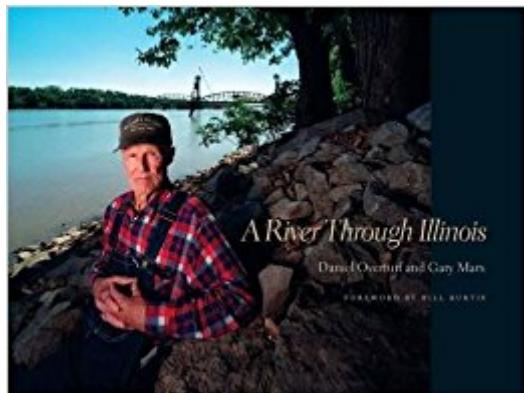


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A River Through Illinois



Synopsis

A River Through Illinois, an innovative collaboration by journalist Gary Marx and award-winning photographer Daniel Overturf, carries readers down the 330-mile Illinois Waterway, from the urban landscape of Chicago to the state's most rural areas. Combining literary impressions, history, and personal narrative with stunning color photographs, this remarkable book transports readers to places most have never been: three hundred feet below the city of Chicago in a TARP pump station, above the Illinois River in a lift-bridge operator's hut, in the wheelhouse of a towboat pushing twenty thousand tons. The story of the river is told by the people who live along the waterway's banks and work its course, who rely on it for their livelihoods, their recreation, and their spiritual sustenance. More than one hundred original color photographs and dozens of conversations with waterway residents, workers, and visitors capture the essence of the waterway, exposing its course and uncovering its past. Traveling through the Illinois & Michigan Canal, Florence, Hardin, Lemont, and Chicago, readers discover a connection to a sense of place and to the early inhabitants of the state. Bar crews, lockmasters, engineers, and those whose memories stretch to the days of steamboats offer their views on the evolution and navigational importance of the waterway. Readers encounter such places as Pekin, LaGrange, Peru, and Joliet as a towboat works its way up the waterway that represents commerce and jobs, the challenge of living and working away from home, and following dreams. The book also introduces Chicago fishermen and wastewater engineers, a city bridge machinist and a marine police officer, who offer insights aboard a patrol boat on the Chicago River, inside a bascule bridge, and in a sailboat marina, revealing an engineering marvel upstream that creates an environmental nightmare downstream. From Mud Creek to Peoria Lakes, a biologist, an ecologist, and a hydrologist consider the edge of the watershed Meredosia, Chandlerville, Henry, the Kankakee River and its tributaries and discuss the changing nature of the river, including new threats such as sedimentation, and the loss of habitat. Hunters, commercial fishermen, and bridge tenders share their stories that demonstrate resiliency in the face of great change. A River Through Illinois represents a unique blend of portraits, landscapes, panoramic 360-degree photographs, and personal narratives that create a cast of characters, including the river itself, who give voice to the life of this important waterway. 

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“A River Through Illinois is a wonderful interlacing of historical documentation and good old storytelling. This book imparts a heartfelt sense of place and life of the Illinois River.” •Bonnie Speed, director of the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University
“This long voyage of Daniel Overturf and Gary Marks is a testimony of their love of the river and the life around it. I highly recommend that you take this journey with them.” •Photographer Mary Ellen Marks “A River Through Illinois is a wonderful, valuable, historical record of the area and its people.” •Photographer Arnold Newman “Gary Marx tells this story with words that paint memorable pictures and Daniel Overturf with photos that speak with eloquence. . . . They remind us that this river does not just run through our state. It runs through our souls.” •Dick Durbin, United States Senator from Illinois

Daniel Overturf is an associate professor and former chair of the Department of Cinema and Photography at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and has worked as a photographer and teacher in New Mexico, Kansas, Nevada, and Alberta, Canada. Gary Marx is a freelance writer and editor and an award-winning journalist now with the Kansas City Star. He has worked as a reporter, editor, and columnist at several newspapers in the Midwest.

Excellent coffee table book on the Illinois river. This guy Overturf has a fantastic eye when it comes to portraiture. The writer, Gary Marx, know his way around a narrative. The pair have done a fine job on this book.

Learned a lot!

If you are "into" the river, from the Midwest or love boating, you will love this book. It's not for the casual reader who loves beautiful pictures. It is an individual, personal and moving tale through one person's "very personal feelings" about boating the Illinois River and those feelings and views. Very worth the price for a lover of all this.

Gary Marx paints a fascinating picture of the history and geography of the Illinois River and peoples it with such interesting individuals and their stories! The gorgeous photographs of Daniel Overturf and the maps tie it all together. You do not have to live in Illinois to enjoy this book but it makes you want to live there! I recommend it highly. *A River Through Illinois*

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