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David Schuyler, *Embattled River: The Hudson and Modern American Environmentalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018, £22.99/\$29.95). Pp. xiii + 266. ISBN 978 1 5017 1805 2.

This fine book tells the story of how activists along the Hudson river from the mid-1950s and onward worked to hinder industrial developments that threatened scenic landscapes and the health of the river. David Schuyler places the views and actions of the environmentalists at the core of the book, which details a set of largely successful political interventions that led to the betterment of human and ecosystem health in and around the river.

The Hudson river runs south from the Adirondack mountains in upstate New York towards the tip of Manhattan, where it drains into the ocean. It is a large river that allows boats to sail uninterrupted all the way to the city of Troy. The navigable section of the river is actually more like a wide fjord with tidal water that creates a unique ecosystem. This long, wide, and deep part of the river is what historically and today often comes to mind as the most scenic part of the Hudson, which is the topic of the book.

Schuyler has previously written *Sanctified Landscape* (2012), which lays out how early writers and artists were inspired by the Hudson river valley. His *Embattled River* continues the narrative as he tells the story of how people inspired by the beauty of the river have reached out to save it from destruction. He portrays his environmental activists as being poets at heart in their political struggle to save the river. This focus on environmental activists is both the strength and the weakness of the book: it is a one-sided story of passionate activists that leaves the reader wondering what those in favor of industrial developments looked like.

The highlight of the book is, perhaps, the story of the folksinger Pete Seeger, who used his energy and money earned from albums and concerts to fund the Hudson river sloop *Clearwater*. Sloops used to be a major mode of transportation on the Hudson, connecting people to the river and to each other as they sailed from town to town. Seeger raised funds to build a new sloop that could sail along the Hudson so that its passengers could reconnect with the river and with each other. While on board, passengers would receive education about the ecology of the Hudson, learn some history, and, most importantly, get a feeling for the river and its surrounding environment. Seeger and his many friends and followers were successful not only in building a 106-foot replica vessel in 1970, but also in sailing and maintaining it year after year and, in doing so, educating more than a half a million people about the river. Indeed, *Clearwater* is still sailing today. The story serves as a striking reminder of some of the finest ideas from the counterculture. However, in telling the story, Schuyler hardly connects Seeger to a larger history of America and beyond. Seeger was, after all, a star musician of his time. Anecdotally, in Norway, where I'm from, his song "Rainbow Race" (1971) had the status of a national anthem within the counterculture generation. In following Schuyler's narrative, one is left to wonder how Seeger's environmental vision spread beyond the Hudson and into wider culture.

To be fair, Schuyler's book is not about Seeger. It is about environmental activism along a river where his *Clearwater* was only one of several sociopolitical interventions.

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Most of the book is devoted to discussing how activists fought to avoid usages of the river, such as the proposed pump-storage plant at Storm King Mountain in 1962, or Consolidated Edison's 1969 plan for building monstrous power plants. These modernist schemes were not realized, thanks to the hard work of the activists, and Schuyler argues that it was the activists' blending of scientific, cultural and aesthetic arguments that made them successful. In the process, the environmental organizations that grew out of this activism, such as the Hudson River Fishermen's Association, the Scenic Hudson, and Riverkeeper, became powerful engines for protection of an embattled ecosystem.

This book does great service to the Hudson river environmentalists. It is also an inspiring read for those seeking encouraging examples of how one could tackle environmental problems today. While not a contribution to critical history, it offers novel insights and a fresh look at little-known events worthy of both time and attention.

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