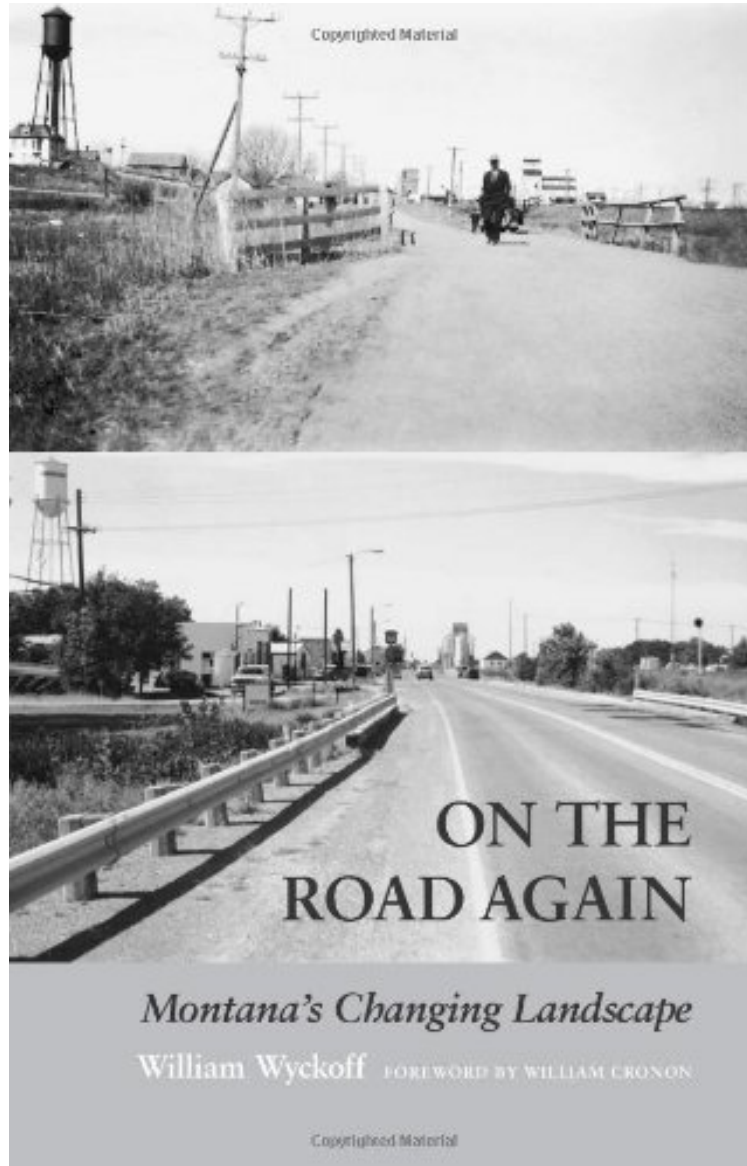


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On the Road Again: Montana's Changing Landscape (Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books)

William Wyckoff

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William Wyckoff : On the Road Again: Montana's Changing Landscape (Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books)
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Montana's Changing Landscape (Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. On the Road Again: Montana's Changing Landscape By Barney Considine This is a perfect book. Admittedly, the subject matter may not appeal to a broad audience, but any book so masterfully crafted must get a perfect score. First, it is important to note that this book is less about roads than it is about landscapes and the meaning of changes to landscapes. The archives of the Montana Historical Society contain photos taken of road projects in the 1920s and 1930s. The federal government was just beginning to provide money for road construction at that time. These black-and-white photos show before and after views of how Montana was spending the money. Mr. Wyckoff selected a group of the photos and traveled the state during 2001-2003 re-photographing the scenes as closely as possible. In addition, he researched each scene by consulting people familiar with the history of the location, reviewing newspaper files, and finding other historical sources. It is obvious that gathering the material for this book required an enormous amount of time and work. The heart of the book is an introductory chapter, 58 two-page modules, and a closing chapter. There is also a Foreword written by William Cronon and what Mr. Wyckoff terms a Bibliographic Essay. Each part of the book is perfect in its own right, even the title. Second, Mr. Wyckoff is a very good writer. Students at Montana State University must feel privileged to take a class in historical geography from Mr. Wyckoff. The 27-page introductory chapter takes the reader through an overview of the field of re-photography and the science of historical geography. To illustrate, it analyzes two photos taken from the same spot near Fife, Montana, one showing the scene in 1922 and the other in 2001. The section also provides a sufficient overview of Montana history that a person unfamiliar with the state can easily understand the context of the modules that follow. Each of the 58 modules has a pair of black-and-white photos taken about eighty years apart. The facing page of text analyzes the photos in terms of changes, or lack of changes, in the scene and what that might mean to the landscape itself or to the people who live there. The comments range from locally significant to those of import statewide or nationally. Some of the scenes are rural and Mr. Wyckoff points out changes in land use, crops, or the ecology of the area. For example, a large number of the photos show an increase in the number of trees on the landscape and the text discusses what happens in the absence of fire. Some shots are urban, such as the downtown scenes in Polson and Wibaux. The discussions highlight the differences that occur depending on whether the town is growing or not. Some modules describe the impact of railroads, mining, and other industries as they wax and wane. In some cases the roads of the 1920s have become interstate highways, and in other places they have returned to sagebrush or farmland. Often the text analyzes the changes in the broader context of Montana's economic, political, cultural, and ecological history. The concluding chapter pulls together the implications of the changes and how trends established over the intervening eighty years might impact Montana in the future. I am giving the book as gifts or recommending it to people interested in Montana, particularly those familiar with the state's physical aspects. I also find myself recommending it to people with a general interest in history and as an example of how to develop a perfect book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nice book! By Customer I'm really enjoying this book. I love Montana and have lived here most of my life. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A stunning look at the Effect of 80 Years on the Landscapes of Montana By Bridger Bukantis There really isn't a better substitute for time travel for those interested in the effects of the public works programs upon the development of modern Montana.

In *On the Road Again*, William Wyckoff explores Montana's changing physical and cultural landscape by pairing photographs taken by state highway engineers in the 1920s and 1930s with photographs taken at the same sites today. The older photographs, preserved in the archives of the Montana Historical Society, were intended to document the expenditure of federal highway funds. Because it is nearly impossible to photograph a road without also photographing the landscape through which that road passes, these images contain a wealth of information about the state's environment during the early decades of the twentieth century. To highlight landscape changes -- and continuities -- over more than eighty years, Wyckoff chose fifty-eight documented locations and traveled to each to photograph the exact same view. The pairs of old and new photos and accompanying interpretive essays presented here tell a vivid story of physical, cultural, and economic change. Wyckoff has grouped his selections to cover a fairly even mix of views from the eastern and western parts of the state, including a wide assortment of land use settings and rural and urban landscapes. The photo pairs are organized in thirteen visual themes, such as forested areas, open spaces, and sacred spaces, which parallel landscape change across the entire American West. A close, thoughtful look at these photographs reveals how crops, fences, trees, and houses shape the everyday landscape, both in the first quarter of the twentieth century and in the present. The photographs offer an intimate view into Montana, into how Montana has changed in the past eighty years and how it may continue to change in the twenty-first century. This is a book that will captivate readers who have, or hope to have, a tie to the Montana countryside, whether as resident or visitor. Regional and agricultural historians, geographers and geologists, and rural and urban planners will all find it fascinating.

"Wyckoff presents a fascinating portrait of change in Montana's rural and urban landscape." *The Public Historian* "No one has used repeat photography more richly as a basis for discussing change broadly in the natural and human landscape than cultural/historical geographers. And arguably no geographer has succeeded as well as William

Wyckoff. "Journal of Cultural Geography" Rarely can a little book say a lot, but such is the case with geographer William Wyckoff's study of the Montana landscape through historical and contemporary photographs. The result of Wyckoff's careful work is an insightful, enjoyable book. It is of great value to historical geographers, students of landscape, and historic preservationists. "Oregon Historical Quarterly" "The rich possibilities of rephotographic time travel have rarely been more successfully realized than in *On the Road Again*. The book will intrigue anyone interested not just in Montana, but in the changing landscapes of the American West and of the United States more generally." William Cronon, from the Foreword From the Publisher "The rich possibilities of rephotographic time travel have rarely been more successfully realized than in *On the Road Again*. The book will intrigue anyone interested not just in Montana, but in the changing landscapes of the American West and of the United States more generally." -- from the Foreword by William Cronon