



The Humboldt Current: Nineteenth-Century Exploration and the Roots of American Environmentalism

Aaron Sachs

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A masterly and beautifully written account of the impact of Alexander von Humboldt on nineteenth-century American history and culture

The naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) achieved unparalleled fame in his own time. Today, however, he and his enormous legacy to American thought are virtually unknown. In *The Humboldt Current*, Aaron Sachs traces Humboldt's pervasive influence on American history through examining the work of four explorers—J. N. Reynolds, Clarence King, George Wallace, and John Muir—who embraced Humboldt's idea of a "chain of connection" uniting all peoples and all environments. A skillful blend of narrative and interpretation that also discusses Humboldt's influence on Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau, Melville, and Poe, *The Humboldt Current* offers a colorful, passionate, and superbly written reinterpretation of nineteenth-century American history.

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