

THOMAS (TOM) ROBERTSON

tbrobert@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Environmental History, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, 2005

- Dissertation: *The Population Bomb: Population Growth, Globalization, and American Environmentalism, 1945-1980*. (Advisor: William Cronon)

B.A., Political Science, Williams College, Williamstown, MA, 1989

School for International Training, Kathmandu, Nepal, Spring 1988

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Visiting Associate Professor, Environmental Studies, Macalester College, 2025-6.

- 5 courses on environmental history and environmental politics.

Visiting Associate Professor, Environmental Studies, Dickinson College, 2024-5.

- Taught 5 upper-division environmental history courses.

Senior Expert, Communications and Community-Oriented Teaching, Kathmandu Univ. Med. School, 2021-2022.

Freelance Journalist, Kathmandu, 2020-2022.

Executive Director, U.S. Education Foundation (Fulbright Nepal), 2017-2019.

Senior Environmental and Social Policy Advisor, U.S. Agency for International Development, 2016-2017.

Associate Professor of History, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2006-2017.

- Taught Environmental History, International Development, and Foreign Relations History.
- Led students on six 2-month study abroad programs in Asia, Africa, and Central America.
- Tenure, 2012.

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis, Rutgers University, 2005-2006.

Nepali Language Instructor, South Asian Language Institute, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, Summer 2005.

Academic Coordinator, Pitzer College in Nepal, 1999-2000.

Teacher Trainer/NGO Trainer, U.S. Peace Corps, Khotang, Nepal, 1992-1996.

- Conducted (in Nepali) teacher trainings and trained NGOs in community projects.

Language Arts and Photography Teacher, Vision Quest/Upward Bound, Minneapolis, MN, 1991-1992.

Math and Language Arts Teacher, Junior High School 204, New York, NY, 1989-1991.

CONSULTING EXPERIENCE IN NEPAL

Social Inclusion in Nepal's Primary Schools, Winrock International, 2021.

Writing and Communications Consultant, United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, Lalitpur, Nepal, 2021.

Community Disaster Resilience: A Study on Nepal's 2015 Earthquakes, Tribhuvan University, 2020.

Dalit Reader Op-Ed Project, 2019.

Anti-Slavery International, Bonded Labor Education Project, July-August 2015.

Tharu Culture Museum, Chitwan, 2007-present.

Jana Sewa Samaj/Nepal [People's Welfare Society/Nepal], Jalpa, Khotang, 1995-present.

ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

Article: "Man-Made Jungles: How Indigenous People Made Nepal's Famous Grassland National Parks"

Book: A synthesis of the role of the environment in US foreign relations from World War II to the present, focusing on how the US military, US development agencies, and the US economy shaped environments overseas and environmental thinking, but also how nature shaped US international activities.

Book: A study of environmental change and conservation in Nepal from World War II to the present, focusing on malaria eradication and the early days of "fortress conservation" in national parks, but also Nepal's innovative turn to community-based natural resource management, including its famous community forestry programs.

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Book

The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism, Rutgers University Press, 2012.

Edited Books

Environmental Justice in Nepal: Origins, Struggles and Prospects, With Jonathan London (UC-Davis) and Jagannath Adhikari, Routledge Press, 2024.

Transplanting Modernity? The Environmental Legacy of International Development, with Jenny Smith (Hong Kong University of Technology), University of Pittsburgh Press, fall, 2023. (NSF workshop funding).

Nature at War: American Environments and World War II, with Richard Tucker, Peter Mansoor, and Nick Breyfogle, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Collaborative Volume

Population Knowledge Network, ed., *Twentieth Century Population Thinking: A Critical Reader of Primary Sources*, Routledge, 2014. A multi-year research network funded by the German Research Foundation.

Articles and Book Chapters

"Earth," in Karl Jacoby and Susan Johnson, eds., "A Book of Common Places: Keywords for a More Than Human World," (Essays inspired by the work of William Cronon), forthcoming.

"Empire" in Karl Jacoby and Susan Johnson, eds., "A Book of Common Places: Keywords for a More Than Human World," (Essays inspired by the work of William Cronon), forthcoming.

"Backwards Development": Malaria Control, Land Reform, and the Dangaure Tharu in Nepal's Dang Valley in the 1960s, *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 30:1, June 2025.

"Introduction," with Jenny Smith in *Transplanting Modernity? The Environmental Legacy of International Development*, University of Pittsburgh Press, forthcoming 2023.

"New Frontiers in A Latin American Laboratory: How New Ideas about Interconnection during World War II Spurred Postwar American International Development Programs," with Megan Black in *Transplanting Modernity? The Environmental Legacy of International Development*, University of Pittsburgh Press, forthcoming 2023.

"US Ambassador Chester Bowles's 1953 Letter to King Tribhuvan, about Land Reform and U.S. Development Programs in Nepal." *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 25, no. 2 (December 2020).

"Introduction: Total War and American Nature," with Richard Tucker, in *Nature at War: American Environments and World War II*, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

"A War of Mobility: Transportation, American Productive Power, and the Environment during World War II," with Christopher W. Wells, in *Nature at War: American Environments and World War II*, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

"Total War and the Total Environment: World War II and the Shift from Conservation to Environmentalism," in *Nature at War: American Environments and World War II*, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

"'Front Line of the Cold War': The U.S. and Point Four Development Programs in Cold War Nepal, 1950-1953," *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 24, no. 1, June 2019.

"New Frontiers: World War II Technologies and the Opening of Tropical Environments to Development," in Stephen J. Macekura and Erez Manela, eds. *The Development Century: A Global History*, Cambridge University Press, 2018.

"DDT and the Cold War: American Social and Environmental Engineering in the Rapti Valley (Chitwan) of Nepal," *Journal of American History*, March 2018. (Winner, 2019 Binkley-Stephenson Award for Best Article)

"Cold War Landscapes: Toward An Environmental History of U.S. Development Programs in the 1950s and 1960s," *Cold War History* 16:4 Fall 2016, 417-441.

"Malthus Today," co-authored with Derek Hoff, *New Perspectives on Malthus*, ed. Robert Mayhew, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

"Natural Resources, Environment, and Population," *Twentieth Century Population Thinking: A Critical Reader of Primary Sources*, ed. Population Knowledge Network, Routledge, 2014.

"'Thinking Globally': American Foreign Aid, Global Scarcity, and the Emergence of Environmentalism in the 1960s," *The United States and the Dawn of the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. Mark Lawrence, Oxford University Press, 2014.

"Total War and the Total Environment: Fairfield Osborn, William Vogt, and the Birth of Global Ecology,"

Environmental History, April 2012.

"The Environment and International Diplomacy," *U.S. Foreign Policy: A Diplomatic History*, ed. Robert McMahon, Congressional Quarterly Press, 2012.

"This is the American Earth': American Empire, American Environmentalism," *Diplomatic History*, December 2007.

"Questions of Seeing": Images and the Culture of Environmental Reform."

Review Essay, *American Quarterly*, March, 2007.

WRITING RESOURCES FOR NEPAL SCHOLARS

"Mitho Lekhai," Youtube channel on non-fiction writing techniques (Nepali Language).

"Writing Journeys: Nepali Authors Reflect Upon Nonfiction Storytelling," weekly edited series, *The Record/Nepal*.

NEPALI NEWSPAPER PUBLICATIONS

"No Smoke without Fire in Kathmandu." *Nepali Times*, March 5, 2022.

"Conservation at the Crossroads," *Nepali Times*, January 25, 2022,

"Writing Strategies in Action." *The Record*, January 5, 2022

"Centennial of Hunting Diplomacy in Nepal," *Nepali Times*, December 14, 2021.

"Tom's Eight Favorite Sentence Structures," *The Record*, November 17, 2021.

"Superduper Handydandy Easypeasy Sentences," *The Record*, November 10, 2021.

"Kathmandu's 'Flash Floods' Are 4 Decades in the Making." *Nepali Times*, July 31, 2021.

"Blame the System, Not Yourself," *The Record*, July 13, 2021.

"The Monsoon, and Nature's Arithmetic." *Nepali Times*, June 26, 2021.

"Four Ways to Practice Writing During Lockdown," *The Record*, June 9, 2021

"After Lockdown, We Will Need Masks More than Ever," *Nepali Times*, June 7, 2021.

"Why are Sherpas always Happy?" *Nepali Times*, May 29, 2021.

"Kathmandu Loses Its Open Space," co-authored with Nilima Thapa Shrestha, *Nepali Times*, May 3, 2021.

"Particulates, Kathmandu's Silent Killer, Explained," *The Record*, March 30, 2021.

"Displacement and Defiance," *Nepali Times*, January 31, 2021.

"Five Myths about the Tharu" *Nepali Times*, January 13, 2021.

"Nepal's Class Divide: How Motivated Young Teaching Fellows are Changing Lives of Students through Remedial Education," *Nepali Times*, January 6, 2021.

"America, Nepal and the Royal Coup." *Nepali Times*. December 12, 2020.

"Meaningful Writing: Mitho Lekhai," *NELTA ELT Forum*, December 2020.

"Love's Victory over Racial Hatred," *Nepali Times*, June 12, 2020.

"An American Historian Explains Ongoing Afro-American Outrage to Nepalis (Part I & II)," *Online Khabar*, June 2020. (in English and Nepali)

"The Dangers of the Dengue Virus," *Nepali Times*, May 30, 2020.

"Viruses Past, Present, and Future," *Nepali Times*, May 20, 2020.

"How Nepal Eradicated the Smallpox Virus," *Nepali Times*, May 5, 2020.

"Smallpox, Politics and Power in Kathmandu," *Nepali Times*, May 2, 2020.

"The Smallpox Virus in British India," *Nepali Times*, April 30, 2020.

"Big Story of Smallpox," *Nepali Times*, April 28, 2020.

"Kathmandu in the Time of Cholera," *Nepali Times*, March 21, 2020.

"What to Teach our Students," *Republica*, February 24, 2020.

"Problems with Large Class Size in Elementary and Secondary Schools" *Kathmandu Post*, August 15, 2019.

"African Americans in Cold War Nepal." *Nepali Times*, July 19, 2019.

"The Right Stuff: What Top American Universities Look for in Students," *Kathmandu Post*, January 27, 2019.

"Engineering Nepal's Reconstruction," *Republica*, August 8, 2018.

"How Schools Can Cultivate An Everyday Culture of Democracy," *Kathmandu Post*, May 19, 2018.

"Teaching the Magic of Books: Giving Children the Skills for Lifelong Learning," *Kathmandu Post*, March 17, 2018.

"The Insect that Changed Nepal's History," *Nepali Times*, March 28, 2018

"Land Reform in Cold War Nepal," *Nepali Times*, February 16, 2018.

- "How Chitwan was Opened," *Nepali Times*, January 26, 2018.
- "Unnatural Disasters," *Republica*, October 15, 2017.
- "Democracy as a Way of Life: Schools Can Give Citizens the Power," *Kathmandu Post*, September 11, 2017.
- "A Cautionary Tale: Nepal Hurrying Towards a Car-Centred Modernity," *Kathmandu Post*, May 15, 2017.
- "Noise Pollution: Shhhhhh!" *Kathmandu Post*, April 18, 2017.
- "Disaster Geopolitics: The Devastating Flood of 1954 First Exposed Nepal to the Geopolitics of Natural Disasters," co-authored with Sharad Ghimire, *Nepali Times*, July 24-30, 2015.
- "Kathmandu Was a Ruin," *Nepali Times*, January 12, 2015.

OTHER ACADEMIC ARTICLES

- "Malthusian Thinking Among Foreigners and Nepalis in Nepal."
Himalayan Research Bulletin 26, May, 2009.
- "Environmental History of the Cold War, German Historical Institute, March 22-25, 2007"
Conference Report, *H-Diplo*.

BOOK REVIEWS

- Review of Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), *Journal of Modern History* 88, 1, March, 2016, 169-171.
- Review of Erika Bsumek, David Kinkela, and Mark Lawrence, eds., *Nation-States and the Global Environment: New Approaches to International Environmental History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), *Journal of American History*, June, 2014, 661-662.
- Review of Fred Pearce, *The Coming Population Crash and Our Planet's Surprising Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), *Environmental History*, July, 2013.
- Review of David Kinkela, *DDT and the American Century* David Kinkela, *DDT and the American Century: Global Health, Environmental Politics, and the Pesticide that Changed the World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), *Agricultural History*, Spring 2013.
- Review of Michael Egan, *Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival: The Remaking of American Environmentalism* (MIT Press, 2007), *Environmental History*, September, 2011.
- Review of J. Mark Baker, *The Kuhls of Kangra: Community-Managed Irrigation in the Western Himalaya* (Univ. of Washington, 2005), *Environmental History*, April, 2008.
- Review of Michael Lewis, *Inventing Global Ecology: Tracking the Biodiversity Ideal in India, 1947-1997* (Ohio Univ. Press, 2004), *Environmental History*, July 2007.
- Review of John Whelpton's *A History of Nepal* (Cambridge, 2005).
Himalayan Research Bulletin 25, July 2007.
- Review of David Arnold, *The Tropics and the Traveling Gaze: India, Landscape, and Science, 1800-1856* (Univ. of Washington, 2006), *Environmental History*, April 2007.
- Review of Durba Basnet's *Schools in the Crossfire* (Film, 2004).
Himalayan Research Bulletin 25:1, 2005.
- Review of Bill Christofferson, *The Man From Clear Lake: Earth Day Founder Senator Gaylord Nelson* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin, 2004), *H-Environment*, April, 2005.

REFERENCE WORKS

- "Development" and "Environment" Entries in the *Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, Ruud van Dijk, ed., Routledge, 2008.
- "History of Disease" Entry in *Encyclopedia of American Science*, Russell M. Lawson, ed., 2007.
- "Afghanistan," "The Cold War in the Horn of Africa," "Rhodesia/Zimbabwe Independence Movements," "Huk Rebellion," "Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos," and "Syngman Rhee" Entries in *The Encyclopedia of World History*, Golson Books and Facts on File.
- "Environmentalism," "Foreign Aid," "Kerner Commission," "Moynihan Report," "Deep Ecology," "Marshall Plan," "Domino Theory," "New Frontier," and "Peace Corps." Entries in *Postwar America: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, and Economic History*, M.E. Sharpe Publishers.
- "My Lai" and "Bonny and Clyde" entries in *St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture*, Tom Pendergast, ed., St.

James Press, 2000.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- “The History of Malthusian Thinking about Environmental Degradation in the Himalaya,” South Asia Conference, Madison, Wisconsin, October 23, 2025.
- “Response to Papers for panel called Environmental Justice in Nepal: Origins, Struggles and Prospects,” Association of American Geographers, Annual Meeting, Hawaii, April 18, 2024.
- “Not Just Victims: Common Tales Told About Tharu,” Martin Chautari Research Center, Kathmandu, Nepal, February 14, 2021.
- “Teachers and Teacher Training Culture in Nepal: Why are Rote Teaching Methods so Entrenched?” Chaitanya Mishra Foundation Sociology Workshop, Kathmandu, Nepal, November 21, 2020.
- “Man-Made Jungles: How the Tharu Made the Famous Grasslands of Chitwan and Bardiya.” Presented at the Social Science Baha Annual Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya, Kathmandu, Nepal, July 28, 2020.
- “Kathmandu Valley: Past, Present, and Future,” Social Science Baha Annual Conf., Kathmandu, Nepal, July 2019.
- “Two Thirds of a Generation Left Behind: Schools and Social Justice in Nepal,” Martin Chautari Annual Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal, April 2019.
- “DDT, Dang, and Land Reform: ‘Backwards’ Development in Nepal’s Western Inner Tarai in the 1960s,” Social Science Baha Annual Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal, July 2018.
- “ ‘Guns and Fences’ Conservation in Asia?: The Origins and Evolution of Nepal’s Chitwan National Park,” Social Science Baha Annual Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal, July 2017.
- “A Lowland Plague in a Himalayan Country: A Historical Political Ecology of Disease in Nepal Before 1950,” Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI, October 2016.
- “The Environment and Development,” Global History and Development Workshop, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cambridge, MA, June 9-10, 2016.
- “Boundary Making and the Origins of Namibia's Contentious Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programs,” Conference on “African Environments and their Populations,” Georgetown University, April, 2016.
- “Air Surveys and U.S. International Development in the 1950s and 1960s,” American Society for Environmental History, Seattle, WA, March 31, 2016.
- “ ‘Guns and Fences’ Conservation in Asia?: The Origins and Evolution of Nepal’s Chitwan National Park,” Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI, October 2015.
- “A Lowland Plague in a Himalayan Country: Malaria Eradication in Cold War Nepal,” Center for Himalayan Studies, CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research), Paris, France, June 2014.
- “Cold War Highways on the Asian Frontier: An Environmental History of U.S. Road-building in Thailand,” Conference on “The Country and the City,” Rachel Carson Center and Renmin University, Beijing, 2014.
- “Case Studies from the Implementation of Family Planning Programs in Cold War Nepal,” Conference on “Demography and Politics in the Twentieth Century in Global Perspective,” Mainz, Germany, July 2013.
- “Point IV In Nepal: DDT and U.S. Environmental and Social Engineering in the Rapti Valley, 1952-1962,” Martin Chautari Research Center, Kathmandu, Nepal, August 2, 2011.
- “Population Programs in Nepal,” paper presented at meeting of German Research Foundation-funded research seminar, “Population, Knowledge, Order, Change: Demography and Politics in the Twentieth Century in Global Perspective,” Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany, July 2011.
- “Point IV In Nepal: DDT and U.S. Environmental and Social Engineering in the Rapti Valley, 1952-1962,” Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati, Guwahati, Assam, June, 2011.
- “Point IV In Nepal: DDT and U.S. Environmental and Social Engineering in the Rapti Valley, 1952-1962,” Association of South Asian Environmental Historians Meetings, Jadavpur University, Feb. 25, 2011.
- “Mixing Diplomatic and Environmental History: The US, DDT, and Nepal, 1952-1972,” Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, June, 2010.
- “Point IV in Nepal: DDT and U.S. Environmental and Social Engineering in the Rapti Valley, 1952-1962,” Policy History Conference, Columbus, June, 2010.
- “40 Years Since Earth Day: New Directions in Historiography,” Roundtable Panel, American Society for Environmental History, March, 2010.
- “Placing Humans in Nature: American Environmentalists and Global Population Control,” Association of American

- Studies, Washington DC, November 5-8, 2009.
- "The Country that DDT Made: USAID, DDT, and Nepal," Society for Historians of Technology, Pittsburgh, Oct. 2009.
- "Developing International Development: DDT and U.S. Environmental and Social Engineering in the Rapti Valley of Nepal, 1952-1965," 1st World Congress for Environmental History 2009, Copenhagen, August 4-8, 2009.
- " 'Thinking Globally': The Johnson Administration, Global Scarcity, and the Emergence of Environmentalism in the 1960s," Lyndon Johnson and the Beginnings of the Post-Cold War Era Conference, UT-Austin, November 14-15, 2008.
- "Are Humans Nature or Culture?: American Malthusians and Social Difference," Common Ground, Converging Gazes: Integrating the Social and Environmental in History, Paris, September, 2008
- "Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*: India, Modernization, and Environmentalism," (Panel Organizer and Presenter), Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, June, 2008.
- "Defusing the Bomb: Domestic and International Perspectives on Population Thinking in the 1970s," Policy History Conference, St. Louis, MO, May, 2008.
- "An Ecological Interpretation of 1968," Legacy of 1968 Conference, Chestnut Hill College, PA, April 2008.
- "American Empire and American Environmentalism: The Cold War, Population Growth, and the Birth of Environmental Activism," Organization of American Historians, New York, March 2008.
- "The Making and Unmaking of an Environmental Crisis: Population Politics from the 60s to the 80s," American Society for Environmental History, March 2008.
- "Paul Ehrlich and the International Origins of the American Environmental Movement," Massachusetts Historical Society, Environmental History Seminar, November, 2007.
- "From Niagara to the Adirondacks: Environmental Policy in New York" (*Panel Commentator*), "Researching New York" Conference, SUNY-Albany, November, 2007.
- "Developing International Development: DDT and U.S. Environmental and Social Engineering in the Rapti Valley of Nepal, 1952-1965," Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI, October 12, 2007.
- "Fairfield Osborn, William Vogt, and the Forgotten History of the American Environmental Movement," Conference on Harry S. Truman and the Environment: From Los Alamos to the Everglades, Key West, Florida, June 8-9, 2007.
- "The American Peace Corps in Nepali History," Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin, October, 2006.
- "Population Growth, Environmentalism, and the Politics of Left and Right," American Society for Environmental History, April, 2006.
- "This is the American Earth: Empire and Environmentalism," Seminar on World History, Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis, Nov., 2005.
- "People, Power, and Political Ecology in the Nepal Himalaya," Panel Organizer and Presenter, Madison South Asia Conference, October, 2005.
- "Paul Ehrlich and *The Population Bomb*," UC-Santa Cruz Environmental Studies Department, April, 2004.
- "Vogt, Ehrlich, and Commoner: Population and the International and Social Origins of Environmentalism," (Panel Organizer/Presenter), Am. Society for Enviro. Historians, April, 2004.
- "Paul Ehrlich, Environmental Science, and the Cold War," Annual Cold War Conference, UC-Santa Barbara, May, 2003.
- "Bambi, Gender, and Violence: War and American Environmentalism" American Society for Environmental History, April, 2002.

SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2019 Binkley-Stephenson Award for Best Article (for 2018), *Journal of American History*

American Association for the Advancement of Science, Science and Technology Policy Fellowship, 2016-2017

National Science Foundation Workshop Grant, \$25,000, 2015

Truman-Kauffman Fellowship for Development History, \$37,500, 2013-2014

Whiting Foundation Travel Fellowship, South Africa and Namibia, May 2013

National Science Foundation Science and Technology Studies Scholars Award, \$220,000, 2010-2013

Fulbright Senior Scholar Research Fellowship, Nepal, January-August 2009

Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Bemis Travel Grant, Summer 2007

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Summer and Fall 2000

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS

Association of Nepal and Himalayan Studies (Editorial Board, 2013-; Executive Committee, 2006-2009;
Book Review Editor, 2006-2011)

Society for the Study of American Foreign Relations

American Society for Environmental History

LANGUAGES

Nepali (excellent), Hindi (intermediate), Spanish (intermediate), Tharu (basic), French (basic).