

1-1-2013

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### Recommended Citation

Loomis, Erik. "Preserving Nature to Preserve the Republic: Laurens Bolles, A Conservationist in Cold War New Mexico." *New Mexico Historical Review* 88, 1 (2013). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol88/iss1/3>

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## Preserving Nature to Preserve the Republic

LAURENS BOLLES, A CONSERVATIONIST IN COLD WAR NEW MEXICO

*Erik Loomis*

On 25 October 1951, Laurens Cheadle Bolles, an Albuquerque engineer and local radio personality, gave a speech entitled “Why Teach Conservation?” to the New Mexico Academy of Science, a group dedicated to science education in the state. Bolles described himself as an advocate for “the conservation of soil, water, and *man*.”<sup>1</sup> On a radio program over two years earlier, he had argued: “God, man and the soil are related. There can be no separation of people and the earth. Conservation of the soul and conservation of the soil are inseparable.”<sup>2</sup>

To preserve these connections, Bolles proposed in his speech “Why Teach Conservation?” that the University of New Mexico create a Department of Conservation. He supported this idea with three points. First, the nation needed to manage its natural resources more efficiently to accommodate its rapidly growing population. Second, Bolles bluntly stated: “Military. Conservation is a vital part of our national defense.” His third rationale, human conservation, provided the overarching framework that encompassed the other reasons.<sup>3</sup>

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For Bolles, human conservation and the conservation of nature were inseparable. Environmental protection, he believed, could build a strong American nation ready to fight for the country's future. Conversely, a denuded nature would mean a dispirited and doomed human race. In the early years of the Cold War, while Americans struggled with the complexity of the nuclear age, Bolles identified conservation as an important strategy for national defense. Beginning in 1947, he pushed human conservation on his weekly radio show called *Let's Save Nature*. For the next fourteen years, Bolles broadcasted from four Albuquerque radio stations to "talk about preserving nature, in order to preserve the republic."<sup>4</sup>

Bolles held no high-ranking positions in national environmental organizations, but his career matters a great deal for western and environmental history. Studying little-known local environmental figures like Bolles helps scholars build a bridge between the conservation movement during the New Deal and the modern environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Bolles believed the New Deal conservation ethic could help solve the military and social problems of the early Cold War. His story shows how some Americans turned to nature to cope with the atomic threats of the Cold War in the years before Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962. Bolles urged New Mexicans to embrace nature during an era that historians have frequently characterized as a low point for American environmentalism.<sup>5</sup> He tied the need for people to experience American, and especially western, landscapes with contemporary domestic and international concerns, anticipating the environmental movement of the 1970s onward.

Once the Cold War had begun in 1947, Bolles argued that the nation needed to embrace human conservation as a central defense strategy for two reasons. First, the nation had to deal with "the matter of preserving a healthy manpower to bear arms." More importantly, however, as he told his audience in September 1949, "There is the matter of giving the whole population reason to believe that our democracy is successful and worth defending."<sup>6</sup> For Bolles, the only way to accomplish this goal and help protect the nation from the ravages of nuclear warfare was for Americans to get back to nature.<sup>7</sup>

By connecting nature with nation, Bolles believed the outdoors would rejuvenate American bodies and create spiritually and physically healthy citizens who could then fight communism without nuclear weapons. The American environment, he argued, taught the nation's citizens spiritual values that would prevent the United States from destroying the world in a nuclear holocaust. Contact with nature would create a healthy citizenry ready to fight for American values against the Soviet threat. The nation's Cold War

strategy, according to Bolles, ought to revolve around nature's building of the nation's muscles and minds.

While historians have discovered multiple seeds of the modern American environmental movement in the early and mid-twentieth century, few have examined the immediate impact of the atomic bomb on people's ideas about nature.<sup>8</sup> Donald Worster states, "The Age of Ecology opened on the New Mexican desert, near the town of Alamogordo, on July 16, 1945," with the testing of the first nuclear bomb.<sup>9</sup> Paul Boyer explores many ways in which Americans responded to the dawn of the nuclear age, but neither he nor scholars who have followed him explore environmental responses.<sup>10</sup> An examination of how Americans with roots in prewar conservation used nature to critique the postwar nuclear state may counter previous assumptions. In particular, Bolles's effort suggests how the New Deal interest in healthy bodies and national pride helped shape postwar conservationist ideas and Cold War defense planning. His work shows that rather than reaching its nadir following the war, the environmental movement was in transition and still active. Bolles stood at the forefront of environmentalists and scientists concerned about the effects of nuclear testing on both national and personal health.<sup>11</sup>

No region bore the brunt of American Cold War military expansion more than the American West. With uranium mining, national laboratories, nuclear test sites, and military bases, the American West became ground zero of the Cold War landscape. Bolles, a man deeply rooted in the landscapes of New Mexico, profoundly expressed western concerns in his radio speeches. He conducted his show amid the intensified militarization of the western landscape, especially in New Mexico. Historians have devoted more attention to these places, particularly sites of military production.<sup>12</sup> They have done a great deal of work on how aboveground nuclear testing, the arms race, and nuclear power influenced environmentalism in later years.<sup>13</sup> This history has focused primarily on military installations and their impact on regional landscapes. Bolles's connections between conservation, the New Mexico landscape, and the Cold War suggest that Americans thought about militarized landscapes outside defense-industry fence lines. For Bolles, New Mexico and the American West existed as a repository of American values and military might that would allow citizens to fight communism and avoid nuclear war.

Bolles viewed nature as a working environment that taught Americans the values necessary for meeting Cold War challenges. Wilderness could not solve America's nuclear crisis, but an accessible and working nature, as Bolles learned during the New Deal, was vital to creating healthy bodies and a strong national character. In postwar New Mexico, Bolles saw newly

militarized landscapes stripped not only of their minerals but also of their ability to build national identity. Bolles's vision of New Mexico connected healthy minds and bodies to U.S. foreign policy. The places that spawned the nuclear age would be the places where citizens would stop it.

### Laurens Bolles and New Deal Conservation

The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki motivated Bolles to go on the radio. He had spent the first half century of his life surrounded by the American nature that he loved. Bolles became a committed New Dealer during the first years of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, serving in both the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), two of the New Deal's signature conservation agencies. Bolles's New Deal experiences shaped his response to the challenges of the atomic world.

Bolles left few personal papers outside of his radio transcripts. But occasional discussions of his early life on his radio show and an autobiographical sketch offer an outline of his pre-radio years. Born in 1890 in Denison, Iowa, Bolles graduated with a degree in civil engineering from Iowa State College in 1910. He claimed to have an interest in the forests and streams of his Iowa home from the time he was a boy. At the age of ten, Bolles's father died. His sensitivity to the natural world developed after spending a lot of time alone in the fields and forests coping with the loss.<sup>14</sup>

The earliest extant environmental writing by Bolles is a 1911 paean to watching a sunset over desert badlands. This romantic piece sheds more light on the young Bolles than on the development of human conservation, but it shows that he clearly enjoyed nature as a young man.<sup>15</sup> When he first arrived in Montana after graduating from college, he quickly fell in love with the place. "The air was definitely intoxicating," he recalled. "I had arrived in Paradise."<sup>16</sup>

Although he was trained as an engineer, Bolles's young adulthood suggests an individual searching for a purpose and place. Soon after he arrived in Montana, he bought land in Fergus County and became a commercial wheat farmer. He volunteered for the First World War in 1917 and served as an engineer in France, where he met and married Lucienne Rousseau. Years later he stated that he had volunteered for the war because he loved his nation's forests, a claim that connected his own patriotism with nature. In 1919 Bolles and Lucienne moved back to his Montana ranch, which foreclosed in 1921. They spent the next twelve years moving around the country, with Bolles working as a civil engineer in Arizona, Montana, and Texas; as a farmer in the hills of Missouri; and as a used bookstore owner in Arizona during the early years of the Great Depression.<sup>17</sup>

Bolles obtained an appointment as the superintendent of an Arizona CCC camp in 1933, supervising highway construction. He never named the camp, but claimed it was the second CCC project in Arizona. Bolles said that his CCC experience led him to rediscover nature.<sup>18</sup> He learned that “soil by itself is unstable and that Earth’s green blanket of vegetation serves to hold it together. The almost equally significant fact that plants, by their capacity for photosynthesis, provide food and fuel for all life was equally inescapable.” He claimed to have become an expert on southwestern plants and to have amazed his fellow engineers with his knowledge of the natural world.<sup>19</sup>

Agencies such as the CCC, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Public Works Administration epitomized the New Deal’s conservationist emphasis. Although CCC planners aimed their program at the average enrollee rather than the supervisors, Bolles’s experiences as superintendent confirmed their hope that the agency would inspire Americans to love their nation’s nature.<sup>20</sup> As historian Neil Maher shows, the CCC helped create modern environmentalism in two important ways. First, it immersed urban youths into a nature that directly benefited their families and exposed thousands to America’s beautiful landscape. Second, centralized CCC planning triggered a reaction among many conservationists against its high-modernist ideas of nature, which showed little respect for wilderness.<sup>21</sup> Bolles’s story demonstrates how the CCC shaped postwar environmentalism in the Southwest.

In 1934 Bolles took an engineering job in the federal SCS in Arizona. Founded in 1933 under the auspices of the Department of the Interior, the SCS promoted conservationist agricultural practices in America’s arid and semiarid regions in response to the Dust Bowl and other environmental disasters of the Great Depression. It promoted wise land use and discouraged soil erosion, whether from wind, water, or overgrazing.<sup>22</sup> In 1935 Bolles transferred to the SCS office in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and worked around Tijeras in the mountains east of the city.<sup>23</sup> In Albuquerque Bolles found a lifelong permanent home.

Bolles later claimed that during the 1930s, he had begun to think about human conservation—not surprising given the concept’s roots in the New Deal. CCC planners hoped that hard work in nature would save U.S. forests from destruction as well as young American men from crime and dissipation. They used the term human conservation to describe this ideal. By the late 1930s, many New Deal conservationists, including SCS chief Hugh Bennett and influential conservationist Morris Cooke, sought to build on human conservation by embracing an idea they called “total conservation.” They aimed to counter the excesses of high-modernist New Deal environmental planning by centering the growing science of ecology in federal conservation

initiatives.<sup>24</sup> After failing to integrate total conservation in New Deal planning because of increased congressional resistance to presidential power, Cooke, Bennett, and other New Dealers met in 1940 to found Friends of the Land. This organization intended to take the principles of total conservation to the general public, promoting CCC-like projects with a more ecological outlook.<sup>25</sup> SCS employees such as Bolles made up a large percentage of the group's early membership, and its policy goals in soil and water conservation supported SCS projects.<sup>26</sup> Bolles stated that Friends of the Land inspired his ideas on human conservation, and he represented the organization during the first years of his radio broadcast, *Let's Save Nature*.<sup>27</sup>

During World War II, Bolles continued his work with the SCS. Bolles's commitment to conservation, however, went beyond his CCC and SCS work. From the 1930s onward, in addition to supporting Friends of the Land, he held memberships in many national environmental organizations, including the Wilderness Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. He even chaired these organizations' local committees in Albuquerque.<sup>28</sup> But in 1945, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, and Bolles's world changed forever. Now the world he sought to protect was at grave risk. Shaken to the core of his soul, Bolles sought a way to make a difference. He decided to use the radio, a medium that allowed him to reach thousands of listeners, to promote human conservation.

At the forefront of American environmental thought, he advocated ecology to build American bodies and preserve nature for future Americans. During the Cold War, he showed his New Deal roots in a 1951 show: "What started the chain [of his environmental transformation] was the realization that mismanagement of land . . . is strictly man's doings and therefore not a cause but an effect, not a disease but merely a symptom." Bolles, however, provided an optimistic message also typical of New Deal planners: "We seek the roots of the malady because when man's mind is restored to balance then nature can speedily take over."<sup>29</sup>

Bolles's tastes in American literature about nature help elucidate his philosophy of human conservation. Placing himself within a tradition of American environmental writers stretching back to Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Roosevelt, and John Muir, Bolles viewed the outdoors as the repository of American democracy.<sup>30</sup> Americans would have little motivation to fight for the country without its abundant nature. The nation's values would be obscured and its people enervated. For Bolles, nature was the nation's most important spiritual resource. He frequently reviewed books on *Let's Save Nature*, choosing selections that would inspire listeners to embrace their environment and promote human conservation.

Bolles promoted, for example, Carson's pre-*Silent Spring* books. *The Sea around Us* (1951) and *The Edge of the Sea* (1955) complemented Bolles's ideas of human conservation because Carson wrote about accessible locations, such as the border between land and ocean, where Americans could visit and rejuvenate themselves. Both Carson and Bolles took a human-centered approach to their environmentalism. Like Bolles, Carson sought to connect people with the land they visited.<sup>31</sup>

One book that typifies Bolles's philosophy is Ross Parmenter's *The Plant in My Window: An Adventure in the Spirit* (1949). This work tells the story of Parmenter's transformation from an urban New Yorker into an environmentalist. Parmenter saw the beauty of the natural world by appreciating the city's plants; he then moved on to research plants in the countryside. Bolles also recommended E. M. Nicholson's book *Birds and Men: The Bird Life of British Towns, Villages, Gardens and Farmland* (1951). Like Parmenter, Nicholson focuses on urban nature, seeking to educate British city dwellers on the birds that they could see near their homes. Other authors Bolles promoted included Aldo Leopold, John Burroughs, and Gilbert White. Bolles typically recommended books that helped people understand the environment close at hand. Like Bolles, these writers saw that connecting people with nature would promote the conservation of both humans and the environment and ultimately benefit the nation.<sup>32</sup>

### Grounding Bolles in Place: New Mexico and the Cold War

Bolles's years in New Mexico deeply influenced his environmental thought, for they coincided with the militarization of the New Mexico landscape. Few states received more public money toward building up America's defenses than New Mexico did. During the Second World War, workers at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), located in the Jemez Mountains northwest of Santa Fe, led the way in researching and developing the atomic bomb. The first atomic test took place southeast of Socorro, New Mexico, at the U.S. Army's White Sands Missile Range in the state's barren and sparsely inhabited south-central region. After the war, LANL continued to serve as the nation's premier nuclear research laboratory. Military installations opened throughout the state. Among these were Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, Holloman Air Force Base near Alamogordo, and Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis. Sandia National Laboratory opened at Kirtland to manufacture nuclear warheads, providing New Mexico with a second center for nuclear and weapons research. New Mexico also served as the home to two mostly unknown nuclear tests after World War II: one outside of Carlsbad in the southeastern corner of the state,

and another southwest of Dulce in the Carson National Forest. This expansion of government military installations and nuclear weapons research and testing during the Cold War had active support from major New Mexico politicians, particularly senators Clinton P. Anderson and Dennis Chavez.<sup>33</sup>

Beyond researching and producing weapons to fight the Soviets, New Mexico also provided much of the raw material for nuclear weapons. The northwestern quadrant of the state experienced a uranium-mining boom during the 1950s and early 1960s to produce nuclear warheads. The state's isolated deserts also served as a storehouse for nuclear waste, a use that began garnering national attention toward the end of Bolles's tenure on the radio. Eventually, the government developed the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) at a site near Carlsbad for storing some of the nation's radioactive byproducts from the Cold War.<sup>34</sup>

Because New Mexico housed a large percentage of the nation's nuclear arsenal, its nuclear research facilities, and even the raw materials for nuclear power and weapons, the state was a possible target for a foreign military attack. In Bolles's mind, the state's natural spaces held the key to dealing with the problem of preparing for future conflicts. Bolles was hardly the first American environmentalist to draw a line between war and nature. Progressive Era conservationists such as Theodore Roosevelt and George Bird Grinnell closely tied environmental protection to training young American men to be soldiers. Early-twentieth-century climbers made similar connections between scaling mountains and U.S. military preparedness.<sup>35</sup>

Like many environmentalists in American history, Bolles found cities disturbing, enervating, and anti-American. Urban spaces obstructed the healthy lifestyle needed for national defense. Bolles claimed that cities produced nothing humans could eat and therefore provided no solid footing to anchor human civilization. He told his listeners in 1951, "Cities and civilization and total disregard of nature's plain rules have caused devastation and waste places and deserts clear around the earth."<sup>36</sup> Bolles alleged that no one could truly experience nature in the city. No city provided the clean air and pure water necessary to develop freedom. He felt particular frustration in Albuquerque because the city's residents lived close to so many varieties of "pure" nature, particularly the forests of the surrounding mountain ranges and the state's widespread deserts. Bolles thought cities like Albuquerque made humans "the most dangerous and destructive of all beasts." Moreover, given the military threats of the Cold War, Albuquerque residents should "feel almost infinitely safer in the high hills or out on the desert."<sup>37</sup>

At the same time that Bolles worried about the state of Albuquerque's residents, the city had begun a period of dramatic growth that, according to

Bolles, separated nature from humans to an ever-greater extent. In the years before 1945, Albuquerque was a small southwestern city with a population of fifty thousand. Discussing his move to the city in 1942, journalist Ernie Pyle said, “We like it because when we look to the westward, we look clear over and above the city of Albuquerque and on beyond, it seems half way to the Pacific Ocean.”<sup>38</sup> Pyle loved that his front window framed Mount Taylor, the highest peak in the Zuni Mountains, sixty-five miles to the west.

Not long after Pyle’s death in World War II, however, postwar development transformed Albuquerque, making clear views of Mount Taylor few and far between. The 1950 census registered 96,815 people living in the city, and by 1960 that number had grown to 201,189.<sup>39</sup> The defense industry spurred much of this growth. Sandia National Laboratories, for example, employed approximately 3,800 people in 1951. Ten years later, that number had expanded to 7,800.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, the physical size of Albuquerque tripled between 1946 and 1950 as the city expanded toward the Sandia Mountains east of town. By the 1960s, home construction had reached the foothills of the Sandias. In 1958 the National Municipal League named Albuquerque an All-American City because of its rapid growth.<sup>41</sup>

In the years after World War II, millions of Americans abandoned the urban cores in city after city and moved to subdivisions on the suburban edges. Bolles celebrated suburbanization as potentially accomplishing Americans’ necessary return to nature. Bolles himself owned land and a second home on the eastern slope of the Sandia Mountains. He thought others should do the same and envisioned “that the family of the not distant future will have two homes: one in the city and the other at the foot of some mountain or at the edge of some desert or bad land. We don’t have to have homes scattered all over the forest or wild area and thus destroying its positive integrity, just so we have a house and parking place reasonably nearby and where there is still fresh air.”<sup>42</sup> That a conservationist supported suburban living complicates arguments made by environmental historians that uncontrolled suburban development served as a call to arms for the environmental movement in the late 1960s.<sup>43</sup> These historians are right, but Bolles demonstrates that in the years immediately following World War II, at least one regionally influential conservationist saw environmental benefits in suburbia, particularly within the context of New Mexico’s stunning natural setting.

To support his vision of suburbanites surrounding themselves with the American landscape, Bolles embraced postwar America’s fascination with the automobile. He argued that automobiles allowed people to take advantage of nature’s spiritual qualities while working in an urban world. During a 1951 show, for example, he lobbied his listeners to support building a paved

road up the steep west face of the Sandia Mountains, contending that the government could construct the road “for the cost of a couple of minutes of the Korean War.”<sup>44</sup>

Bolles thought the federal government should facilitate access to natural areas, not limit it to those adventurous enough to trek into designated wilderness. Although he supported specific pieces of wilderness legislation, he also chastised people who wanted no automobile access to those places: “Wilderness people are strong for ‘roadless areas.’ They want real primitive wilderness, period. I like to have wilderness, all right, but feel that roads opened across it at intervals . . . would be a good thing. I am rather in favor of harvesting considerable of the mature timber, instead of just letting it stand there until it finally falls.”<sup>45</sup> Bolles believed restricted wilderness undermined human conservation by creating barriers between nature and everyday people. Protecting the environment meant nothing if humans could not enjoy and gain strength from it. If completely cordoned off from people, wilderness could not serve human conservation nor prepare Americans to make the right decisions in an atomic world.

Not only did Bolles repudiate strict constructions of wilderness, he also espoused forest management plans quite opposed to those preferred by the burgeoning environmental movement. Although nascent environmental organizations such as Friends of the Land supported a more ecological approach to land management, Bolles viewed the heavily managed forests of Europe as positively as he did pristine wilderness: “I can learn plenty about nature in a forest that has been planted in rows by man, such as one sees in Europe. I have a feeling that the deer and the birds and the squirrels don’t object to open forests.”<sup>46</sup> Moreover, Bolles argued that roads “could help us guard the wilderness better” by allowing firefighters access to put out conflagrations.<sup>47</sup> For Bolles, forests could rejuvenate society by working for humans in both spiritual and material ways. Americans had to harness their natural resources to defend themselves in the Cold War not only by logging or mining, but also by hiking, camping, and fishing in wilderness areas.

Bolles directly linked conservation to civil defense. At a time when Americans were inventing ways to survive a nuclear attack, leaving the cities for the country seemed as good a solution as any envisioned by civil-defense planners, and one probably more rational than hiding under a school desk or wearing a hat to protect one’s face from a blast. People had a much greater chance of dying instantly from a nuclear strike in the city than in the countryside. By departing from urban centers, Bolles believed, not only would Americans protect themselves from the fallout of nuclear war, but the exposure of young boys to wilderness or nature would also turn them into fighting men who had learned about democracy from their experiences with the land.

### Scientists and Human Conservation in Cold War New Mexico

Even before the threat of nuclear annihilation, Bolles and other New Dealers believed that the nation ought to immerse its citizens in the American landscape. The CCC cultivated healthy men by promoting work in nature, and this policy paid off in building America's formidable fighting force in World War II. But the advent of the atomic world turned Bolles into a prophet of conservation who delivered jeremiads about how Americans' distance from nature had placed the world on the edge of destruction.

Bolles argued that this modern atomic crisis justified the message of his radio show. People must realize "that society is confronted with the possibility that the tremendously destructive atomic weapons that science has invented . . . will kill countless people and disrupt civilization."<sup>48</sup> He believed that Americans should be able to rely on their politicians for leadership, but that most of them had failed their constituents. He told listeners in 1960 that he began broadcasting to counter the reality of a place "where we may be blown to Kingdom Come by some dimwit's finger on a push button." This situation made him pessimistic about the human race during a time when "man evidently can not handle his fool inventions and instruments of violence" and when "the continuance of freedom hangs in the balance."<sup>49</sup> With the world at the mercy of politicians who could not control these destructive weapons, the populace would have to step into the ethical breach through human conservation.

During the early Cold War, however, Bolles believed that the nation fell short in conserving both men and nature. The nation should "take a look at the human race and its alleged civilization. Nearly all of them actually lack vital elements in their food that they usually don't even know about. One young man out of three is found physically and mentally able for military service. . . . We pretend that we have achieved freedom, but we plainly haven't."<sup>50</sup> Despite these problems, Bolles had confidence that the nation could develop the robust men necessary to build a strong citizenry during a time of change that challenged and even undermined traditional American manhood.<sup>51</sup> He said: "Nature is still a going concern. All we really have to do is to wake up our minds to their capabilities, and this is a function of education. . . . We do not run the race for the boy entrusted to us, we but show him how to condition his muscles, husband his strength, keep his eye on the goal."<sup>52</sup> The rejuvenation of the nation through exposure to the outdoors had direct national security implications. According to Bolles, "Either we renew the fertility of our farm or . . . presently the nation will become sick and be taken over by a more healthy nation," the Soviet Union.<sup>53</sup>

Although Bolles opposed the use of destructive nuclear weapons, he took the threat of Soviet world domination seriously. His connections between nature and nation did not preclude all war but only conflict that would destroy the American landscape and thus the American character. Bolles believed the United States would likely lose a nuclear conflict. He thought the Soviet Union had in reserve a great deal of untapped natural strength: "We are confronted by an enemy nation who has double our resources and at least as much mental energy." Like many Americans, Bolles believed the United States could not out-compete the Soviets. Thus, "our destiny is obviously not that of the powerful materialistic conqueror" as "we have achieved this semblance of invincibility by using the better part of our material resources already."<sup>54</sup>

Bolles argued Americans did have one weapon the Soviets could not match: "Our spirits obtain strength and sustenance from the aesthetic qualities of unravished nature: the beauty and space that is everywhere; the fact that nature is basically beneficent and it is man's inventions and general foolishness that cause human privation and suffering."<sup>55</sup> For Bolles then, the United States had to do two things to fight the Soviet threat. First, it had to get people back to the land. Second, Americans had to acknowledge that their scientific and technological advantages were a dead end that would not defeat the Soviets and might destroy the world. They could not rely on nuclear scientists to protect it.

Bolles developed complex views toward the relationship of science to human conservation and the nuclear state. Scientists held great power in the minds of Cold War Americans, particularly in light of the arms race, space travel, and technological innovations in the postwar decades. On the one hand, Bolles saw scientists as natural leaders to guide humankind out of the nuclear morass. On the other, scientists had created monstrous weapons that could destroy human civilization. With average Americans seemingly powerless in the nuclear age, Bolles feared that scientists and their creations would doom the human race. Scientists needed to leave behind their Frankenstein laboratory inventions and, more than anyone, help Americans use nature to live better lives. In order to fight this nuclear-age threat, Bolles linked science and human conservation to the fate of the world.

Bolles stressed that scientists were at fault for creating the original atomic weapons and their ever-more-powerful descendants.<sup>56</sup> On the radio, Bolles chastised the scientific community: "Man has not added the most infinitesimal part to his universe or achieved power to destroy anything in all his laboratories. He can kill, all right. He can mess things up, and put an end to individual forms of life and endanger human happiness." Unless scientists

approach nature with humility, “the best of them present a suggestion of an ape beating his chest, no matter what remarkable contraption they may have invented.”<sup>57</sup> Scientists’ mistakes made human conservation all the more necessary. They “blithely” created the atomic bomb. Now, Bolles explained, “life itself is in the balance, with the odds unfavorable. So the net result is that human conservation is not just a phrase; it is a desperate need.”<sup>58</sup>

Scientists themselves shared Bolles’s concern about the consequences of their research. Soon after the end of World War II, many scientists who had worked on the bomb promoted international control of nuclear energy to prevent such a destructive weapon from serving the interests of individual nations.<sup>59</sup> Bolles never spoke directly to this issue, but he argued that rather than contribute to world destruction, scientists should benefit humankind and improve life for all human beings. Scientists needed to realize that nature held much more power than they could ever muster and that inventions like the atomic bomb could only lead to the destruction of civilization.<sup>60</sup> Initially, science “was going to save us, to create a brave new world,” but instead, the scientists “set up a process to produce primeval chaos, calling it atomic fission, and the survival of our entire species and life itself is now in the balance.”<sup>61</sup>

Bolles maintained his ambivalence about science and technology throughout his radio career. He fully embraced ecology, geology, and scientific pursuits that advanced human understanding of the natural world. The field of ecology grew rapidly during the early Cold War years, and in 1947 the Atomic Energy Commission created a permanent advisory committee on biology and medicine.<sup>62</sup> But the growing military-industrial complex continued promoting militarization of the United States and its allies. The middle and late 1950s saw the rise of the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Bolles viewed his nation’s obsession with space travel as an irresponsible adventure that diverted attention from the many serious problems on the earth. Again, he saw scientists blindly creating technology without giving any thought to the environmental and social consequences. He rebuked these scientists, arguing that humans ought “to make some bluff at managing this planet before we set out to conquer other worlds.”<sup>63</sup> Although he spoke about the subject far less frequently than his fear of nuclear war, he also worried about the increasing use of pesticides in U.S. agriculture. In 1958, four years before Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, Bolles declared, “Pesticides at present are a more serious danger to one and all of us than radioactive fallout.”<sup>64</sup>

For all his disillusionment regarding how nuclear scientists imperiled the world and undermined human conservation, Bolles truly believed they could improve human lives. He told his listeners in 1951, “Science represents

unswerving mental integrity.”<sup>65</sup> He had high expectations of scientists: “Science must reassess all our inventions and most of our conceptions if it is to establish a foundation for genuine freedom, valid justice, workable democracy.”<sup>66</sup> He wrote to Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson in 1952 that human conservation “must be the final objective of both science and government.” Bolles urged Stevenson to incorporate human conservation into his administration should he win the presidency.<sup>67</sup> Scientists only had to subscribe to the idea of human conservation and create inventions that would serve the living rather than cause death and destruction. Working in the framework of human conservation, scientists would inspire people to enjoy nature, and peace would result.

Bolles argued that regardless of whether scientists used their power for good or destruction, Americans must return to their natural roots. Doing so would prepare them to fight the next war and lead them to make smart decisions about their future. Part of Bolles’s program for human conservation and national defense included a curriculum of environmental education. As he noted in his speech to the New Mexico Academy of Science in 1951, Bolles believed that environmental education would both encourage children to pay attention to nature and promote patriotism. With environmental education, “our children would have better balanced minds; it is my profound belief that every citizen who can go to a forest and mountain frequently, and know that part of the wonder he sees belongs to *him*, is going to have deeper pride and patriotism.”<sup>68</sup>

Bolles claimed that he volunteered for the First World War because the national forests inspired him to defend his country and protect its natural legacy. He wrote: “It was the fact that this country owns these magnificent forests and they are open to all of us. I reflected that possibly this was the only country where this was true, and it seemed the final illustration of what a wonderful democracy we have maintained. So I thought: I shall be fighting for the forests first of all.”<sup>69</sup> Since Bolles’s love of America and its natural environment convinced him to risk his life in war, he believed that the nation could motivate its people to love nature as well. If so, they would do whatever they could to save the nation from the ravages of both communism and nuclear holocaust, even if it meant sacrificing their lives.

By fighting for forests and nation with a gun in 1917 and with a microphone in 1950, Bolles battled for the American people and American values. In his eyes, democracy could thrive only with the existence of a strong relationship between people and their natural environment. Drawing on his SCS experiences, Bolles noted in 1951, “I doubt that Christianity or democracy can be practiced successfully for long in a dust bowl or eroded wasteland.”<sup>70</sup>

The United States could only sustain itself against destructive warfare and Soviet communism “by providing vitamins, and clean water and pure air and experience and, finally, by achieving all the freedom there is.”<sup>71</sup> Since untrammelled nature generated freedom, conservation would protect freedom. Thus, by conserving its fragile environment, the United States would preserve the similarly delicate liberties of democracy.

Bolles spent a good deal of energy denouncing communism. Of course, his attitudes reflected the Cold War era in which he lived. In the years of Bolles’s radio show from 1947 to 1961, the United States found itself increasingly enmeshed in a global battle with international communism. During this period, the United States enacted the Marshall Plan, reinforced West Berlin from a Soviet stranglehold through the Berlin Airlift, fought the Korean War, overthrew the governments of Iran and Guatemala because of their perceived communist leanings, supported the Bay of Pigs invasion intended to overthrow Fidel Castro’s government in Cuba, and began its military involvement in Vietnam.<sup>72</sup>

He condemned communism for spreading un-American values: “No sort of socialistic regimentation can ever work. If we have to be *compelled* to be decent, it will just remain too bad. When we become able to live according to the tenets of the most rudimentary intelligence, we will not need any regimentation to keep us in line, and government will simply become the mechanism of social cooperation.”<sup>73</sup> The most rudimentary intelligence for Bolles was the natural world.

Although Bolles argued for the necessity of human conservation to defend the United States from the Soviet Union, he jeopardized his livelihood by going on the radio during the height of McCarthyism. The Cold War years witnessed Americans suppressing dissent at home, with the rise of McCarthyism, red baiting, and the fear of communist infiltration of American society.<sup>74</sup> This anticommunist fervor scared Bolles. While he criticized communism, he also frequently critiqued core tenets of capitalism. For instance, he believed that private property created values opposed to those inculcated in the natural world. On a number of occasions, Bolles strongly disparaged the material possessions he thought served as a barrier between humans and nature. For example, he once attacked the “antediluvian conceptions of alleged sacredness of ‘individual’ private property,” going on to say that individuals had no right to destroy their piece of the planet regardless of their legal ownership of land.<sup>75</sup> Capitalist greed destroyed natural resources and alienated people from nature by emphasizing private property over public access to the outdoors.

Bolles’s ambivalence toward greed and materialism came through in a 1951 broadcast. He told his audience: “Man is interested in conserving himself.

Putting it objectively, there would be little use (to us) in fertile soil, clear streams, pure air, [and] pleasant forests unless there are healthy and happy people to enjoy them. An egocentric viewpoint, but reasonable.”<sup>76</sup> Bolles may have desired a world where selfishness would not guide people’s choices, but he remained realistic about fundamental human nature. Given the basic selfishness that he saw in humans, Bolles believed that any conservationist ethic must accommodate human needs. If Americans could see how preserving nature served their best interest, they would apply themselves to the cause of environmental conservation.

Bolles’s critique of economic materialism opened him to redbaiting attacks, to which he felt particularly vulnerable as a government employee. Occasionally, he referenced his dilemma on his show. In 1951 he complained about constantly being called a socialist every time “I express doubts about our present social system of dog-eat-dog and the-devil-take-the-hindmost.”<sup>77</sup> In 1952 Albuquerque television station KOAT held a town hall meeting to address “Can we afford to outlaw the Communist party?” Bolles submitted this question: “Can this nation afford to continue this unmistakable abrogation of freedom of speech and thought which, as expounded by our political demagogues, seems also a surrender of some of the tenets of Christianity? Does it not actually help Communism more than it hurts it, the world over?” Bolles asked KOAT to identify him as “M.I. Wright,” explaining in his request: “I have hesitated to submit this because I am a federal civil service employe [*sic*]. Our civil freedom is too closely circumscribed by the Hatch Act. I should like to leave it to your judgement, as I could scarcely afford to become liable under that Act.”<sup>78</sup>

Freedom played a central role in Bolles’s anticommunist ideology. He told his listeners: “The individual must have freedom just as surely as he requires vitamins. Democracy is the natural and practical way of handling our common affairs.”<sup>79</sup> Ultimately, he claimed to have no fear that Americans might accept a foreign ideology. “I do not believe that the slightest possibility exists that the American people would even *consider* anything even *vaguely* resembling Communism for this country,” Bolles stated in a 1960 broadcast.<sup>80</sup> The American landscape would protect the nation from totalitarian ideology if only the people would immerse themselves in it. This was particularly true of the open landscapes of New Mexico, which Bolles so dearly loved.

### Conclusion

Bolles retired from radio in 1961. Until 1965 he spent much of his time recording his thoughts for books he never published and developing a show garden

at the New Mexico State Fairgrounds in Albuquerque. Beginning in that year, he suffered a series of debilitating strokes and died in Albuquerque in 1971. His wife had died in 1954, and two of his three children survived him.

Bolles did not transform national environmentalism. He did, however, play an important role in the statewide environmental movement through both his radio show and his service to conservation organizations. There is no precise way to measure the popularity of his radio show. He kept a few fan letters, but they alone prove little. Circumstantial evidence points to a reasonable following. Bolles spent fourteen years on the radio and gave conservation talks around the state. Albuquerque also named a city park after him, suggesting he was a well-liked local personality.

More important for historians, Bolles's work helps us understand more about environmentalism during the late 1940s and 1950s, a supposedly dormant period with an underdeveloped historiography about local environmental issues and organizations. He shows how supporters of New Deal environmental programs expressed those ideas in post-World War II America and how these people helped bridge the period between two high points of the American environmental movement. Bolles applied the conservation agenda of the CCC and Friends of the Land in the 1930s—placing bodies in nature to rejuvenate national health—to the dangers of the nuclear age. He argued that only by creating a healthy national body and spirit could Americans successfully resist communism, Soviet invasion, and rampant materialism.

Bolles's message suggests that at least some Americans looked to nature and its preservation as an antidote to the problems of the early Cold War. The experience of nature simultaneously built U.S. military might and prevented the nation from following the dark path toward nuclear holocaust. Bolles helped make conservation a viable option for New Mexicans, demonstrating that the environmental ethic remained alive in American society during the late 1940s and 1950s. He grounded his critique of the nuclear age in the New Mexico landscape, specifically offering the state's deserts, forests, and mountains as protection from the dangers and calamities of the postwar world.

Everyday people like Bolles shaped an environmental ethic for an atomic age. There is much we do not know about this interaction between conservation, nuclear fears, and western landscapes. Were there other people like Bolles around the nation, those who responded to the nuclear age and fear of war against communism by turning to nature or the environment? Was Bolles an isolated prophet, or did many people see conservation as a panacea for the atomic bomb and Cold War? If he is the tip of an iceberg of common people thinking about nature as a response to the challenges of the early Cold War,

it could dramatically alter our understanding of environmentalism in the period. Bolles's radio career suggests these are worthy questions to consider.

### Notes

1. Laurens C. Bolles, "Why Teach Conservation?," 25 October 1951, folder 5, box 2, Laurens C. Bolles Papers, 1919–1965, MSS 493 BC, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque [hereafter LCB, CSWR, UNM]. The dates were given by Bolles for the cited radio script. The dates are not always consistent, and some scripts are undated. Note that some radio scripts have titles and others do not. I have included titles when Bolles assigned them.
2. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 15 April 1949, folder 5, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
3. Bolles, "Why Teach Conservation?," 25 October 1951.
4. Laurens C. Bolles, "Why I Volunteered," submitted to *Reader's Digest's* Personal Experience series, folder 36, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM. The four radio stations were KABQ, KQUE, KHAM, and KGGM.
5. Among the most important overviews of American environmentalism and environmental politics are Philip Shabecoff, *A Fierce Green Fire: The American Environmental Movement* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 90; and Hal Rothman, *Saving the Planet: The American Response to the Environment in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), 85. See also Hal Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the United States since 1945* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998); Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1993); Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Green Revolution: The American Environmental Movement, 1962–1992* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955–1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Samuel P. Hays, *A History of Environmental Politics since 1945* (Pittsburgh, Penn.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).
6. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, September 1949, folder 4, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM. Exact date of radio show not provided.
7. *Ibid.*; and Neil Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 213.
8. Among the key books on the unexpected roots of the American environmental movement are Maher, *Nature's New Deal*; Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); and Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
9. Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*, 2d ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 342.
10. Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985). Richard A. Matthew discusses how the environment became an important Cold War issue in the 1960s for American policy makers. Still, Matthew, like so many others, dismisses the 1950s as a period

when environmental concerns were on the radar screen. See Richard A. Matthew, "The Environment as a National Security Issue," *Journal of Policy History* 12 (January 2000): 102–22. For some of the voluminous literature on the cultural impact of the atomic age, see Howard Bruce Franklin, *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination*, rev. ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008); Charles K. Wolfe, "Jesus Hits Like an Atom Bomb': Nuclear Warfare in Country Music, 1944–1956," in *Country Music Goes to War*, eds. Charles K. Wolfe and James E. Akenson (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005); Robert H. Kargon and Arthur P. Moella, *Invented Edens: Techno-Cities of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2008), 67–90; Patrick B. Sharp, *Savage Perils: Racial Frontiers and Nuclear Apocalypse in American Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007); Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2d ed. (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Mark Silk, *Spiritual Politics: Religion and America since World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

11. See Jacob Darwin Hamblin, *Poison in the Well: Radioactive Waste in the Oceans at the Dawn of the Nuclear Age* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Milton S. Katz, *Ban the Bomb: A History of SANE, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, 1957–1985* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); and Lawrence S. Wittner, *One World or None: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement through 1953*, vol. 1 of *Struggle against the Bomb*, Nuclear Age series, 3 vols. (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).
12. Michael D'Antonio, *Atomic Harvest: Hanford and the Lethal Toll of America's Nuclear Arsenal* (New York: Crown, 1993); Michael A. Amundson, *Yellowcake Towns: Uranium Mining Communities in the American West* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004); Doug Brugge et al., eds., *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007); Judy Pasternak, *Yellow Dirt: An American Story of a Poisoned Land and a People Betrayed* (New York: Free Press, 2010); Len Ackland, *Making a Real Killing: Rocky Flats and the Nuclear West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002); and Ryan H. Edgington, *Lines in the Sand: The Environmental Contest for White Sands Missile Range* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, forthcoming).
13. On nuclear issues, see Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Robert Kleidman, *Organizing for Peace: Neutrality, the Test Ban, and the Freeze* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1993); J. Samuel Walker, *Three Mile Island: A Nuclear Crisis in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and Robert Divine, *Blowing on the Wind: The Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1954–1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).
14. Laurens C. Bolles, "Autobiography," p. 17, folder 1, box 1, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
15. Laurens C. Bolles, "Reverie at Sunset: The Bad Lands," folder 36, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
16. Bolles, "Why I Volunteered."
17. Bolles, "Autobiography," p. 23.
18. Bolles, "Autobiography," p. 11. Bolles claimed that this camp was the second in Arizona, but he provides no additional information. According to the official website of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) alumni, the first and second CCC camps

- in Arizona both opened in Globe on 23 May 1933. But neither the website nor the few published sources on the New Deal in Arizona fully explain what these camps did. Also, given the fact that many CCC camps opened in May and June of 1933, it is difficult to identify which camp Bolles is talking about. Another project opened on 24 May 1933 in Payson. The camp Bolles directed still remains unknown. For further information, see the CCC alumni website at [www.cccalumni.org](http://www.cccalumni.org).
19. Bolles, "Autobiography," p. 59.
  20. The standard study of the New Deal remains William E. Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932–1940* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963). On the CCC, see John Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1967). The literature is mixed on other New Deal agencies that dealt with conservation, though works abound on the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). These include William U. Chandler, *The Myth of TVA: Conservation and Development in the Tennessee Valley, 1933–1983* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1984); Nancy L. Grant, *TVA and Black Americans: Planning for the Status Quo* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Temple University Press, 1990); and Michael J. McDonald and John Muldowny, *TVA and the Dispossessed: The Resettlement of Population in the Norris Dam Area* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982). The literature on the Public Works Administration is remarkably thin. Two monographs offering some coverage of the agency are Jeanne Nienaber Clarke, *Roosevelt's Warrior: Harold L. Ickes and the New Deal* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Jason Scott Smith, *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933–1956* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For a discussion of the New Deal in Arizona, see William S. Collins, *The New Deal in Arizona* (Phoenix: Arizona State Parks Board, 1999). The best works on conservation in the New Deal have focused on the Dust Bowl. Particularly notable are Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Paul Bonnifield, *The Dust Bowl: Men, Dirt, and Depression* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979); and R. Douglas Hurt, *The Dust Bowl: An Agricultural and Social History* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981).
  21. Maher, *Nature's New Deal*.
  22. Among the most important works on the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) are R. Douglas Hurt, "The National Grasslands: Origin and Development in the Dust Bowl," *Agricultural History* 59 (April 1985): 246–59; R. Douglas Hurt, "Dust Bowl: Drought, Erosion, and Despair on the Southern Great Plains," *American West* 14 (January 1977): 22–27, 56–57; and Neil Maher, "'Crazy Quilt Farming on Round Land': The Great Depression, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Politics of Landscape Change on the Great Plains during the New Deal Era," *Western Historical Quarterly* 31 (summer 2000): 319–39. Unfortunately, like much of the literature concerning conservation issues during the New Deal, most works on the SCS focus on the Dust Bowl. Historians have written no monographs of note on the agency in the Southwest.
  23. Lorraine Keller, comp., *Field Activities of the Department of Agriculture: 1947* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1948), 196.

24. For a discussion of high modernism, see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999).
25. Maher, *Nature's New Deal*, 102–5, 203–10. On Friends of the Land, see Randal S. Beeman and James A. Pritchard, *A Green and Permanent Land: Ecology and Agriculture in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).
26. Beeman and Pritchard, *A Green and Permanent Land*, 62–68.
27. Bolles, “Why Teach Conservation?,” 25 October 1951. By 1954 Bolles claimed to represent the Nature Conservancy on his show, though he did not elaborate. Laurens C. Bolles, “Nature Preserves,” 9 January 1954, folder 14, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
28. Scholarly literature on these major environmental organizations remains spotty. For the Wilderness Society, see Tracy Marafioti, “Gender, Race, and Nature: A Cultural History of the Wilderness Society and the Wilderness Act of 1964” (PhD diss., University of Utah, 2007); and Sutter, *Driven Wild*. On the Nature Conservancy, see William D. Blair Jr., “The Nature Conservancy: Conservation through Cooperation,” *Journal of Forest History* 30 (January 1986): 37–41; and Mark Harvey, *Wilderness Forever: Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).
29. Laurens C. Bolles, “A Science of Human Conservation,” 1951, folder 38, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
30. See Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996); Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3d ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982); and Peter A. Fritzell, *Nature Writing and America: Essays upon a Cultural Type* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990).
31. Rachel Carson, *The Edge of the Sea* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1955); and Rachel Carson, *The Sea around Us* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951). Important literature on Rachel Carson includes Linda Lear, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997); Mark Hamilton Lytle, *The Gentle Subversive: Rachel Carson, Silent Spring, and the Rise of the Environmental Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Maril Hazlett, “Woman vs. Man vs. Bugs’: Gender and Popular Culture in Early Reactions to *Silent Spring*,” *Environmental History* 9 (October 2004): 701–29; and Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
32. Ross Parmenter, *The Plant in My Window: An Adventure of the Spirit* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1949); E. M. Nicholson, *Birds and Men: The Bird Life of British Towns, Villages, Gardens and Farmland* (London: Collins, 1951); and Laurens C. Bolles, “Preservation of Wilderness,” 24 November 1956, folder 25, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
33. For overviews of New Mexico’s role in the development of the atomic bomb, see Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986); and Ferenc Morton Szasz, *The Day the Sun Rose Twice: The Story of the Trinity Site Nuclear Explosion, July 16, 1945* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press,

- 1984). For New Mexico and the Cold War, see Carl Abbott, "Building the Atomic Cities: Richland, Los Alamos, and the American Planning Language," in *The Atomic West*, eds. Bruce Hevly and John M. Findlay (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 90–115; Terry Isaacs, "Silos and Shelters in the Pecos Valley: The Atlas ICBM in Chaves County, New Mexico, 1960–1965," *New Mexico Historical Review* 68 (October 1993): 347–69; Hal K. Rothman, *On Rims and Ridges: The Los Alamos Area since 1880* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 207–316; Stephen I. Schwartz, ed., *Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons since 1940* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), 43–48, 169–70, 364–68; Ferenc Morton Szasz, "Los Alamos in Context of State and Nation," *New Mexico Historical Review* 72 (January 1997): 23–30; and Ferenc Morton Szasz, "New Mexico's Forgotten Nuclear Tests: Projects Gnome (1961) and Gasbuggy (1967)," *New Mexico Historical Review* 73 (October 1998): 347–70.
34. Raye Ringholz, *Uranium Frenzy: The Saga of the Nuclear West* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2002).
  35. Susan R. Schrepfer, *Nature's Altars: Mountains, Gender, and American Environmentalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 148.
  36. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 19 May 1951, folder 5, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  37. Laurens C. Bolles, "Forest Access Roads," undated, folder 36, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  38. Journalist Ernie Pyle quoted in Michael F. Logan, *Fighting Sprawl and City Hall: Resistance to Urban Growth in the Southwest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 104, 109–10.
  39. *Ibid.*, 104.
  40. Bradford Luckingham, *The Urban Southwest: A Profile History of Albuquerque, El Paso, Phoenix, Tucson* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1982), 76; and Necah Stewart Furman, *Sandia National Laboratories: The Postwar Decade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990).
  41. Marc Simmons, *Albuquerque: A Narrative History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 374.
  42. Bolles, "Nature Preserves," 9 January 1954.
  43. See Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*; Sutter, *Driven Wild*; and Logan, *Fighting Sprawl and City Hall*.
  44. Bolles, "Why Teach Conservation?," 25 October 1951.
  45. Bolles, "Forest Access Roads." For Bolles's support of wilderness legislation, see "Preservation of Wilderness," 24 November 1956.
  46. Bolles, "Forest Access Roads."
  47. *Ibid.*
  48. Laurens C. Bolles, "SNAFU," p. 1, folder 1, box 1, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  49. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 5 November 1960, folder 34, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  50. Laurens C. Bolles, "Teaching Conservation," 20 October 1951, folder 5, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  51. Among the leading works on masculinity during the early Cold War are Steven Cohen, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America* (New York: Free Press, 1996); Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance*

- and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996); and K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
52. Bolles, "Why Teach Conservation?," 25 October 1951.
  53. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 8 December 1951, folder 5, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  54. Laurens C. Bolles to Senator Dennis Chavez, 11 April 1954, folder 1, box 3, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  55. Ibid.
  56. Bolles, "SNAFU," p. 1.
  57. Bolles, "Why Teach Conservation?," 25 October 1951.
  58. Laurens C. Bolles, "A Dissertation on Fiction," 7 May 1960, folder 32, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  59. Katz, *Ban the Bomb*, 1–20; Wittner, *One World or None*; Jo Ann Ooiman Robinson, *Abraham Went Out: A Biography of A. J. Muste* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Temple University Press, 1981); and Lawrence S. Wittner, *Rebels against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).
  60. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 2 January 1954, folder 14, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  61. Bolles, "A Dissertation on Fiction," 7 May 1960.
  62. Sharon E. Kingsland, *The Evolution of American Ecology, 1890–2000* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 181.
  63. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 18 January 1958, folder 32, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  64. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 25 January 1958, folder 32, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  65. Bolles, "Why Teach Conservation?," 25 October 1951.
  66. Ibid.
  67. Laurens C. Bolles to Stevenson, 30 September 1952, folder 1, box 3, LCB, CSWR, UNM. There is no evidence that Stevenson answered the letter.
  68. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 13 February 1954, folder 14, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  69. Bolles, "Autobiography," p. 23.
  70. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 3 November 1951, folder 5, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  71. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 26 January 1952, folder 6, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  72. Among the many works discussing U.S. foreign policy during the early years of the Cold War, some of the most useful are James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988); George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1975* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Temple University Press, 1986); Seth Jacobs, *America's Middle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004); Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993); Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–2000*, 9th ed. (Boston, Mass.: McGraw-Hill, 2002); Peter Lowe, *The Korean War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Thomas G. Patterson, *On Every Front: The Making of the Cold War* (New York: Norton, 1979); and Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982).
  73. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 17 November 1951, folder 9, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  74. Some of the most important works on the United States during the early Cold War are Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore, Md.:

- The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Free Press, 1983); Lisle A. Rose, *The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999); and Richard G. Hewlett and Jack M. Holl, *Atoms for Peace and War, 1953–1961: Eisenhower and the Atomic Energy Commission* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
75. Laurens C. Bolles, "Socialism," 1951, folder 38, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  76. Bolles, "A Science of Human Conservation," 1951.
  77. Ibid. See also Bolles, "Socialism," 1951.
  78. Laurens C. Bolles to Town Hall, Inc., 12 November 1952, folder 38, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  79. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 8 December 1951, folder 9, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.
  80. Laurens C. Bolles, radio script, 5 November 1960, folder 34, box 2, LCB, CSWR, UNM.