Professors edit a unique Sacramento history book

*River City and Valley Life: An Environmental History of the Sacramento Region* – a collection of essays that examine Sacramento’s extraordinary relationship with its natural surroundings – was edited by Christopher Castaneda and Lee Simpson, both professors of history at Sacramento State.

“Every essay looks at how humans’ actions have altered or been altered by our natural environment,” Simpson says. “Being located at the confluence of two rivers shaped everything that happened in Sacramento’s history.”

*River City and Valley Life* ($27.95, University of Pittsburgh Press, 416 pages, 47 photographs) is divided into four themes: “Boomtown,” “Valley Reclamation,” “Government Town” and “Reclaiming the Past.” The book is part of the University of Pittsburgh Press’ *History of the Urban Environment* series, which looks at cities’ built environments from the perspectives of geography, technology, ecology, culture and society.

Seventeen prominent historians, including Albert Hurtado, former Travis Chair in Modern American History at the University of Oklahoma, write in *River City and Valley Life* about how Sacramento and its surroundings have, since 1849, been shaped by boosterism, agriculture, flood control, military bases, urban planning, the Gold Rush, the Transcontinental Railroad, Old Sacramento, Rancho Seco, Indian casinos, the New Deal, the American River Parkway and John Sutter’s fort.

Among the contributors are Ken Owens, professor emeritus of Western history at Sacramento State and founder of the Capital Campus Public History Program; and Steven Avella, a professor of history at Marquette University and author of *Sacramento: Indomitable City*.

“This is an important book,” Simpson says, “because it’s the first comprehensive environmental history of Sacramento and a much-needed update of Joseph McGowan’s 1961 *History of the Sacramento Valley*.”

*River City and Valley Life* is for sale through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and at area bookstores.
“We hope this book will find a place in the classroom and with a wider public audience, to help us better understand Sacramento, its unique historical development and its interaction with the natural environment,” Castaneda says.

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Office of Public Affairs at (916) 278-6156. – Dixie Reid

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