

"Missouri River Music" almost makes readers forget that there is a river at the heart of the story, or that the story of music and the river along the Missouri is in many ways the story of humans anywhere, pursuing any enterprise.

I suppose it is the reviewer's job to reach a conclusion, a summing up that explains "what it all means." Knopp's book resists that effort; there are gems large and small—stories we know pretty well and stories that are new—throughout these reflections. Students of the land and people of the Midwest will find much that is rewarding here. Students of rivers will find even more.

*The Bark River Chronicles: Stories from a Wisconsin Watershed*, by Milton J. Bates. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2012. vii, 293 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$18.95 paper.

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The sixty-some miles of the Bark River meander through a landscape sculpted by the same Wisconsin ice advance that shaped the heavily tiled pothole region of rural north central Iowa. The Bark, however, flows through exurban Milwaukee, linking at least six lakes and as many cattail marshes in its course. Bates's miscellany of story and history attaches to the chronicle of a single float season's trip on the river—the imagined composite of 30 years of paddling.

Although Bates hopes that "the story of the Bark River is the story of Wisconsin" (196), his book is really a river story of dams, mills, ice harvests, canal schemes, floods, lakeside development, fish, fishing, and wetland conservation. As the author elsewhere happily admits, "In the midst of suburban sprawl and commuter traffic, the Bark remains a place apart" (125). The book lacks the more singular focus of Lynne Heasley's *A Thousand Pieces of Paradise: Landscape and Property in the Kickapoo Valley* (2005), which analyzes land use and ideas of property on another Wisconsin watershed, but in its best moments it captures the rhythms, windings, and repetitions of a river trip by canoe. It chronicles the culverts and beaver dams on a stream small enough to be left off the average atlas map of Wisconsin while showing that this "unsung river" (157) powered the foundation of several towns, that its lakes and millponds continue to be a focus for development and recreation, and that its flood threats and pollution are reminders that we neglect the environment at our peril.