

The Essential Aldo Leopold: Quotations and Commentaries

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The Essential Aldo Leopold: Quotations and Commentaries, edited by Curt Meine and Richard L. Knight. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999. xxii, 362 pp. Illustrations, notes. \$27.95 cloth.

Reviewer Karl Jacoby is Robert J. Carney Assistant Professor of History at Brown University. He is the author of *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (2001).

Although best known for his posthumous best-seller, *Sand County Almanac* (1949), Aldo Leopold authored hundreds of articles, reports, and essays during his lengthy career in conservation. In *The Essential Aldo Leopold*, Curt Meine and Richard L. Knight distill Leopold's prodigious output into a single volume that encompasses not only Leopold's published output but previously unpublished material from his personal papers as well. To accomplish this impressive feat, Meine and Knight have chosen brief excerpts (sometimes a sentence, occasionally a paragraph or two) of Leopold's work. Each selection offers either an unusually clear distillation of one of Leopold's ideas or an example of Leopold's often elegant phrasing. Meine and Knight have arranged these excerpts into chapters with themes such as "Ecological Restoration" and "Agriculture." Each chapter is, in turn, introduced by a present-day environmental thinker (Donald Worster, David Orr, Terry Tempest Williams, and others) who identifies the contemporary relevance of Leopold's thought.

Although the result is a book that is made up of snippets rather than a sustained narrative, *The Essential Aldo Leopold* does indeed serve an essential function: it enables readers to survey Leopold's remarkably varied output in a single volume. A system of notes directs readers to the source of each excerpt. The book's hidden message, then, would seem to be that readers should not rest after finishing *The Essential Aldo Leopold*, but should instead use the work as a starting point from which to investigate the full range of Leopold's still vital environmental writings.

Taming the Upper Mississippi: My Turn at Watch, 1935-1999, William H. Klingner, P.E., P.L.S., by Janice Petterchak. Rochester, IL: Legacy Press, 2000. 208 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography. \$10.00 paper.

Reviewer Patrick Nunnally is an independent public historian who also teaches at the University of Minnesota. He has been investigating the environmental history of the Mines of Spain region along the Mississippi River.

This slim book, based largely on the oral recollections of a civil engineer based in Quincy, Illinois, is an uneven treatment of a complex

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