

The River Road Journal

Art, Literature, History, and Travel on the Mississippi River
Volume One Issue One \$5.00

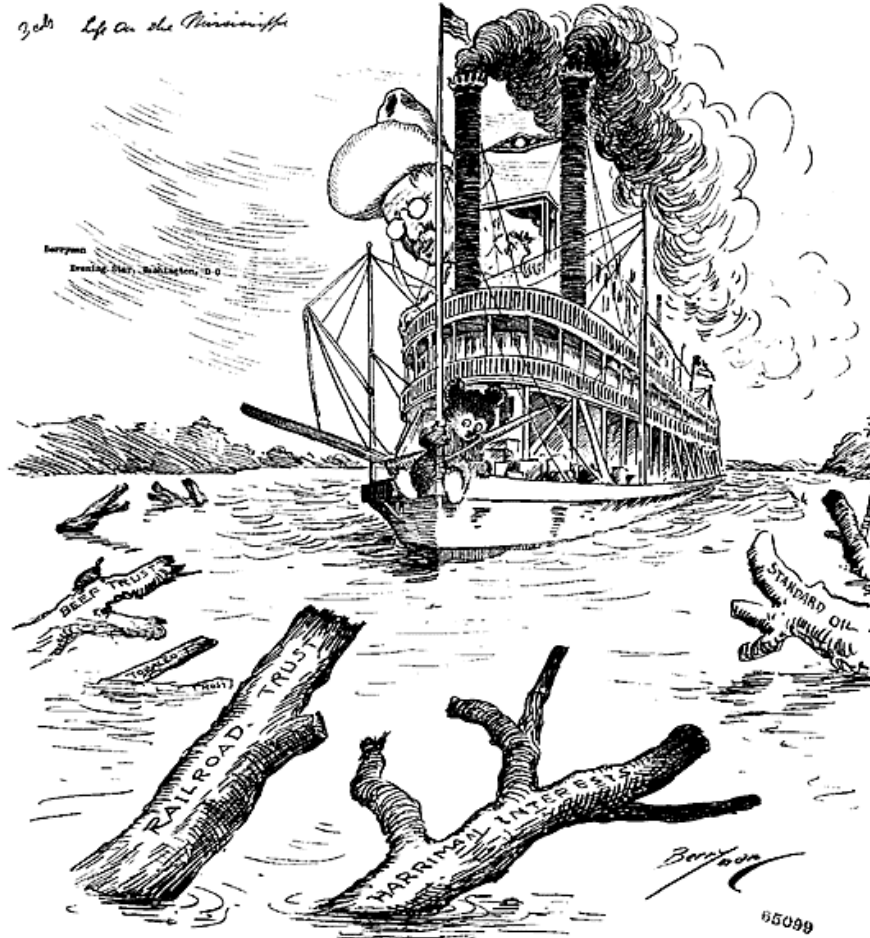


Photo Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

With the passage of The Northwest Ordinance in 1789, the first United States Congress declared: "*The navigable waters leading into the Mississippi and Saint Lawrence and the carrying places between the same shall be common highways and forever free.*"

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Mississippi River Facts

- The Mississippi is the longest river in North America
- The Mississippi River winds its way 2,552 miles as it travels from the headwaters in northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana.
- The river begins 1,475 feet above sea level.
- The Mississippi passes through ten states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana.
- The Mississippi--Missouri River system is the world's fourth longest. Only the Nile, Amazon and Yangtze Rivers are longer.
- The Mississippi River drains approximately 40% of the continental United States-all or part of 31 states, and two Canadian provinces, Ontario and Manitoba.
- The total drainage area of the Mississippi River is approximately 1.25 million square miles.
- The Mississippi releases 2.3 million cubic feet of water per second into the Gulf of Mexico and more than 400-million cubic yards of mud, sand and gravel each year.
- The Mississippi River provides transport for more than 472-million tons of cargo each year, including 46% of the grain exported from the United States.
- More than 12 million people live in the 125 counties and parishes that border the Mississippi River.
- The Mississippi River valley generates over \$7 billion in agricultural and forest products and \$29 million in manufacturing goods each year.
- The Mississippi is a major flyway for migratory birds. It is used by up to 40% of North America's duck, goose, swan and eagle populations.
- Waterfowl hunting in the flyway is valued at \$58 million per year and sport fishing is valued at over \$100 million annually.
- The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge reports 3.5 million visits a year. That's more than the number of visits to Yellowstone National Park.
- International visitors spend an estimated \$2.6 billion each year throughout the ten river states, generating more than 53,000 jobs.
- The Mississippi River is a water source for over 4 million people.
- A system of 29 locks and dams control navigation on the Upper Mississippi between Minneapolis, Minnesota and St. Louis, Missouri.

The Great Flood of 1993

The intense rainfall that deluged the upper Mississippi River basin in the spring and summer of 1993 caused the largest flood ever measured at St. Louis. This unprecedented event in nine Midwestern states generated the highest flood crests ever recorded at 95 measuring stations on the region's rivers. The catastrophic flooding caused 38 deaths, as well as extensive damage to property and agriculture; required the evacuation of tens of thousands of people; and created large-scale disruptions in transportation, business, and water and sewer services. The President declared 505 counties to be federal disaster areas, and estimates of the damage reached \$16 billion.

The 1993 flood affected most of the upper Mississippi River basin. The basin drains all or part of 13 states and encompasses about 714,000 square miles, or 24 percent of the contiguous United States. The upper basin includes the Mississippi River from its source in Minnesota to its confluence with the Ohio River at Cairo, Illinois. Its principal tributary is the Missouri River, which joins the Mississippi at St. Louis, Missouri. Other major tributaries include the Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Des Moines, and Illinois rivers.

A persistent atmospheric pattern during the summer of 1993 caused excessive rainfall across much of the upper Mississippi River basin. Major flooding resulted primarily from a series of heavy rainfalls from mid-June through late July. A change in the upper air's circulation pattern created drier conditions in late July and early August, but heavy rainstorms brought more flooding to parts of the upper basin in mid-August. The rainfall over the upper Mississippi River basin from May to August 1993 is unmatched in the historical records of the central United States. Generally, rainfall from the Dakotas to Missouri and Illinois was well above normal.

Extreme flooding of major rivers like the Mississippi and Missouri rivers seldom occurs in the summer. During a typical Midwestern summer, a few localized heavy rains are scattered throughout the region. In 1993, the rare combination of closely timed and record-level rainfall occurred on both the lower Missouri and upper Mississippi basins, causing a record flood at St. Louis.

The National Weather Service reported that the extended duration of the flood was also extremely rare. Typically, periods of above-average rainfall during a Midwestern summer last from 2 to 5 weeks, sometimes persisting up to 8 weeks. In 1993, major flooding continued throughout the summer along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. For example, as of September 1, 1993, Hannibal, Missouri, had experienced 153 consecutive days, or about 22 weeks, of water above flood level. Flooding continued through the middle of September in many regions along the Mississippi River. →

Significant damage occurred to about 100,000 residences, more than 5,000 businesses, many bridges, hundreds of miles of roads and railroads, and 33 airports. The flood also closed the major rivers to navigation and affected about 200 municipal water systems, and 388 wastewater facilities.

FEMA reported that about 6.6 million acres in the floodplain were flooded in 1993, of which 63.4 percent were agricultural lands and 2.5 percent were urban areas. The remaining acres in the floodplain were normally covered by water, were wetlands, and/or were used for other purposes.

According to U.S. Army Corps of Engineer records, 157 of the 193 Corps levees found in areas affected by the 1993 flood prevented rivers from flooding about 1 million acres and causing \$7.4 billion in damage. Another 32 levees withstood floodwaters until the water rose above the levees and overtopped them. Four other levees were breached or otherwise allowed water into protected areas before the levees' design capacity was exceeded. The Corps estimated the damage caused by the overtoppings and breachings of these 36 levees at about \$450 million.

The Corps operates 98 reservoirs in the upper Mississippi River basin to reduce flood damage. Of these, 22 were constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation. While not all of the reservoirs were in the flooded area, most had some impact on the flood because they stored water. Corps headquarters officials said the reservoirs stored more than 20 million acre-feet of floodwater on August 1, 1993, reducing flood levels throughout much of the flood area—for example, lowering the crest of the Mississippi River at St. Louis on that day by 5 feet. In addition to the reservoirs, the Corps has built or improved more than 2,200 miles of levees for the protection of communities and agriculture in the basin.

Of the 181 levees for which the Corps had information on design capacity and flood flows or levels, 145 performed up to their design capacity and prevented flooding, 32 met their design capacity until the floodwaters exceeded their height and overtopped them, and 4 allowed water to enter their protected areas before they were overtopped. The information showed that many levees withstood flood flows that were greater than the levees were designed to withstand. In addition, the levees were able to withstand saturation far longer than the 1 to 2 weeks contemplated in their design.

According to the Corps, flooding caused 32 Corps levees to be overtopped. These levees were designed to protect against floods whose average recurrence intervals ranged from 20 to 500 years. Of the 32 levees, 26 were on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers where the flood was greatest. Five of the other six levees were located on the Illinois River, and one was located near the Missouri River. Table 2.1 lists, by Corps district and by river, the 32 levees that the flood overtopped, the design capacity of each levee, and the flood's estimated flow or water level at each levee. →

The Corps estimated that about 1,100 of the 1,358 nonfederal levees in the area covered by the five Corps districts involved in the 1993 flood failed to keep the flood out of the areas they were designed to protect or were otherwise damaged.

Levees in the upper Mississippi River basin increased the height of water in the 1993 flood, according to three modeling simulations. The simulations indicated that agricultural levees on the Mississippi River added up to 2.7 feet to the flood peak at St. Louis. Corps officials told the General Accounting Office, however, that the floodwater storage capacity of reservoirs compensates for the increases in flood levels caused by levees. Experts agree that natural and man-made factors also directly affect the height of the water levels and the amount of the damage that occur during a flood. Natural factors include the flood's duration, the seasonal level of vegetation, the deposition of sediment carried by the water, and the water's temperature. Man-made activities include urban development, agriculture, navigation, and other development in wetlands.

Of the nine states involved in the 1993 flood, five—Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin—have programs to regulate levees. Iowa, for example, generally requires permits for constructing, operating, and maintaining levees in rural areas and in urban areas that exceed a minimum size. For each levee, Iowa specifies requirements for the level of protection, location, drainage, and other design factors. Local governments generally exercise more control over local floodplains and levees than the states or the federal government because FEMA requires that communities adopt floodplain regulations to join its flood insurance program. Local ordinances can require building codes for development in floodplains, and zoning regulations can restrict land uses—including the construction, operation, and maintenance of levees—in floodplains.

The Interagency Floodplain Management Review Committee was formed to identify the major causes and consequences of the 1993 Midwest flood, evaluate the performance of existing floodplain management programs, and recommend changes to make the programs more effective. As stated in its final report, issued in June 1994, the Committee found that projects for reducing flood damage and programs for managing floodplains, where implemented, essentially worked as designed. Flood control reservoirs and levees prevented billions of dollars in damage. Nevertheless, the flood overtopped many smaller, locally constructed levees and caused considerable damage. According to the Committee, the 1993 flood would have covered much of the floodplains of the lower Missouri and upper Mississippi rivers whether or not the levees had been there.

Source: General Accounting Office report: *MIDWEST FLOOD Information on the Performance, Effects, and Control of Levees*. (August 1995). ☑

National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium

The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium campus houses the William Woodward Discovery Center, the National Rivers Hall of Fame, the Fred W. Woodward Riverboat Museum, the Captain William Bowell River Library, a boatyard, a wetland, and a refurbished train depot.

In 2004 the museum was accepted into the prestigious Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program. The Smithsonian Institution is the world's largest museum complex with a collection of more than 142 million objects in 16 museums and 8 research centers. As an affiliate, the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium will have access to the Smithsonian's vast collection from American cultural artifacts to fine art.

In June of 2004, exactly one year ago from when it's founding was announced, the Captain William Bowell River Library opened at the museum. On June 28, 2003, Captain Bowell of the Padelford Packet Boat Co., Inc., St. Paul, MN, surprised the audience by announcing at the opening ceremonies of the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium and National Rivers Hall of Fame that he was making a \$1 million gift to establish the Library.

The Library includes Captain Bowell's extensive collection of over 2,000 books which cover a vast array of river history. The collection also includes 47 historic paintings that depict famous American River people as well as several steamboat whistles and other artifacts. The number of paintings will grow to over 100 within the next few years. In addition to the books, paintings, and artifacts, Captain Bowell also established an endowment to support future operations of the Library.

The Museum is operated by the Dubuque County Historical Society, which has its roots in the Richard Herrmann Museum of Natural History. The Society was organized in 1950 as a private, non-profit organization with a focus on oral and archival history, and opened its first museum, the Mathias Ham House, in 1964. Over the past 25 years, the museum has successfully raised \$54 million to establish and expand.

National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium
350 East 3rd Street
Port of Dubuque
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

(563) 557-9545
(800) 226-3369
(www.mississippirivermuseum.com)

Kimmswick Pottery

Kimmswick Pottery features a diverse line of functional, hand-thrown salt-glazed stoneware and decorative Raku pottery. It is also known for its exotic gallery of gifts, jewelry, art, and toys from around the world. (www.kimmswickpottery.com)

Chris Ferbet, owner and resident artist of Kimmswick Pottery has over 25 years experience playing in the mud. She is a graduate of University of Missouri, Columbia and has been a resident potter in Bethel, Missouri and Watervalley Pottery in Mississippi. She fell in love with Kimmswick on a visit home and in 1981 founded Kimmswick Pottery after restoring the grounds that once held the majestic National Hotel built in the 1869.

Kimmswick was founded in 1859, by German dry goods merchant, Theodore Kimms. He purchased about 160 acres of land from the widow of Captain George Waters. The town prospered early due to the easy access to both railroad and river transportation. The community of 1,500 boasted a bank, a post office, four schools, two train stations, a flouring mill, an iron works foundry, a lumber mill and a brewery. After the turn of the century, the town was bypassed with the introduction of automobiles. Many of the historic buildings fell to decay and the local economy suffered.

The loss of so many historic buildings served as a catalyst for an energetic movement for preservation of the town that began in 1969, led by Lucianna Gladney Ross. An active Kimmswick Historical Society continues the effort of restoration. During the "Great Flood of '93", the town of Kimmswick was saved through the efforts of thousands of volunteers and National Guard who sandbagged and built the earthen levee. Today, about 150 people live and work in many of the restored original buildings.

Visitors to Kimmswick, MO can step back in time to spend a delightful afternoon browsing through more than 30 antique, artisans and collectibles shops. Shoppers will discover 18th century log cabins, unique items, and exotic gifts. Hearty home-cooked meals and specialty desserts can be found with enchanted elegance and old town atmosphere.

The annual Apple Butter Festival started in 1976 as a peaceful kettle of apple butter simmering in the hubbub of the town's Bicentennial Celebration. Today a large crew spends long hours to peel (with old-time crank peelers), quarter, and hand-core the over 100 bushels of apples. It takes more than 12 hours worth of cordwood, wooden-handled stick-stirring and a crew of over a dozen to can the nearly 3,000 pints of authentic Kimmswick Apple Butter. Today the festival attracts more than 200 craft and food booths, exhibits of old-time craftsmanship, and an estimated 30,000 visitors during its two-day run. ☑

Poetry by Judith Bader Jones

Water Street Bars With a Mississippi River View

Honey Dripper, Mule's Lip, Town Pump, Edward's Paradise, Pink Pony, and The Yellow Dog, bars on the edge, straddled the ledge of a cobbled street that once felt tread of Mark Twain, and Ulysses S. Grant.

One summer, Mississippi flew into a whirl,
tilted and flooded, rose 20 feet while a man
rowed right out of the window of The Yellow Dog.
He shouted from his ding-bat boat,
"Build a Sea Wall."

The new concrete fortress towered gray to the skies.
Men, drunk or sober no longer rhythm swayed in doorways
to songs of the waves. Walled from the water,
no longer bars with a view ... dank, dark, and feary,
redeemed only on nights when a great harvest moon
transcended to shower both sides of the wall
with a shimmy of light that flickered and shuddered
on the dry side, swam and washed in a river
that moved out of sight, out of sound,
and out of Edward's Paradise once and for all.

Undercurrents

Full of herself the river rises when June is barely spent.
Sallies forth a swish above the shore . slaps . slurps
drips brown mud blown bubble bursts of fishy scents.
All the while, I stand rooted to the shore longing to shed
my silent rage, send it into depths of waters carried
downstream by undercurrents where no one recognizes
parts of me in release. Cleansed anger will come to rest,
settle in on one of those jutting sand bars; perfect watch
to see the river ride by.

Released feelings, cast out, drift until they find a crowd
of grains of sand, testaments of time turned beach,
safe exile for rage that has no useful purpose except to be
emptied, turned inside out for a river ride until the right
sand bar comes along. Sun soothes once felt fear, puffed
up dragon force, now dissipated into bubble bursts
of fishy scent, while water harmonizes with a rush of a swish
and a swirl of a dance that sounds like a song singing
a prayer to itself.

Southeast Missouri Tent People

(The Mississippi River in Southeast Missouri, during the late 1930s and early 1940s, was a great shuddering wash of water that rose up over spinach and hay, sucked earth from riverbanks and digested rows of corn and plenty of cotton. The government sent workers to build levees to protect crops.)

Levee workers called “tent men”, pant legs flapping river wind, worked to halt water with mountains of dirt our Daddy called “virgin soil”. They lived in tents with barefoot women who wanted work in farm kitchen.

Mama, poor as a dishrag, herself, opened the screen with, “You all come in, least I see how you mind little folk or ring chicken necks. There’s food for your work, and your man can make light pay the server. It’s daylight to dark work. Hog pen needs cleaning. We’ve a river of washing. Feed sacks to sew. Best wipe your feet. Leave your heart at the door. No room for dirt or wasting my time. Turn your hands to their light side. Why they’re graceful as herons. Rest your bones on that chair and hold this young-un while I make with dinner. You watch my children. They’re lost to the summer, like moths in a cellar. See my boy by the barn door. He’s fired like a cook stove. Glue your eyes to his backside. You’ll save us all grief. Want black tea, biscuits and sorghum? By the way, where you from?”

A woman, Verbena, smiled toward the river. What brought her might take her in a matter of days. I tried not to love her. Leave was her ticket. I shied from the losing. They came for time no bigger than Sabbath to Sabbath.

Verbena stayed on with her man who bailed hay, then fled to pick oranges, like flies flee in winter, when farms idle in frost. This woman I remember when thinking on “tent people”. Their levees still holds river at bay and life protected on a farm in Missouri’s bayou.

Judith Bader Jones writes poetry, short fiction and essays for both literary and commercial publications. She is a poetry editor for Kansas City Voices. She grew up in two Mississippi River towns; Caruthersville and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and the river often appears in her works.

Historic Photo Gallery

Saint Louis, Missouri, waterfront crowded with steamboats

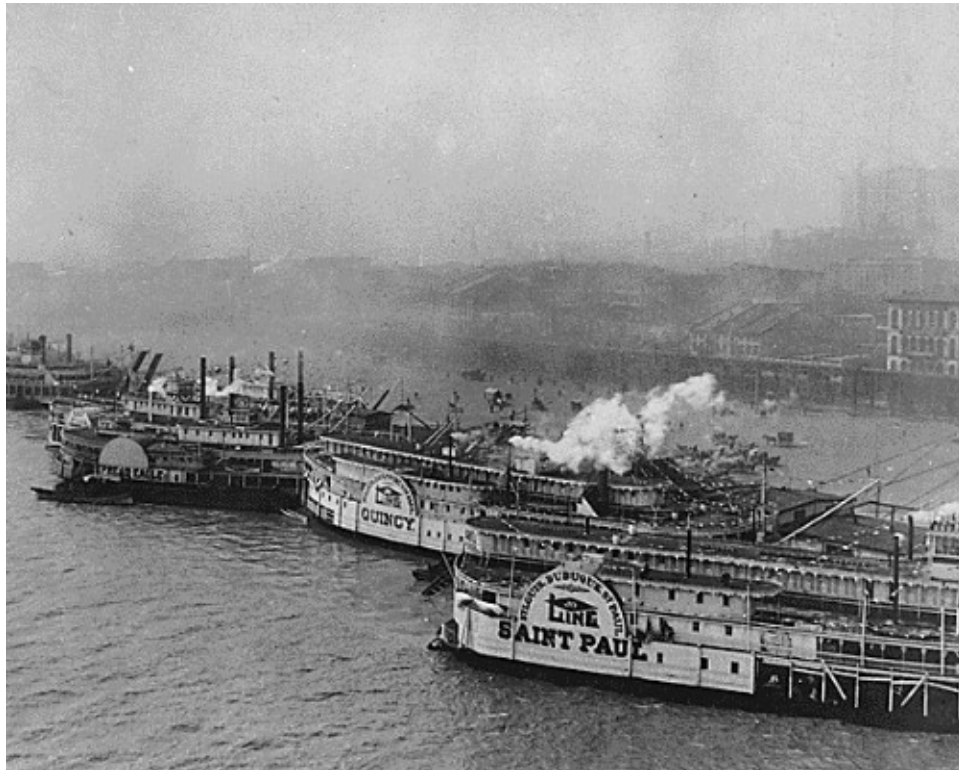


Photo Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The river front at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, on April 20, 1927



Photo Source: U.S. NOAA Central Library

Poche Plantation House

Located less than an hour from New Orleans, on Majestic River Road, the Poche Plantation hosts a bed and breakfast and guided tours at this Louisiana plantation home that has been beautifully restored to its original splendor. A plantation house recently enjoyed by overnight guests ranging from well known Civil War historians to the business elite, the Poche Plantation is now open to the public for guided tours and bed and breakfast lodgings in surrounding cottages for the first time since its construction in the late 1800s.

The last of the great Mississippi River plantations to be constructed, the Poche Plantation house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places both for its architectural importance and as the residence of Judge Felix Pierre Poche.

The Poche Plantation is an example of the Victorian Renaissance Revival raised plantation house - an unusual style because most plantation houses were constructed under the influence of Greek Revival architecture. Felix Pierre Poche is most famous for his Civil War diary, which remains an important scholarly source of information with a Confederate outlook on the war.

The spacious cottage suites are beautifully decorated in authentic 1800's luxury. There are five cottage suites furnished with period antiques and a private bath. A full breakfast is served to overnight guests every morning in the main dining room. Poche Plantation operates year-round. Check-in time is between 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Poche Plantation offers daily-guided tours seven days a week at 10: 00 a.m. Group tours are available by appointment and can be scheduled anytime. Guides suggest that visitors allow at least one hour to tour Poche Plantation. Tours are complimentary with overnight stays in the Plantation's bed and breakfast cottages.

Poche Plantation hosts weddings, receptions and private events. The historic plantation home offers a beautiful setting for your special event. Accommodations are available for special events that last from several hours to several days in duration. Corporate and extended stay rates are also available.

Poche Plantation
6554 Louisiana Hwy 44 (River Road)
Convent, LA 70723

Telephone: 225-562-7728
Fax: 225-562-0550
Website: (www.pocheplantation.com)

Taylor's Fine Dining, Imperial, Missouri

Taylor's opened in March of 2003 and now offers guests classic American regional cuisine and intimate dining in the areas most beautiful Victorian setting. Andrew J. Guillot is an avid competitor in local and regional culinary competitions ranging from Artistic Presentations of cold food to intense Mystery Basket hot food competition and a gold medalist in Ice Sculpting with the American Culinary Federation.

Chris and Stephanie Bates are the proud owners of Taylor's and named the restaurant in honor of their daughter, 10 year old Taylor Bates. Both Chris and Stephanie had the shared vision of Taylor's, having been lifetime residents of the area, felt the great need for a fine dining restaurant in Jefferson County, Missouri. So in February of 1999, the renovation process began and the vision became a reality.

Since opening, Taylor's has received outstanding reviews in Saint Louis Magazine, The Saint Louis Post Dispatch, The River Front Times, and The Ladue News.

Located at 1027 Main Street, the original building that the restraint occupies was built around 1898 was a schoolhouse. In 1935 it was converted into a barbershop, it then changed hands more than once to become a TV repair shop, a used car dealership and a local tavern. Residents of Jefferson County share many fond memories with our staff from days past. Chris and Stephanie knew this building could be transformed into something special.

Taylor's Fine Dining
1027 Main Street
Imperial, Missouri 63052

Lunch: Tuesday through Friday 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Dinner: Tuesday through Saturday 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Sunday Brunch: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Telephone: 636-461-2240
Fax: 636-461-2225
Website: (www.taylor finedining.com)

Directions from Saint Louis, Missouri:
Interstate 55 South to Exit 186 (Imperial/Kimmswick)
East (left) on Imperial Main Street
Taylor's is on the left about a 1/4 of a mile from the highway.

Books of Note

[The Mississippi: and the Making of a Nation](#)

by Stephen E. Ambrose, Douglas Brinkley, Sam Abell

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: National Geographic (October 1, 2002)

ISBN: 0792269136

From northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi River runs its course along the borders of ten states and cleanly bisects the nation. But the Mississippi is more than an imposing natural landmark; it is embedded in every facet of America's national identity.

Stephen E. Ambrose, renowned author of *Undaunted Courage*, historian Douglas G. Brinkley, author of *The Unfinished Presidency*, and award-winning National Geographic photographer Sam Abell traveled the entire length of the Mississippi—from its mouth at Delacroix Island, Louisiana, to its source at Itasca, Minnesota—to bring readers the full, rich history of America's great river. In 11 chapters, each covering a length of the river, readers will witness the early explorations of DeSoto and the momentous signing of the Louisiana Purchase; they will meet Jim Bowie, Ulysses S. Grant, and Robert Johnson; they will relive the Civil War and the Great Flood, the Underground Railroad and the Trail of Tears; and they will discover the immense impact of the Mississippi on American arts, from the birth of the Blues to the literature of Mark Twain and T.S. Eliot. To expand the book's visual dimension, each chapter of *The Mississippi and the Making of a Nation* is illustrated with period paintings, lithographs, artifacts, and maps, and features unique photographic essays by Sam Abell.

[Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood Of 1927 And How It Changed America](#)

by John M. Barry

Paperback: 528 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster (April 2, 1998)

ISBN: 0684840022

An American epic of science, politics, race, honor, high society, and the Mississippi River, *Rising Tide* tells the riveting and nearly forgotten story of the greatest natural disaster this country has ever known -- the Mississippi flood of 1927. The river inundated the homes of nearly one million people, helped elect Huey Long governor and made Herbert Hoover president, drove hundreds of thousands of blacks north, and transformed American society and politics forever. A New York Times Notable Book of the Year, winner of the Southern Book Critics Circle Award and the Lillian Smith Award. →

[River of Song: A Musical Journey Down the Mississippi](#)

by Elijah Wald, John Junkerman, Theo Pelletier

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Press; 1st U.S. edition (January 1, 1999)

ISBN: 0312200595

A companion to the major Smithsonian Institution series for public television and radio, River of Song explores the breadth and depth of American music at the close of the twentieth century--through narrative, photography, and the words of the musicians themselves.

Over the course of five years, recording and interviewing more than five hundred musicians in the communities where they live and perform, John Junkerman, Elijah Wald, and the River of Song team surveyed the length of the Mississippi River and found along its muddy banks an America where music is not merely a carefully packaged commodity but an exhilaratingly diverse and thriving part of the culture. Near the icy headwaters in Minnesota, Ojibwe drummers perform at a powwow, and the power trio Babes in Toyland serve up their brand of riot-grrrl punk. In Iowa, songwriter John Hartford navigates the river. In Moline, Illinois, a Mexican band blends traditional rhythms with Latino rap; in Memphis, Rufus Thomas, Ann Peebles, and the Memphis Horns carry on the Southern fusion; in New Orleans, Henry Butler radiates the 88s, while the Soul Rebels carry the brass band swinging into the twenty-first century.

There is folk music here, and basement-band rock; newly transplanted Laotian melodies and the music of last century's French settlers; zydeco and Cajun music, country, gospel, blues, and soul. River of Song captures, often in the artists' own words, what the music means to them: its place as a part of tradition, but also as a living, glorious fact in their world.

The original film version is also available in VHS format. From the Back Cover: "You'll be swept away." - Washington Post "An ambitious multi-genre documentary...that bears comparison to such high profile PBS projects as Ken Burns' The Civil War." - Billboard From an Ojibwe powwow in northern Minnesota to the bandstands in New Orleans, Louisiana, the Mississippi River offers a mosaic of musical talent. Join folk-rock musician Ani DiFranco as she explores each bend in the river, highlighting the richness and vitality of American music at the close of the 20th century. The video titles are:

[The Mississippi River of Song Volume 1](#)

[The Mississippi River of Song Volume 2](#)

[The Mississippi River of Song Volume 3](#)

[The Mississippi River of Song Volume 4](#)



[*The River We Have Wrought: A History of the Upper Mississippi*](#)

by John O. Anfinson

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: University of Minnesota Press (March 1, 2003)

ISBN: 0816640238

The River We Have Wrought is a landmark history of the upper Mississippi, from early European exploration through the completion of a navigable channel and a system of locks and dams in the mid-twentieth century.

One of the world's largest and most powerful rivers, the Mississippi became the waterway we know today after massive engineering efforts. Previously, it was often shallow and full of sandbars, snags, and mile-long rapids. Shipping goods and people from St. Louis to St. Paul was arduous and expensive on the natural river, so the farmers and merchants of the region demanded that the federal government transform the upper Mississippi. As a result, in 1930 Congress authorized a system of locks and dams that has revolutionized shipping and, by extension, life in the Midwest.

Anfinson explores the origins of navigation improvements and traces the physical design of the river to the grain empire's feud with railroads and to the politics of port cities. He also reveals how the conservation movement rose to challenge navigation's supremacy, questioning the impact of the locks and dams on the ecology of the river.

At a time when the role of such public works and their impact on the environment is being intensely debated, *The River We Have Wrought* is an essential examination of how politics has shaped the landscapes of the Upper Midwest and how taming the river has affected economic sustainability, river ecology, and biological diversity.

John O. Anfinson is a historian with the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. For nearly twenty years he was the historian for the Saint Paul District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He is a founding board member of the Friends of the Mississippi River, an organization dedicated to improving the Mississippi's environmental health in the Twin Cities.

[*A-Rafting on the Mississip*](#)

by Charles Edward Russell

Paperback: 424 pages

Publisher: University of Minnesota Press; Reprint edition (September 1, 2001)

ISBN: 0816639426

During the nineteenth century, pine logs were lashed together to form easily floatable rafts that traveled from Minnesota and Wisconsin down the →

Mississippi River to build the farms and towns of the virtually treeless lower Midwest. These huge log rafts were steered down the river by steamboat pilots whose skill and intimate knowledge of the river's many hazards were legendary.

Charles Edward Russell, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, chronicles the history and river lore of seventy years of lumber rafting. "Russell deals with those decades during which the lumber business and the rafting of lumber grew and reached enormous proportions. But his story covers also the splendid phase of the river steamboat. Russell writes with a lively pen, and he has made a colorful and entertaining account." New York Times Book Review.

[Live Steam: Paddlewheel Steamboats on the Mississippi System](#)

by Jon Ward, Jon Kral

Hardcover: 128 pages

Publisher: Longwind Publishing (October 1, 2001)

ISBN: 1892695006

Taking viewers to places never seen by passengers, Jon Kral photographs aboard all six remaining real paddlewheel steamboats on the Mississippi River system. Imagine standing underneath the mighty American Queen, largest steamboat ever built, while in drydock. Stand a midnight watch in a wheelhouse that has no wheel. Experience a man overboard drill from the rescue boat. Text contributed by some of steamboating's most noted figures like noted musician and riverman John Hartford ("Gentle on My Mind"), legendary Captain Clark C. "Doc" Hawley, and naval architect Alan Bates, designer of the "Natchez". Over 100 sepia duotone photographs show the complete story of what it takes to run a steamboat.

[Road to the Sea: The Story of James B. Eads and the Mississippi River](#)

by Florence Dorsey

Paperback: 360 pages

Publisher: Pelican Publishing Company (April 1, 1999)

ISBN: 1565544595

James B. Eads spanned the Mississippi in 1874. In his prolific career as an inventor Eads founded diving salvage companies, designed turrets for Civil War ironclad ships, and-perhaps most spectacularly-built the first bridge that connected the eastern and western halves of the country, previously divided by the Great River. Compiled from the voluminous writings and utterances of James B. Eads, from government documents relating to his projects and the many controversies over them, and from magazine and newspaper accounts of his professional and social activities, among other sources, Road to the Sea is the definitive work on James B. Eads and his amazing accomplishments. ☑

The Mississippi Gunboats of the Civil War

The Carondelet and the Cairo were two of seven ironclads designed by Samuel M. Pook and built by James B. Eads to aid the Union objective of regaining control of the Lower Mississippi from the Confederacy. The seven gunboats, nicknamed "Pook Turtles" after their designer and because of their resemblance to mud turtles. These powerful ironclads were formidable vessels, each mounting thirteen big cannons. They were constructed between August 1861 and January 1862 at an average cost of \$101,808.00 each. James Eads, a retired engineer who had made a fortune salvaging sunken vessels on the Western Waters, financed the construction of the gunboats and was later reimbursed by the U.S. Government.

Eads had wanted the ironclads named for Union military leaders; however, Andrew H. Foote, commander of the Western Flotilla, decided that the gunboats would instead be named for cities and towns along the Ohio and Upper Mississippi Rivers. Thus, the Carondelet, Louisville, Pittsburg, and St. Louis were built at Carondelet on the outskirts of St. Louis, Missouri, while the Cairo, Cincinnati, and Mound City were constructed on the banks of the Ohio River at Mound City, Illinois. Completed two months before the Monitor and Virginia clashed at Hampton Roads, the Eads ironclads would play an integral role in the Western theater of operations during the American Civil War.

U.S.S. Cairo

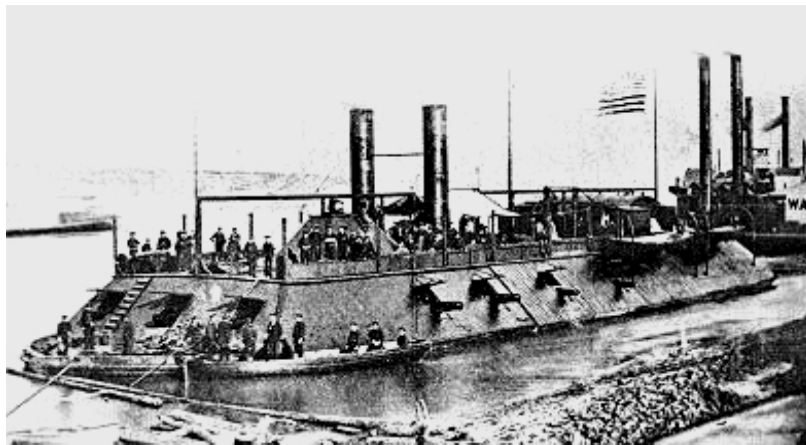


Photo Source: National Park Service

On the cold morning of December 12, 1862, the Cairo's skipper, Lt. Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, Jr., led a small flotilla up the Yazoo River, north of Vicksburg, to destroy Confederate batteries and clear the channel of torpedoes (underwater mines). As the Cairo reached a point seven miles north of Vicksburg the flotilla came under fire and Selfridge ordered the guns to ready. As it moved toward shore two explosions rocked the Cairo in →

quick succession which tore gaping holes in the ship's hull. Within twelve minutes the ironclad sank into six (6) fathoms (36 feet) of water without any loss of life. Cairo became the first ship in history to be sunk by an electrically detonated torpedo.

Over the years the gunboat was soon forgotten and her watery grave was slowly covered by a shroud of silt and sand. Impacted in mud, Cairo became a time capsule in which her priceless artifacts were preserved. Her whereabouts became a matter of speculation as members of the crew had died and local residents were unsure of the location.

By studying contemporary documents and maps, Edwin Bearss, Historian at Vicksburg National Military Park, was able to plot the site of the wreck. With the help of a pocket compass and iron bar probes, Bearss and two companions, Don Jacks and Warren Grabau, set out to discover the grave of the Cairo in 1956. The three searchers were reasonably convinced they had found the Cairo, but three years lapsed before divers brought up armored port

covers to positively confirm the find. A heavy accumulation of silt, swift current, and the ever-muddy river deterred the divers as they explored the gunboat. Local enthusiasm and interest began to grow in 1960 with the recovery of the pilothouse, an 8-inch smoothbore cannon, its white oak carriage and other artifacts well preserved by the Yazoo mud. With financial support from the State of Mississippi, the Warren County Board of Supervisors and funds raised locally, efforts to salvage the gunboat began in earnest.

Hopes of lifting the ironclad and her cargo of artifacts intact were crushed in October of 1964 when the three inch cables being used to lift the Cairo cut deeply into its wooden hull. It then became a question of saving as much of the vessel as possible. A decision was made to cut the Cairo into three sections. By the end of December the battered remains were put on barges and towed to Vicksburg. In the summer of 1965 the barges carrying the Cairo were towed to Ingalls Shipyard on the Gulf Coast in Pascagula, Mississippi. There the armor was removed, cleaned and stored. The two engines were taken apart, cleaned and reassembled. Sections of the hull were braced internally and a sprinkler system was operated continually to keep the white oak structural timbers from warping and checking.

In 1972, the U.S. Congress enacted legislation authorizing the National Park Service to accept title to the Cairo and restore the gunboat for display in Vicksburg National Military Park. In June of 1977, when the vessel was transported to the park and partially reconstructed on a concrete foundation near the Vicksburg National Cemetery. →

The recovery of artifacts from the Cairo revealed a treasure trove of weapons, munitions, naval stores and personal gear of the sailors who served on board. The gunboat and its artifacts can now be seen along the tour road at the U.S.S. Cairo Museum.

The Fate of the Ironclads

Cairo	Struck a torpedo and sank in Yazoo River, MS, December 12, 1862. Wreck raised December 12, 1964.
Carondelet	Decommissioned June 20, 1865. Sold November 29, 1865. Hull became a wharfboat at Gallipolis, Ohio. Engines used in towboat Quaker.
Cincinnati	Decommissioned August 4, 1865. Sold March 28, 1866. Sank at moorings in Cache River, 1866.
Louisville	Decommissioned July 21, 1865. Sold November 29, 1865.
Mound City	Sold November 9, 1865. Broken Up, 1866.
Pittsburg	Sold November 29, 1865. Abandoned June, 1870.
St. Louis	Renamed Baron De Kalb September 8, 1862. Sunk by torpedo 1 mile below Yazoo City, July 13, 1863

Source: National Park Service

Historical Notes: Women Steamboat Pilots

Callie French was a licensed river pilot on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers in 1888. By 1895, her license covered almost all the navigable waterways in the region and she had earned her master's license. Working with her husband, Mrs. French specialized in running showboats.

Mary Becker Greene received her riverboat pilot's license in 1896, earning captain's rank in 1897. She helped manage and operate her husband's riverboat company, the Greene Line, which ran a fleet of packet boats carrying passengers and freight on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Greene died aboard the Delta Queen in 1949. The company continues to operate today as the Delta Queen Steamship Company. ☑

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – A Brief History

From 1775 to the present, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has served the Nation in peace and war. The Corps traces its history to June 1775, when the Continental Congress appointed Colonel Richard Gridley as Chief of Engineers of the Continental Army, under General George Washington. The original Corps was the Army's engineering and construction arm until it mustered out of service at the close of the Revolutionary War in 1783.

In 1802, Congress re-established a separate Corps of Engineers within the Army. At the same time, it established the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, the country's first--and for 20 years its only--engineering school. With the Army having the nation's most readily available engineering talent, successive Congresses and administrations established a role for the Corps to carry out both military construction and works "of a civil nature."

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Corps supervised the construction of coastal fortifications, lighthouses, several early railroads, and many of the public buildings in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere. Meanwhile, the Corps of Topographical Engineers, which enjoyed a separate existence for 25 years (1838-1863), mapped much of the American West. The Corps of Engineers became increasingly involved with river and harbor improvements, carrying out its first harbor and jetty work in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Corps' ongoing responsibility for federal river and harbor improvements dates from 1824, when Congress passed two acts authorizing the Corps to survey roads and canals and to remove obstacles on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Without its great rivers, the vast, thickly-forested, region west of the Appalachians would have remained impenetrable to all but the most resourceful early pioneers. Consequently, politicians such as Henry Clay advocated federal assistance to improve rivers. At the same time, the War of 1812 showed the importance of a reliable inland navigation system for defense.

There was, however, a question as to whether transportation was, under the Constitution, a legitimate federal activity. This question was resolved when the Supreme Court ruled that the Commerce Clause of the Constitution granted the federal government the authority, not only to regulate navigation and commerce, but also to make necessary navigation improvements.

Federal interest in flood control began in the alluvial valley of the Mississippi River in the mid-1800s. As the relationship of flood control and navigation became apparent, Congress called on the Corps of Engineers to use its expertise to devise solutions to flooding problems along the river. →

After a series of disastrous floods affecting wide areas in the 1920s and 30s, Congress determined, in the Flood Control Act of 1936, that the federal government would participate in the solution of flooding problems affecting the public interest that were too large or complex to be handled by states or localities. Corps authority for flood control work was extended to embrace the entire country.

Corps work in shore protection began in 1930, when Congress directed the Corps to study ways to reduce erosion along U.S. seacoasts and the Great Lakes. Hurricane protection work was added to the erosion control mission in 1955, when Congress directed the Corps to conduct investigations along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts to identify problem areas and determine the feasibility of protection. Federal participation in a shore protection project varies, depending on shore ownership, use and type and frequency of benefits. If there is no public use or benefit, the Corps will not recommend federal participation.

The Corps played a significant role in meeting the nation's electric power generation needs by building and operating hydropower plants in connection with large multiple-purpose dams. The Corps' involvement in hydropower generation began with the Rivers and Harbors Acts of 1890 and 1899, which required the Secretary of War and the Corps of Engineers to approve the sites and plans for all dams and to issue permits for their construction.

Corps involvement in water supply dates back to 1853, when it began building the Washington Aqueduct. The Water Supply Act of 1958 authorized the Corps to provide additional storage in its reservoirs for municipal and industrial water supply at the request of local interests, who must agree to pay the cost. The Corps also supplies water for irrigation, under terms of the Flood Control Act of 1944. This act provided that the Secretary of War, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of the Interior, could allow use of Corps reservoirs for irrigation, provided that users repay the government for the water.

The Flood Control Act of 1944, the Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965, and language in specific project authorization acts authorize the Corps to construct, maintain, and operate public park and recreational facilities at its projects, and to permit others to build, maintain, and operate such facilities. The water areas of Corps projects are open to public use for boating, fishing, and other recreational purposes.

The Corps carries out the Civil Works Programs in consistency with many environmental laws, executive orders and regulations. Perhaps primary among these is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. This law requires Federal agencies to study and consider the environmental impacts of their proposed actions. Consideration of the environmental impact of a Corps project begins in the early stages, and continues through design, construction and operation of the project. →

The Corps must also comply with environmental laws and regulations in conducting its regulatory programs. The Water Resources Development Act of 1986 authorizes the Corps to propose modifications to existing projects--many of them built before current environmental requirements were in effect. Proposals the Corps has made under this authority range from use of dredged material to create nesting sites for waterfowl to modification of water control structures to improve downstream water quality for fish.

The Corps provides emergency response to natural disasters under Public Law 84-99, which covers flood control and coastal emergencies. It also provides emergency support to other agencies, particularly the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), under Public Law 93-288 (the Stafford Act) as amended. Under P.L. 84-99, the Corps of Engineers carries out disaster preparedness work; advance measures; emergency operations such as flood fighting, rescue and emergency relief activities; rehabilitation of flood control works threatened or destroyed by flood; and protection or repair of federally authorized shore protection works threatened or damaged by coastal storms.

Under the Stafford Act and the Federal Response Plan, the Corps of Engineers is responsible for providing public works and engineering support in response to a major disaster or catastrophic earthquake. Under this plan, the Corps, in coordination with FEMA, will work directly with state authorities in providing temporary repair and construction of roads, bridges, and utilities, temporary shelter, debris removal and demolition, water supply, etc. The Corps is the lead Federal agency tasked by FEMA to provide engineering, design, construction and contract management in support of recovery operations. ☑
(Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

Historical Note: The Louisiana Purchase

"Let the Land rejoice, for you have bought Louisiana for a Song."
--Gen. Horatio Gates to President Thomas Jefferson, July 18, 1803

The Louisiana Purchase has been described as the greatest real estate deal in history. In 1803 the United States paid France \$15 million for the Louisiana Territory--828,000 square miles of land west of the Mississippi River.

The lands acquired stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border. Thirteen states were carved from the Louisiana Territory. The Louisiana Purchase nearly doubled the size of the United States, making it one of the largest nations in the world. ☑

The Cultural Diversity of the Lower Mississippi Delta Region

The diversity of the Lower Mississippi Delta region's cultural heritage is reflected in the names of cities and towns up and down the river: Saint Genevieve, Kaskaskia, Altenburg, Wittenburg, Cape Girardeau, Cairo, Hickman, Helena, Memphis, Vicksburg, Natchez, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Venice. The Mississippi River and its associated bounty not only sustained the region's first inhabitants, the Indians, but have also attracted immigrants from around the world.

Millions of people inhabited the Americas in 1492, most densely along the coast and major rivers, and these indigenous peoples, or American Indians, were discoverers, explorers, warriors, and settlers in the New World. They spoke over 600 distinct languages. Indian economies varied from farming, to maritime activities, to hunters and gatherers, while Indian artisans were adept at weaving, carving, sculpting, and painting.

At the time the Spaniard Hernando de Soto and his expeditionary army landed on the West Coast of present-day Florida in 1539, many of the leading Mississippian centers were already in decline. As de Soto's army slogged overland through the Southeast to the Mississippi River, bloody encounters between the Mississippians and the Spanish expedition presaged the Indians eventual loss of their lands and lifeways, as Europeans increasingly penetrated the continent over the succeeding centuries.

Two centuries after de Soto's expedition. during the 1770s, approximately 1,500 Canary Islanders settled in the marshlands southeast of New Orleans (present-day St. Bernard Parish), where they hunted, trapped, and fished for sustenance. Their descendents, known as the Isleños, continue to speak an archaic Spanish dialect and perform traditional decimas — folk songs of 10 syllable lines sung a cappella.

During the 17th century, following the successful descent down the Mississippi River by Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle in 1682, the French envisioned establishing a comprehensive commercial system in North America. The Mississippi River offered an all-weather outlet to the sea for the furs of the northern American lands France dominated, and control of the river's length would both confine the British to the east and open the vast American plains to French exploitation. Though France never realized its grand scheme for North America, French settlements dot the Mississippi Delta region. Descendant French populations still live in southern Illinois and Missouri as well as southeastern Arkansas in such communities as Prairie du Rocher, Kaskaskia, Ste. Genevieve, and Cape Girardeau, Dumas, and in Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana. →

During Great Britain's conquest of the French Empire in North America (1754-1763), the British expelled nearly 75%, or over 10,000, of the French Catholic Acadians from Nova Scotia. Many of the displaced Acadians migrated to Louisiana, settling in the eastern prairies and along Bayou Lafourche and the lower Mississippi River, to farm, fish, hunt, and trap, while interacting and intermarrying with their American, Spanish, Indian, and African American neighbors. Today the French derived dialect spoken by the descendants of the Acadians, known as Cajuns can be heard throughout southern Louisiana and their cuisine and music are deeply imbedded in the state's culture.

African-Americans form the very fiber of the social and political tapestry of the Delta. Brought to the Delta in slavery, forced to work in bondage and servitude throughout the antebellum years, and freed only with the catastrophe of the Civil War. Communities as diverse as Mound Bayou, Mississippi and Fargo, Arkansas; Little Rock, Arkansas and Memphis, Tennessee; and New Orleans and Monroe, Louisiana, illustrate the spirit of the Delta's black communities.

The term Creole refers to a diversity of cultural groups. The white Creoles of colonial Louisiana were born of French and Spanish parents before 1803. White Creoles were generally landed gentry, who adopted and retained European culture and mannerisms. In central Louisiana the Cane River Creoles of color emerged during the 18th century from a family of freed slaves. The social stratum occupied by Creoles of color was unique to Louisiana. Some of the Cane River Creoles became wealthy plantation owners and developed their own unique culture, enjoying the respect and friendship of the dominant white Creole society.

Many other groups also contributed to the cultural diversity of the region. In the 19th century, German immigrants settled along the Mississippi River above New Orleans and below Cape Girardeau. Sephardic Jews migrated to New Orleans from countries ringing the Mediterranean Sea. There were two waves of Irish immigrants to the region. The first was the Scotts-Irish who came in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and the Irish Catholics who came in the middle of the 19th century. A small community of Filipinos established a fishing village in southern Louisiana. Chinese laborers were recruited from New Orleans and Asia in the 1870s, and a decade later many Jewish, Sicilian, and Lebanese people migrated to the Delta from southern and eastern Europe. By the late 19th century, a Syrian community was established in the Arkansas Delta and a substantial Italian contingent settled in New Orleans.

The Lower Mississippi Delta Region continued to lure immigrants during the 20th century. In the 1950s Cuban immigrants moved to New Orleans and the migration of Vietnamese to southern Louisiana occurred in the 1970s.

Source: Draft Heritage Study and Environmental Assessment
U.S. National Park Service