

Preface

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THIS VOLUME SPRANG from an observation I made on Twitter in November 2014: that the gap between environmental history and the history of science was (and remains) perplexing, given themes of obvious shared interest to these fields.¹ Researchers such as Michael Egan, Sara Pritchard, and Amy Kohout, whose work bridges this gap, soon chimed in. They offered explanations for this intellectual divergence and shared titles of recent scholarship on the environmental history of science.² Sean Kheraj, meanwhile, had a bright idea: that NiCHE's blog, *The Otter-La loutre*, should publish a series of posts on this subject. As an *Otter* editor, I took up this challenge.

"Landscapes of Science" premiered in January 2015 with an eponymous post by Stephen Bocking, a leading Canadian scholar in the history of science and the environment. Bocking's overview of this cross-disciplinary subject and agenda for future research elicited a great deal of enthusiasm, as reflected in the numerous, thoughtful replies posted by other environmental historians and historical geographers of Canada.³ Two such commenters, William Knight and Peter Anderson, were even inspired to contribute slices of their own research to this series. The posts following Bocking's opening salvo sometimes ranged beyond landscapes of science into adjacent ones of technology and medicine. They generated similarly excellent discussions, and not only among academics. Daniel Heidt's essay on "met techs" working in the High Arctic after the Second World War prompted several members of this community to share memories of their fieldwork.⁴ The high level of engagement with this series

foregrounds the contemporary relevance and importance of the environmental history of science in Canadian life and letters.

For this reason, as well as the high quality of the series' original research, NiCHE's editorial board wanted "Landscapes of Science" to remain easily accessible for years to come. This e-book is the result. It contains revised versions of the series' five original posts; an expanded version of a cognate post by Joanna Dean, originally published on *ActiveHistory.ca*; and a new, closing commentary by Stephen Bocking. In concert with other recent Canadian work situated at the intersection of environmental history and the histories of science, technology, and medicine, it aims to guide these fields, slowly but surely, onto common ground.⁵

¹ On the relationship between these two fields, see, for example, Stephen Bocking, "Nature's Stories? Pursuing Science in Environmental History," in *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, ed. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Toronto: Nelson, 2009), 294–308; Dolly Jørgensen, Finn Arne Jørgensen and Sara B. Pritchard, eds., *New Natures: Joining Environmental History with Science and Technology Studies* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013) <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt5vkgkn>; and Michael Lewis, "And All Was Light?—Science and Environmental History," in *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History*, ed. Andrew C. Isenberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 207–26. For my original tweet and ensuing discussion, see <https://twitter.com/TinaAdcock/status/529836165860687872>.

² The titles mentioned were Joshua P. Howe, *Behind the Curve: Science and the Politics of Global Warming* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014) and Frederick Rowe Davis, *Banned: A History of Pesticides and the Science of Toxicology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014) <https://doi.org/10.12987/yale/9780300205176.001.0001>.

³ For Bocking's most recent thinking on this subject, see Stephen Bocking, "Landscapes of Science in Canada: Modernity and Disruption," in *Made Modern*:

Science and Technology in Canadian History, ed. Edward Jones-Imhotep and Tina Adcock (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018), 251–78.

⁴ The original posts with comments are archived at <http://niche-canada.org/tag/landscapes-of-science/>. Readers wishing to explore the history and historiography of science and environment in Canada in more depth will find the comments especially illuminating.

⁵ See, for example, Ian Mosby and Catherine Carstairs, eds., “Foodscapes of Plenty and Want: Historical Perspectives on Food, Health, and the Environment in Canada,” special issue of *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 32, no. 2 (2015) <https://doi.org/10.3138/cbmh.32.2.247>; *Scientia Canadensis* 40, no. 1 (2018), a special issue on environmental history and the history of technology co-edited by Daniel Macfarlane and William Knight; and Jones-Imhotep and Adcock, *Made Modern*, especially the third part, “Environments.”