



Great River Road Network of Museums and Interpretive Centers Nomination Form

Name of organization: Itasca County Historical Society

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Introduction: This is a network of museums and interpretive centers about the Mississippi River along the Great River Road. It is not our intent to select every museum or interpretive center along the Mississippi River, even though we recognize there are hundreds of museums that are doing excellent work. Our goal is to have a network of premier institutions that are willing to work together to further the interpretive and marketing goals for the Great River Road.

Section 1- Qualifications

The institution must interpret the Mississippi River or some significant aspect or relationship to the river with a high level of quality and be open to the public on a published, regular basis.

1. What story does your institution tell about the Mississippi River as part of its regular daily visitor experience? How does it relate to the themes for interpretation which are attached? Why do you feel that this significant aspect or relationship to the river is presented at a high level of quality? Describe the quality of the visit your guests receive.

The Itasca County Historical Society, most specifically “The River Room” exhibit, tells the stories of a town and area shaped over time by the Mississippi River and with a continued connection to the river. Our stories relate well to the following Great River Road Interpretive Themes -

Theme 9: The history of Mississippi River transportation is a dramatic story reflecting the river’s economic and commercial importance.

Don Boese, History Professor at the Itasca Community College wrote in the book “Papermakers”:

“Grand Rapids, Minnesota, almost 200 miles to the north of the Twin Cities, is a Mississippi River Town. The visitor who knows Mark Twain’s river and relishes the character and flavor of places far to the south may scoff at the very idea. The resident, on the other hand, may give scarcely a passing thought either to the reservoir that extends upriver or to the water that rushes through the dam in the center of town to become but a peaceful stream meandering south. After all, the water passing through Grand Rapids at about 1,000 cubic feet per second is only one-thirtieth of that at the Iowa border and only one-seventieth of that at New Orleans. Grand Rapids is nonetheless a bona fide river town. First as a commercial trade route and then as a source of water and power, the Mississippi has been vital to the interests of Grand Rapids from its earliest days.

Grand Rapids was situated at the foot of a natural 3 1/2 –mile stretch of cataracts, where a clear rapids rushed and boiled and swirled and effectively blocked the passage of boats from the south. The town marked the head of navigation of the Mississippi. True, there were other navigational heads on the river. For many rivermen, especially during the Mississippi’s heyday as an important avenue of commerce, the river ended at the Falls of St. Anthony in Minneapolis. There, substantial traffic came to an abrupt halt. For those plying the waters above the falls, the river ended in Sauk Rapids near St. Cloud, where rushing waters also barred the progress of boats. There may also have been small pleasure boats and even a few freight boats eking out survival in the waters above the cataracts at Grand Rapids. But for all significant commercial boating purposes, the final head of navigation on the Mississippi River was at Grand Rapids.

Above the town, the water moves relatively swiftly, dropping about 1 ½ feet per mile from its source at Lake Itasca to Bemidji and on to Grand rapids. Below, for 125 winding miles to Aitkin (53 miles by highway) the river drops only seven-tenths foot per mile, gently meandering through stands of hardwood and open marshy areas. That section of the river was of first importance to Grand Rapids. Twisting and roundabout as it was, the Mississippi offered a passage to boats headed upstream from Aitkin.

By the 1870’s, upriver commercial traffic on the Mississippi no longer relied on either the transport canoes or the laboriously poled keelboats of an earlier day. Instead, the steamboat that had begun as little more than a raft equipped with a shack and a small boiler and engine had evolved into the great wooden riverboat with a flat bottom and shallow draft that allowed movement in low water. Such boats commonly steamed along all reaches of the river below St. Paul as early as the 1840’s, and they appeared in ever-increasing numbers thereafter.

The steamboats churning their way from Aitkin to Grand Rapids were mostly smaller craft, pale reflections of the great riverboats further south. This was because some places in that last stretch of river were so shallow they were referred to as dusty, and because of the rivers many twists and turns.... By the end of the 1870s, shipping on the last navigable segment of the Mississippi was regularly scheduled and fairly frequent.... Roads still did not exist and the river steamboats were the major link with the outside world....In 1881, a traveler passing through Grand Rapids described the town as little more than a cluster of rustic log buildings and houses. Grand Rapids was incorporated in 1891.... Progress continued. In 1894 a waterworks was installed and then a power company to furnish electricity for lighting. ...Of all the improvements, none had more impact than the arrival of the Duluth and Winnipeg Railroad in 1890. The river continued to provide some transport for the next 30 years, and it still had a very large role in play in Grand Rapids.

Theme 8: The Mississippi River is one of the world's great rivers noted for its beauty, grandeur and diversity.

The River room will also tell the story of one of the most unique Mississippi River feature that is in Itasca County and possible the only one throughout the whole river! Serpentine River: the only place on the river to be called Serpentine. The Serpentine River story will be told with pictures and documentation with an emphasis on finding help to preserve the island which was formed by the river over one hundred years ago.

Serpentine River: Minnesota Mississippi Oxbow Scientific and natural area, written by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Mississippi Oxbow SNA is located south of the unincorporated community of Blackberry in Itasca County, where the river takes a [serpentine route, looping in tight meanders known as oxbows](#). The island site is both a recent addition to the SNA roster and a relatively recent island, geologically speaking. According to early accounts, the 23 acres were separated from the west bank in 1911 when the river created a short cut, slicing a new channel that bypassed an earlier loop.

Roughly two thirds of the island supports terrace forest dominated by black and green ash, with some basswood, bur oak, and blue beech, the last of which is at the extreme northern edge of its range here. Relatively lower elevations support floodplain forest of black ash and silver maple, while the abandoned oxbow channel is covered in meadow-like River Shore vegetation with Tuckerman's sedge, lake sedge, and common woolgrass. Much of the SNA rises only 4-6 feet above the river level of 1,234 feet, and is periodically submerged. Only a small, (~1.5-acre) knob at the western tip of the island remains reliably high and dry, supporting an upland forest with a canopy of white pine, red pine, white spruce, and paper birch. Here, one finds a diverse understory of blueberry, beaked hazelnut, prickly gooseberry, groundpine and balsam fir.

Why protect a relatively small site in such a dynamic environment? It's important to see this SNA in a landscape context, for the contribution it makes to the health of the larger floodplain system. The high quality, undisturbed terrace and floodplain forests here are part of a stretch of riverway ranked as "outstanding" by Minnesota Biological Survey ecologists, containing the best example of a floodplain forest complex in the [Tamarack Lowlands Subsection](#). Nearby lands with conservation value include 134 acres of state land to the east with designated old-growth lowland hardwood forest, and an 89-acre private parcel to the west protected by an Aquatic Management Area (AMA) easement. To the north of the SNA, land on both sides of the river is part of a designated Itasca County wildflower sanctuary and recreation area. Collectively, these provide critical habitat for rare, state-listed species, including [Northern goshawk](#) (special concern) and [Blanding's turtle](#) (threatened), both documented within two miles of the SNA.

In spring and summer, listen here for the rickety tea-CHER tea-CHER, tea-CHER of ovenbirds and the flute-like songs of wood thrushes. Watch for red-eyed vireos and Northern parula warblers flitting in the treetops, foraging for insects, and keep an eye out for sign of black bear. Or make the steep climb up to the island's western edge for a dry vantage point from which to consider the meandering Mississippi, minute by minute remaking its route.

Theme 3: The Mississippi River has nurtured prehistoric and historic cultures.

Prehistoric during the Ice Age; "Our Own Woolly Mammoth Tusk!" Twenty years ago a local sand and gravel company found a woolly mammoth tusk, and another one three months later. After one year the tusks were returned from the Minnesota Science Museum ready to be displayed. The report back revealed that it was a male and female that were traveling together.

Indigenous Peoples: Ojibwe' Chippewa will tell their own stories of ricing, water ceremonies, and travel on the Mississippi River. Amanda Burnette; Historic Preservation Officer of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe will be consulting on Anishinabe artifacts and stories.

Theme 10: Mississippi River towns and cities reflect mid-19th century life.

Stories about the portages and the fifteen days it took the Steam boats to travel up the river from Aitkin includes the *Gibson*, *Oriole*, and *Irene*. Up beyond the dams in Cohasset the story of the "Mud Hen" tug boat that helped the shipment of boats to the railroad in Deer River. River travel ended with the railroad coming through the area, industry boomed when Grand Rapids tapped the river's power, which is still used even today.

Cities in Itasca County on the River: Deer River, Cohasset, Grand Rapids, their beginnings and stories of development from logging, industrial, environmental and tourists.

Showboat: Mississippi Melody Showboat story and its 60 years of entertainment on the banks of the Mississippi River.

All these stories will be featured in the River Room.

Theme 11: The Mississippi River is a working river sustaining many industries.

Past industries:

Harper Boat Factory: Wooden boats were made in Grand Rapids used for fishing and leisure.

Cohasset Pail Company and Cohasset Wanigan Boat Company

Industrial development: Minnesota Power, C.K. Blandin Paper Company, currently UPM Paper,.

Environment: The River speaks to all of us with its beauty! Itasca County is fortunate that our past leaders have taken into consideration the effects upon the River when making decisions on industries, pollution, entertainment, and building. Local Izaak Walton League was involved for many years to protect the river environment.

River Travelers: • *Big River Magazine reported – I believe – that people launch over 60 trips a year from Lake Itasca to canoe or kayak all or part of the Mississippi River. Grand Rapids is a major stop along the way.*

Leisure groups, competitive racers, and kayak clubs travel though all season long.

Riverfront Project: Twenty years ago, Todd Driscoll led a committee of people in putting together a proposal for the Riverfront in the Grand Rapids area. Today the Riverfront has walking trails, historic signage, fishing piers, walking bridge, local art, and events.

River Room: ICHS is opening this room in February of 2021. We have asked people to take pictures of the river in our area. We will use them as well as the oldest picture we have from the 1890's of the rapids. The River Room will have artifacts, stories like those representing the Interpretive Themes of the Great River Road and will use technology to tell our story of the Mississippi River.

2. What is the length of stay for the typical visitor experience at your institution?
Please provide what you consider an average time, what you consider a short stay and what you consider a long stay for regular attendance.

One hour = Average, 30 Minutes – Short Stay,
Two Hours – Long Stay

3. What educational or interpretive programs beyond exhibits do you conduct that interpret the Mississippi River or some significant aspect or relationship to the river?

Youth Water Summit – Program call the “Mud Hen” focuses on the Steam Boats traveling up the Mississippi River.

6th Grade classes will now use the *Papermakers* book in class. This project is just getting under way by a large donation from a person that grew up in Grand Rapids and realized that our own local history was not being taught in the schools. It will start with the story of Itasca County covering the top third of Minnesota and the River story leading all the way through the Industrial development in Grand Rapids.

4. What are your published and regular hours? Please describe hours for various seasons.

Open year-around

Monday through Friday 9:00-5:00

Saturdays 10:00-4:00 – Closed Sundays and Holidays

5. What is the annual attendance for regular museum hours at your site, exclusive of special events? What is the admission fee?

Nine thousand

Free Admission

6. What is your proximity to the Great River Road?

One block from Mississippi River

Two Blocks from Great River Road

View road from Door

7. Did you enclose a letter of endorsement from your state Mississippi River Parkway Commissioner?

Yes

Section II- Duties and Obligations:

1. Members of the network must have the Great River Road map at their site, at a minimum for reference, but preferably for sale or for distribution to visitors. One map will be provided as will an order form for additional maps. Will you agree to stock and/or sell the Great River Road map?

Yes, we currently hand-out the map covering our portion of the Mississippi River.

2. Members of the network must ensure that front line personnel who have contact with the public are knowledgeable of and will promote the Great River Road and the museums and interpretive centers in the region. Describe how you will ensure that your front line personnel will be trained, briefed and monitored.

Staff and volunteers go through training each spring which will include the Great River Road Information.

3. Are you willing to display signage at your center showing that you are a member of the Great River Road Network? This may be inside or outside signage, but must be prominently displayed. Where will you display the Interpretive Center sign? Both inside and outside
Inside: beside the “River Room” where the story of our portion of the River is interpreted.
Outside: Sign on Southside of building facing the River.
4. Are you willing to secure the needed funds to have an officially approved Great River Road Interpretive Center sign erected at your site?
Yes, the cost is being approved in the budget presented at the August board meeting.
5. Are you willing to use and incorporate the Great River Road network language and logo on all future marketing and promotional materials (i.e. radio, newsprint, social media, websites, maps, rackcards and brochures, etc.)? Sample language: [Name of Interpretive Center] is an Interpretive Center of the Great River Road – Mississippi River Parkway Commission National Scenic Byway.
Yes, new brochures made up yearly will be added to 2021 in January.

Section III – Capacity:

The following questions are asked primarily for information purposes and will not be major factors in determination of inclusion in the network.

1. Do you have access to the internet? If your facility has a website, what is the address? Do you have the ability to post the www.experiencemississippiriver.com website on our website?
Yes, research center has 12 computer, for public and volunteers
Yes; website – will create page for “River Room”
Yes, we have 2 web sites. Paul Bunyan Communications is our internet provider.
www.itscahistorical.org
www.itscaveteransproject.com
2. Do you have traveling exhibit space? If so, what size is it in square footage?
Would you be willing or interested in hosting a traveling exhibit?
Yes, we currently use 3 different local locations – ICHS, Grand Rapids Area Library and the Reif Center.

Please send photos of your interpretive center, both inside and outside, to 701 E. Washington Ave. Suite 202 Madison, WI 53703. Call 866-763-8310 if you have questions.

PROCESS

Nominations may be sent simultaneously to the chair of your state Mississippi River Parkway Commission and/or directly to the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission Office, 701 E. Washington Ave. Suite 202 Madison, WI 53703. Nominations must be received by September 1 to be eligible for consideration at the Annual Mississippi River Parkway Commission meeting each year. Please include a letter of endorsement by your state Mississippi River Parkway Commission Commissioner. This is extremely important.

Nominations are reviewed by the Heritage and Culture Committee of the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission. This committee has representation from all 10 states of the Mississippi River. Nominations are then also approved by the Board of Directors of the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

To date, there are 69 centers in the Great River Road Network that interpret the stories of the Mississippi River. These centers reside along the 10-state stretch of the river and range from museums, parks, nature centers, aquariums, historic and prehistoric sites.

Benefits to Network members include: a listing on the Great River Road map distributed nationally, a listing in the touch screen kiosk at the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, listing on the MRPC website, and listing on signage at each GRR center along the river.

Overall Theme:

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IS THE FLOW OF LIFE SHAPING LAND AND PEOPLES.

To assist in utilizing the overall theme and the 11 major themes, examples of stories in each category also were developed. These examples are not exhaustive or definitive, but may be helpful in triggering other ideas. They are meant ONLY as ideas and examples. Each state, as well as each attraction along the Great River Road, will think of other stories that can be told within these broad themes.

While the overall theme and the 11 major themes convey important messages, they are not necessarily in a style and format that will appeal to specific audiences or lend themselves to slogans and marketing statements. Those involved with interpretation are encouraged to consider the background and interests of their audiences, and to present their interpretation in lively, dynamic formats that touch the public.

Theme 1: The Mississippi River is a ribbon of life for people, plants and animals.



- a. The Mississippi River system hosts vastly diverse habitats, including sloughs, side channels, and oxbow lakes, which support a wide variety of plant and animal species comprising a significant component of the continent's biodiversity. Congress recognizes the Upper Mississippi as a nationally significant ecosystem.



- b. Prior to settlement by Europeans and hydrologic modification, the Mississippi River flooded approximately 21 million acres, depositing rich alluvial sediments that supported millions of acres of forest wetland. Today fewer than 5 million acres of these forests remain as important sources for timber and wildlife habitat. The rich alluvial soils support agricultural production.



- c. The Mississippi River is home to many rare, threatened, and endangered species, including both state-listed and federally listed species. Federally listed species are bald eagle, peregrine falcon, Louisiana black bear, pallid sturgeon, Mississauga rattler, and two freshwater mollusks: Higgins eye and fat pocketbook.



- d. The Mississippi River has international importance as a migratory corridor for mid-continent water-fowl populations. The river corridor is also important for maintenance, conservation, and preservation of diverse mid-continent fish and wildlife populations.
- e. Development and change in the Mississippi River, during and immediately after the last glacial advance and retreat, have influenced the location and character of the present river, including the deposit of "Ice Age" loess soil.
- f. The Mississippi River is a dynamic system involving sedimentation, erosion, channel changes, floods, and droughts.
- g. The Mississippi River's watershed - about 1,250,000 square miles - extends from the Allegheny Mountains and drains parts of two Canadian provinces and 31 states.
- h. The natural history of the Mississippi River, including its geography, geology, flora, fauna, and ecology, is a vital component in the river's importance and relationship to the entire United States.
- i. The origin, character, and development of the river's landforms affect human use of the river corridor.

Theme 2: As the river has influenced people, people have influenced the river.



- a. Local, state, and federal agencies regulate, protect, preserve, and enhance natural resources. State-of-the-art resource management and environmental engineering approaches in both the upper and lower Mississippi River restore wetlands. A large portion of the upper river corridor is a federally designated refuge.



- b. Individuals and private and interagency groups (such as the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee, the Izaak Walton League, GREAT, and Environmental Management Programs) have played pioneering roles, especially on the upper river, in protecting the welfare and integrity of the river environment for future generations to enjoy.



- c Many areas along the river are relatively pristine and isolated despite the environmental transformation caused by historic and contemporary human activity.
- d Sedimentation alters fish and wildlife habitats, impedes commercial and recreational navigation, increases frequency of dredging, and can contribute to degraded water quality conditions. Historical erosion and displacement of rich topsoil of the Midwest have had negative effects on Midwest agriculture and way of life, but have helped create and maintain the delta in Louisiana.
- e Exotic plant and animal species pose severe threats to the river's natural inhabitants and municipal, industrial, and recreational activities on the river.
- f Pollutants from a number of sources, including spills, continue to degrade Mississippi River water quality. This results in fish consumption advisories, non-attainment of water quality standards, algae blooms, nutrient enrichment, high turbidity, and decreasing populations of intolerant aquatic species.
- j The cumulative effects of recent human intervention in the Mississippi River natural system are many: channel modifications have altered erosion cycles, channel bed stability, and sediment loads.
- k The Mississippi River is a major recreational resource. The river's easy access and diverse resources attract millions of people annually, but the increasing number of people using the river creates problems and concerns among different user groups.



Theme 3: The Mississippi River has nurtured prehistoric and historic cultures.



- a A great diversity of cultures existed in pre-European times beginning around 12,000 years before the present (B.P.), with the Paleo-Indian hunters of the mammoth and mastodon. Archaic hunters and foragers of 9000 B.P. followed. Then the Woodland Mound builders of the Hopewell culture came. Later, the Mississippian and Oneonta cultures with prosperous farms flourished in the half-century before the time of Columbus.



- b From the earliest settlement, patterns of economic exchanges and alliances facilitated by the Mississippi River system influenced cultural developments in



the Midwest and Old Southwest that distinguished these regions from their counterparts on the East Coast.

- c The most sophisticated prehistoric Indian civilization north of Mexico, centered at Cahokia Mounds, established a regional center for Mississippian culture at the primary confluences of the Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois, and Ohio Rivers.



- d Human inhabitants of the Mississippi River Valley have adapted to its rich biotic resources; these adaptations, which involve hunting, fishing, and resource-gathering techniques, a great variety of watercraft and water-related material culture, and centuries of folk wisdom, constitute an essential unit of Mississippi River ecological analysis.



Theme 4: The Mississippi River inspires a variety of folk life, literary, fine art, and musical forms.



- a The indigenous music of the Mississippi River includes folk, gospel, blues, jazz, rock, country, and folk songs of traditional river people. An interweaving of Creole, Cajun, Anglo-Celtic, and African-American musical traditions inspired these unique sounds.

- b The Mississippi River Valley nourished a rich oral tradition that contributed to a distinctive regional literature and nurtured and disseminated regional linguistic diversity.

- c The fluidity of populations in "golden era" river towns (before lock and dam) gave the settlements a diverse and boisterous character. Long-lasting stereotypes of "river rat" behavior and character emerged, furnishing never-ending fuel for literary imaginations and contributing to the American frontier's mythology.



- d. The Mississippi River has served as a channel for the movement of ideas, and the dissemination and diffusion of material, folk, and popular culture can be traced both east and west from the Mississippi River, as well as along its north-south course.
- e. A wealth of intricate traditional knowledge regarding the Mississippi River survives among the few people whose livelihoods still depend on the river. While river people have adapted this knowledge to modern times, it still shares much with what the pilots of Mark Twain's time knew, connecting river users through the ages.
- f. The Mississippi River Valley has a multicultural history, with many ethnic peoples playing significant roles and contributing to the arts, letters, music, historic events, and traditional culture.

Theme 5: The Mississippi River has profoundly shaped American history.



- a. The historical Mississippi River fur trade merged Indian and European cultures. Native people, trappers, and the parent trading companies interacted to have an impact on European settlement, regional economic growth, European American and American Indian culture, and American Indian/European American relationships. As the fur trade moved up the Missouri River, the trans-Mississippi west opened to American settlement.
- b. The central story of post-Columbian American Indian history in the Mississippi River valley is the process by which European and American settlers displaced native tribes and disrupted their cultural base.
- c. The history of the Mississippi River is significant not only to Americans but to Europeans, as the river was an important border zone between rival colonial powers and played a major role in opening the continent to French, Spanish, British, and American exploration trade, and settlement.
- d. The Mississippi River system (including the Ohio and Missouri Rivers) provided access to the interior and southern outlet for surplus goods, linked the eastern states with the west instead of with Europe, allowed for political unity via the Louisiana Purchase, supported the spread of the southern cotton economy and slavery-based labor system, and sustained a distinct American culture.



- e. Slavery became a significant political, economic, and social issue in American history because of its expansion into the Mississippi River Valley. The river was central to the operations of the plantation and the creation of a planting "aristocracy" in the antebellum South, which dominated political, economic, and social affairs in the lower Mississippi River Valley. The river also served to transport enslaved people downriver and offered a route north to freedom for escaping fugitives.
- f. By providing growth and opportunity, the Mississippi River Valley supported an American democracy composed of individuals with strong beliefs in social ideals, responsibility, and populist reform.

Theme 6: The strategic importance of the Mississippi River has resulted in conflict between nations and peoples.



- a. The Mississippi River has played a central role in American Indian, American, and international military history. The river was a prize of war and a boundary in treaties. It also served as home to Civil War presidents and generals, and became key to the Civil War's outcome. Later, it supported mobilization in World War II.



Theme 7: Mississippi River architecture reflects distinctive styles affected by cultural and natural resources.



- a. Architectural styles in Mississippi River towns were affected by climate, topography, natural resources, ethnic culture, and construction dates.



- b. Consistent architectural styles in Mississippi River towns reflect rapid communication and flow of ideas along the river, the rapidity with which the river was settled, the cultural backgrounds of the first immigrants to make permanent settlements, and a deep cultural and communicative gap between river people and inland farming people.



- c. Vernacular architecture along the Mississippi River reveals many ethnic influences.
- d. Surviving river town architecture represents the boom years of wealth along the river, wealth generated through transportation and other river-based commercial activities.
- e. The ethnic diversity of the small river towns provides international visitors with shared architecture, language, cultural events, and history.



Theme 8: The Mississippi River is one of the world's great rivers noted for its beauty, grandeur and diversity.



- a. The richness and beauty of much of the Mississippi River corridor remain one of the nation's "best-kept secrets." Scenic resources along the Mississippi River are many and varied, offering majestic bluff vistas as well as tranquil, low-lying views.



Theme 9: The history of Mississippi River transportation is a dramatic story reflecting the river's economic and commercial importance.



- a. The Mississippi River is a vital interstate trade route linking North and South, and through its tributaries the Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and Arkansas rivers, linking East and West.



- b. Mississippi navigation has evolved from the transportation of goods in dugouts, pirogues, rafts, bateaux, flatboats, and keelboats to the heyday of the steamboat era to establishment of the present inland waterway system with its towboat and barges.
- c. Eastern attempts to reach the Mississippi, the interior river of commerce, resulted in internal improvement such as canals, turnpikes, bridges, and railroads.



- d. Evidence of historic river transportation is preserved in the numerous documented and undocumented shipwrecks that are recorded for the Mississippi River channels and its backwaters.
- e. The Mississippi River plays an important role in bulk commodity transportation and world trade and provides the nation's most inexpensive means of transportation.
- f. The Mississippi River System is a federally designated navigation channel, providing economic benefits to river communities and the region.



Theme 10: Mississippi River towns and cities reflect mid-19th century life.



- a. For most towns, the river was the location and site factor in economic development before the 1870s. Only limited, capital-intensive conventional economic development has ensued, but the river now offers important opportunities for tourism development.



- b. The physical layout of river towns provides access to the river and to adjacent lands, securing an economic and cultural advantage over inland towns.



- c. Navigation and flood control improvements on the Mississippi have changed the river's landscape to such an extent that both the upper and lower Mississippi River today differs markedly from the natural river viewed by Indians, explorers, and early settlers.

Theme 11: The Mississippi River is a working river sustaining many industries.



- a. Many industries depend on the river for water power and transportation and use the river for its natural resources.
- b. Historic river-based industries, including commercial fishing, pearl button, ice lead, and timber, have given way to the present-day oil, cement, limestone, grain, and coal industries. Other industries, including milling and hydroelectric generation, have spanned the decades.

