm grasp of forces biological and social, Stoll explicates the methods and ethic of "improvement" as practiced by an enlightened coterie of highly successful northern farmers, then contrasts their ecologically wise approach (manure was a key factor) to the brutal and unsustainable operations of southern planters. Grounded in rarely referenced farming literature, farmers' and planters' diaries, and political records, Stoll's eye-opening and rousing

chronicle of American agriculture and its industrialization explores an overlooked yet crucial facet of our past, and points the way to a more bountiful future. Donna SeamanCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ã¢â ¬Å“[An] eye-opening and rousing chronicle of American agriculture and its industrialization.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢BooklistÃ¢â ¬Å“An engaging examination of the early proponents of restorative husbandry.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Kirkus ReviewsÃ¢â ¬Å“Evocative and provocative, written with verve and passion and with new insights on every page, this is a book that every nineteenth-century historian will want to read.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Daniel Feller, University of New MexicoÃ¢â ¬Å“[A] valuable act of reclamation.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Bill Kauffman, The Wall Street Journal

arrived in fine shapearrived in fine shape

Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century AmericaÃ Â My husband purchased the 2003 paperback edition of this book for a class. The content of the book is fine. The problem is that every odd numbered page from 145 to the last page grows increasingly blurred until finally becoming illegible. I have never owned a book suffering from such poor quality printing and intend to ask the publisher for another copy. Hill & Wang should be ashamed.

When we think of the conservation movement in America, our minds are drawn to people such as John James Audubon, John Muir, Henry David Thoreau, and Aldo Leopold. Although these men wrote with passion about conservation, the political movement had deeper roots. In his original and thought provoking book, Steven Stoll proposes that conservation thought emerged as a political force in the 19th century exploitation of the land. Two forces emerged - the improvers of the land who believed that farming practices must be used to sustain the soil, - and the emigrants who kept moving to new untouched wilderness as their land gave out. Today, most of the arable land is cultivated and much of it in North America is maintained by technology. Larding the Lean Earth explores how technology has come to dominate the agricultural landscape. It is a must read for anyone interested in the history of conservation, and anyone close to the land.

Farming occupied the majority of American pursuits in the 19th century, tied up most of the nation’s

capital, and occupied the thoughts of farmers and politicians alike. Before expansion into the West could succeed, conservation of land and resources would have to be taken into account: Larding The Lean Earth points out that the debate over natural resource management began in the 1820s and pitted farmers against plantation owners in a conflict which would affect westward expansion processes as a whole.

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