

# ALLEN ANTHONY'S RIVER AT THE DOOR: UNUSUAL EXPERIENCES IN ISOLATED AREAS

Keith M. Heim, Ph.D.

Anthony, a native Kentuckian, has written five articles on areas of western Kentucky and Tennessee whose common thread is their close identification with rivers of the area. The articles, well-researched in original and secondary sources and in some instances fleshed out through personal interviews with residents of these areas, deal with Linton, Kentucky, and the mail service to Dover, Tennessee; Wolf Island; Kentucky Bend; Reverie, Tennessee; and Corona, Tennessee.

In each, the early history of the area is set forth, the geography explained in detail, and insights into the economic and social development are afforded. In the case of Linton, we see that the mail boat on the Cumberland provided an important tie with the outside for the residents of western Trigg County. They not only received their mail from the daily run, but many rode the boat to Dover to the dentist (hoping to get a tooth yanked out in time to make the return trip without having to stay overnight), to buy supplies, to conduct legal business, to get married, or even to pick up a little "white whiskey." Eggs, railroad ties cut from surrounding forests, and other products were sent to market, and the passengers who filled the deck waved gaily to those who gathered on the banks to watch the boat go by. The discontinuance of mail service on the river in June of 1934, brought an end to an institution whose social aspects matched perhaps its economic aspects.

Researchers will find maps and discussions relating to the boundaries of Kentucky (relating to Kentucky Bend and Wolf Island) useful, but the quality of the photos reproduced in the book is uneven and often disappointing. Although four of the five articles have been published previously in **The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society**, **The Filson Club History Quarterly**, and **The Kentucky Folklore Record**, it is an interesting, well-documented and well-written book which many readers will want for their own.

Note: Allen Anthony: **River At The Door: Unusual Experiences in Isolated Areas**. Fort Davis, Texas: River Microstudies, 1987. 143 pp. Paperback.