

Aldo Leopold. *A Sand County Almanac and Other Writings on Ecology and Conservation*. Edited by Curt Meine

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Excepting two of Aldo Leopold's published books, his *Report on a Game Survey of the North Central States* (1931) and *Game Management* (1933), this handsome new anthology contains virtually everything Leopold published during his lifetime as well as the main host of his unpublished shorter works, his personal journals, and an extensive selection of his letters. Edited by Curt Meine and published by The Library of America, this collection is sure to become the new standard for scholars and aficionados of Leopold's writings alike. The scope of writings and the careful editing of the work make this volume unquestionably the most authoritative collection of Leopold's writings yet produced.

Meine divides the anthology into four sections, not including a substantive set of endnotes and indices. The first section contains the complete text of Leopold's most well-known work, *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There* (hereafter *ASCA*). The second section, titled "Other Writings on Ecology and Conservation," comprises fifty-six shorter writings produced by Leopold, many of which have been in print for years now. The third section contains complete texts of twelve journals written from 1920 to 1936 as well as thirteen entries from the "Shack Journals" written between 1935 and 1948. The fourth and final section offers the most exciting new addition of Leopold materials in print to date. This is a collection of some ninety-four letters, all written by Leopold, some for public consumption, some privately. The letters are arranged chronologically from 1903 to 1948. Taken as a whole, the anthology presents a picture of Leopold as never before seen.

As noted, *ASCA* stands in the primary position in the anthology. Meine has preserved the structure of the work as published in the original 1949 edition by Oxford University Press, *inclusive* of Charles W. Schwartz's illustrations. Thus he redresses a long standing complaint among scholars of Leopold's work concerning the inclusion of alien elements into the revised and enlarged 1966 edition of *ASCA* by Oxford University Press. The outstanding feature of Leopold's first edition was its overall beauty, and this work retains that same characteristic. This book is a bit hefty making it not as portable as Leopold's original. The inclusion of Leopold's shorter works makes up for this deficiency, though.

The second section, i.e., "Other Writings on Ecology and Conservation," comprises nearly all of Leopold's shorter works. The bulk of these were originally published in Susan Flader's and J. Baird Callicott's excellent

anthology, *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991). Meine follows Flader and Callicott in organizing the works chronologically here. This is, indeed, what is particularly nice about this volume. Its principle of organization reflects an archivalist eye, and Meine's execution in this section follows the plan laid out by Flader and Callicott. So even though a good bit of the material published herein has already been published elsewhere, this volume allows the scholar conveniently to trace the development of Leopold's thought while comparing this against *ASCA*. This convenience alone makes the anthology worthwhile. It is unfortunate, then, that the chronological ordering of the shorter articles is not more readily apparent in Meine's edition. Where Callcott and Flader were very clear in regards to the organizational principle at work in their collection, emphasizing thereby the developmental nature of Leopold's thinking, the reader of Meine's edition may find this difficult to discern. To his merit, Meine has appended the publication or typescript date to the end of each selection. While difficult to see at first, to the careful eye it will not be hard to uncover. If one were to criticize this volume, this lack of clarity regarding the ordering of these shorter works is its greatest weakness. But again, Meine offers enough information for the careful reader to track their trajectory.

Sections 3 and 4 contain a selection of Leopold's journals and letters, respectively. Positioning these after both *ASCA* and his shorter essays has two merits. On the one hand, setting these more personal writings off, as Meine has done, allows the reader to form a clear view of Leopold the man, that is, Leopold the husband, father, hunter, and friend. On the other hand, reading the journals and the letters fills out our view of Leopold's philosophy articulated in the first two sections by giving us a view into those experiences which suffuse this philosophy. Many of the journals included in Meine's edition have never before been published. Meine has also included maps and photographs which Leopold, himself, later appended to his journals. Thus one can really get a good sense of the trips and the people about which Leopold writes in these journals. But the letters included here are a genuine treasure. Very many of these have remained locked away except to the most dedicated of Leopold scholars. With the inclusion of Leopold's letters to his parents, his wife, his children, his colleagues, his publishers, and to his President, Meine has provided a portrait of Leopold in his own words. The letters, especially, give the collection a sense of Leopold's heart; the journals offer us a picture of Leopold as he lived. When reading these personal writings together, especially in conjunction with the materials in the first two sections, one can see how his own experiences were fundamental to the formation of his philosophy. Thus Meine introduces an implicit claim about Leopold's environmental philosophy in this anthology. The land ethic, which he articulated in the capstone essay of *ASCA*, cannot be fully appreciated apart from Leopold's own life history.

Scholars of Leopold's life and work should not overlook the ancillary textual material produced by Meine at the conclusion of this anthology. The chronology of Leopold's life which Meine provides is adequate. However, the two sets of notes, i.e., the "Note on the Texts and Illustrations" and Meine's own editorial "Notes" to the texts, are a repository of scholarship. The excellent "Note on the Texts" lays out a well-researched overview of the history of revisions and publication not merely of ASCA but also of all the texts included in the collection. In his editorial "Notes," Meine offers the reader not a few surprise inclusions, the greatest of which is the original forward to ASCA in its entirety penned by Leopold after Knopf rejected his book for publication. Finally, Meine concludes the book with two substantive and very helpful indices, a general index and an index of animal and plant names.

What with the Aldo Leopold Archives available online at the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections (<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/AldoLeopold>) and now the publication of this important text, Leopold's entire corpus is happily available quite generally. Meine's work as editor is truly superb in this volume. Leopold died before he saw his most significant work, *A Sand County Almanac*, published. The original title of that work was to be "Great Possessions." Though it is true that many of the texts in this new anthology can be found elsewhere, Meine's superb effort ensures this new collection will, itself, be a great possession to add to one's library.