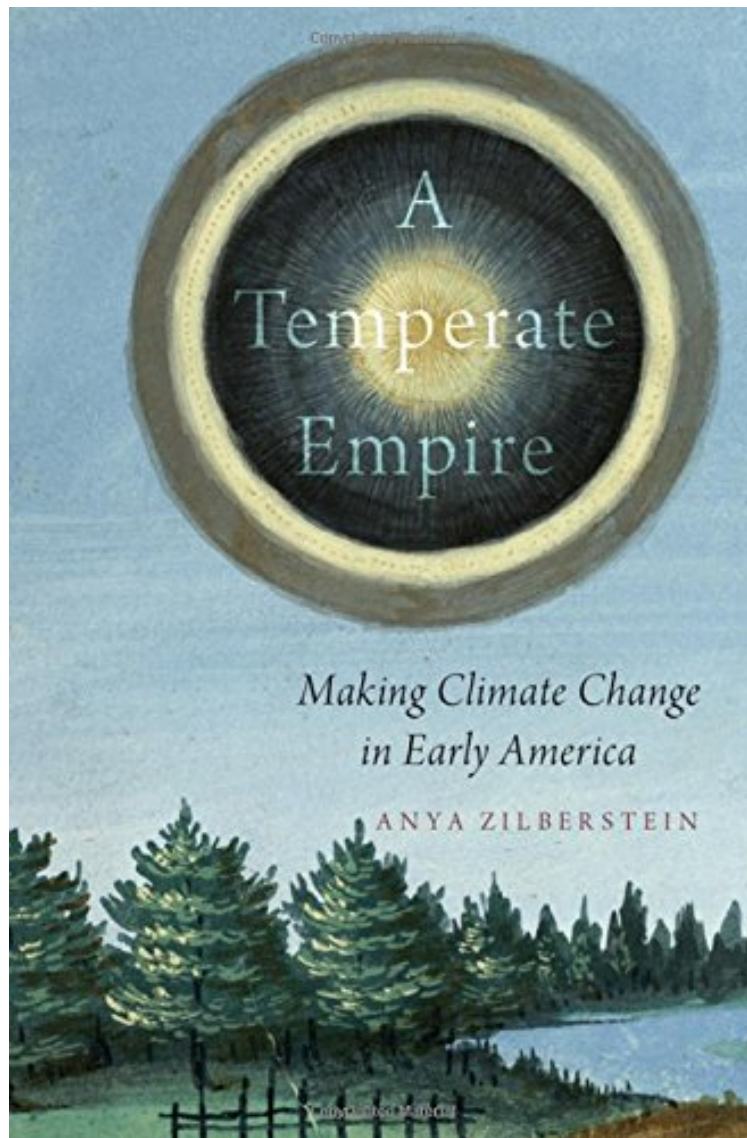


(Read free ebook) A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America

A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America

Anya Zilberstein

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Anya Zilberstein : A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America:

Controversy over the role of human activity in causing climate change is pervasive in contemporary society. But, as

Anya Zilberstein shows in this work, debates about the politics and science of climate are nothing new. Indeed, they began as early as the settlement of English colonists in North America, well before the age of industrialization. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many early Americans believed that human activity and population growth were essential to moderating the harsh extremes of cold and heat in the New World. In the preindustrial British settler colonies in particular, it was believed that the right kinds of people were agents of climate warming and that this was a positive and deliberate goal of industrious activity, rather than an unintended and lamentable side effect of development. *A Temperate Empire* explores the ways that colonists studied and tried to remake local climates in New England and Nova Scotia according to their plans for settlement and economic growth. For colonial officials, landowners, naturalists, and other elites, the frigid, long winters and short, muggy summers were persistent sources of anxiety. These early Americans became intensely interested in reimagining and reducing their vulnerability to the climate. Linking climate to race, they assured would-be migrants that hardy Europeans were already habituated to the severe northern weather and Caribbean migrants' temperaments would be improved by it. Even more, they drew on a widespread understanding of a reciprocal relationship between a mild climate and the prosperity of empire, promoting the notion that land cultivation and the expansion of colonial farms would increasingly moderate the climate. One eighteenth-century naturalist observed that European settlement and industry had already brought about a "more temperate, uniform, and equal" climate worldwide—a forecast of a permanent, global warming that was wholeheartedly welcomed. Illuminating scientific arguments that once celebrated the impact of economic activities on environmental change, *A Temperate Empire* showcases an imperial, colonial, and early American history of climate change.

"The lessons of this book are many and its deep history crackles with resonances in the present." -- Adam Bobbette, *Times Literary Supplement*"Anya Zilberstein has offered an extraordinarily sensitive and textured treatment of the early modern discussion of climate and climate change in *A Temperate Empire*. She successfully combines the history of science and environmental history to provide an account that is relevant both to modern-day discussions about climate change and to early American environmental history...Zilberstein's book is beautifully written and enjoyable, as well as rigorous and insightful."--James Bergman, *H-Net*"Ideological and political debates over climate and climate change have a long and rich history, as Anya Zilberstein illustrates in this elegantly written study. Though centered on late eighteenth-century New England and Nova Scotia, *A Temperate Empire* ranges widely in space and time to elucidate the connections between race, nation, empire, and how people thought about climate during the Age of Enlightenment. *A Temperate Empire* is true to that place and time, yet also resonates with contemporary issues." - James D. Rice, author of *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson*"Anya Zilberstein vividly describes how European settlers in northeastern North America confronted the obstacles of harsh winters, poor soils, and short growing seasons. She shows them struggling to understand and master the rigorous environment of New England and Nova Scotia, while convincing themselves that they were improving the climate as they tamed the land. Her meticulously researched and timely account should be read by anyone who is interested in the environmental history of this part of the world." -Jan Golinski, University of New Hampshire"As this original and imaginative study demonstrates, observers have long argued about the reasons for perceived shifts in nature. With crucial insights drawn from a vast range of primary materials, the historian of science Anya Zilberstein reveals how debates about the climate of the American northeast played a central role in transplanted Europeans' understanding of science and economics in the early modern age. Migrants to New England and Canada, as she argues, endured a 'trial by frost' that had long-term significance for the European effort to colonize and conquer North America."-Peter C. Mancall, author of *Fatal Journey: The Final Expedition of Henry Hudson-A Tale of Mutiny and Murder in the Arctic*"*A Temperate Empire* shows the importance of climate in the cultural life of early America at the intersections of the natural sciences, political economy, colonial policy, and race theory. Startlingly, Zilberstein shows how colonists imagined that 'improving' the land through agriculture would make winters and summers moderate. The British Empire and the early American Republic emerge as enterprises animated by a drive to achieve climate change through and for an expanding frontier of settlement."-Richard Drayton, King's College London

About the Author
Anya Zilberstein is Associate Professor of History at Concordia University.