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Book Review

MISSOURI LAWYER. By John T. Barker. Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, 1949.
Pp. 391. \$3.50.

If a personal liking for the author of a book serves to disqualify one as a reviewer I should not be writing this review of John T. Barker's "Missouri Lawyer." I have too often enjoyed hearing "General" Barker tell some of the experiences related in this book—and others which, to my sorrow, aren't—to be able to pretend that I am a critical and unbiased judge of his anecdotal, and other, abilities. Any readers of this review are now forewarned that I like, and enjoy, both the "General" and his book.

I object strenuously to the fact that the title of the book was not "One Missouri Lawyer." The missing word "One" is necessary to set the author apart from most of our Missouri lawyers. The reader of this book must realize that most Missouri lawyers didn't start in Carrollton; move to La Plata; then on to the Legislature and become the Speaker of the House; then become Attorney-General—with side excursions on the chautauqua circuit; engage in practice in Kansas City, being City Counselor for a time; then move on to Washington as a special assistant to the Attorney-General of the United States; marry and raise a family in the process; breeze through the American Bar Association and the American Judicature Society; try cases, whether little or big, with equal gusto and skill; meet and enjoy more people over the entire country than most of us know to exist; and tell of every one of these with such a keen sense of enjoyment that his stories of his well-remembered experiences bring them alive. John T. Barker has done them all, and his doing of them and his recital of his experiences and of the settings and personalities involved and encountered by him convinces me that he is the only "Missouri Lawyer" known to me who could take them all in stride and remember and set them down.

Whether it be the "General's" first client, who had been arrested for keeping a vicious dog, or T. J. Pendergast, a new client named "Truman," a passing acquaintance, a bit of history, a bite by Man O' War, police court or the Supreme Court, or any of the author's varied clients and experiences, he finds room to mention and comment upon the time, the place and the person involved.

Out of this full recital of one man's experiences in the law and with people, it appears that not only does John T. Barker live a full life—which he is still doing, up to the hilt—but that he enjoys every bit of what comes his way. If it is anything but routine, he likes it. As he says: "It has been my good fortune to live in a time and place of action and interest." Any reader of this book will agree with him. Every reader of it is again warned, however, not to expect the impossible of all other Missouri lawyers. We are not all John T. Barkers.

LEE-CARL OVERSTREET

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