vate property in the West, provide examples of why it is necessary to look bey-
ond what is built on the earth’s surface. And we can imagine that much of
the information contained in the essays in part four will be used to develop
context for evaluating resources by the next generations of cultural resource
managers and preservationists. For those of us whose work includes the tasks
of describing the existing conditions of a particular place and assessing the
historical integrity of extant landscape features, George Henderson’s dis-
cussion of the four discourses of landscape scholarship seems fairly remote.
Moreover, the bias in the authors’ case studies towards the urban and, to a lesser
degree, the eastern, is a niggling source of irritation for those of us who live
and work in the West, where the “vacant” areas often speak more directly to
the human experience than the built environment.

*Everyday America* contains so much, from so many disciplines, from so
many perspectives, that it will easily interest a wide-ranging audience—an
audience every bit as inclusive as the field of cultural landscape studies. For
those of us who must work within public agency guidelines, the book may be
unsettling and even dangerous, because one of the conclusions that might
be drawn from reading it is that methodologies that reduce landscape stud-
ies to formulaic processes are not what J. B. Jackson had in mind. Although
we need structure to complete our work, we shouldn’t become too fond of
our databases.

Janene Caywood

Historical Research Associates, Inc.
Missoula, MT

*New Orleans has long exemplified the conflicting spatial characteristics of
site and situation. Few will argue that the city’s exact location is a poor one.
Virtually surrounded by water and built on a swamp that must be continu-
ously drained, New Orleans is a soggy and endangered place. However, the
Crescent City lies close to land’s end along North America’s most important
river system. Products from nearly three dozen U.S. states and Canadian
provinces pass through its busy port. This situation at the nexus of America’s
riparian funnel gives a tremendous advantage relative to other American cities.
The site and situation of New Orleans make its riverfront a zone of human
interaction with the environment as well as an area of competition for pub-
lic and private space.*

Ari Kelman’s *A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Or-
leans* is a trenchant study of New Orleans, its environment, and its public his-
tory. However, its greatest value is as a case study for important issues that
confront all cities. Kelman intends to show that both nature and public space
remain integral parts of modern cities in spite of popular and some academic protestations to the contrary. His foci are the relationship between the city and the river and the competing social constructs that have shaped the waterfront and its use. Hence the book is both an environmental history and a public history.

The volume consists of five chapters and an epilogue, which at first glance seem episodic. Yet the author ties them together to show the evolution of human attempts to control the river and to define who constitute the “public” that will manage the riverfront. The first chapter commences in 1807 with a lawsuit by Edward Livingston to claim ownership of the river’s batture (riverbank that is flooded at high runoff but exposed the rest of the time.) In reality this was both a conflict between the city’s French and Spanish elite and the new American culture and between public versus private ownership of the riverfront. The city lost the case but ultimately won the war with appeals that health and citizenship would benefit from contact with nature.

Chapter 2 discusses the steamboat era and the equating of the “public good” with financial success of the port. Kelman portrays the growing influence of commercial leaders in the city who gained control of the waterfront, displacing many recreationists yet ironically opening a window of escape for runaway slaves. The third chapter shows how both the physical environment of New Orleans and the human response to the threat of yellow fever allowed the disease to reassert nature’s place in the city. Faced with a crisis outbreak in 1853, the city’s commercial elite conspired to block news of the epidemic in order to protect trade. Initially the businessmen believed that only immigrants, the poor, and morally reprehensible people contracted the disease and they were not held to be members of the “public.” As the death toll approached ten percent of the city’s population, it destroyed this myth while to a limited degree empowering women and slaves.

The next chapter considers the postbellum shift to railroads as the primary transportation link and the complete exclusion of all but railroad workers and customers from the riverfront. This era separated people physically and mentally from the natural environment as technology seemed to conquer the river. The final chapter discusses the 1927 flood, which harshly demonstrated the river’s continuing influence on the city as well as the extension of disenfranchisement from the “public” to include those living outside the city. Finally, the epilogue details the fight to block an interstate connector that would have separated the riverfront from the French Quarter and the eventual reopening of the riverfront to general public access. Yet even that step demonstrated the continued power of the commercial elite as the riverfront evolved into a clone of other urban tourist zones. Kelman observes that the riverfront is now what the commercial elite always wanted, “a landscape of power, order, and discipline, a tableau of progress” (p. 216).

Important lessons arise from this case study. For environmental historians, the book demonstrates the intimate connection of the natural environment and a human population seeking to control it. No matter how artificial a place
seems, the environment has helped to shape it and continues to play an active role. For public historians, it is a wonderful portrayal of the competition for power and space in an urban environment through manipulation of government, information, and nature.

*A River and Its City* contains thirty-nine excellent maps and photographs as well as notes and a useful bibliography. Kelman is an engaging writer and the book should enjoy considerable popular success as well as scholarly acclaim. He manages to include such diverse but related subjects as race relations, women’s roles in society, business history, transportation technology, geological and hydrological processes, anecdotal data, and the occasional postmodern perspective. This volume should become a classic for understanding New Orleans. It will also prove a valuable resource for those studying the competition for power and control of an evolving and occasionally dangerous interface between humans and the environment.

LARY DILSAVER

University of South Alabama

*The River We Have Wrought: A History of the Upper Mississippi* by JOHN O. ANFINSON. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003; xxi + 366 pp., illustrations, tables, photographs, notes, index; clothbound, $29.95.

In this new history of the upper Mississippi River, author John Anfinson argues that the river “is defined more by the visions that made it a navigation channel than by its own natural character” (p. 291). What happened on the river’s upper reaches—essentially the St. Louis to St. Paul section—paralleled the fates of our country’s other great rivers in the twentieth century. Like the Colorado, Missouri, and Columbia rivers, the upper Mississippi became an intensely managed landscape, where political will and engineering expertise created a causeway that largely denied the river’s nature. *The River We Have Wrought: A History of the Upper Mississippi,* provides the first comprehensive history of perhaps the least understood portion of the Mississippi River.

At the center of Anfinson’s history is the two-decade effort to establish a nine-foot shipping channel through the rich agricultural regions of five Midwestern states: Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. It is a history dominated by the author’s focus on how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers responded to episodic political pressure from agricultural interests, chambers of commerce in cities along the river, and a phalanx of regional and local politicians to channelize the river. Anfinson emphasizes the Corps’s skepticism over campaigns to build a nearly five-hundred-mile shipping sluice on a river notorious for heavy siltation, shifting river channels, and broad floodplains.

For readers accustomed to stories depicting Corps engineers as overly eager dam-builders, the history of upper Mississippi River development will seem contrarian, but the engineers approached projects on the upper Mis-