

## A River in the City of Fountains: An Environmental History of Kansas City and the Missouri River

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Following the war, Barriger worked briefly as president of the Union Stock Yards Railway and as president of diesel engine manufacturer Fairbanks-Morse (based in Beloit, Wisconsin) before becoming president of the Monon Railroad. Long a believer in modernization of plant and equipment, Barriger spent his years at the Monon improving the physical property, streamlining passenger service, and dieselizing the road. Running a railroad gave Barriger the impetus to develop his concept of super railways, which included proposals for limiting curvature, improving efficiency and operations, and ending government regulation. Following his departure from the Monon, Barriger worked for a short time at the troubled New Haven and as a vice-president for the (then) prosperous Rock Island.

In 1956 Barriger began a nine-year tenure as president of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie, a wealthy coal and steel hauler and a New York Central affiliate. He was recruited to that task by his friend and iconoclast railroad executive Alfred Perlman. Barriger relished the chance to run a profitable railroad, improving the property and turning the line into a symbol of his super railroad.

In 1964 he turned 65, considered the mandatory retirement age for railroad executives, but he was not finished. He was offered the presidency of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (Katy), a struggling, moribund plains railroad whose prospects seemed dim. He turned that road around. After he cut the deficit for the struggling carrier, he left in 1970, but the Katy lived on until it merged with the Union Pacific in 1982. His final presidency was of the bankrupt Boston and Maine before finishing his railroad career at the Federal Railroad Administration and then again as a traveling sales agent for the bankrupt Rock Island. He died in 1976.

His career was varied, he never retired (or did several times, as Grant explains), and his legacy is a testament to the vision and love of an industry that makes the Barriger name a legend in the field of railroading and railroad history. Grant tells the story of this visionary leader quite well. Readers will find in his biography an extraordinary tale of the travails of twentieth-century railroading through the career of this one man.

*A River in the City of Fountains: An Environmental History of Kansas City and the Missouri River*, by Amahia Mallea. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018. x, 348 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$50 hardcover, \$29.95 paperback and e-book.

Reviewer Joseph Otto is a communications specialist with the Iowa Water Center at Iowa State University. He is also a doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma, writing a dissertation on the history of agricultural drainage in Iowa.

Amahia Mallea's *A River in the City of Fountains* is an urban environmental history of Kansas City and its troubled relationship with the Missouri River. Through ten chapters organized into three sections, Mallea guides readers through a growing network of water and sewer pipes, called the city's "urban innards," that pump waters from the Missouri River through the homes and bodies of residents before returning it back to the river (6-7). Mallea argues that the growth of infrastructure in the twentieth century has artificially separated city residents from a riverscape that until very recently was wholly neglected, avoided, and largely forgotten.

While reading about actors ranging from boosterish business elites and high-minded federal engineers to concerned sanitarians, civil servants, water works directors, and environmental advocates, readers learn about two separate yet intertwined histories of riverine Kansas City. The "economic river" is that of barge navigation, flood control, and the idea that human-river interaction enriches people's lives through commerce. The "healthy river" is that of drinking water and sewage treatment and the idea that the river supports the public health of all who live in its basin. For much of the twentieth century Kansas Citians prioritized the economic river, often at the expense of the healthy river. Water was increasingly fouled by offal, sewage, and garbage, while bottomlands became sites of heavy industry and vice. Water usage was complicated by the fact that Kansas City was actually two cities—one in Kansas and one in Missouri—each with its own demographics, political structures, and approaches to public health. Plans to harmonize the river's economic and health resources appeared as early as the 1910s, but local and regional differences hindered any real progress until the postwar years, when federal intervention forced Kansas City to be more careful about what it sends downstream.

*A River in the City of Fountains* is an excellent work of urban environmental history that has something for everyone. Mallea's commentary on the divergent paths the Kansas Cities took to cope with problems of water quality and quantity runs throughout the book and is particularly insightful for discussions about race relations, urban planning, and watershed management at the local, state, and federal levels. Historians and graduate students will appreciate the detail given to kindred works of scholarship offered in the endnotes. Educators of modern U.S. history will glean lesson content about racial segregation in Kansas City as it relates to housing covenants and parks development. Watershed planners and conservationists will learn about the unmet expectations of the Pick-Sloan Plan to manage the Missouri River for the benefit of multiple users. Of interest to Iowans will be the historically burdensome role of

a large, urban water works to monitor public health in the absence of state, federal, or regional oversight, particularly as it relates to the city of Des Moines.

*The Girl in Building C: The True Story of a Teenage Tuberculosis Patient*, edited by Mary Krugerud. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2018. 227 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$17.95 paperback.

Reviewer Lisa D. Lykins is associate professor of history at Georgetown College. Her primary research interest is the history of tuberculosis sanatoria.

Sixteen-year-old Marilyn Barnes entered Ah-Gwah-Ching sanatorium near Walker, Minnesota, in 1943. She had traveled hundreds of miles from her home, similar to the journey made by thousands before her, seeking treatment for *mycobacterium tuberculosis* (TB) infection prior to effective drug therapy. Marilyn would be one of the lucky sojourners; she was able to resume her life as a 19-year-old high school junior in 1946 and lived to see her story published more than 70 years later. While at the sanatorium, she wrote more than 300 missives, which she donated to the Minnesota Historical Society in 2010. For *The Girl in Building C*, independent researcher Mary Krugerud excerpted the letters, arranged them chronologically within thematic chapters, and provided context “to illustrate the daily life of a sanatorium” (5).

The excerpts reveal that Marilyn’s interests were similar to those of other white, small-town, middle-class teenagers in the 1940s. She comments on the war, listens to favorite radio programs, writes to her *Child Life* pen pals, asks her parents for money, has “parties” with her friends, and even primps to “dazzle” one of her “crushes” (87) among the patients. Her desire for normalcy is understandable; Marilyn was seriously ill and literally surrounded by death. During her three years at Ah-Gwah-Ching 162 patients died, including both of her romantic interests.

Her letters reveal how the unfamiliar experience becomes normal and the commonplace becomes extraordinary. Marilyn’s references to procedures such as aspiration, artificial pneumothorax, and thorocoplasty seem almost casual. Patient deaths are sad but routine. On the other hand, she is jubilant when her doctor gives her permission to walk to the bathroom once daily. She titles the letter detailing this event “MY LUCKY DAY!!” and enthuses, “Oh gosh, it’s such a thrill. . . . I’m so happy I feel just like getting up and shouting” (141). She concludes the letter with reactions to the previous night’s news that World War II was over. Patients celebrated with an “‘illegal’ open house” and listened to “band music and patriotic programs on the radio” (142); her own victory day was still 13 months away.