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## People and their Environment

Humans and the environment have always had a reciprocal, although not necessarily balanced, relationship. “Dazzling White” by Dave Northrup discusses the effects of human progress on the natural landscape. Terence Young emphasizes the impact of the physical environment on people in his article, “Murray’s Rush.” The relationship between people and their environment is an important theme throughout history and one that deepens our understanding of historical events .

## Compelling Question

**How does the relationship between people and their environment shape history?**

## Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- create meaningful and persuasive understandings of the past by fusing disparate and relevant evidence from primary and secondary sources and drawing connections to the present
- Distinguish human activities and human-made features from “environments” (natural events or physical features—land, air, and water—that are not directly made by humans) and describe the relationship between human activities and the environment
- Identify and analyze how environments affect human activities and how human activities affect physical environments in the United States.

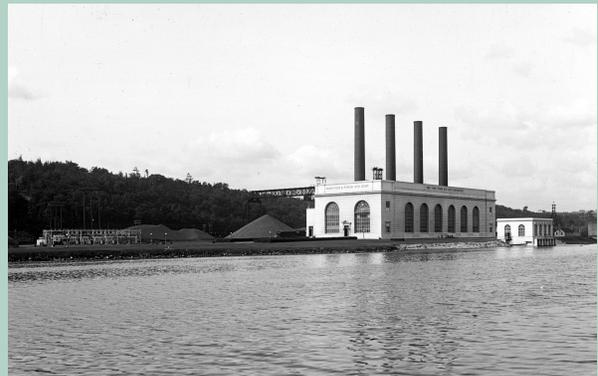
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*Courtesy: New York State Archives*

## Selections

### **Dazzling White: A powerfully built glowing beacon of industry**

By Dave Northrup



*Courtesy: New York State Archives*

### **Murray’s Rush: The Adirondack Beginnings of American Camping**

By Terence Young



*Courtesy: New York State Archives*

*This guide includes supporting questions to guide students in the reading of the article and analysis questions for understanding the primary sources. All educational materials are aligned to the New York State Social Studies Framework. The learning objectives are taken directly from the Social Studies Practices and the content fits within the framework.*

# MURRAY'S RUSH

## THE ADIRONDACK BEGINNINGS OF AMERICAN CAMPING

### Setting the Stage

Show this video from [pbslearningmedia.org](https://pbslearningmedia.org) and discuss the impact of humans on their environment.

<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/99ee7a9a-7963-494b-a3eb-a18788cdc4ef/5-human-impacts-on-the-environment-crash-course-ecology-10/#.WwaqGO4vyM8>



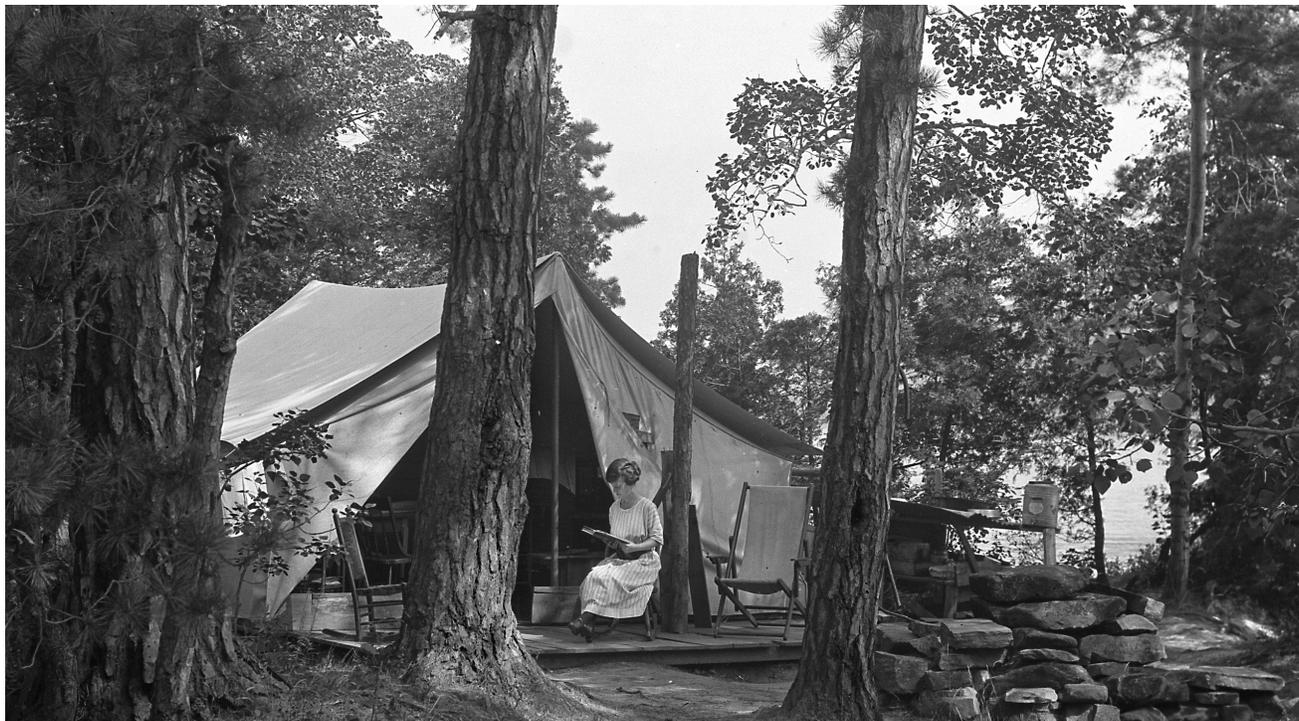
Courtesy: New York State Archives

View from Craggs looking over Raquette Lake and surrounding forests in the Adirondack Mountains region. 1916

### Guided Reading Questions

1. What event is seen as the beginning of recreational camping in America?
2. What activities did William Murray enjoy?
3. Who did Murray bring with him on his camping trips?
4. What effect did Murray's book have on the Adirondack region?
5. Why was Murray given the nickname "Adirondack" Murray?
6. What technological advancements improved access to the Adirondacks?
7. What practical information did Murray give in his book?
8. Why were some people critical of Murray's book? Were their concerns valid?
9. How did Murray's book impact the lives of women?

## Document Analysis



Courtesy: New York State Archives

View of a woman camping on Juanita Island-Lake George in Bolton, Warren County-Adirondack Mountains.

### Analysis Questions

1. What natural items do you see in this photograph?

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2. What man-made items do you see in this photograph?

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3. What is the woman in the photograph doing? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What effect does the woman have on the environment?

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5. What effect does the environment have on the woman?

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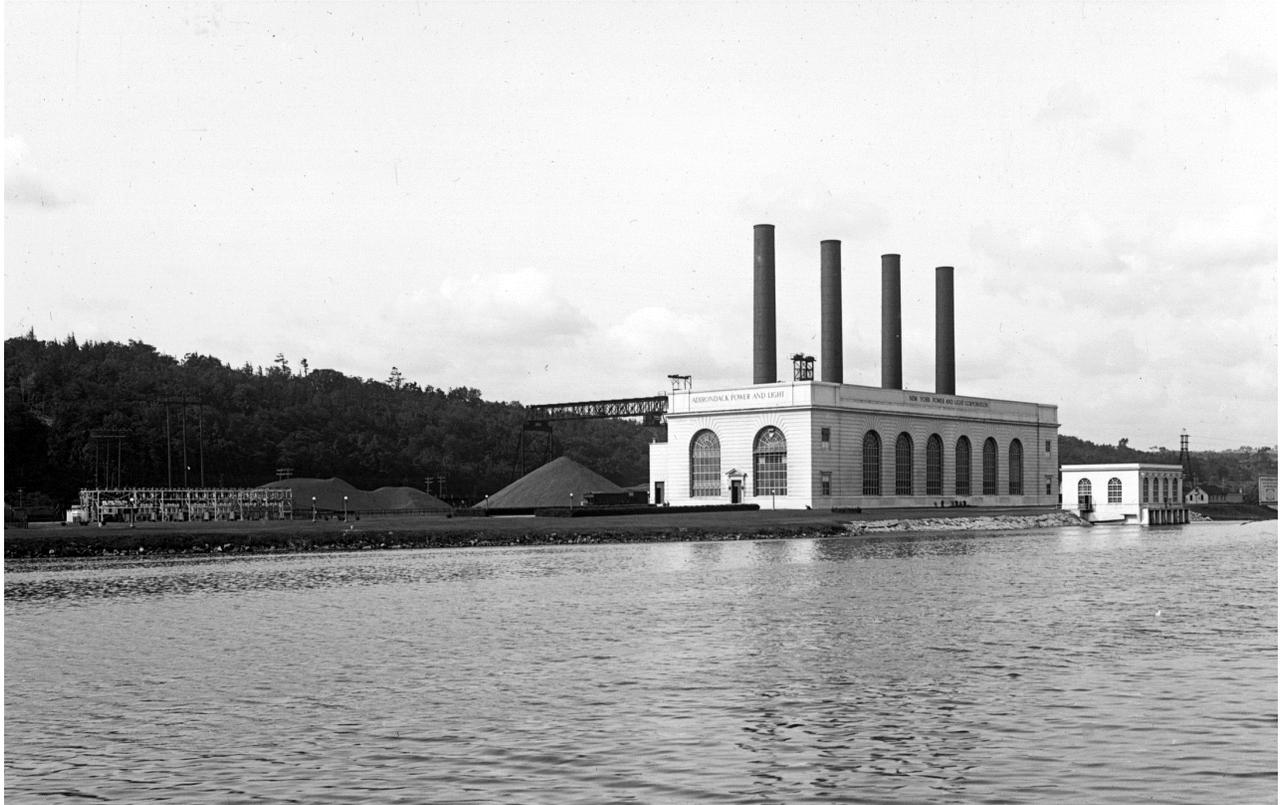
# DAZZLING LIGHTS

## A POWERFULLY BUILT GLOWING BEACON OF INDUSTRY

### Setting the Stage

Show this video from [pbslearningmedia.org](https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/27c5005d-d467-4142-8b4a-66ca97d3eba4/water-the-lifeblood-the-steam-cycle-in-power-plants/#.WwbV4-4vyM8) and discuss the way steam power plants work.

<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/27c5005d-d467-4142-8b4a-66ca97d3eba4/water-the-lifeblood-the-steam-cycle-in-power-plants/#.WwbV4-4vyM8>



Courtesy: New York State Archives

Exterior view of the New York Power & Light Corporation's steam-electric plant on the banks of the Mohawk River east of Amsterdam, New York.

### Guided Reading Questions

1. What structure was built on the Mohawk River in the 1920s?
2. How was this building constructed?
3. What makes this building noticeable on the Mohawk Valley landscape?
4. What evidence does the author cite regarding the urgency of this building's construction?
5. According to the author, what makes this building "an example of the ability of industry to harness the forces of nature in a harmoniously beautiful way?"
6. What happened to this building?

# Document Analysis



Courtesy: New York State Archives

View of a dam and power plant of the Rochester Railway and Light Company on the Middle Falls of the Genesee River at Rochester.

## Analysis Questions

1. Describe the man-made objects in this photograph,

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2. What effect do these objects have on the natural environment?

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