



Proving Up: Domesticating Land in U.S. History

Lisi Krall

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Uses the interdisciplinary approach of evolutionary economics to explore the history of land domestication in the United States.

On July 9, 1920, William Krall, a coal miner in Wyoming, was shot by his neighbor in a dispute over water as he attempted to “prove up” and gain title to his homestead. Attempting to understand her grandfather’s passion and determination for making his own 160 acres of land in dry, sagebrush country led Professor Lisi Krall on a unique journey through the interconnections of economy, culture, and land in the history of the United States. She tells the story of the domestication of land in the United States, a story that hinges on the market economy and the agrarian and wilderness ethos as foundational land institutions. Drawing on institutional or evolutionary economics, *Proving Up* explores in detail the rich and ever-changing intermingling of culture, economic, and material conditions through American history. Untangling the complicated history of Americans’ experiences with nature, Krall provides a critical focus and a timely contribution to the current debate surrounding our relationship to land and nature.

“Krall has skillfully blended passion and analysis, and she writes well. *Proving Up* is a welcome contribution to what I hope will become the ‘New History of Homesteading.’” — Richard Edwards, *Great Plains Quarterly*

“The book does provide a much richer framework for understanding the twists and turns in federal policy ... and its fundamental premise—the dialectic between agrarianism and economic development—will be invaluable to anyone bold enough to attempt a more complete updating of the works of Robbins, Rohrbough, and Gates.” — *Journal of American History*

“...Krall’s overview and explanation of complex developments is enlightening ... *Proving Up* challenges readers with a broad, interdisciplinary interpretation of economic, cultural, and environmental policies, and is a unique integration of some familiar subjects.” — *H-Net Reviews (H-Environment)*

Lisi Krall is Professor of Economics at the State University of New York at Cortland.

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