

Introduction

This third edition of *American Environmental Leaders From Colonial Times to the Present* is the second published by Grey House Publishing. The second edition of this book came out in 2008, and the first was published by ABC-CLIO in 2000. This 2-volume third edition has been revised and expanded with new material and added features:

- **New Key Documents**—25 articles, book excerpts and speeches by the foremost authorities in the field. It comprises an incredibly expansive perspective—nine centuries—including excerpts from the 13th century *Constitution of the Iroquois Nation* to the Pope Francis’ Encyclical issued in 2015. The detailed introduction to these Key Documents offers insight into the criteria for inclusion and the actions these documents have prompted.
- **New and Updated Entries**—20 brand new essays, primarily focusing on recent environmental leaders but filling in some gaps as well. This third edition, like the first two, includes biographies of well-known heroes, as well as less visible behind-the-scenes people who make things happen. In addition, all articles from the first and second editions have been revised as needed. This new edition offers a total of 399 biographies, many with new images that address the most pressing topics of environmental concern.
- **New Contributors**—We engaged six contributors for the new and updated entries in this edition, bringing our total number of talented contributors to 47 writers and editors with deep knowledge and interest in the multifaceted American environmental movement.
- **Updated Timeline of American Environmentalism**—The timeline marks important firsts in areas vital to the environment and its protection, such as accomplishments of various social movements, significant legislation, technological advances, and extreme climate-change-induced weather events as well.
- **Updated Index**
- The third edition of *American Environmental Leaders From Colonial Times to the Present* is available in both print and electronic formats.

A

Abbey, Edward

(January 29, 1927–March 14, 1989)
Writer

Edward Abbey, wild man of the American West and the author of 22 books, defies literary definitions. He is known for his exquisite descriptions of his beloved Southwestern desert, for his bitter diatribes against those who defile such pristine areas (ranchers, loggers, even dumb tourists), and for the unruly characters—some autobiographical—who people his novels.

Edward Paul Abbey was born on January 29, 1927, in Home, Pennsylvania, a rural Allegheny community. His mother, Mildred, was an activist for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union,



Abbey spent time as a park ranger at what became Arches National Park near Moab, Utah.

and his father, Paul Revere Abbey, was a Socialist union organizer who earned his livelihood cutting hickory fence posts. As a child Abbey wrote comic books, and he became a journalist while in high school (though he flunked his journalism class). During the summer of his seventeenth year, Abbey hitchhiked and rode buses and trains on an exploratory tour of the West. He fell in love with the deserts and canyons. And at the age of 19, after one year in the Army and another at Indiana State Teachers College, Abbey moved west, where he was to stay except for a few brief periods of his life. Abbey studied philosophy and English at the University of New Mexico, earning his B.A. in 1951 and his M.A. in 1956. His master's degree thesis, titled "Anarchism and the Morality of Violence," examined political situations in which violence could be justified. His conclusion was that it was most justifiable when used in self-defense.

While working at varied jobs after completing his M.A., including inspecting roads for the U.S. Forest Service and being a ranger for the National Park Service, Abbey wrote several novels. His first widely acclaimed work was *Desert Solitaire* (1968), a compilation of his journals from the time he was working as a seasonal ranger in Arches National Monument in Utah. Many critics call this book his best. It is a medley of crystalline nature writing and enraged rants against the incursion of civilization into the pristine Southwest deserts. The author's note in *Desert Solitaire* warns the reader:

Do not jump into your automobile next June and rush out to the canyon country hoping to see some of that which I have attempted to evoke in these pages. In the first place you can't see *anything* from a car; you've got to get out of the goddamned contraption and walk, better yet crawl, on hands and knees, over the sandstone and through the thornbush and cactus. When traces of blood begin to mark your trail you'll see something, maybe. Probably not.

The direct action arm of the environmental movement remembers Abbey best for *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), an account of the exploits of a group of iconoclasts who specialized in what was later termed *monkey-wrenching*, the deliberate damaging of equipment used to destroy nature. The Monkey Wrench Gang would pour sugar and dirt into the gas tanks of bulldozers and tractors at desert construction projects, but their ultimate goal was to blow up the Glen Canyon Dam. True to Abbey's master's thesis conclusions, the Monkey Wrench Gang's violence was undertaken in self-defense, for the gang identified so closely with the desert that the development was an attack on their very beings. This book inspired Dave Foreman, Howie Wolke, and three other friends to found Earth First! in 1979. Their first public action was at a Glen Canyon Dam protest during which Abbey spoke. From that time on, Abbey served as an elder adviser and shaman to the group.

During his lifetime, Abbey wrote 22 books. The literary establishment pegged him as a Western environmentalist writer. Abbey himself said in an interview published in *Resist Much, Obey Little* (1996) that he was content to remain in that pigeonhole because it assured him easy access to publishers and earned him a comfortable living. However, environmentalists who wanted to see him as a spokesperson for their causes were often disturbed by some of his assertions. He spouted brash, disturbing opinions

in some of his books. He insulted literary critics who did not like his work; called on the U.S. Border Patrol to turn back all Mexican immigrants, hand them guns, and tell them to finish their revolution; and criticized mainstream environmentalist organizations for their compromises.

Abbey's friends and fans admired his dedication to the truth—about the world and his own life—even if his words were sometimes difficult to digest or undiplomatic. Abbey was continually outraged, wrote Wendell Berry in his contribution to *Resist Much, Obey Little*, but Abbey's humor made his outrage tolerable to his readers. During his life Abbey married five times and fathered six children.

Abbey died of internal bleeding on March 19, 1989, shortly after being informed that he had a terminal circulatory disorder. His death and burial have achieved the same mythological status that was given his life while he was alive. Two days before he died, he asked his friends to take him out of the hospital and into the desert, where he enjoyed one last campfire circle. He died in a sleeping bag on the floor of his writing cabin, and his friends followed the instructions he had left them to drive his body as far as possible into the desert and bury him under a pile of rocks.

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Ackerman, Diane

(October 7, 1948-)

Writer, Poet

Diane Ackerman is best known for her elegant literary treatment of scientific topics and the natural world, and for her versatility. She has published twenty-four books of non-fiction, poetry, plays, and children's literature, as well as countless articles. Her book *A Natural History of the Senses* (1990), about the many dimensions of the five human senses and their intermingling, was her first national bestseller, leading later to a highly rated public television miniseries. Her most popular book, *The Zookeeper's Wife* (2007), is a narrative nonfiction account of a true story set in WWII Warsaw in which Christian zookeepers Jan and Antonina Zabinski save the lives of several hundred Jews and members of the Polish underground resistance. It was made into a major motion picture in 2017. Her most recent book, *The Human Age: The World Shaped by Us* (2014), regarding the new geologic era called the Anthropocene, won the P.E.N. Henry David Thoreau Award for Nature Writing.

Diane Ackerman was born in Waukegan, Illinois, on October 7, 1948. Eight years later, her family moved to the more rural location of Allentown, Pennsylvania. She earned a B.A. in English in 1970 from Pennsylvania State University, where she met the late Paul West, a writer who became her husband. By 1978 she had completed a master's in fine arts and an M.A. and Ph.D. in English literature at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. She lives in upstate New York to this day.

In 1976 she published her first book of poetry, *The Planets: A Cosmic Pastoral* (1976). Entirely about astronomy, *The Planets* introduced readers to the way Ackerman approaches the natural world with lyrical observation.

In 1980 she published *Twilight of the Tenderfoot*, a book detailing her experiences as a ranch hand in New Mexico. After earning her

pilot's license, she wrote *On Extended Wings* (1985), a book exploring the implications of learning to fly, which was later adapted to the stage. Ackerman also continued to write poetry. *Lady Faustus*, a collection of poems published in 1983, covered the spectrum from soccer, flying and meditations on amphibians.

In 1988, Ackerman published *Reverse Thunder: A Dramatic Poem*, detailing the life of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, an extraordinary nun who lived in late seventeenth-century New Spain (what is now Mexico). A play written in verse, *Reverse Thunder* is a tribute to a woman Ackerman deeply admires for her genius and gumption. Sor Juana wrote prose, plays and poems. Her works explored love, religion, mythology, philosophy and the abilities of women. Like Ackerman, Sor Juana had a deep and nuanced understanding of science and music. She had the greatest library at the time in the Americas, and was a natural scientist who conducted cutting-edge experiments.

In Ackerman's *A Natural History of the Senses*, she explores, through historical vignettes, scientific research and her own keen observations, the ways in which humans perceive the world. She terms her approach "nomadic curiosity," echoing American nature writers who came before her, such as transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, Sierra Club founder John Muir, environmental ethics pioneer Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson, the poetic public scientist who launched the modern environmental movement.

The Moon by Whale Light: And Other Adventures among Bats, Penguins, Crocodilians, and Whales (1991) expanded upon a series of articles that Ackerman had previously published in the *New Yorker*. Ackerman's 1995 *The Rarest of the Rare: Vanishing Animals, Timeless Worlds* resulted from a series of pilgrimages to the world's rarest ecosystems, during which she paid homage to rare and unusual species. The book contains chapters on the monk seal, the short-tailed albatross, the golden lion tamarin, and other endangered species. Ackerman mixes

descriptions of habitats and animals with biographical data about her human companions: biologists who study and strive to protect their chosen species.

Cultivating Delight: A Natural History of My Garden (2001) is composed of 52 essays that range from the sensory pleasures of a garden to detailed botanic and zoological descriptions. In *An Alchemy of Mind* (2004), she delves into what recent neuroscience has revealed about the evolution and workings of the brain and consciousness, mainly of humans, but she devotes an entire chapter to animals.

Ackerman's interest in the story she tells in *The Zookeeper's Wife* (2007) stems from her maternal grandparents, both of whom came originally from Poland. Jan Zabinski was the director of the Warsaw Zoo, one of the largest in pre-WWII Europe. However, according to Jan it was his wife Antonina, whose diaries form the backbone of Ackerman's narration, who had a sixth sense for communicating with animals. The Zabinski home and the zoo they managed had always been a halfway house for orphaned or injured animals, but during WWII they also took in some of their persecuted human brethren, at great personal risk. The book is an ode to the Zabinskis, but also to the city of Warsaw and to the Bialowieza forest preserve in northeastern Poland, which harbors some of the descendants of horses, bison and bulls painted on the walls of the caverns of the Loire Valley during Neolithic times.

The Human Age: The World Shaped by Us (2014) examines the unfathomable human impact on the planet since the Industrial Revolution, which ushered in the geologic era that has been the most definitively marked by the human race: the Anthropocene. Regarding the Anthropocene, Ackerman foresees technological breakthroughs like evolutionary robotics and other adaptations, such as the ability to harvest human body heat in crowded places to warm buildings.

In 2015 Ackerman lost her husband, Paul West, after more than 45 years together. She had

helped him regain his ability to speak and write after he was left with global aphasia, an inability to produce or understand words, following a stroke he suffered in 2003. She chronicles that particular chapter of her storied marriage in the sparkling *One Hundred Names for Love* (2011).

In 2016 Ackerman was elected to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. She has taught at Columbia and Cornell Universities. Her articles appear regularly in *The New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian* and other periodicals.

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Adams, Ansel

(February 20, 1902–April 22, 1984)

Photographer, Preservation Activist

Ansel Adams was a photographer and a preservationist. His pictures played an important role in defining how Americans think about wilderness, and have been vital in supporting preservation. Adams served on the board of directors of the Sierra Club for nearly 40 years.

Ansel Easton Adams was born on February 20, 1902, in San Francisco, California, the only child of Charles Hitchcock Adams and Olive Bray Adams. His father was a business-