

EARLY SETTLEMENTS

Along the Mighty Mississippi



From its headwaters at Lake Itasca to where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi River stretches more than 2,300 miles. Its collective stories celebrate the flow of life that has shaped and sustained land, people, fauna, and flora over centuries.

Experience these stories as you drive along the Great River Road National Scenic Byway, which traverses ten states on both sides of the river. Visit our website for the locations of nearly 100 official Interpretive Centers along the way.

Early settlements and military fortifications used the Mississippi River for protection and trade. The remnants of some of these sites now are among the Great River Road Interpretive Centers.



ExperienceMississippiRiver.com

EARLY SETTLEMENTS

Some Suggested Interpretive Centers

Oliver Kelley Farm, Minnesota Historical Society

15788 Kelley Farm Rd. - Elk River, Minnesota - 763.441.6896

mnhs.org/kelleyfarm

Recognized as "the birthplace of organized agriculture in America." Kelley began farming on the banks of the Mississippi River in 1850 and founded the first successful national farming organization, known as the Grange.

Fort Crawford Museum

717 S. Beaumont Rd. - Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin - 608.326.6960

fortcrawfordmuseum.com

The museum stands at the site of this military fort that guarded America's western frontier from 1816 to 1856.

The Motor Mill Historic Site

23002 Grain Rd. - Elkader, Iowa - 563.245.1516

motormill.org

Site includes a six-story limestone gristmill built in the late 1860s from local limestone and timber, along with three other buildings.

Old Fort Madison

716 Riverside Dr. - Fort Madison, Iowa - 800.210.8687

fortmadison-ia.com

The Midwest's oldest American military garrison on the upper Mississippi River. Exhibits include information about the War of 1812.

Black Hawk State Historic Site

1510 46th Ave. - Rock Island, Illinois - 309.788.0177

blackhawkpark.org

Prehistoric Indians and 19th century settlers made their homes here, but the area is most closely identified with the Sauk nation and the warrior-leader whose name it bears.

Fort de Chartres State Historic Site

1350 State Rte. 155 - Prairie du Rocher, Illinois - 618.284.7230

fortdechartres.us

Site is the location of the last of three successive forts named "de Chartres" built by the French during their 18th century colonial occupation of what is today Illinois.

Pierre Menard State Historic Site & Fort Kaskaskia

4230 Kaskaskia Rd. - Ellis Grove, Illinois - 618.859.3031

illinois.gov/ihpa

Includes earthen remains of a fort constructed by the French in 1759 to defend the commercial center of Kaskaskia, along with the home of fur trader and Illinois political figure Pierre Menard.

Arkansas Post National Memorial

1741 Old Post Rd. - Gillett, Arkansas - 870.548.2207

nps.gov/arpo

This trading post, established in 1686, was the first European settlement in the lower Mississippi River Valley. The post became the first capital of the Arkansas Territory in 1819.