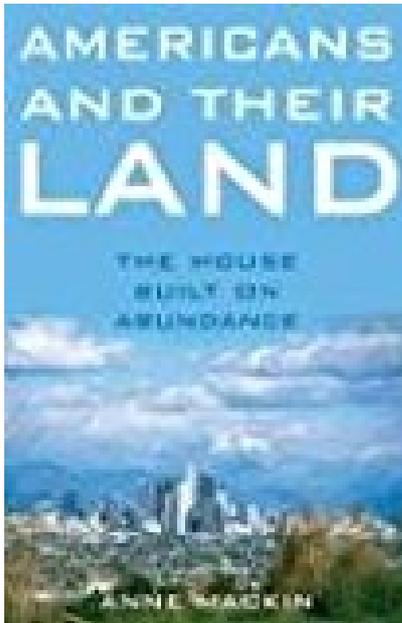


# Americans and Their Land The House Built on Abundance

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## BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Anne Mackin
- Pages : 264 Pages
- Publisher : University of Michigan Press
- Language : English
- ISBN : 0472115561





## BOOK SYNOPSIS

“A compelling, even moving, portrait of the national landscape—its past, its meaning, its urgent need of rescue.” —James Carroll, author of *House of War* and *An American Requiem*, winner of the National Book Award “Anne Mackin has taken a fresh and provocative look at that most fascinating of relationships: the one between the American people and the American land.” —Michael Pollan, Knight Professor of Journalism and Director of the Knight Program in Science and Environmental Journalism at University of California Berkeley, contributing writer to the *New York Times Magazine*, and author of *The Omnivores Dilemma* and *The Botany of Desire* “Anne Mackin has given us a valuable and less-used lens to view the development of our neighborhoods, towns and cities: the land itself. Our relationship to the earth beneath our feet—how we dig it, buy it, sell it, zone it, pave it, spoil it or pamper it—helps explain what is produced on top of the land in our nation, from farms to homes to skyscrapers. All in all, Mackin takes us on a novel and erudite journey, from one coast to the other, and from Colonial times to the present. This valuable book marks a significant and lasting contribution to the way we see and understand our landscape and ourselves.” —Alex Marshall, author of *How Cities Work: Suburbs, Sprawl, and the Roads Not Taken* “To really understand the origins of the range war now raging between smart growth and property rights advocates over the future of the American land, you need to read this exceptional book.” —Robert D. Yaro, President Regional Plan Association and Professor in Practice, University of Pennsylvania Thomas Malthus once said, “The happiness of the Americans depended much less upon their peculiar degree of civilization than . . . upon their having a great plenty of fertile uncultivated land.” Malthus knew. Lord MacCaulay knew. Albert Gallatin knew. America and its people would change as a growing population whittled away the supply of land. Nothing has shaped the American character like the abundance of land that met the colonist, the pioneer, and the early suburbanite. With today’s political and economic institutions shaped by the largesse of yesteryear, how will Americans fare in the new landscape of water wars, expensive housing, rising fuel prices, environmental and property rights battles, and powerful industrial lobbies? Why is land the key to American democracy? How can we protect our democracy as more people and industries compete more intensively for our remaining resources? *Americans and Their Land* begins an important, overdue discussion of these questions. Anne Mackin takes the reader story by story from frontier history to the present and shows how land shaped the American political landscape. She shows how our evolving traditions of apportioning resources have allowed diminished supplies to create our present, increasingly unequal society, and she asks how 300 million Americans living in the new American landscape of growing competition can better share those resources.

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