

Gateways to Commerce: the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' 9-Foot Channel Project on the Upper Mississippi River

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On balance, though, this is a well-researched, cogently argued, readably written, and intellectually significant book. It deserves a wide reading by historians as well as political scientists.

Gateways to Commerce: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 9-Foot Channel Project on the Upper Mississippi River, by William Patrick O'Brien, Mary Yeater Rathbun, and Patrick O'Bannon; edited by Christine Whitacre. Denver: National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1992. 238 pages. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Paper.

REVIEWED BY PHILIP V. SCARPINO, INDIANA UNIVERSITY/PURDUE UNIVERSITY, INDIANAPOLIS

This nicely illustrated volume had its genesis in three separate contract history projects for the National Park Service's Rocky Mountain Region. In 1986 the Rocky Mountain Region contracted with the St. Paul District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to produce documentation of the locks and dams in the St. Paul district for the Historic American Engineering Record. Two additional contracts with the Rock Island and St. Louis districts finished documenting the twenty-six locks and dams that make up the nine-foot channel project on the upper Mississippi. The completion of the documentation of all twenty-six locks and dams provided an important body of source material about one of the most significant engineering accomplishments in the history of inland navigation in the first half of the twentieth century. These materials are now a part of the collections of the Historic American Engineering Record in the Library of Congress.

Apparently in an effort to make a summary of the results of these three contracts available to a larger public, the Rocky Mountain Region elected to have Christine Whitacre edit the work of William Patrick O'Brien, Mary Yeater Rathbun, and Patrick O'Bannon into *Gateways to Commerce*. In twenty-seven pages, including notes and pictures, the first four chapters provide background on navigation on the upper Mississippi from the early 1800s to the late 1920s, and on the beginning of the construction of the nine-foot channel. Chapters five and six examine the nine-foot channel project from 1929 to 1933 and set the stage for the heart of the volume, found in chapters seven and eight: "From Rollers to Tainters: The Changing Technology of the 9-Foot Channel" and "Case Study: The Construction of Lock and Dam No. 26." Chapter nine briefly examines the story of the nine-foot channel after World

War II; and chapter ten concludes with a lengthy, seventy-one-page, lock-and-dam by lock-and-dam examination of "The Locks and Dams—And Those Who Built Them."

The strength of *Gateways to Commerce* is in chapters seven and eight, which discuss the engineering of the locks and dams. There is far too much detail here for the casual reader; however, much awaits anyone who has an interest in the way that the Corps of Engineers planned, constructed, adapted, modified, refined, and developed the engineering components of this navigation system that turned the free-flowing Mississippi into a series of slack-water pools. Chapter seven carefully examines the engineering history of the system component-by-component: Roller gates, Tainter gates, architecture, locks, and foundations. One theme that emerges clearly is the degree to which good engineering represents careful, intelligent trial and error. The chapter is illustrated with useful drawings and photographs that clarify the structural descriptions and reinforce significant points such as the transition from roller gates to tainter gates.

Overall, this is a very uneven volume. Except in the specifics of the history of engineering, it adds little to the overall body of knowledge about the history of the upper Mississippi. Many of the chapters offer superficial overviews, and the vitality of some of the individual chapters overpowers the sum of the parts. Despite some high points, *Gateways to Commerce* has not synthesized information from the original contracts in a way that is likely to be of interest to the general reader or useful to professionals in a range of disciplines.

Exploring Missouri's Legacy: State Parks and Historic Sites, edited by Susan Flader. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992. xiv, 352 pp. Color photographs, bibliographical essay, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY REBECCA CONARD, WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

Exploring Missouri's Legacy is a stunning celebration of Missouri's state park system. In a book richly illustrated with more than two hundred color photographs, the authors have sought to "capture the essence" of seventy-eight state parks and historic sites (x). This book, however, is emphatically not a guide: there is only one map in all of its 352 pages (not nearly enough), and its oversize, coffee-table format won't stow easily with the outdoor gear. Rather, the closing lines of the preface seem to sum up the collective vision

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