

CURRICULUM VITAE  
CHRISTOPHER A. CONTE

**Current Appointments**

*Associate Professor*, History Department, Utah State University, Specializations: African and Environmental History. Tenure home.

*Associate Professor*, Department of Environment and Society, College of Natural Resources, Utah State University.

**Past Appointments at Utah State University**

*Interim Department Head*, History Department, 2012-13.

*Director of Graduate Studies*, History Department, 2005 - 2012, 2018-19 (Interim).

*Assistant Professor*, History Department, Teaching specializations in African and Environmental History, 1995 - 2001.

**Education**

*Doctor of Philosophy*, History, May 1995. Michigan State University, East Lansing Michigan.  
Dissertation addresses the relationship between production, exchange and ecology in nineteenth and twentieth century Tanzania. Examination fields: African history, African Geography, Middle Eastern history.

*Master of Arts*, International Affairs, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, 1987. Interdisciplinary degree with Africa Area Specialty. Sub fields: History, Political Science, Geography.

*Master of Arts*, Linguistics, Ohio University, 1986. Emphasis in Applied Linguistics with certificate in TEFL/TESL.

*Bachelor of Arts*, History, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, 1981.

**Relevant Professional Experience**

*Visiting Assistant Professor* - History Department, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Spring Semester 1995. Courses: Introduction to African Societies, Graduate Colloquium in African History.

*High School History/English Teacher* - U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer. Narok High School, Narok, Kenya. September 1981 - December 1983. Taught English language and literature, and history at a large government secondary school in the Maasai area of Kenya.

## Publications

### Book

*Highland Sanctuary: Environmental History in Tanzania's Usambara Mountains*. Athens: Ohio University Press, Series in Environment and History, Series Editor, James L.A. Webb, 2004.  
–*Choice Award*, “best academic titles.”

### Articles

“The Usambara Knowledge Project: Place as Archive in a Tanzanian Mountain Range.” *History in Africa*. 48 (2022): 83-102.

“[Mountain History in Africa from the Earliest Times](#).” In *Oxford Research Encyclopedias: African History*. Oxford University Press. Article posted, July 21, 2020. 6500 words.  
doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.387>.

“Turning Tree Plantations of Slavery into Agro Forests for Everyman: The Landscape History of Cosmopolitanism on Pemba Island, Zanzibar, 1830-1930.” *Agricultural History* 93.4 (2019): 581-607.

“Power, Production, and Land Use in German East Africa through the Photographs of Walther Dobbertin, c. 1910.” *The Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12.4 (2018): 632-654.

“Africa’s Forest History,” In *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. Edited by Tom Spear. September 2017. <https://doi-org.dist.lib.usu.edu/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.196>

“Nature Conservation in Africa’s Great Rift Valley: A Study in Culture and History.” In *National Parks beyond the Nation*. Edited by Mark Fiege, Jared Orsi and Adrian Hawkins. Oklahoma University Press, 2016.

“Rust Belt Recollections and a Winding Road to Munich,” In *Seeing the Woods, a Blog by the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Making Tracks Series*, April 21, 2016. Written as a service to the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich, Germany.

“Africa’s Mountains: Collecting and Interpreting the Past.” In *Crossing Mountains: The Challenges of Doing Environmental History*. Edited by Marcus Hall and Patrick Kupper. *Carson Center Perspectives* 4 (2014): 55-64.

“Forest History in East Africa’s Eastern Arc Mountains: Biological Science and the Uses of History.” *Bioscience* 60.4 (2010): 309-313.

“Imperialism and the Environment.” In Peter Stearns, et al. eds. *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

“Wild Places or Domesticated Landscapes: Applying the Wilderness Concept to Africa, Asia and Latin America,” In *American Wilderness: A New History*. Edited by Michael Lewis and published by Oxford University Press, 2007.

“Environmental History in Ancient East Africa,” In John McNeill and Shepard Kreech eds. *Encyclopedia of World Environmental History*. New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 14 – 18.

“Imperial Science, Tropical Ecology and Indigenous History: Tropical Research Stations in Northeastern German East Africa, 1896 – 1914.” In Gregory Blue, Martin Bunton, and Ralph Crozier, eds., *Colonialism and the Modern World: Selected Studies*. Armond, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002, pp. 234-246.

“Searching for Common Ground: Reconstructing Landscape History in East Africa’s Eastern Arc Mountains.” In *Methods and Approaches in Forest History*. Edited by Mauro Agnoletti and Steven Anderson, IUFRO Research Series, no. 3, published by CABI publications, Oxford, UK. 2000, pp. 173-188.

“Colonial Science and Ecological Change: Tanzania’s Mlalo Basin, 1888 - 1946.” *Environmental History* 4.2 (1999), pp. 220 - 244.

“The Forest becomes Desert: Forest Use and Environmental Change in Tanzania’s West Usambara Mountains.” *Land Degradation and Development* 10.4 (1999), pp. 289-307.”

"Nature Reorganized: Ecological History in the Plateau Forests of the West Usambara Mountains, c. 1850-1935." in *Custodians of the Land: Environment and Famine in Tanzania*. Edited by James Giblin, Gregory Maddox and Isaria Kimambo, published by James Currey, London, 1995, pp. 96-122.

### *Research in Progress*

Eastern Africa Mountain Knowledge Project: A Collaborative History – The project aims to document digitally for the Tanzanian public, a social and environmental history of African mountain environments. Efforts began with research that I conducted during June and July of 2016 in Tanzania under a Utah State University Research Catalyst grant using the historical photographs of Walther Dobbertin. My research team initiated the formal oral history segment of the project in Tanzania during the summer of 2019 with funding from the Rachel Carson Center, the USU College of Humanities and Social Science, and the Department of History.

### *Book Reviews*

Lekan, Thomas. "Our Gigantic Zoo: A German Quest to Save the Serengeti" *H-Environment Roundtable* vol. 11 no. 2 (2021). Other roundtable authors are Julie Weiskopf, Corinna Treitle and Jeff Schauer.

Hopper, Matthew. *Slaves of One Master: Globalization and Slavery in Arabia in the Age of Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. *Agricultural History* 91.2 (2017): 158-59.

McMahon, Elizabeth. *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa: From Honor to Respectability*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. *Journal of Northeast African Studies* 15.2 (2015): 149-152.

- Grace Carswell. *Cultivating Success in Uganda: Kigezi Farmers and Colonial Policies*. Oxford: James Currey, 2007. *Africa* 79.3 (2009), 464-65.
- Davis, Diana. *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome: Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa*. Ohio University Press Series in Ecology and History. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 41.2 (2008), 352-53.
- Bender-Shetler, Jan. *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from the Earliest Times to the Present*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007. *Journal of African History*, 49.3 (2008), 497-98.
- Porter, Philip W. *Challenging Nature: Local Knowledge, Agrosience, and Food Security in Tanga Region, Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. *Agricultural History* 82.2 (2008).
- Maddox, Gregory. *Sub-Saharan Africa: An Environmental History*. Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO, 2006. *African Studies Review* 50.2 (2007), 270-71.
- Börjeson, Lowe. *A History under Siege: Intensive Agriculture in the Mbulu Highlands, Tanzania, 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present*. Stockholm Studies in Human Geography 12. Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2004. *Africa* 76.4 (2006), 604-06.
- William Beinart and Joann McGregor, eds., *Social History of African Environments*. *American Historical Review*, October 2005.
- Dan Brockington, *Fortress Conservation*. London: James Currey Publishers, 2002. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 40.3 (2005), 235-37.
- Francaviglia, Richard. *Believing in Place: A Spiritual Geography of the Great Basin*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003. *Western Historical Quarterly* XXXVI (2005), 82-83.
- Brad Weiss, *Sacred Trees, Bitter Harvests: Globalizing Coffee in Northwest Tanzania*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003. *Journal of African History* 45.3 (2004), 507-09
- Carolyn Merchant. Merchant, *The Columbia Guide to Environmental History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. *Journal of Politics and the Life Sciences* 22.2 (2003), 75-77.
- Tamara Giles-Vernick. *Cutting the Vines of the Past*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002. *Environmental History* 8.4 (2003), 689-91.
- Joanna Lewis. *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya 1925-52*. East African Studies Series. Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000. *African Studies Review* 45.1 (2002), pp. 190-92.
- Donald Crummey. *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia: From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000. *African Studies Review*, spring, 2002.

*Selected Conference Presentations, Symposiums, and Seminars*

- “Resiliency in Rural Africa: Photography, History and Hope.” University of Munich, Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. *Workshop: Radical Hope: Inspiring Sustainability Transformations through Our Past*, July 3-4, 2017. Invited.
- “Plantation Eco-culture in the Western Indian Ocean: A Transformational History.” University of Warwick Annual World History Seminar, *Nature commodification during the long nineteenth century*. May 18-19, 2017. Invited.
- “Power, Production, and Land Use in German East Africa through the Photographs of Walther Dobbertin, c. 1910.” Seminar in African Studies, St. Anthony’s College, Oxford, May 17, 2017. Invited.
- “Landscape History and Photography in German East Africa.” African Studies Association Annual Conference, Washington D.C., December 1, 2016. Chaired panel and presented paper.
- “Landscape, History and Ecological Cosmopolitanism on Pemba Island, Zanzibar: The Benevolence and Tyranny of Trees.” Presented to the weekly *Lunchtime Colloquium* at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich Germany, July 2015. Fellows’ presentation.
- “Africa’s Mountains: Collecting and Interpreting the Past.” Summer school symposium entitled Mountains across Borders, held in Lavin, Switzerland, August 2013. Sponsored by The European Society for Environmental History, The International Association for Alpine History, The Rachel Carson Center / Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology ETH Zurich, and the University of Zurich, Institute of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies. Invited Participant.
- “Nature Conservation in Africa’s Great Rift Valley: A Study in Culture and History.” Presented to the *National Parks Beyond the Nation Colloquium* held at Colorado State University at Fort Collins from Wednesday September 14 through Sunday September 18, 2011. Invited participant.
- “Ecological History and World History, Landscape Reading on Pemba Island East Africa. Or, An Antique Land.” American Society for Environmental History, Portland Oregon, March 2010.
- “Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Landscape Transformation on Pemba Island, Zanzibar. Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute, Zanzibar, December 2008.
- “Historical Landscapes and Violence in East African History.” ASEH Conference, Boise, ID, March 2008.
- “Literary Studies and Environmental Studies in Africa.” Kansas Symposium sponsored by the Kansas Center for African Studies, March 2008. Invited Participant.
- “Restoring Landscapes of Violence to a Resilient Condition.” Invited presentation to the University of Florida African Studies Center Weekly Seminar Series, February 2008.
- Workshop on History and Geography in Northern Tanzania, Held in Soni, Tanga Region. Includes a seminar presentation at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, October, 2006.

Society for Human Ecology, Annual Conference, “Creating Wild Places on Domesticated Landscapes: Applying the Wilderness Concept to Africa, Asia and Latin America,” Society for Human Ecology Annual Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, October 2005.

American Historical Association, Pacific Coast Branch, Annual Conference, Roundtable Discussion, Theories and Approaches to Undergraduate World History Courses, Global Environmental History, Corvallis, Oregon, August 2005.

American Society for Environmental History, Annual Conference, Panelist on a Roundtable on Global Environmental History, Houston, March 2005.

Weber State University Summer Seminar Series, June 21, 2004. “Environment and History in the Great Basin.”

Dibner Institute Summer Seminar in the History of Biology, Human Dimensions of Ecological Science, Wood’s Hole Massachusetts, May 2003. Participant (competitive selection process).

International Conference on the Forest and Environmental History of the British Empire and Commonwealth, University of Sussex, March 2003. Panelist.

African Mountain Association, Annual Conference. Sponsored by the UNEP. “Whose Sanctuary? Natural and Human History on East Africa’s Highland Landscapes.” Presented in Moshi, Tanzania, August 23, 2002.

American Society for Environmental History, Annual Conference, “Reconciling the Past: Natural and Human History in East Africa’s Highlands.” Presented in Denver, Colorado, March 21, 2002.

### **Significant Grants and Awards**

CHASS Small Grant, 2019. Seed grant that led to application for \$100,000 NEH Digital Humanities Fellowship.

Rachel Carson Center, Outreach Grant, Funded in 2018 for research in Summer 2019.

Utah State University Research Catalyst Grant, Awarded Fall 2015 for Summer 2016 research in Tanzania, 2016.

Fellowship, Rachel Carson Center for the Study of Environment and Society, Munich German, Summer 2015.

Fulbright Faculty Development Seminar, Kenya and Tanzania, spring, 2011.

Curriculum Development Grant, GOSESO, Tanzania, December 2010.

Utah State University Research Travel Grant to London’s Friends Library, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, September 2010.

American Philosophical Society, General Research Program, July 1998.

Utah State University New Faculty Research Grant, fall 1998.

Utah State University Faculty Research Grant, fall 1996.

Michigan State University Dissertation Write-Up Fellowship, spring 1993.

I.I.E. Fulbright Dissertation Research Grant: funded dissertation research in Tanzania, Sept.1991-June 1992.

Michigan State University College of Arts and Letters Dissertation Research Fellowship, Sept.1991-June 1992.

Michigan State University Department of History Research Award, summer 1991.

Recruitment Fellowship, Department of History, Michigan State University, fall 1988.

United States Department of Education Title VI Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Michigan State University, 1988-1990.

### **Language Skills**

*Swahili*: fluency in the written and spoken language.

*German*: intermediate aural/oral and advanced reading skills.

### **Professional Associations**

African Studies Association

Forest History Society

American Society for Environmental History

### **Contact Information**

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