
book review

Damming the Delaware: The Rise and Fall of Tocks Island Dam. Richard C. Albert. 1987. The Pennsylvania State University Press. University Park, PA. 202 p.

The Delaware River is neither a large river nor a long river. Its drainage area is modest and it lacks some of the grandeur of the world's "great" rivers. Yet, this river has contributed significantly to the history of this nation. Indeed, if the Delaware River hadn't served as an obstacle to the British pursuit of General Washington's army after the fall of New York City, many of us might be collecting our paychecks from Britain's Countryside Commission rather than the National Park Service!

Today, the mainstem of the Delaware River remains undammed, despite the fact that the river and its tribu-

taries provide drinking water to more than 10 percent of the U.S. populations. Situated along the borders of the populous states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, the river also serves as an exceptional recreation resource within easy reach of more than 20 million Americans. Two units of the National Park Service, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, are located along the upper and middle reaches of the mainstem of the Delaware River.

Damming the Delaware is a fascinating account of 200 years of water management. The history of the Tocks Island Dam project, which was to have created a major reservoir in what is now Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, is traced from an early 1783 anti-dam treaty, through multiple U.S. Supreme Court decisions (1931, 1954) and a highly emotional 1970s environmental controversy, to a historic "Good Faith" agreement, in which the four states within the Delaware

River basin derived a new formula for the equitable apportionment of the basin's water. The book provides insight into the water politics of four states (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware), two cities (New York City and Philadelphia), and the federal government, as well as the influence of the environmental movement over major public works projects. The book also provides a history of the establishment of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Middle Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, the latter of which was created to keep the Tocks Island Dam from being built in the National Recreation Area.

Damming the Delaware is a thoroughly researched and well written synthesis of public record, which serves as an invaluable political case study. As such, it should be of interest to National Park Service policy makers and managers as well as to water resource professionals.

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