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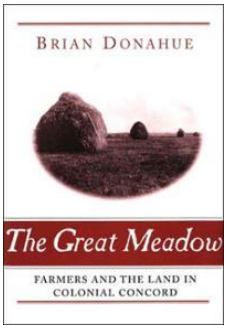
The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord

Donahue, Brian



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Donahue, Brian. *The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Brian Donahue offers an innovative, accessible, and authoritative history of the early farming practices of Concord, Massachusetts, and challenges the long-standing notion that colonial husbandry degraded the land. In fact, he argues, the Concord community of farmers achieved a remarkably successful and sustainable system of local production. Donahue describes in precise detail—using among other tools an innovative historical geographical information system (GIS) method—how land was settled and how mixed husbandry was developed in Concord. By reconstructing several farm neighborhoods and following them through many generations, he reveals the care with which farmers managed the land, soil, and water. He concludes that ecological degradation came to Concord only later, when nineteenth-century economic and social forces undercut the environmental balance that earlier colonial farmers had nurtured. — Yale University Press website .

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- H-Environment, H-Net Reviews, reviewed by Jeff Filipiak
  http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php
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