



Shaped by the West Wind: Nature and History in Georgian Bay (Nature/History/Society)

Claire Elizabeth Campbell

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Along the east shore of Ontario's Georgian Bay lie the Thirty Thousand Islands, a granite archipelago scarred by glaciers, where the white pines cling to the ancient rock, twisted and bent by the west wind -- a symbol of a region where human history has been shaped by the natural environment. Over the last four centuries, the Bay has been visited by some of the most famous figures in Canadian history, from Samuel de Champlain to the Group of Seven. This book traces the history of Canadians' reactions to and interactions with this distinctive and often intractable landscape.

Claire Campbell draws from recent work in cultural history, landscape studies in geography and art history, and environmental history to explore what happens when external agendas confront local realities -- a story central to the Canadian experience. Explorers, fishermen, artists, and park planners all were forced to respond to the unique contours of this inland sea; their encounters defined a regional identity even as they constructed a popular image for the Bay in the national imagination.

Beginning with a revealing analysis of the cartographic history of the Bay, Campbell proceeds to examine changing cultural representations of landscape over time, shifts between resource development and recreational use, recurring motifs of water and rock in landscape design and representation, changing memories of place, and the environmental politics of place read through debates about resource management and parks.

Campbell investigates the relationship between landscape, culture, and regional identity, and presents a case study in modern environmental thought. Each chapter presents a different type of encounter -- different ways in which people approached and interacted with the Bay. She incorporates a wide variety of sources, including art and literature, maps and survey journals, cottage architecture and boat design, government and park archives, tourism brochures, and oral interviews.

This is not a narrowly conceived local history but a focused argument about how places take on shifting cultural meanings over time. The author argues that the environment of Georgian Bay is not simply an imagined geography but has been created through an active engagement between cultural readings and physical circumstances. *Shaped by the West Wind* speaks to a wide variety of disciplines including geography, art and design, literary criticism, environmental studies, and public history. It will appeal to anyone interested in the environmental dimensions of Canadian history.

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