

Oh Where, Oh Where Has My River Gone?

A Ground-Breaking Study of a Key Player in the American Heartland

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The American Geographical Society announces release of Special Publication Number 42, "Historical Channel Changes of the Kansas River and its Major Tributaries." The Kansas River, flowing into the Missouri River at Kansas City, drains an area of approximately 60,000 square miles within the central Great Plains. Twenty-five pages of text discuss historical changes in the Kansas River system in considerable detail, but in language accessible to interested citizens. The volume includes 43 pages of 1:50,000 maps depicting channel positions color-keyed to sources ranging from earliest county atlases of the 1850s to recent satellite images, all plotted on a 2002 black-and-white, fine-resolution imagery base. Coverage is included for all or parts of the Kansas, Wakarusa, Delaware, Blue, Republican, Smoky Hill, Solomon and Saline Rivers.

AGS Special Publication 42 was authored by Wakefield Dort, Jr., Professor Emeritus at the University of Kansas, who joined the Department of Geology in 1957. He retired from regular teaching in 1993, but his research activities have continued right up to the present. Both his research and teaching have focused on geomorphology, the study of the processes that shape the Earth's surface, the landforms they create, and the deposits they leave behind. He also has a major interest in glaciation of the Northern Rocky Mountains and Great Plains. The list of his publications contains more than 100 titles.

This volume benefits from more than three decades of research that began with a request by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a study of instability in the Kansas River system in the 1970s. In the Preface to the volume, Richard Marston remarked that, "This atlas was first conceived and written most specifically for the farmers and ranchers and others whose livelihoods and well-being depend directly on the Kansas River and its tributaries. However, the principles discussed here, and the knowledge gained from this study, can be applied by engineers, planners, and scientists to similar river systems anywhere in the world." This 80-page long atlas presents information about channel development, stable versus unstable histories, straight versus meandering reaches, meander migration and cutoff, contrasting degrees of meandering, pulses of extensive deposition and erosion and differing patterns of channel activity in sub-parallel tributaries. Some aspects of these topics have received little or no mention in standard textbooks. These discussions, augmented by the numerous maps of actual river histories, can therefore serve as educational tools by providing a basis for lecture or laboratory exercises or advanced studies – regardless of where a student resides.

Copies of AGS Special Publication 42 can be ordered for U.S. \$50.00 plus \$7.50 for shipping and handling, by sending check, money order, or credit card order (AmEx, VISA, Mastercard) to: The American Geographical Society, 120 Wall Street, Suite 100, New York, NY 10005-3904. Phone: 212-422-5456, Fax 212-422-5480, email ags@amergeog.org