

HISTORY

Roundtable

est. 2017

September's Topic: The Mississippi River

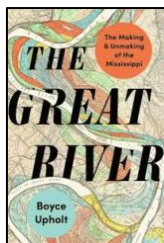
Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 22nd, 2026 at 6:30pm

Register at www.greenwoodlibrary.us or by calling 317-881-1953.

More info and handout at www.greenwoodlibrary.us/historyroundtable.

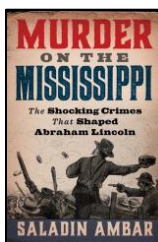
Read. Watch. Listen. Discuss. Read any non-fiction book, watch a documentary, and/or listen to a podcast pertaining to **The Mississippi River**. Once you've read/watched/listened to the item, come to the roundtable prepared to summarize your book/video/podcast for all the participants. Possible resources include (but are not limited to) –

Books:



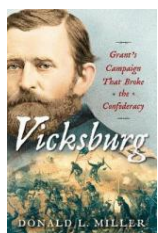
[The Great River: The Making & Unmaking of the Mississippi](#) by Boyce Upholt – NONFICTION SCIENCE EARTH SCIENCE Upholt & CD Audiobook; [eBook](#) & [eAudio](#) via Libby*; [eAudio via Hoopla](#)*

In this landmark work of natural history, Upholt tells the epic story of this wild and unruly river. Over thousands of years, the Mississippi watershed was home to millions of Indigenous people who regarded “the great river” with awe and respect. Centuries of human attempts to own, contain, and rework the Mississippi River have now transformed its landscape. Rich and powerful, *The Great River* delivers a startling account of what happens when we try to fight against nature instead of acknowledging and embracing its power.



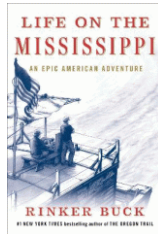
[Murder on the Mississippi: The Shocking Crimes that Shaped Abraham Lincoln](#) by Saladin Ambar – NONFICTION HISTORY UNITED STATES 19th CENTURY Ambar; [eBook](#) & [eAudio](#) via Hoopla*

Murder, mob rule, and the making of Abraham Lincoln--the story of three racially motivated murders in Mississippi River towns from 1835 to 1838 that inspired the speech that put Lincoln on the national map--the Lyceum Address. In *Murder on the Mississippi*, award-winning historian Saladin Ambar unearths the horrors that shaped a young Abraham Lincoln's worldview, pushing him to find his political voice in one of the earliest and most pivotal speeches of his career.



[Vicksburg: Grant's Campaign that Broke the Confederacy](#) by Donald L. Miller – Evergreen Indiana*; [eBook via Libby](#)* and [eBook via Hoopla](#)*

The astonishing story of the longest and most decisive military campaign of the Civil War in Vicksburg, Mississippi, which opened the Mississippi River, split the Confederacy, freed tens of thousands of slaves, and made Grant the most important general of the war. Miller brings to life all the drama, characters, and significance of Vicksburg, a historic moment that rivals any war story in history.



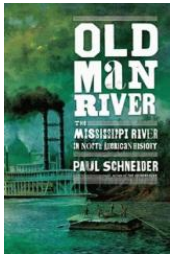
[Life on the Mississippi: An Epic American Adventure](#) by Rinker Buck – LARGE PRINT NONFICTION TRAVEL MEMOIRS Buck; [eAudio via Libby](#)*

The role of the flatboat in our country's evolution is far more significant than most Americans realize. A modern-day Huck Finn, Buck casts off down the river on the wooden flatboat *Patience*, journeying down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Buck resurrects the era's adventurous spirit, but he also challenges familiar myths about American expansion. With a rare narrative power that blends stirring adventure with absorbing untold history, *Life on the Mississippi* is a muscular and majestic feat of storytelling from a writer who may be the closest that we have today to Mark Twain.



[Wicked River: The Mississippi when it Last Ran Wild](#) by Lee Sandlin – Evergreen Indiana*; [eBook via Libby*](#); [eAudio via Libby*](#)

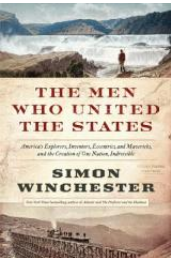
Beginning in the early 1800s and climaxing with the siege of Vicksburg in 1863, *Wicked River* brings to life a place where river pirates brushed elbows with future presidents and religious visionaries shared passage with thieves. Here is a minute-by-minute account of Natchez being flattened by a tornado; the St. Louis harbor being crushed by a massive ice floe; hidden, nefarious celebrations of Mardi Gras; and the sinking of the *Sultana*, the worst naval disaster in American history. Masterfully told, *Wicked River* is an exuberant work of Americana that portrays a forgotten society on the edge of revolutionary change.



[Old Man River: The Mississippi River in North American History](#) by Paul Schneider – Evergreen Indiana*; [eBook](#) & [eAudio](#) via Hoopla*

Old Man River is an exploration of America's great waterway—taking the reader from the Mississippi River's origins to its polluted present and tracing its prehistory, geology, and cultural and literary histories. The fascinating cast of characters includes the French and Spanish explorers de Soto, Marquette and Joliet, and the incomparable La Salle; George Washington fighting his first battle in an effort to secure the watershed; the birth of jazz and blues; and literary greats like Melville, Dickens, Trollope, and, of course, Mark Twain; it is impossible to imagine America

without the Mississippi.



[The Men who United the States : America's Explorers, Inventors, Eccentrics, and Mavericks, and the Creation of One Nation, Indivisible](#) by Simon Winchester – AUDIOBOOK NONFICTION HISTORY UNITED STATES Winchester, [Book via Evergreen Indiana*](#); [eBook](#) & [eAudio](#) via Libby*; [eBook](#) & [eAudio](#) via Hoopla*

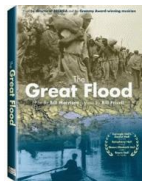
Acclaimed New York Times bestselling author Winchester illuminates the men who toiled fearlessly to discover, connect, and bond the citizenry and geography of the U.S.A. from its beginnings and ponders whether the historic work of uniting the States has succeeded, and to what degree. Part Four focuses on “Canals and Steamboats” and includes The Mississippi River.

Videos:



[State Parks along the Mighty Mississippi: The Wonders of America's State Parks](#) via Kanopy*

Episode 13: The vast majority of natural and human landmarks along the 2,320-mile stretch of the Mississippi River can be found at state parks. Here, take a trip down Old Man River and hop from Itasca State Park in Minnesota through Columbus-Belmont State Park in Kentucky all the way to Rosedown Plantation in Louisiana.



[The Great Flood](#) via Evergreen Indiana*

The Mississippi River Flood of 1927 was the most destructive river flood in American history. Part of its legacy was the forced exodus of displaced sharecroppers, who left plantation life and migrated to Northern cities, adapting to an industrial society with its own set of challenges. The Great Migration fueled the evolution of acoustic blues to electric blues bands that thrived in cities like Memphis, Detroit and Chicago becoming the wellspring for R&B and rock as well as developing jazz styles.

Podcasts:



American History Hit: [Episode 340 – Life on a Mississippi Steamboat](#)

It's one of the most iconic symbols of early Americana; it conjures up images of bustling saloon bars and Mark Twain. But as glamorous as they may seem, there's a dark side to the history of the Steamboats of the Mississippi River. In this episode we welcome Professor of History at Colorado State University, Robert Gudmestad. His newest book is *The Devil's Own Purgatory: The*

United States Mississippi River Squadron in the Civil War.



[The Mississippi Valley Traveler Podcast](#)

Since 2007, Dean Klinkenberg has dedicated himself to uncovering and sharing the hidden stories, vibrant communities, and extraordinary characters that make the Mississippi River Valley one of America's most misunderstood treasures. Sample episodes include – [Episode 78: The Decades-Long Effort to Tame the Wild Mississippi River: How Engineers Reshaped America's Greatest River](#) and [Episode 66: Beyond Mark Twain: Faye Dant on Hannibal's African American Stories](#). You can also select a state and explore [histories of river towns](#) or [listen to songs inspired by the Mississippi River](#).

*=requires GPL Evergreen Indiana card