

**James C. McCann**



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African Studies Center  
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**PRESENT POSITION:** Professor of History (with tenure), Director, *ad interim*, African Studies Center, Boston University.

**EDUCATION:**

1984 Ph.D. History - Michigan State University. 1978 M.A. - Michigan State University.  
1973 B.A. - Northwestern University.

**FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS (INDIVIDUAL):**

Principal Investigator, The Impact of Maize Cultivation on Malaria Transmission, (with the Harvard School of Public Health), funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, 2005-present.

George Perkins Marsh Prize (best book in environmental history, 2005). Awarded by American Society of Environmental History for *Maize and Grace: Africa's Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500-2000*.

W.E.B. DuBois Institute, Harvard University (Sheila Biddle Fellow), 2005-2006

Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad fellow 2002-2003 (for research on maize in Africa)

Cotsen Grant (National Humanities Center) for preparation of C-D Rom course "The Environmental History of Africa."

Fellow in Residence, Program in Agrarian Studies (Yale University), 1998-99.

Ford Foundation Grant for research on maize and the city (Travel to Mexico, January 1999).

Herskovitz prize (finalist), 2006 (for *Maize and Grace*)

Herskovitz prize (finalist), 1996 (for *People of the Plow*).

Choice Magazine Outstanding Academic Book Award, 1996 (for *People of the Plow*).

Choice Magazine Outstanding Book in African and African-American Studies for the period 1990-1996.

Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Fellow 1992-93, 1996-97, 2002-03.

Fellow, National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina (Delta Delta Delta Fellow), 1991-92.

Advanced International Research in African Studies, Social Science Research Council/American Council of Learned Societies, 1991-92.

Grant-in-Aid, American Council of Learned Societies, 1991.

Humanities Fellow, Boston University Humanities Foundation, 1989-90.

Choice Magazine, Outstanding Academic Books of 1987-88 (for *From Poverty to Famine*).

National Endowment for the Humanities Travel Grant, 1987.

American Council of Learned Societies, Travel Grant, 1986.

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, 1985.

Graduate School Seed Grant, Boston University, 1990, 1984.

College of Arts and Letters Scholarship, Michigan State University, 1982-83.

Social Science Research Council Fellow, 1980-82.

Fulbright-Hays Fellow, 1980-81.

NDFL Language Fellow (Arabic), 1979-80.

NDFL Language Fellow (Amharic), 1976-79.

**RESEARCH LANGUAGES:** Amharic, Italian, French, Spanish, Arabic.

## **PUBLICATIONS:**

### **Books:**

- 2009 *Stirring the Pot: African Cuisine and Global Change, 1500-2000* (Ohio University Press).  
 2005 *Maize and Grace: A History of Maize in Africa* (Harvard University Press).  
 1999 *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa, 1800-1990* (Heinemann).  
 1995 *People of the Plow: A Modern History of Highland Agriculture in Ethiopia* (University of Wisconsin Press).  
 1987 *From Poverty to Famine in Northeast Ethiopia: A Rural History 1900-35* (University of Pennsylvania Press).

### **Chapters in Books**

- 2006 "Naming the Stranger" in Paolo Squatriti, ed, *The Nature of History*. Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press.  
 2005 "West Africa's Colonial Fungus: Globalization and Science at the End of Empire, 1949-2000." In J. Diefendorf and K. Dorsey, ed. *The City and the Country.: New Themes in Environmental History*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.  
 2004 "Seeds of Subversion: Maize in Two Old World Empires (Ethiopia and Veneto), 1500-1999. In Thomas Summerhill, ed. *Transatlantic Rebels: Agrarianism in Comparative Context*. E. Lansing, Michigan State University Press.  
 2000 Prospects for Democracy, Agro-ecology and Civil Society: Elections in the Amhara region, Ethiopia's Rural Hinterland ,," in Siegfried Pausewang and Kjetil Tronvoll, *The Ethiopian Elections: Democracy Advanced or Restricted*. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of Human Rights.  
 1998 "Leadership, Personality and Political Culture in Modern Ethiopian History" in M. Page and S. Beswick, eds. *Personality and Political Culture in African History* (Michigan State University Press).  
 1994 "Empiricism, Narrative, and Change in African Historical Landscapes" in Michael Glantz, ed., *Creeping Environmental Phenomena*, National Center for Atmospheric Research  
 1994 "The Title VI Mandate, African Studies, and Undergraduate Teaching on Africa" in Patricia Alden and David Lloyd, eds. *African Studies and the Undergraduate Curriculum: New Directions for the 21st Century* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press)  
 1993 "Ethiopia" chapter in Michael Glantz, ed., *Drought Follows the Plow: Marginal Land Agriculture in Seven Countries* (Cambridge University Press).  
 1990 "The Myth and Reality of Agricultural Crises in Ethiopia: Empirical Lessons from History," in Marina Ottaway, ed., *The Political Economy of Ethiopia* (New York: Praeger).  
 1988 "Children of the House: Households and Slavery in Ethiopia, 1900-35," in Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts, eds., *The End of Slavery in Africa* (University of Wisconsin Press).

- 1987 "Drought, Land, and Reproduction: Dynamics of Society and Ecology in Northeast Ethiopia," in David Anderson and Douglas Johnson, eds., *Ecology and Stress in Northeast Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Crook Green Publishers).
- 1987 "The Social Impact of Famine in Northeast Ethiopia: Some Implications for Rehabilitation," in Michael Glantz, ed., *Drought and Hunger in Africa: Denying Famine a Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

#### Articles (since 1986)

- 2008 "Disease as History and Agro-ecology: Malaria" (Review article), *International Journal of African Historical Studies*.
- 2005 Asnakew Kebede, McCann, James C., Yemane Ye-ebiyo, and Kiszewski, Anthony. "New Evidence of the Effects of Agro-ecological Change on Malaria Transmission." *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*.
- 2005 "Africa's Environmental Footprints: Tracking Past and Future." *Environmental History*, 10, 1 (2005), 59-61.
- 2003 "African Lives as Historical Narrative," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 30, 1 (2003), 125-30.
- 2001 "Maize and Grace: History, Corn, and Africa's New Landscapes, 1500-1999," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*,
- 2001 "Literacy, Orality, and Property: Church Documents in Ethiopia," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Summer 2001), 1-10
- 2000 "Climate and Causation in African History," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*
- 1997 "A Tale of Two Forests: Deforestation Narratives in Ethiopia, 1840-1996," *Environmental History*, 2, 1 (1997)
- 1994 "The Environmental History of Eastern Africa," *Environmental History Review*, 1993
- 1991 "Agriculture and African History," *Journal of African History*, 31.
- 1991 "Orality, State Literacy, and Political Culture in Ethiopia: Translating the Ras Kassa Registers," Discussion Papers in the African Humanities, African Studies Center, Boston University, AH#10.
- 1990 "A Dura Revolution and Frontier Agriculture in Northwest Ethiopia, 1898-1920," *Journal of African History*, 30, 1.121-34.
- 1990 "A Great Agrarian Cycle? A History of Agricultural Productivity and Demographic Change in Highland Ethiopia 1900-87," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 20, 3, 389-416.
- 1986 "The Political Economy of Rebellion in Northeast Ethiopia, 1928-30," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*.
- 1986 "Household Economy, Demography, and the "Push Factor in Northern Ethiopian History, 1916-35," *Review*, 9, 3.

#### INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Master Respondent, conference on Cultural Creativity in the Ethiopian American Diaspora, Harvard University/Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Spring 2008.

Organizer, Workshop on the Impact of Maize Production on Malaria Transmission. Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, Jimma (Ethiopia), July 2007.

Invited Participant, Conference on Africa's Environmental History, Royal Swedish Academy, Stockholm. April 2007.

Consultant, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo. 2005. (Ethiopian elections evaluation and field study)

Mother-Baby Maize Breeding Program, International Center for the Improvement of Maize and Wheat (CIMMYT), Harare, Zimbabwe. Visiting Scientist to evaluation crop breeding program. June-July 2004. (with Dr. Timothy Dalton, University of Maine). Regional field study in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and South Africa.

Keynote Speaker, Workshop on African Environmental History and Applied Research, Uppsala University/Stockholm University, April 2004.

Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations), Rome, Seminar Presented on Maize and Malaria to the Farming Systems Department, July 2003.

Visiting Scientist, International Center for the Improvement of Maize and Wheat (CIMMYT), Harare Zimbabwe, July 2003.

Norwegian Institute on Human Rights University of Oslo, Ethiopian Election Observer, May-June 2000.

National Humanities Center, MacArthur Foundation Project on the Ecological Humanities. Planning Group (April 1999).

U.S.A.I.D./Tufts University, Workshop on Strengthening A Livelihoods Approach for Disaster Response in Africa, Joint Workshop by Feinstein International Famine Center (Tufts U.) and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID), November 1998.

Social Science Research Council and African Academy of Science, Workshop on Biodiversity in Africa, , Nairobi, 1994.

National Science Foundation and African Academy of Science, Workshop on Drought in Africa.

International Livestock Centre for Africa, consultant on Project on Improved Production on Black Clay Soils, 1992-94.

American Jewish World Service/Save the Children (Norway), consultant on Social Context of Food Storage, 1990.

U.S. Congress, Invited testimony to Joint Economic Committee (Senator A. Gore) on Long-term strategy for environmental policy for ending famine, February 1990.

Member, Advisory Board on Rural Vulnerability, United Nations Development Program, Ethiopia, 1988.

United Nations Environmental Program (Ethiopian Meteorological Services Agency), consultant and project design for drought early warning program for northeast Africa, 1988-present.

Oxfam (U.K.), Consultant to evaluate social impact of rural development projects in Hararge, Ethiopia, 1987.

U.S. House of Representatives, Testimony to Joint House Committees on Economic Policy, Human Rights, and Africa, , October 1987.

Oxfam America, consultant to evaluate Ethiopia oxen/seed rehabilitation program in cooperation with the Staff Council of the International Livestock Commission for Africa (ILCA), 1985-86.

National Center for Atmospheric Research, Organizing Committee, International Colloquium, "Denying Famine A Future."

House of Commons (U.K. Parliament), Testimony on Ethiopian studies in the U.S. given to United Kingdom Ethiopia Society, London, July 1984.

Research Associate, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, Summer 1985, January-September 1982.

Visiting Fulbright Scholar, Italy (Rome), November 1981-January 1982.

Visiting Fulbright Scholar, Britain (London, Oxford, and Durham), May-November 1981.

Research Associate, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, Sudan, January-May 1981.