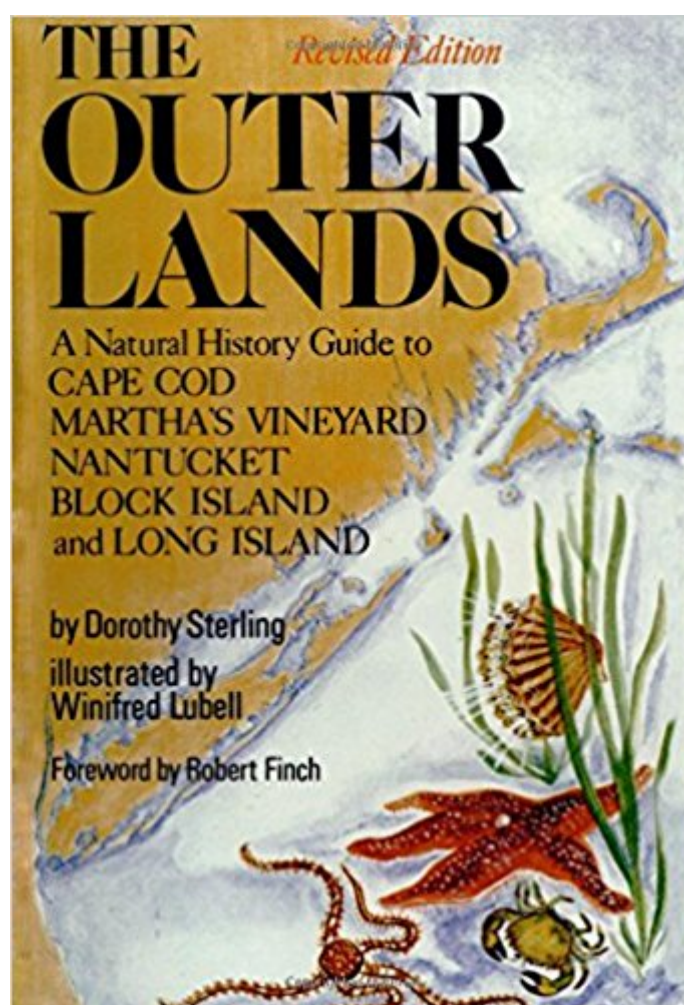


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# The Outer Lands: A Natural History Guide To Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, Block Island, And Long Island



## Synopsis

Did you know that horseshoe crabs have been around for 200 million years? That mussels "spin" long anchor lines and climb steep slopes with them? Do you know what a "Beetlebung" tree is? This is all part of Dorothy Sterling's fascinating description of The Outer Lands, and the plants and animals that inhabit this peninsula and chain of islands along our New England coast.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“This lovely volume will never leave my library shelves until I again enter the enchanted land it describes.” - Los Angeles Herald Examiner  
“This book belongs in the hands of anyone who has ever been even remotely curious about the myriad forms of teeming organisms that surround us.” - The Cape

Dorothy Sterling (1913–2008) was a native New Yorker who lived for many years on Cape Cod in Wellfleet. She made many trips to Nantucket, Block Island, Martha's Vineyard, and Long Island. She was a painstaking and thorough researcher with a long list of natural history, biography, and fiction books to her credit. Robert Finch has lived on Cape Cod for more than forty years, currently in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. He is the author of seven collections of essays, most recently of his radio scripts for his weekly radio broadcast, "A Cape Cod Notebook," on the Cape and Islands NPR station, WCAI. Artist Winifred Lubell's wonderful drawings have illustrated many of Dorothy Sterling's natural history books. She also lives on Cape Cod.

she is wonderful.

Good book

So writes Dorothy Sterling in this remarkable book. "It builds and destroys". Ostensibly a natural history guide, at times *The Outer Lands* reads more like a poetic drama. Here is the author's description of the formation of the beaches: "Waves battered against the gravel banks, carrying away rocks, stones, and clay. Undermined by the storms of winter, washed out by spring rains, boulders tumbled from the bluffs. A million times, and a million times a million, the smaller fragments of the glacial till somersaulted along the ocean floor. Pulled by winds and pushed by currents, they were swept out to sea and tossed back to shore. Rocks rubbed against each other. Stones clattered over the surface of the boulders at high tide. Filing, scraping, polishing rough edges, the endless motion of the waves turned the coarse gravel into smooth pebbles, and the pebbles into sand." Wonder abounds even in the very small things. For instance, "The architecture of a snail's shell is not only a thing of beauty but a precise bit of engineering". And indeed, so it is. There is even a section entitled "Worms Can Be Beautiful". In it Sterling makes her point, "Although 'worm', often coupled with the word 'lowly' conjures up unpleasant images, these marine worms are by no means at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder. They are lowly when compared to the readers of this book, but their bodies and behavior are admirably adapted to the tidal world in which they live. Viewed without prejudice, they can seem surprisingly beautiful". With these insights and deft description, we explore beaches, bays and sounds, marshes and dunes, ponds and bogs. The interesting facts never stop coming. We learn, for instance, that a single meadow mouse consumes about thirty pounds of vegetation per year. *The Outer Lands* has a timeless vintage feel. Much more than a reference work, it's a perfect read for a foggy afternoon. Highly recommended.

Dorothy Sterling describes the Outer Lands (The Cape, Long Island, Nantucket, etc.) very eloquently, using understandable, interesting language. She adds charming local folklore and local sights, as well as maps and drawings that contribute so much to the book. This book is great for leisure reading as well as a textbook for a marine biology class.

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sights, as well as maps and drawings that contribute so much to the book. This book is great for leisure reading as well as a textbook for a marine biology class.

I not only bought myself a copy once I had read this from the public library, but I have bought several as gifts as well. If you visit Cape Cod or ever dream of it, buy this book!

This book is a great combination of user friendliness and scientific information. I have used it for years and always learn something.

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