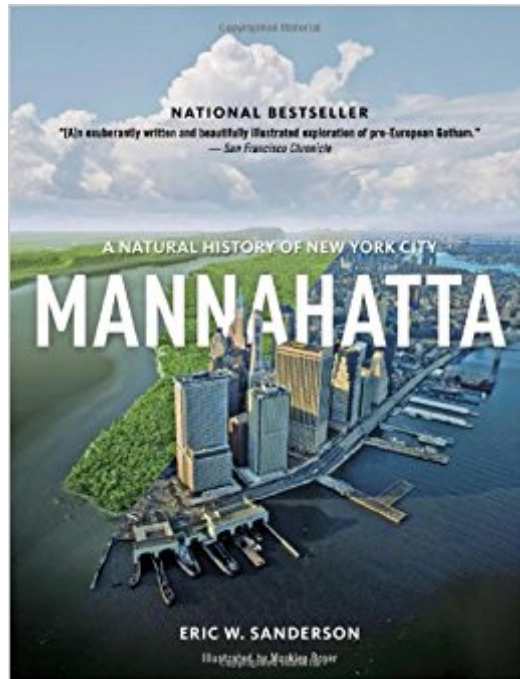




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Mannahatta: A Natural History Of New York City



Synopsis

On September 12, 1609, Henry Hudson first set foot on the land that would become Manhattan. Today, it's difficult to imagine what he saw, but for more than a decade, landscape ecologist Eric Sanderson has been working to do just that. *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* is the astounding result of those efforts, reconstructing in words and images the wild island that millions now call home. By geographically matching an 18th-century map with one of the modern city, examining volumes of historic documents, and collecting and analyzing scientific data, Sanderson re-creates the forests of Times Square, the meadows of Harlem, and the wetlands of downtown. His lively text guides readers through this abundant landscape, while breathtaking illustrations transport them back in time. *Mannahatta* is a groundbreaking work that provides not only a window into the past, but also inspiration for the future.

Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams (May 28, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1419707485

ISBN-13: 978-1419707483

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1.5 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 51 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #70,405 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Historical Geography #82 in Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Natural History #129 in Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Geology

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. In this brilliantly illustrated volume, Sanderson and Boyer recreate the ecology of Manhattan as it was that 1609 September afternoon when Henry Hudson first saw it, "prodigious in its abundance, resplendent in its diversity." The project began as a simple thought exercise, when senior Bronx Zoo ecologist Sanderson (*Human Footprint: Challenges for Wilderness and Biodiversity*) tried visualizing pre-colonial Manhattan, but was promoted to full-blown science project after Sanderson discovered an "extraordinary" 1776 British Headquarters Map detailing the island's natural terrain. Developing a "georeference" system to coordinate the old map, Sanderson "relates its depiction of the old hills and valleys to their modern addresses." From there, he reconstructs data

missing from the historical record using standard scientific tools-examining pollen layers, tree rings, archeological information, etc. Sanderson's text integrates political and sociological history; examines the culture of the original inhabitants, the Lenape (their word Mannahatta means "Island of Many Hills"); and covers a wealth of ecological data; he even shares his vision for the ecologically sustainable city of 2409. This wise and beautiful book, sure to enthrall anyone interested in NYC history, boasts maps, charts, photos and artist renderings, thorough appendices (including Lenape place-names and Manhattan's flora and fauna), and an extensive section of "Notes, Sources, and Elaborations." 120 color illustrations. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Eric W. Sanderson is a senior conservation ecologist in the Global Conservation Programs of the Wildlife Conservation Society. He is adjunct faculty member at Columbia University and New York University and has lectured at Princeton, Harvard, and Oxford universities, and at TED.

Who would not be curious to see what the place where they grew up looked like 400 years ago? This book does that for every New Yorker, but you don't have to be a New Yorker to appreciate the extraordinary task that Eric Sanderson and his team undertook to create this book. Using old maps and up-to-date computer technology, Sanderson tells a story unlike any other, an amazing feat given that the subject is one of the most written about and photographed places on earth. Matching photographs of sections of Manhattan as we know it today with computer-generated pictures of the same areas as the Lenape Indians would have seen them, Sanderson gives us an almost incredible view of what was once a fertile and thriving ecosystem as well as a deeper appreciation for the long history of this island we think is so familiar to us. The story of how he created this work is as fascinating as the photographs themselves, and the quality of the writing matches the historical and scientific importance of the task. Five stars, indeed. Marguerite from Seattle

This is an unusual and magical book, which I recommend highly for many of the reasons others cite. But many of the interesting details are literally unreadable in the Kindle version. The book is dense with fascinating maps and diagrams, but the text on these can not be read in the Kindle version, no matter how much one expands the images (the type just becomes blurry). I liked the book so much that I bought the physical book when I encountered the shortcomings in the Kindle version.

Mannahatta is a very well written and illustrated book, with many fantastic maps. The book presents

to non-scientists the scientific process of determining what the original vegetation and animals were in an area, that area being Manhattan, a place one tends to forget that there was original vegetation. Eric Sanderson does an excellent job explaining landscape ecology and methods used to determine the original vegetation. As an ecologist who does this type of work, it falls a bit short in the science, but I am not the intended audience. One component that is missing is a more easily used geographic guide to the original landscape. When I was in Manhattan last week, I would have liked to have a more easily accessed description of what existed where Rockefeller Center is today.

Having been aware of this Mannahatta project for quite some time, and having visited the various websites a few times, the appearance of the book as an suggestion for me to buy became the trigger for me to grab it. I actually bought it as a gift for a neighbour with a son living in New York and who visits there frequently. I had previously shared information about Mannahatta with both of them. As an intermittent visitor to New York, first in 1968, I've had an ongoing interest and have purchased quite a number of books on the subject from . This particular book is superb for anyone interested in Manhattan or in the process of providing an historical setting for any such significant location. It's great value. I thoroughly recommend it, even for general interest.

love it - great read.

I read this book prior to attending a lecture by Eric Sanderson. It is a totally worthwhile book if you are interested in the ecology of Manhattan over time. The book is filled with maps, not just topographical but also historical and some showing geological or biological data. The paperback is printed on heavy stock which makes this book a keeper.

My wife got her Masters in Landscape Architecture and really loved the book. We use it to teach our son about Manhattan

Mannahatta is the kind of book that changes the way you look at everything, and it's a surprisingly quick read, given the heft of it. Whether you love biology or architecture or the history of civilization, there is something in this book for you. My new favorite gift for friends and family...

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