

The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold, edited by Susan L. Flader and J. Baird Callicott. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. xv, 384 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95 cloth.

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This volume is a chronological collection of many of Aldo Leopold's essays that were previously unpublished or have not been available as a collection. The fifty-nine pieces range over Leopold's varied interests and mark the development of his thoughts from his days as a seventeen-year-old observer of nature to his career as a seasoned professional and scholar. Flader and Callicott have written a useful introduction that charts the development of Leopold's thought on conservation ecology, natural esthetics, and environmental ethics, as well as on a number of professional concerns.

This is a book that addresses a wide audience, and deservedly so. The introduction may contain little that is new to Leopold scholars, but the selections themselves—each introduced with a brief headnote—contain much that is rich and thought provoking. Leopold is perhaps the preeminent twentieth-century American thinker on conservation, a man who emerged from the Midwest (he grew up in Burlington, Iowa) and whose ideas attained their full maturity through intimate knowledge of midwestern landscapes. Those readers familiar with his landmark *A Sand County Almanac* will find in these essays the same pungent phrasing and elegant thought that characterize that book. Perhaps the most important value of this book, though, is that it makes available still more of Leopold's thought, for this is a man whose ideas were, and continue to be, vitally important. The issues he explored—the multiple relations between people and the land they inhabit—are not just matters pertaining to wilderness or public land. On the contrary, they are perhaps more important on farm land or other privately held land, the kind of landscape that constitutes most of Iowa and the Midwest. If we are to have any real hope of understanding these lands, much less preserving some elements of them, Leopold's ideas are the place to start.

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