

RCC at the VI SOLCHA Symposium

The Latin American and Caribbean Society for Environmental History (SOLCHA for its acronym in Spanish) had its Sixth meeting in Villa de Leyva, Colombia, from 6 June to 8 June. It was a friendly encounter mostly between scholars from varied corners of Latin America and Spain, along with a few others doing research on this region, in a beautiful colonial town four hours north of Bogotá. The charm and small size of the place contributed greatly to everybody's good spirits and made people run constantly into one another and thus talk and integrate.



This was SOLCHA's largest meeting so far with almost 300 people. The idea of creating SOLCHA emerged in 2003 at the Symposium of American Environmental History in Santiago de Chile, and the society itself began to take shape the following year in the II Symposium organized in Havana, Cuba. It was officially constituted in 2006 in Carmona, Spain, during the III Symposium.

The RCC was present at Villa de Leyva in many ways. One of its co-directors, Christof Mauch, participated—both as RCC director and European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) President—in a panel entitled “Internationalizing Environmental History: Opportunities and Networks from around the Globe.” SOLCHA's President Micheline Cariño, ASEH's President-elect Gregg Mitman, ICEHO's President Jane Carruthers, among others, also contributed to this panel. Several ideas of how to collaborate emerged from the

discussion. Jane Carruthers, who is also the chair of RCC Advisory Board, gave a wonderful keynote speech entitled “An Environmental History for the Emerging World,” in which she compared South Africa and Colombia, proposing interesting points of convergence between Latin America, Africa, and Asia, as well as suggesting avenues for cooperation.



Along with the Colombian El Instituto de Investigación en Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt, the RCC sponsored a panel, organized by Claudia Leal and Paula Ungar, on the history of conservation in Latin America. This panel included a session on “lived experiences,” in which park rangers and other protagonists of the history of conservation in Colombia participated. It also included two academic sessions, chaired by Christof Mauch and commented on by Wilko Graf von Hardenberg, Carson Fellow (2010) and Acting Director of the Environment & Society Portal. This session had presentations on Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico by scholars with varied levels of experience and backgrounds (historians, geographers, anthropologists, etc.), including Camilo Quintero, Emily Wakild, and Jose Augusto Padua. This panel aimed to create dialogue between scholars and practitioners and to stimulate research on the history of conservation in this region.

The RCC was also present in a panel on “digital media and environmental history,” in which Wilko Graf von Hardenberg and Felix Mauch presented the RCC’s Environment & Society Portal. The RCC also used this opportunity to give away numerous issues of *RCC*

Perspectives and spread the word on its existence in the hope of getting much more applications from the region.

Finally, Carson Fellows Stefania Gallini (2010) and Claudia Leal (2012), who were part of the organizing committee along with Andrés Guhl, were elected as the new presidents of SOLCHA. This will guarantee the continuous collaboration between the Center and the Latin American and Caribbean Society for Environmental History.

