

## Book Review

*World Canals: Inland Navigation Past and Present.* Charles Hadfield. New York: Facts On File Publications, 1986. \$24.95 cloth.

Charles Hadfield has spent a lifetime immersed in canals, the evolution of their design, engineering, and economic consequences. He is an authority on waterways of England and his first-hand knowledge of the intricate networks of northwestern Europe is remarkable. However, this book is a world survey in which we predictably find the depth of his treatment inversely proportional to the distance from his home. His course through Southeast Asia is shallow indeed and virtually runs aground here in Florida in his analysis of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal. Hadfield considers the demise of this ecological disaster a "set-back" (p. 380) which he attributes to its "effect on the environment, especially the scenic Oklawaha Valley."

This book has sixteen chapters divided into two parts -- Old World and New World, two-thirds of the text devoted to the former. But this is no watered down bargain barging through exotic places; it is an attractive, profusely illustrated account that will please many cultural geographers, historians, folklorists, and canal buffs (who it seems are internationally organized and the acknowledged sponsors of this book). The simple maps are nicely done and the selection of illustrations most appropriate and up-to-date (some are 1985 events). In fact, the entire book is a quality publishing effort that seems strangely underpriced.

It is clear that Hadfield knows his canals and the boats that use them. His limpid prose is free of the chanteyman's jargon, and we sense he is a formidable scholar. There are five packed pages devoted to meticulous citations of the quotations that appear in every chapter. There is an eleven page cross-referenced index with well over one thousand entries.

Why then, with such potent cargo in the hold, are the scholarly references to his source material missing from his manifest? Captain Hadfield claims there was no room in his vessel for such dead weight, but I suspect the owners told him to discourage academic stowaways for a more lively passenger list. What a shame to launch so fine a study and leave the sources locked up in the Captain's cabin. Barratry, I'd call it!

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