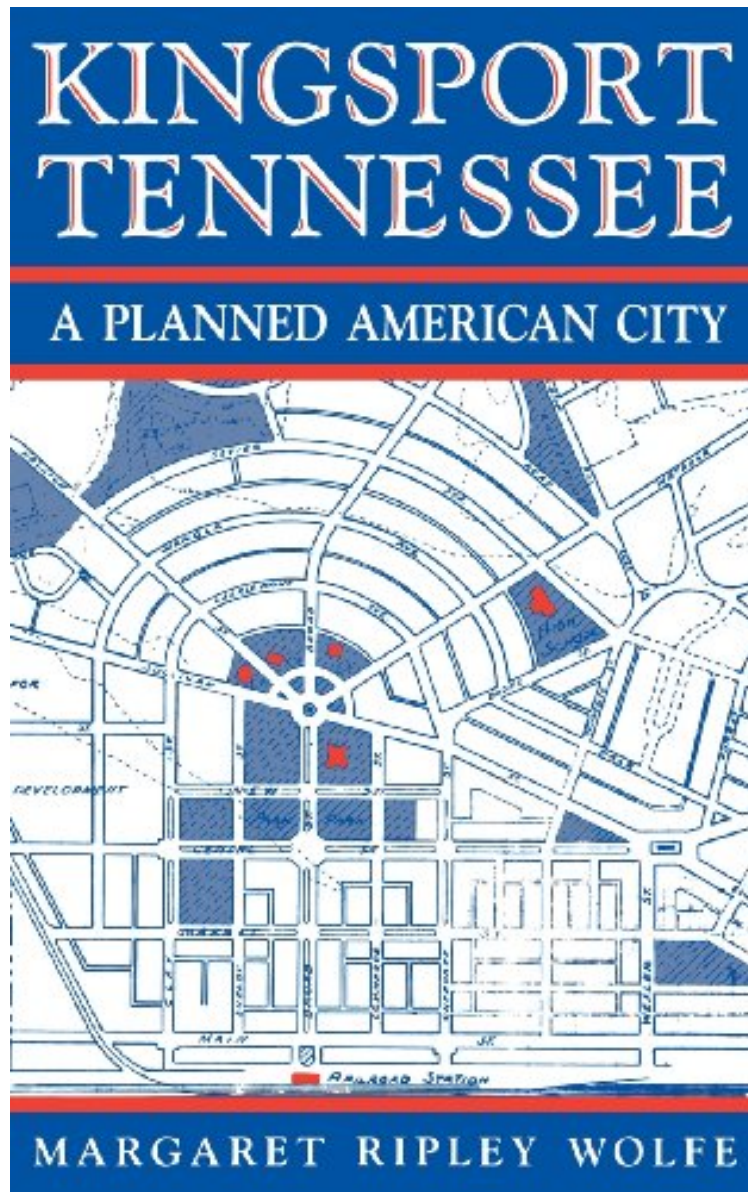


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Kingsport, Tennessee: A Planned American City

Margaret Ripley Wolfe

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Margaret Ripley Wolfe : Kingsport, Tennessee: A Planned American City before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kingsport, Tennessee: A Planned American City:

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review helpful. Kingsport, A planned American City By Lawrence Excellent book that is very well written. Margaret Ripley Wolfe has done extensive research on the building of the city of Kingsport. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in and loves the city. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Good overview of industrialization of small southern town By Glen Moody, proprietor--Moody Bookstore Kingsport's population peak during WWII has never returned again, despite a half century of growth by annexation. Professor Wolfe has done a very fine job of archival research and interviews to enlighten the reader. Though her survey is more critical, obviously, than a publication each decade of the 90's by the local Rotary Club, Wolfe adds the human element and anecdotal illustrations to complement the Rotary's advertising bent. City builder J. Fred Johnson has become a legendary and almost apocrypha figure for this town in the foothills of Southern Appalachia. Middle class factory workers and country club executives dominated this city during the 20th century. But the 21 century has arrived as industrial downsizing is taking a toll. Wolfe tells the true story as it really happened, 'warts and all.' Hopefully either Professor Wolfe or someone else will fill in more details and produce a future volume that fills in the gaps of the history of this city whose most prominent claim to fame is the hometown and idyllic setting of Lisa Alther's veiled trashy novel, "Kin flicks."

Kingsport, Tennessee, was the first thoroughly diversified, professionally planned, and privately financed city in twentieth-century America. The advent of this so-called model city, a glittering new industrial jewel in the green mountains, offered area residents an alternative to rural life and staid small-town existence as the new century dawned. Neither an Appalachian hamlet nor a company town, Kingsport developed as a self-proclaimed "All-American City." Produced by the marriage of New South philosophy and Progressivism, born of a passing historical moment when capitalists turned their attention to Southern Appalachia, and nurtured by the Protestant work ethic, Kingsport today reflects its heritage. From flaunting its patriotism with grandiose Fourth of July parades to being defensive about its pollution, the city exhibits values almost stereotypically those of middle-class America. But loss of vision and a decline in the quality of leadership plague contemporary Kingsport, and, like other American industrial strongholds, it is buffeted by the winds of the high-tech revolution and the changing world economy. This first full-length biography of Kingsport challenges interpretations of regional history that promote the colonial and poverty models. Margaret Ripley Wolfe brings to it the advantage of an insider's perspective. In considering the special roles of capital, labor, industry, and government over seven decades, she neither patronizes Appalachian workers nor treats developers and industrialists as villains. Her book will interest scholars of urbanization, city planning, landscape architecture, and industrialization, as well as local history enthusiasts.

About the Author Margaret Ripley Wolfe is a native of the Kingsport area and professor of history at East Tennessee State University.