Environment & Society Portal

Multimedia Library Collection: Environment and History (journal)

"Colonial Geographies of Settlement: Vegetation, Towns, Disease and Well-Being In Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1830s–1930s"

Beattie, James

Beattie, James. "Colonial Geographies of Settlement: Vegetation, Towns, Disease and Well-Being In Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1830s–1930s." *Environment and History* 14, no. 4, Trans-Tasman Forest History special issue (Nov., 2008): 583–610. doi:10.3197/096734008X368457 . A fruitful new area of environmental history research can be undertaken on the relationship between plants and health in colonial societies. By using New Zealand as a case study, Beattie demonstrates the strength of settler beliefs in the connections between existing environments, environmental transformation, and their own health. He attempts to reconnect the historiographies of medical and environmental history by arguing that urban settlements—as much as rural areas—were important sites for debates about environmental change and human health. The author adopts a broad perspective in order to sketch out the contours of a new field, demonstrating the complicated connections between health, aesthetic appreciation, medicine and garden history. Furthermore, he argues that many environmental-health ideas associated with miasmic theories became incorporated into the microbial 'revolution' taking place from the late nineteenth century. Finally, a close study of settler environmental-health ideas reveals a far more ambiguous—a far more anxious—history of European engagement with temperate colonies than the existing historiography on the topic posits. Rather than wholly confident and arrogant agents of environmental exploitation, it reveals that great anxieties about health existed side-by-side with confidence in the environmentally transformative potential of colonisation. All rights reserved. © 2008 The White Horse Press

Download:
PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/beattie-14-4.pdf

Related links:

- *Environment and History* at The White Horse Press
  http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EH.html

Websites linked in this text:

- http://dx.doi.org/10.3197/096734008X368457

Environment and History (journal) Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
"Colonial Geographies of Settlement: Vegetation, Towns, Disease and Well-Being In Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1830s–1930s"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/3361
Print date: 02 November 2026 22:38:41