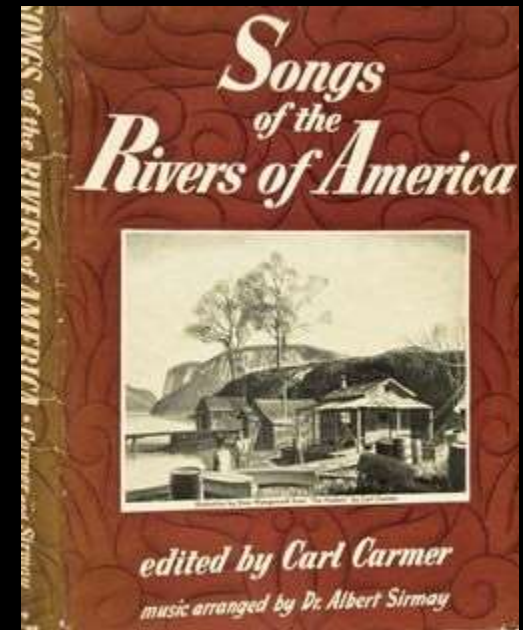


Riversong: American Rivers and Music

Kevin M. Anderson, Ph.D.

Austin Water - Center for Environmental Research



The Waters of March (Aguas de Março)

Antônio Carlos Jobim (1927 – 1994)

Brazilian songwriter, composer, arranger, singer, and pianist/guitarist.
He was a primary force behind the creation of the bossa nova style

it's the wind blowing free. it's the end of a slope.
it's a beam, it's a void, it's a hunch, it's a hope.
and the riverbank talks of the waters of March.
it's the end of the strain, it's the joy in your heart.

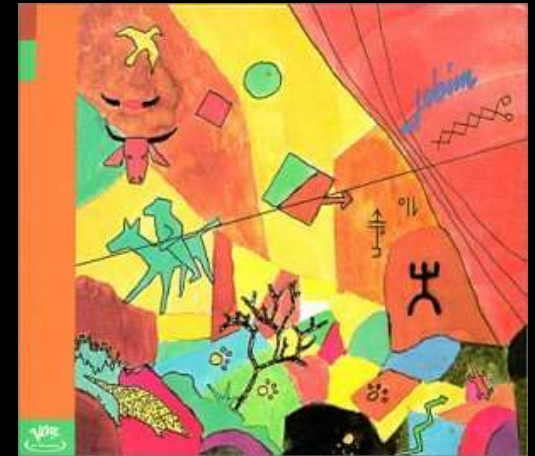
the plan of the house, the body in bed,
the car that got stuck, it's the mud, it's the mud.

a float, a drift, a flight, a wing,
a hawk, a quail, the promise of spring.
and the riverbank talks of the waters of March.

it's the promise of life, it's the joy in your heart.

a stick, a stone, the end of the load,
the rest of the stump, a lonesome road.
a sliver of glass, a life, the sun,
a night, a death, the end of the run

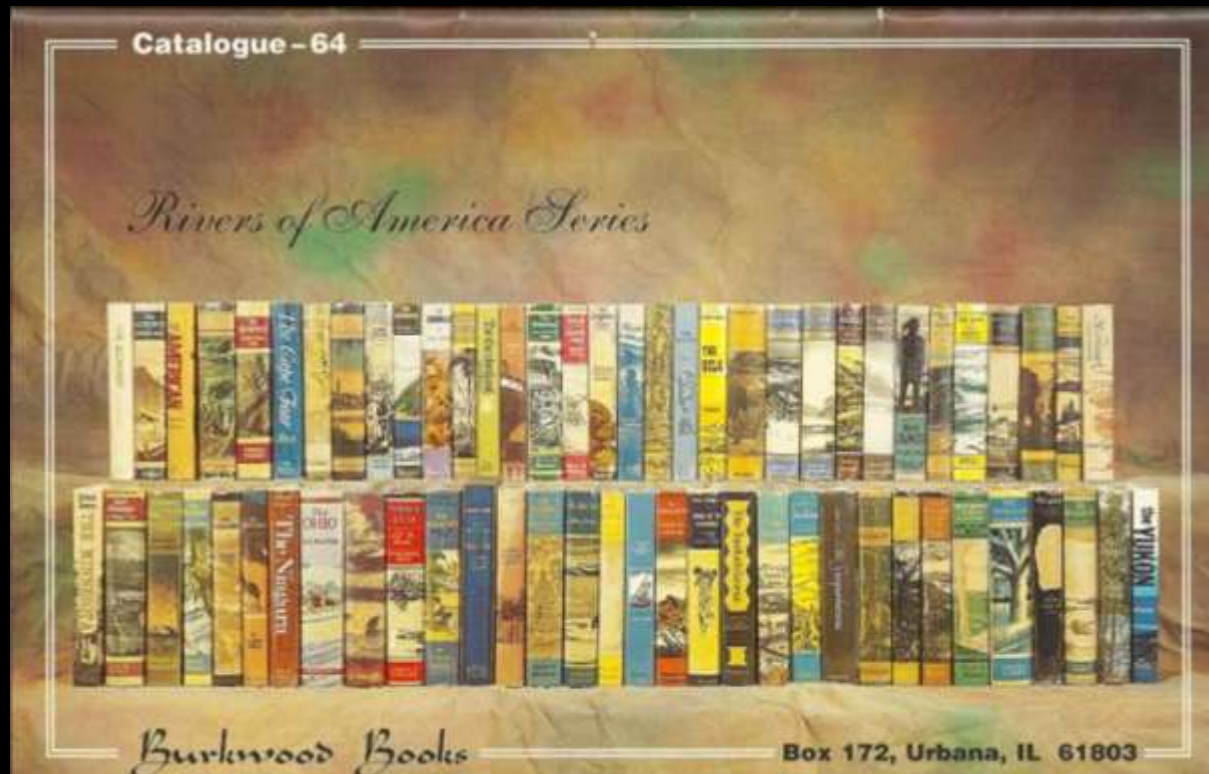
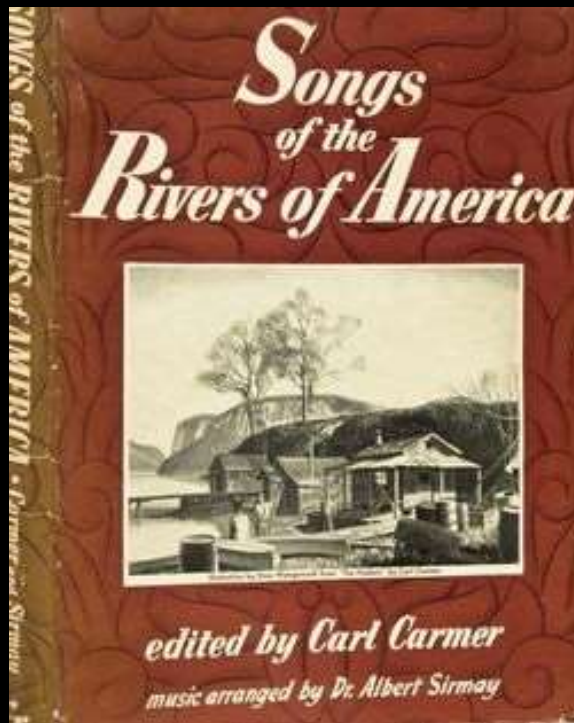
and the riverbank talks of the waters of March.
it's the end of all strain, it's the joy in your heart.



The Rivers of America Series

Initially projected as a series of twenty-four volumes, it developed into a series of sixty-two titles from the first title in 1937 to the last title in 1974.

Many persons consider *Songs of the Rivers of America*, edited by Carl Carmer (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942) to be a title in the series, thereby making a series of sixty-five titles.



American Rivers and Music

- Genres
- (Classical)
- Work Songs
- Prison Songs
- Spirituals/Hymns
- Blues
- Cowboy
- Folk
- Old Time/Traditional
- Jazz
- Bluegrass
- Country
- Americana
- Rock



Geography of Rivers

- Flowing
- Flooding
- Crossing
- Wading
- Baptizing
- Washing
- Swimming
- Drowning
- Sitting
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Boating
- Rafting
- Drifting

You can ride on it or drink it
 Poison it or dam it
 Fish in it and wash in it
 Swim in it and you can die in it
 Run, you river, run



- Bottomland
- Bed
- Banks
- Levees
- Boats
- Ferries
- Rafts
- Bridges



“The River Knows Your Name”

John Hiatt

Oh the river knows your name
And your tears falling like the rain
All around you suffering and pain
Oh the river knows your name

And the river hears you cry
As the lightning cracks the open sky
As your momma sings a lullaby
Oh the river she knows why

Let the river wash you down
Beneath the surface with a rushing sound
Like a freight train passing through a town
Let the river wash you down

Let the river take away
All the words you and I could never say
In the silence darling let us pray
Let the river take it all away

Oh the river she knows your name
From the Brazos to the Wabash to the Seine
No two journeys are ever quite the same
But the river knows your name
Oh the river knows your name

American Rivers and Music

Geography of Rivers

Naming



Texas Rivers – “Another Colorado” Jimmie Dale Gilmore

Down by the banks of the Colorado
My true love and I one night did lie
And we laughed and played and made fun
Of the entire world spinning 'round the sun
Down by the banks of the Colorado

Up from the banks of the Colorado
Night watchmen stood guard 'round the wagon yard
And I took a pillar for a sign
That the salt of the earth was surely mine
Up from the banks of the Colorado

There is another Colorado
Wise men have told me, wise women too
That I may find sweet El Dorado
Down by the banks of one sweet Colorado

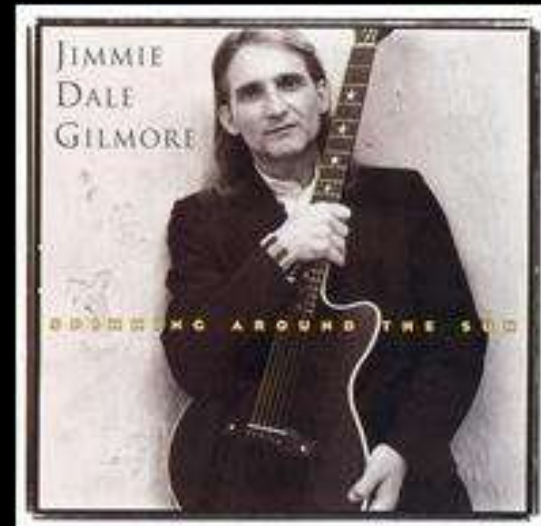
Down by the banks of the Colorado
The years flowed softly before my eyes
And the circus joined me in my quest
And stayed with me throughout my test
Down by the banks of the Colorado

There is another Colorado
Wise men have told me, wise women too
That I may find my sweet El Dorado
Down by the banks of one sweet Colorado

American Rivers and Music

Geography of Rivers

Naming



Traditional "The Texas Rivers Song"

Lend me your hand
Li, li, li, le, le, le
Lend me your hand
Li, li, li, le, le, le
Lend me your hand
There's many a river
That waters the land

Now the fair Angelina
Runs glossy and gliding
the crooked Colorado
Runs weaving and winding
The slow San Antonio
Courses and plains
But I never will walk
By the Brazos again

She kissed me and she hugged me
And she called me her dandy
The Trinity's muddy
But the Brazos quick sandy
She kissed me and she hugged me
And she called me her own
But down by the Brazos
She left me alone

American Rivers and Music

Geography of Rivers

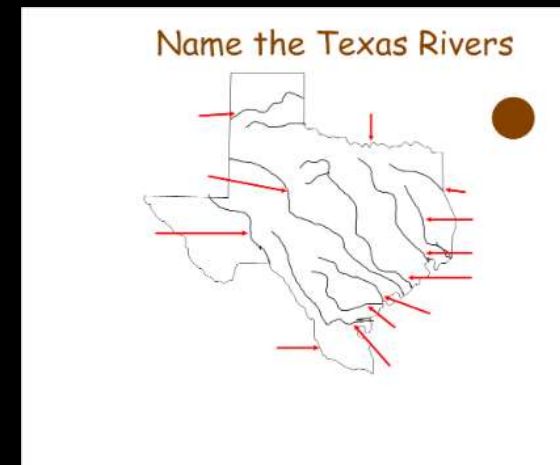
Naming

Now the girls of Little River
They're plump and they're pretty
The Sabine and the Sulphur
Hold beauties a'many
The banks of the Neches
There are girls by the score
But down by the Brazos
I'll wander no more

We crossed the wild Pecos
We forded the Nueces
We swum the Guadalupe
And we followed the Brazos
Red River runs rusty
The Wichita clear
But down by the Brazos
I courted my dear



Lyle Lovett (Townes Van Zant)



American Rivers and Music

Geography of Rivers

Naming

“American Rivers”

Tom Russell



Ain't no more cane on the Brazos
Yeah, yeah, yeah
It's all been ground down to molasses
Yeah, yeah, yeah

I saw a red iron sunset from a rust iron bridge
In the Indian country of the mockingbird kid
I saw the moon in a boxcar being carried as freight
Through 62 winters through 48 states
And in an old Chinese graveyard I slept in the weeds
When a song and a story were all a kid needs
Hear the rhymes and the rattles of those runaway trains
And the songs of the cowboy and the sound of the rain

And it's mamma I miss you
I woke up and screamed
American rivers roll deep through my dreams
Colorado, Allegheny, Shenandoah, Susquehanny
And the Wabash and the Hudson and the brave Rio Grande
I was a kid there asleep in sand and your water

We named them for Indians our guilt to forsake
The Delaware, the Blackfoot, The Flathead and Snake
Now they flow past casinos and hamburger stands
They are waving farewell to the kid on the land...
With their jig-sawed old arteries
So clogged and defiled no open heart miracle's
Gonna turn 'em back wild

Past towns gone to bankers past fields gone to seed
All cut up and carved out so divided by greed
And old grandfather catfish with his whiskers so long
And his life is a struggle cuz the oxygen's gone



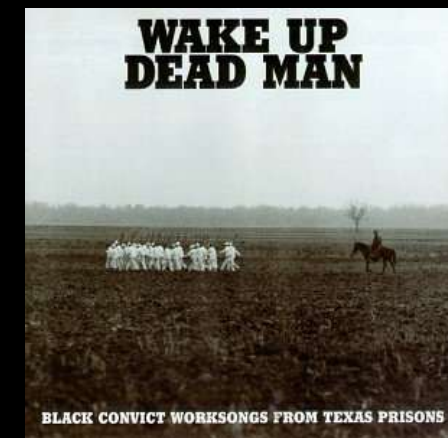
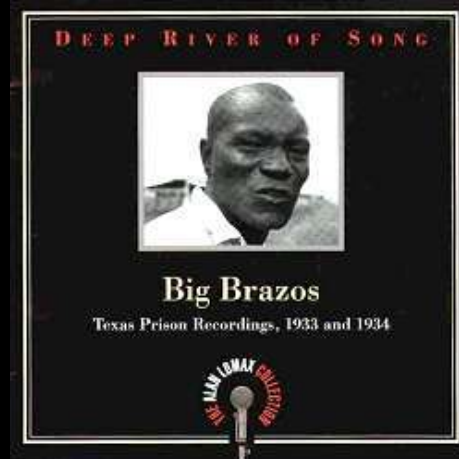
*Ain't no more cane on the Brazos
It's all been ground down to molasses*

John A. Lomax (1867-1948) and, his sons, John Jr. and Alan Lomax

African American Prison Songs, Work Songs, Spirituals, Blues

Recordings on Smithsonian Folkways Records and
Deep River of Song subset of Rounder's Alan Lomax Collection series

Deep River of Song: Big Brazos
Texas Prison Recordings, 1933 and 1934
Rounder Records



Bob Dylan and The Band

Ain't no more cane on the Brazos
Oh, oh, oh, oh...
Its all been ground down to molasses
Oh, oh- oh, oh- oh...

You shoulda been on the river in 1910
They were driving the women just like they drove the men.
Go down old Hannah, don'cha rise no more
Don't you rise up til judgment day's for sure
Ain't no more cane on the Brazos
Its all been ground down to molasses

Captain, don't you do me like you done poor old shine
Well ya drove that bully til he went stone blind
Wake up on a lifetime, hold up your own head
Well you may get a pardon and then you might drop dead

Ain't no more cane on the Brazos
Its all been ground down to molasses.



River Hymn – The Band

The ladies would put the baskets on the table
And the men would sit beneath a shady tree
The children would listen to a fable
While something else came through to me
The river got no end, just roll around the bend
Then pretty soon the women would all join in
On the river hymn...

The whole congregation was standing on the banks of the river
We are gathered here to give a little thanks

The voice of the rapids will echo
And ricochet like an old water well
Who'd ever want to let go
Once you sit beneath its spell
It's dark and wide and deep, towards the sea it creeps
I'm so glad I brought along my mandolin
To play the river hymn...

You can ride on it or drink it
Poison it or dam it
Fish in it and wash in it
Swim in it and you can die in it
Run, you river, run



Son, you ain't never seen yourself
No crystal mirror can show it clear, come over here instead
Son, you ain't never eased yourself
Til you laid it down in a river bed
If you hear a lonesome drone, it's as common as a stone
And gets louder as the day grows dim
That's the river hymn...

The whole congregation was standing on the banks of the river
We are gathered here to give a little thanks

Spirituals – Down in the River to Pray

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord show me the way
Oh sisters let's go down
Let's go down come on down



Oh sisters let's go down
Down to the river to pray

As I went down in the river to pray
Studyin' about that good ole way and who
Shall wear the robe and crown good lord show me the way

O brothers let's go down, let's go down come on down
Come on brothers let's go down, down in the river to pray

Allison Krauss on *O Brother Where Art Thou?*



DOWN IN THE RIVER TO PRAY

Gospel

J.B. Voines

1. As I went down in the ri-ver to pray Stu-dy-ing a-bout that good old way And
who shall wear the star-ry crown Good Lord show me the way Oh sis-ters let's go down
Let's go down come on down Oh sis-ters let's go down Down in the ri-ver to pray

2. As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord show me the way
Oh brothers let's go down
...

5. As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord show me the way
Oh sinners let's go down
...

3. As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord show me the way
Oh fathers let's go down
...

6. As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord show me the way

4. As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord show me the way
Oh mothers let's go down
...

Wade in the Water

Blind Boys of Alabama

Perhaps instructions to fugitive slaves on how to avoid capture and the route to take to successfully make their way to freedom - leaving dry land and taking to the water as a strategy to throw pursuing bloodhounds off one's trail.

Wade in the Water, Wade in the Water, Children.
Wade in the Water. My God's gonna trouble the water.

If you hear tell of me dying, I don't want nobody to cry.
All I want you to do for me is just to close my dying eyes

Wade in the Water, Wade in the Water, Children.
Wade in the Water. My God's gonna trouble the water.

In my dying hour, I don't want nobody to mourn.
All I want you to do for me is just give that bell a tone.

Wade in the Water, Wade in the Water, Children.
Wade in the Water. My God's gonna trouble the water.

When I'm getting lonely. Well, I'm gonna shake my mother's hand
I'm gonna tell her all about my troubles while travelling through this lands

Wade in the Water, Wade in the Water, Children.
Wade in the Water. My God's gonna trouble the water



Take Me to the River

a 1974 song written by singer Al Green and guitarist Teenie Hodges.

Hit versions were recorded by both and Talking Heads. In 2004, Al Green's original version was ranked number 117 on Rolling Stone magazine's list of the 500 greatest songs of all time.

I wanna know
Won't you tell me
Am I in love to stay?
Hey hey
Take me to the river
And wash me down
Won't you cleanse my soul
Put my feet on the ground



Working On the River – River Work Songs

Get Up Jake – The Band

Get up Jake, it's late in the mornin'
The rain is pourin' and we got work to do
Get up Jake, there's no need lyin'
You tell me that you're dyin' but I know it's not true
Now me and Jake, we work down on the river
On the ferry 'Baltimore'
And when Jake don't rise up in the mornin'
People lined up all along the shore
Get up Jake, it's late in the mornin'
The rain is pourin' and we got work to do
Get up Jake, there's no need lyin'
You tell me that you're dyin' but I know it's not true
Crap game will take you to the cleaners
Rye whiskey to the grave
River Woman, don't you come no closer
'Cause me and Jake got no time to save, oh, oh



Genres

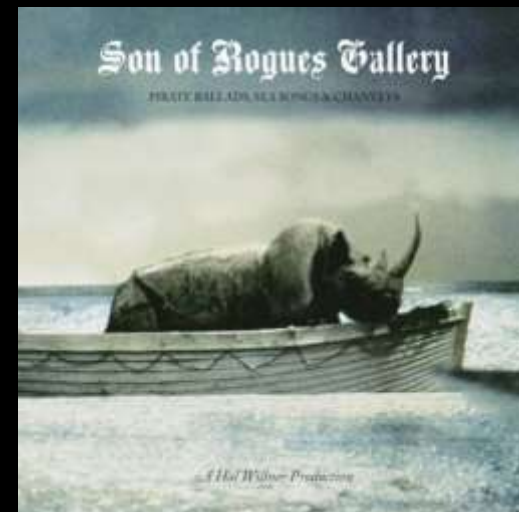
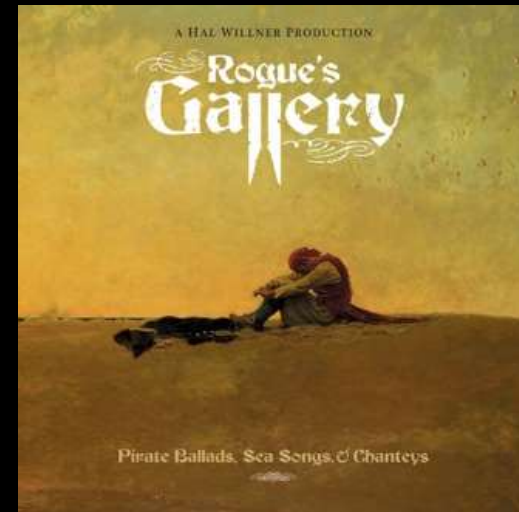
River Work Songs - River Boats and Canals

Connection to Pirate Ballads and Sea Shanties



For huge sets of menhaden, purse boat crews from two steamers would work together to harden the net, with up to three score fishermen chanting as they pulled the bunkers to the water's surface.

Courtesy of The Mariners Museum



River Work Songs

Shenandoah or *Across the Wide Missouri* is a traditional American folk song of uncertain origin, dating at least to the early 19th century. Originally used by river boatmen on the Ohio and Missouri rivers.

Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you.
Away, you rolling river!
Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
Away, I'm bound away,
'Cross the wide Missouri.

Oh, Shenandoah, I love your daughter,
Away, you rolling river!
For her I've crossed the stormy water,
Away, I'm bound away,
'Cross the wide Missouri.

Farewell, my dear, I'm bound to leave you.
Away, you rolling river!
Oh, Shenandoah, I'll not deceive you,
Away, I'm bound away!
'Cross the wide Missouri.



River Work Songs

Erie Canal Song – Thomas S. Allen

I've got a mule and her name is Sal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
She's a good old worker and a good old pal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal

We haul'd some barges in our day
Filled with lumber, coal, and hay
We know every inch of the way
From Albany to Buffalo

Low bridge, everybody down
Low bridge, yeah we're coming to a town
And you'll always know your neighbor
And you'll always know your pal
If ya ever navigated on the Erie Canal

We'd better look around for a job, old gal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
You can bet your life I'll never part with Sal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal

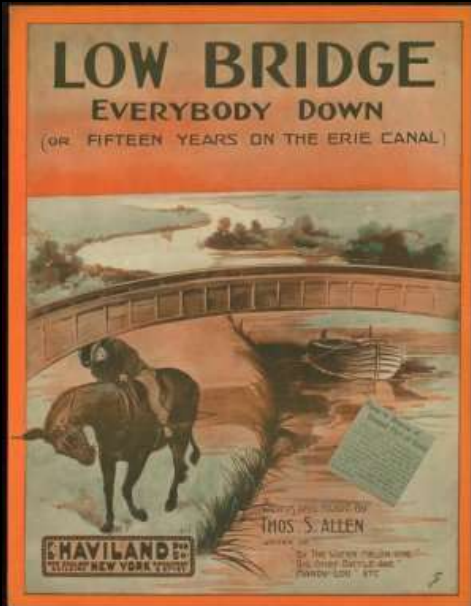
Get up mule, here comes a lock
We'll make Rome 'bout six o'clock
One more trip and back we'll go
Right back home to Buffalo

The Erie Canal Song, as it is commonly known by today, was written in 1905 under the title *Low Bridge, Everybody Down* about life on the Erie Canal.

Completed in 1825, the Erie Canal carried boats, cargo, and people 363 miles from Albany to Buffalo, the longest artificial waterway in North America. Around 1905 mule powered barge traffic had converted to steam power and diesel power was about to take over.

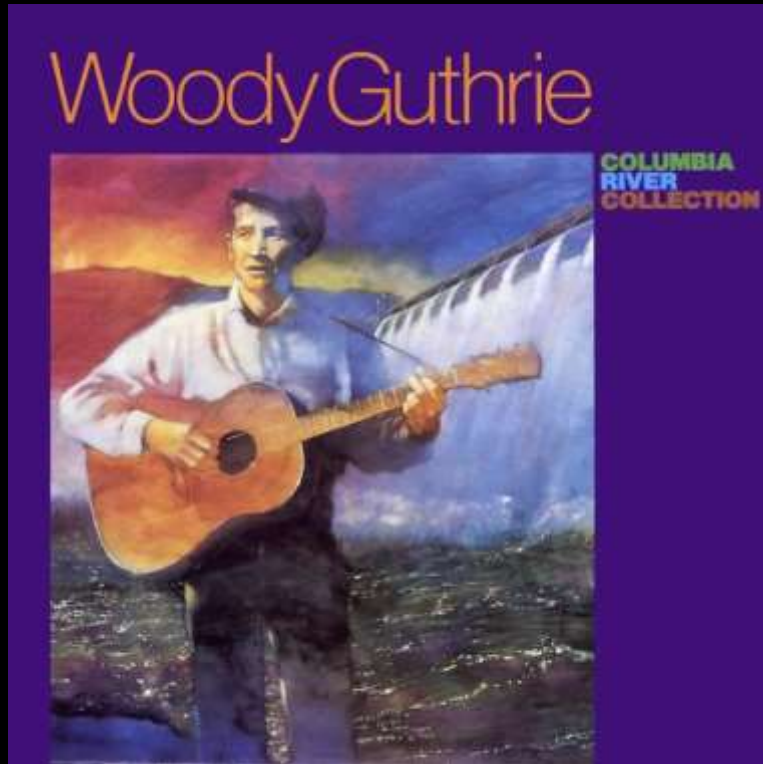
The Erie Canal Song was written to commemorate the history of nearly 100 years of life along the Erie Canal.

The song is about the people in the boats. Travelers would typically ride on the roof of boats when the conditions allowed, but the low bridges along the route would require that they either duck down or get off the roof to fit under bridges.



Woody Guthrie Columbia River Collection

In 1941, Woody age 28, was hired by the Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Oregon to write music for a film about the Columbia River and public power. This collection presents all known recordings of Woody singing his Columbia River songs, including *Roll On Columbia*, *The Biggest Thing That Man Has Done*, and *Grand Coulee Dam*.



Waist Deep in the Big Muddy

Pete Seeger

[Made more famous because of its censorship from The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour]

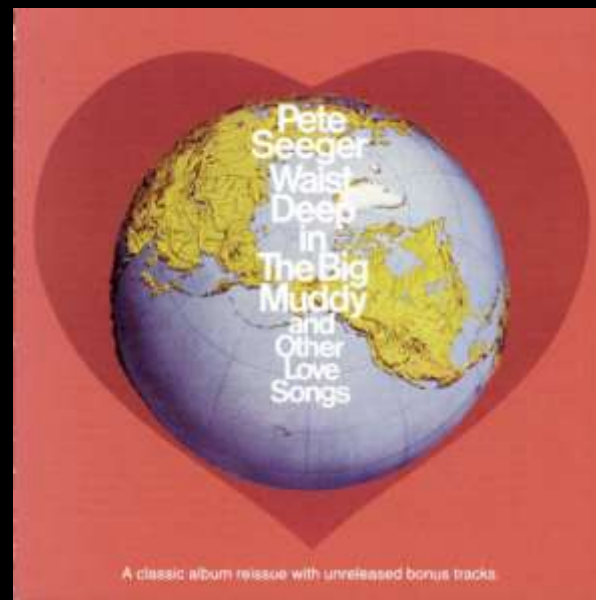
It was back in nineteen forty-two,
I was a member of a good platoon.
We were on maneuvers in Loozianna,
One night by the light of the moon.
The captain told us to ford a river,
That's how it all begun.
We were knee deep in the Big Muddy,
But the big fool said to push on.

The Sergeant said, "Sir, are you sure,
This is the best way back to the base?"
"Sergeant, go on! I forded this river
'Bout a mile above this place.
It'll be a little soggy but just keep slogging.
We'll soon be on dry ground."
We were -- waist deep in the Big Muddy
And the big fool said to push on.



Well, I'm not going to point any moral;
I'll leave that for yourself
Maybe you're still walking, you're still talking
You'd like to keep your health.
But every time I read the papers
That old feeling comes on;
We're -- waist deep in the Big Muddy
And the big fool says to push on.

River as Metaphor



River Metaphor

Lazy River

Up a lazy river by the old mill run
Lazy, lazy river in the noon day sun
Linger awhile in the shade of the tree
Throw away your troubles, dream a dream of me

(lyrics by Sidney Arodin)



also "Riverboat Shuffle", recorded by Bix Beiderbecke, which became a staple of jazz and Carmichael's first recorded song.

Moon River, wider than a mile,
I'm crossing you in style some day.
Oh, dream maker, you heart breaker,
Wherever you're going, I'm going your way.
Two drifters off to see the world.
There's such a lot of world to see.
We're after the same rainbow's end,
Waiting 'round the bend,
My huckleberry friend,
Moon River and me.

Moon River

Composed by Henry Mancini with lyrics written by Johnny Mercer.

It received an Academy Award for Best Original Song for its first performance by Audrey Hepburn in the 1961 movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

It also won Mancini the 1962 Grammy Award for Record of the Year and Mercer the Grammy Award for Song of the Year.

River Metaphor

Cry Me a River

American torch song, written by Arthur Hamilton and first published in 1953, and made famous in the version by Julie London, 1955.

Now you say you're lonely
You cry the whole night through
Well, you can cry me a river, cry me a river
I cried a river over you

Now you say you're sorry
For being so untrue
Well, you can cry me a river, cry me a river
I cried a river over you

You drove me, nearly drove me out of my head
While you never shed a tear
Remember, I remember all that you said
Told me love was too plebeian
Told me you were through with me and

Now you say you love me
Well, just to prove you do
Come on and cry me a river, cry me a river
I cried a river over you



River Metaphor

Whiskey River

Songwriter - Johnny Bush

Whiskey River take my mind
Don't let her memory torture me
Whiskey River don't run dry
You're all I've got, take care of me

Whiskey River take my mind
Don't let her memory torture me
Whiskey River don't run dry
You're all I've got, take care of me

I'm drowning in a whiskey river
Bathing my memor'ied mind in the wetness of its soul
Feeling the amber current flowin' from my mind
And warm an empty heart you left so cold

Whiskey River take my mind
Don't let her memory torture me
Whiskey River don't run dry
You're all I've got, take care of me
I'm drowning in a whiskey river



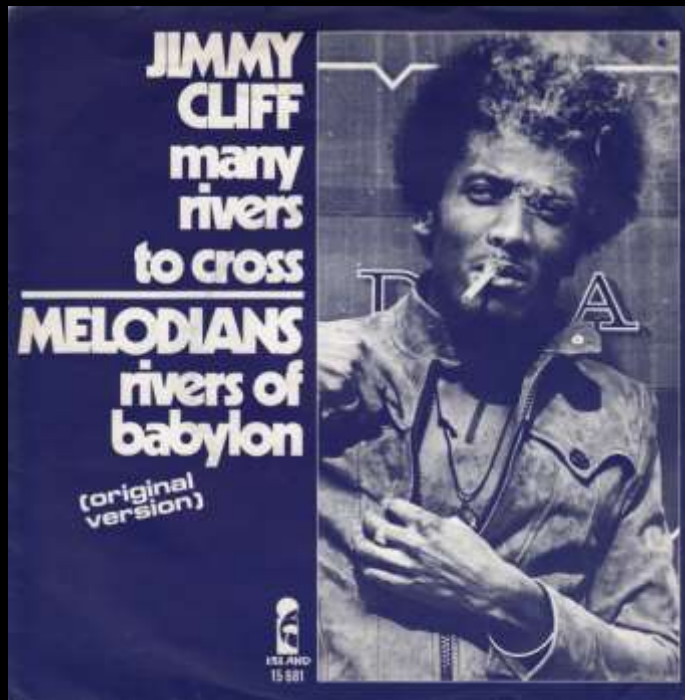
WILLIE NELSON ★ SONGS



River Metaphor

Many Rivers to Cross

Jimmy Cliff



Many rivers to cross
But I can't seem to find my way over
Wandering I am lost
As I travel along the white cliffs of dover

Many rivers to cross
And it's only my will that keeps me alive
I've been licked, washed up for years
And I merely survive because of my pride

And this loneliness won't leave me alone
It's such a drag to be on your own
My woman left me and she didn't say why
Well, I guess I'll have to cry

Many rivers to cross
But just where to begin I'm playing for time
There have been times I find myself
Thinking of committing some dreadful crime

Yes, I've got many rivers to cross
But I can't seem to find my way over
Wandering, I am lost
As I travel along the white cliffs of Dover

Yes, I've got many rivers to cross
And I merely survive because of my will...

Dark Side – Drowning

Going to the River – Fats Domino

I'm goin' to the river,
Gonna jump overboard and drown
I'm goin' to the river,
Gonna jump overboard and drown
Because the girl I love
She just done let me down

Now when she left me,
I bowed my head and cried
When she left me,
I bowed my head and cried
I never thought I would be,
I would be the one to cry

If you see my mama,
Tell her good-bye for me
If you see my mama,
Tell her good-bye for me
I'm tired of livin'
Livin' in misery



Dark Side - La Llorona

a part of Hispanic culture since the days of the conquistadores. The tall, thin spirit is said to be blessed with natural beauty and long flowing black hair. Wearing a white gown, she roams the rivers and creeks, wailing into the night and searching for children to drag, screaming to a watery grave.

No one really knows when the legend of La Llorona began or, from where it originated. Though the tales vary from source to source, the one common thread is that she is the spirit of a doomed mother who drowned her children and now spends eternity searching for them in rivers, creeks, and lakes.

Chavela Vargas (1919 –2012) Costa Rican-born Mexican singer.

Lila Downs - Downs' version of "La Llorona" was released as part of her debut album, La Sandunga.

Todos me dicen el negro,
Llorona

Negro pero cariñoso

Todos me dicen el negro,
Llorona

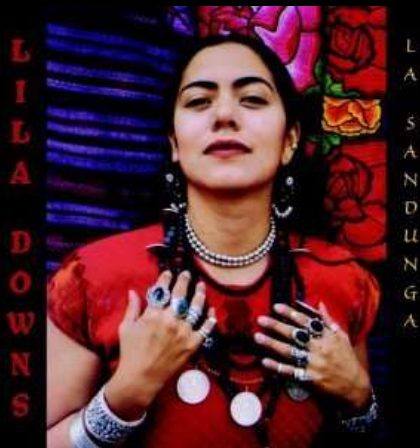
Negro pero cariñoso

Yo soy como el chile verde,
Llorona

Picante pero sabroso

Yo soy como el chile verde,
Llorona

Picante pero sabroso



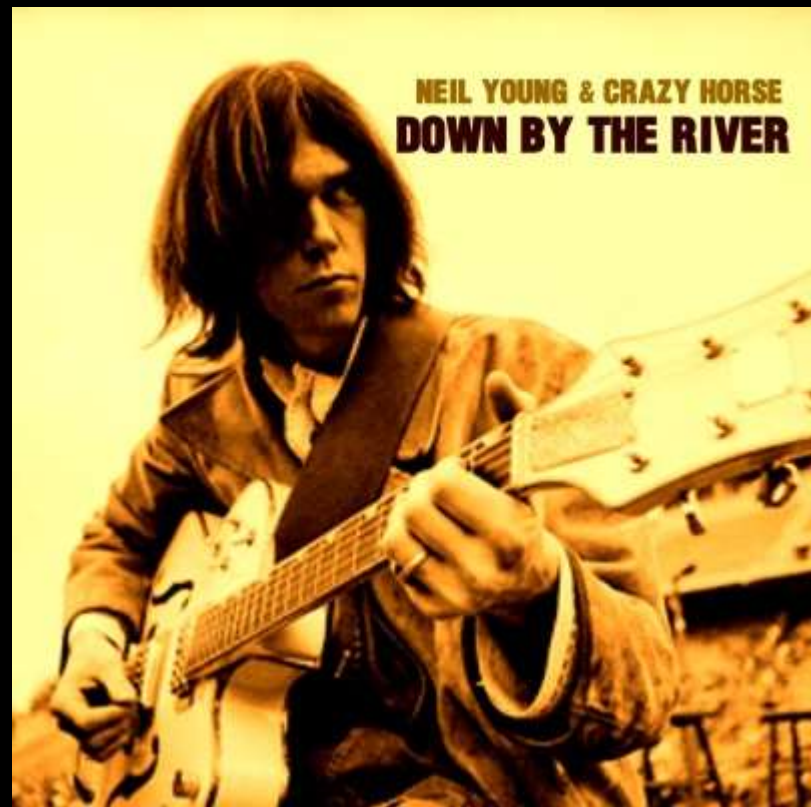
Dark Side – Killing

Down By The River – Neil Young

Be on my side, I'll be on your side, baby
There is no reason for you to hide
It's so hard for me, staying here all alone
When you could be taking me for a ride

Yeah
She could drag me over the rainbow
And send me away

Down by the river
I shot my baby
Down by the river

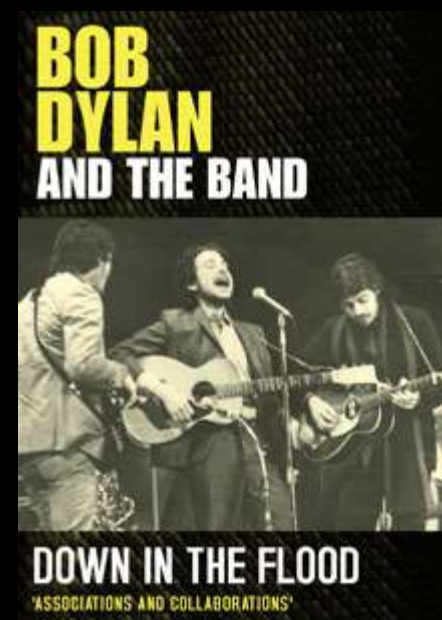


River as Threat - Floods

Down in the Flood – Bob Dylan and The Band

Crash on the levee, mama
Water's gonna overflow
Swamp's gonna rise
No boat's gonna row
Now, you can train on down
To Williams Point
You can bust your feet
You can rock this joint
But oh mama, ain't you gonna miss your best friend now?
You're gonna have to find yourself
Another best friend, somehow.

Now, don't you try an' move me
You're just gonna lose
There's a crash on the levee
And mama, you've been refused
Well, it's sugar for sugar
And salt for salt
If you go down in the flood
It's gonna be your own fault
Oh mama, ain't you gonna miss your best friend now?
You're gonna have to find yourself
Another best friend, somehow.



Well, that high tide's risin'
Mama, don't you let me down
Pack up your suitcase
Mama, don't you make a sound
Now, it's king for king
Queen for queen
It's gonna be the meanest flood
That anybody's seen
Oh mama, ain't you gonna miss your best friend now?
You're gonna have to find yourself
Another best friend, somehow.

River as Threat – Floods

Louisiana 1927
Randy Newman

A song telling the story of the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 that left 700,000 people homeless in Louisiana and Mississippi.



What has happened down here is the wind have changed
Clouds roll in from the north and it started to rain
Rained real hard and rained for a real long time
Six feet of water in the streets of Evangeline

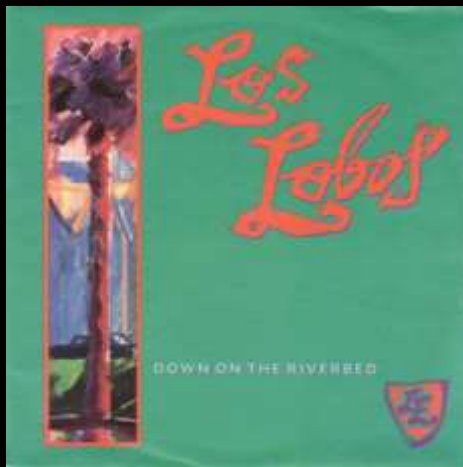
The river rose all day
The river rose all night
Some people got lost in the flood
Some people got away alright
The river have busted through
Cleared down to Plaquemines
Six feet of water in the streets of Evangeline

Louisiana, Louisiana
They're tryin' to wash us away
They're tryin' to wash us away
Louisiana, Louisiana
They're tryin' to wash us away
They're tryin' to wash us away

President Coolidge came down in a railroad train
With a little fat man with a note-pad in his hand
The President say,
"Little fat man isn't it a shame what the river has done
To this poor crackers land."

Louisiana, Louisiana
They're tryin' to wash us away
They're tryin' to wash us away
Louisiana, Louisiana
They're tryin' to wash us away
They're tryin' to wash us away





Down on the riverbed
Down on the riverbed
Down on the riverbed
I asked my lover for her hand

Dark Geography of Rivers

Bottomland

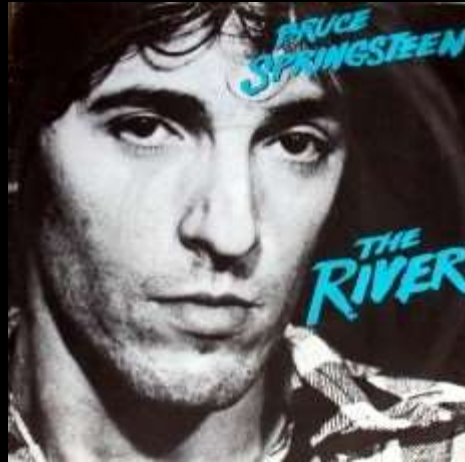
Bed

Banks

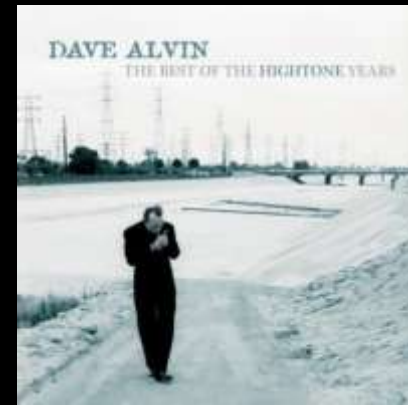
Ice

I was born by a river, but it was paved with cement
Yeah I was born by a river, but it was paved with cement
Still I stand out in that old dry river,
and wish that I was soaking wet

Someday it's gonna rain, someday it's gonna pour
Someday this old dry river, it well, won't be dry anymore



Is a dream a lie if it don't come true
Or is it something worse
that sends me down to the river
though I know the river is dry
That sends me down to the river tonight
Down to the river
my baby and I
Oh down to the river we ride



It's coming on Christmas
They're cutting down trees
Putting up reindeer
Singing songs of joy and peace
Oh, I wish I had a river
That I could skate away on...

Joni Mitchell "River"



Find the River

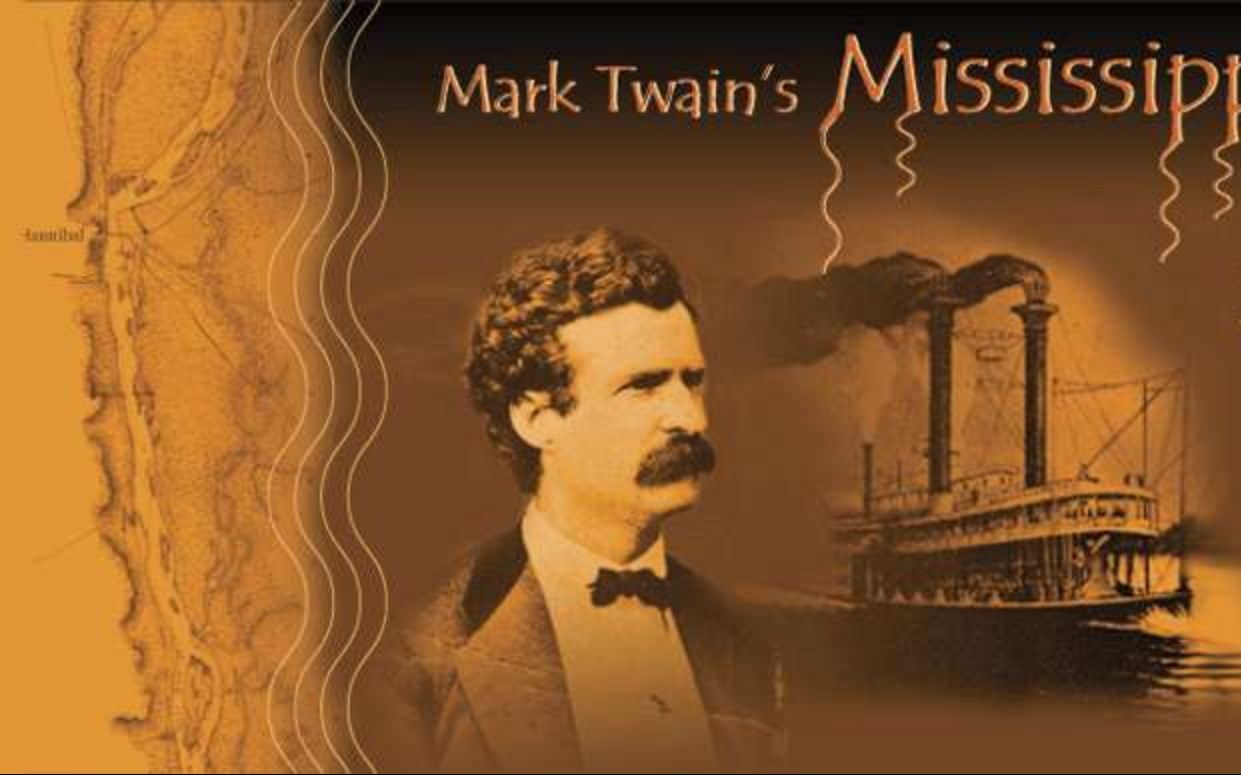
Pick up here and chase the ride
The river empties to the tide
Fall into the ocean

The river to the ocean goes
A fortune for the undertow
None of this is going my way
There is nothing left to throw
Of ginger, lemon, indigo
Coriander stem and rose of hay

Strength and courage overrides
The privileged and weary eyes
Of river poet search naivete
Pick up here and chase the ride
The river empties to the tide
All of this is coming your way

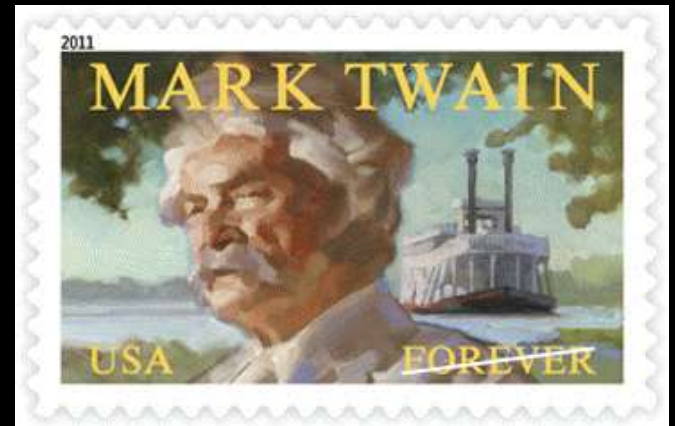


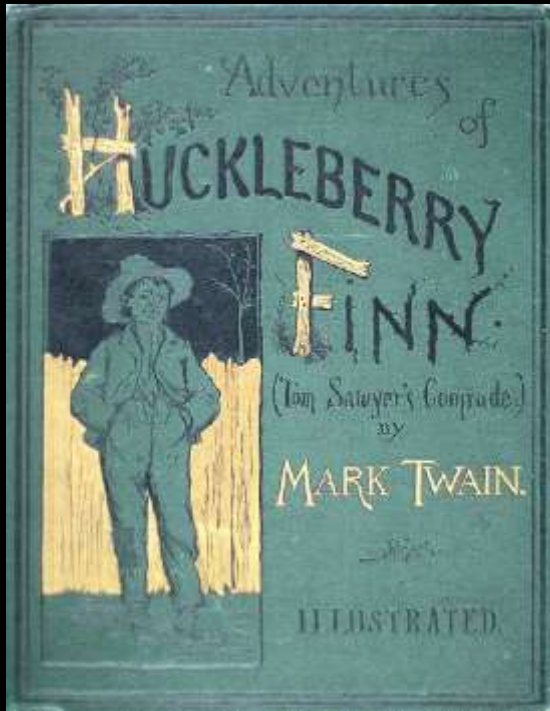
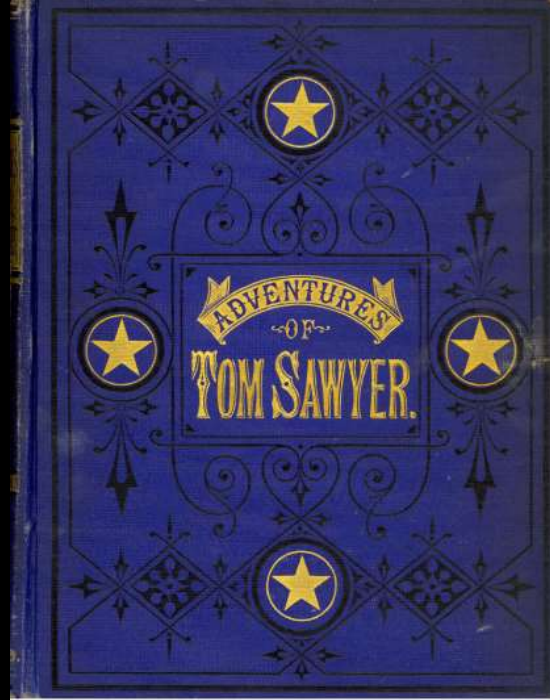
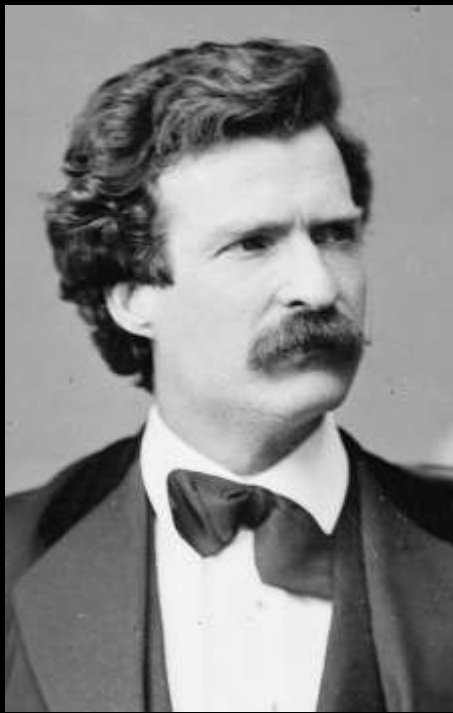
Mark Twain's Mississippi



Innocence and Experience: A Life on the River

Mark Twain 1835-1910





Innocence

The Raft and Drifting

“Black Water” Doobie Brothers
Well, I built me a raft and she's ready for floatin'
Ol' Mississippi, she's callin' my name
Catfish are jumpin'
That paddle wheel thumpin'
Black water keeps rollin' on past just the same
Old black water, keep on rollin'
Mississippi moon, won't you keep on shinin' on me
Old black water, keep on rollin'
Mississippi moon, won't you keep on shinin' on me
Old black water, keep on rollin'
Mississippi moon, won't you keep on shinin' on me
Yeah, keep on shinin' your light
Gonna make everything, pretty mama
Gonna make everything all right
And I ain't got no worries
'Cause I ain't in no hurry at all

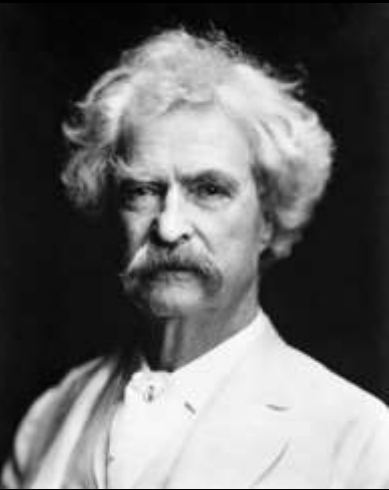
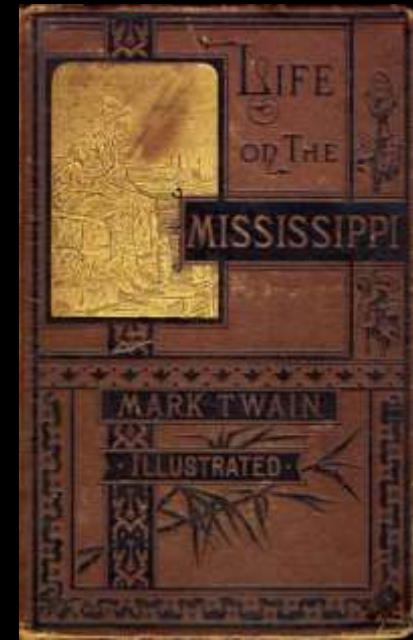
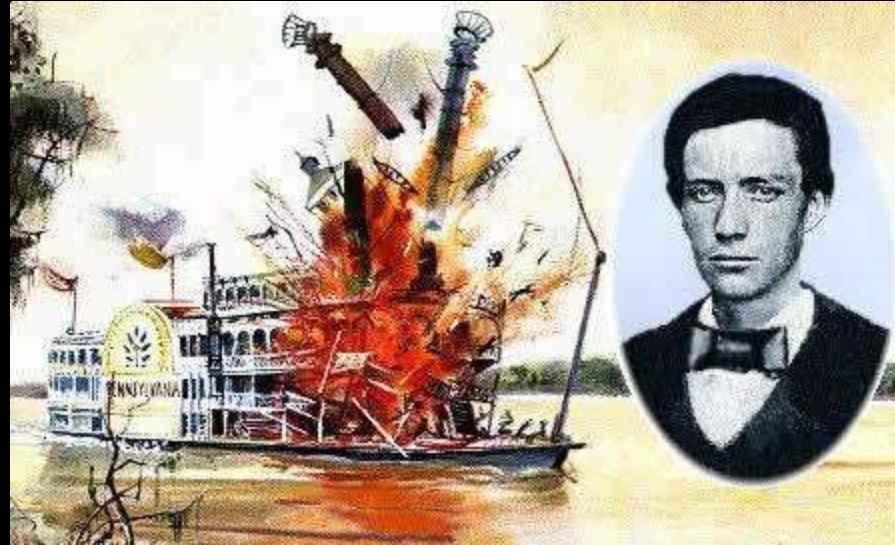




Experience

Life on the Mississippi is a memoir of his days as a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River before the American Civil War, and also a travel book, recounting his trip along the Mississippi many years after the War.

Published 1883



The night before the 'Pennsylvania' left, Henry and I sat chatting on a freight pile on the levee till midnight. The subject of the chat, mainly, was one which I think we had not exploited before - steamboat disasters.

On June 13, 1858, the Pennsylvania was steaming near Ship Island, just below Memphis, Tennessee when its boiler exploded. Estimates at the time put the passenger manifest at 450 with an initial loss of life of 250.

Among those who died was Henry Clemens, younger brother of Mark Twain.

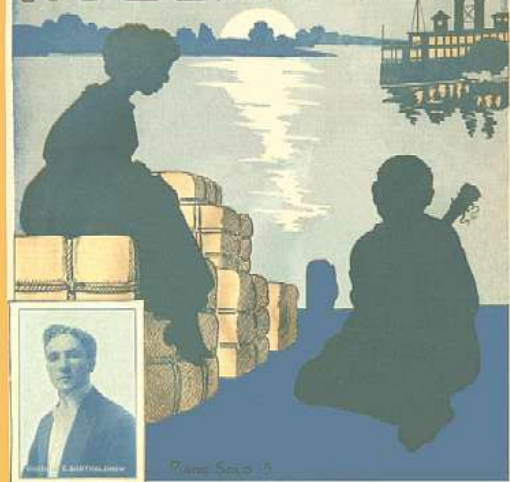
Steamboat Navigation and American Music

Invention of the steamboat in the early nineteenth century brought about a revolution in river commerce. The first steamboat to travel the Mississippi was the *New Orleans*.

Before the invention of the steamboat, a trip from Louisville to New Orleans often required 4 months. In 1820, the trip was made by steamboat in 20 days. By 1838, the same trip was being made in 6 days.



AL JOLSON'S BIG HIT IN THE WINTER GARDEN WAITING FOR THE ROBERT E. LEE



WORDS BY
L. WOLFE GILBERT

MUSIC BY
LEWIS F. MUIR

A MILLS

"Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" is an American popular song composed in 1912 by Lewis F. Muir and L. Wolfe Gilbert. The title refers to the steamboat of that name.

It was featured in the 1927 film *The Jazz Singer*, and later recorded by Al Jolson.

The famous race between the Robert E. Lee and the Natchez was made in July 1870 from New Orleans to St. Louis, 1,278 river miles. This was won by the Lee with a time of 3 days 18 hours 14 minutes.

Steamboat Navigation and American Music

Proud Mary

written by John Fogerty and recorded by Creedence Clearwater Revival.



Left a good job in the city
Workin' for the man ev'ry night and day
And I never lost one minute of sleepin'
Worryin' 'bout the way things might have been

Big wheel keep on turnin'
Proud Mary keep on burnin'
Rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river

Cleaned a lot of plates in Memphis
Pumped a lot of pain down in New Orleans
But I never saw the good side of the city
'Til I hitched a ride on a river boat queen

Big wheel keep on turnin'
Proud Mary keep on burnin'
Rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river
Rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river

If you come down to the river
Bet you gonna find some people who live
You don't have to worry 'cause if you got no money
People on the river are happy to give

Big wheel keep on turnin'
Proud Mary keep on burnin'
Rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river
Rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river



Steamboat Disasters - The Sultana - the greatest maritime disaster in United States

Sultana was a Mississippi River side-wheel steamboat that exploded on April 27, 1865 in the greatest maritime disaster in United States history.

An estimated 1,800 of her 2,427 passengers died when three of the boat's four boilers exploded and she burned to the waterline and sank near Memphis.

Sultana - Son Volt

April 27, 1865 the worst American Disaster of the maritime

No one knows the count of lives lost

The soldiers, civilians and the sisters of charity

\$5 a head Captains Mason and Hatch

Boarded 6 times the legal load of the Sultana

Leaving Vicksburg bound for Cairo

Memphis was the tragic last port of call of Sultana

6 miles out of Memphis a boiler gave out

From the flooding swift river and extra heavy load of Sultana

The current was cold the river was wide

A mile to either side away from the burning Sultana

3 boilers blew fire and lit up the night sky

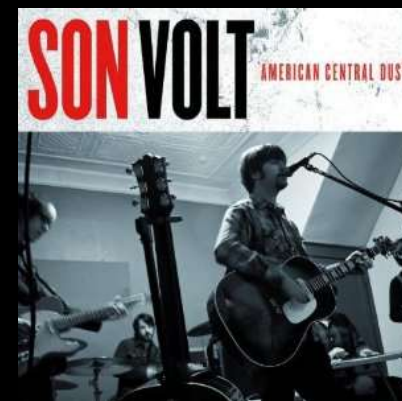
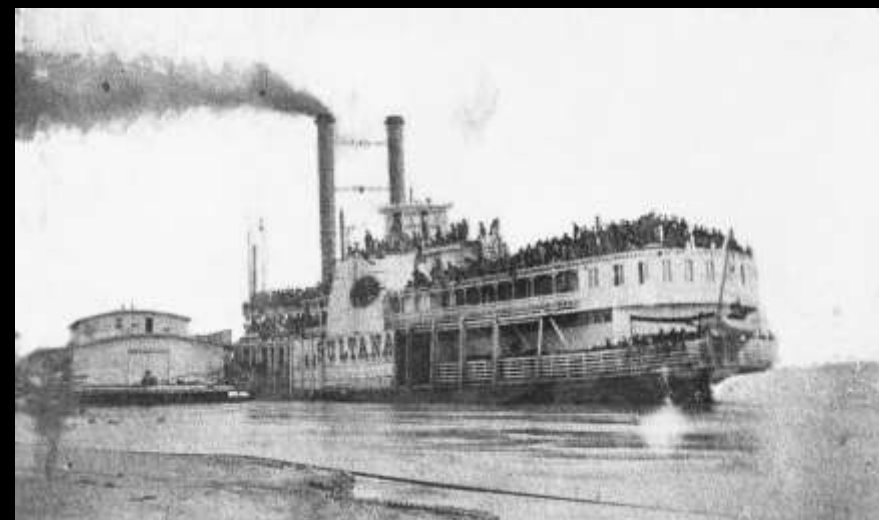
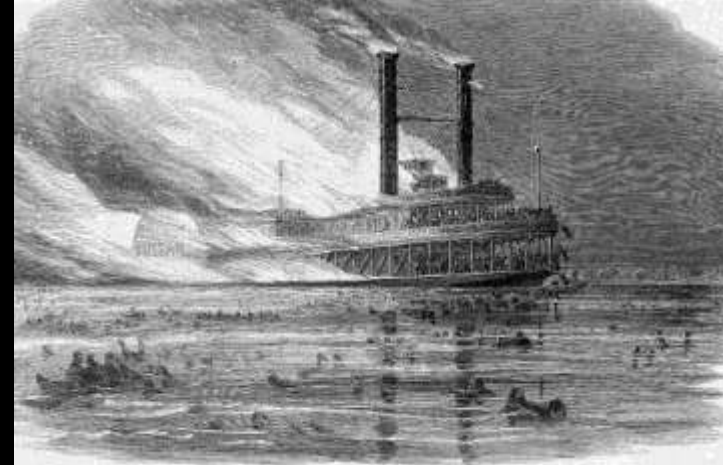
Hell was a better place than on board the Sultana

The worst American disaster on water

The Titanic of the cold Mississippi was the Sultana

Hell was a better place that night

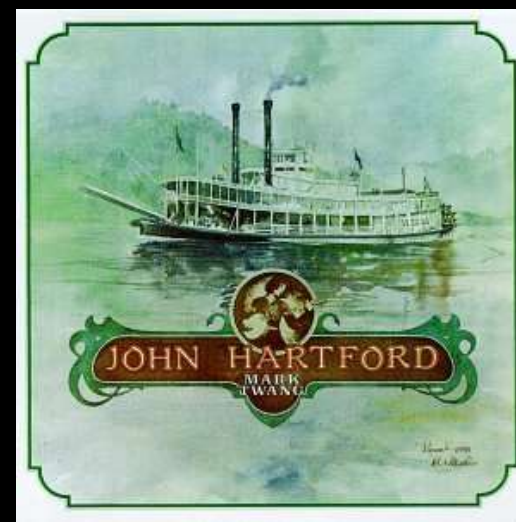
Titanic of the cold Mississippi was the Sultana



River Boats



John Hartford
1937- 2001



John Hartford was one of the rarest of musical birds. He had one foot deeply rooted in the past and the other always at least a few steps into the future - and both were dancing.

--Larry Groce, Mountain Stage

Skippin' in the Mississippi Dew

John Hartford

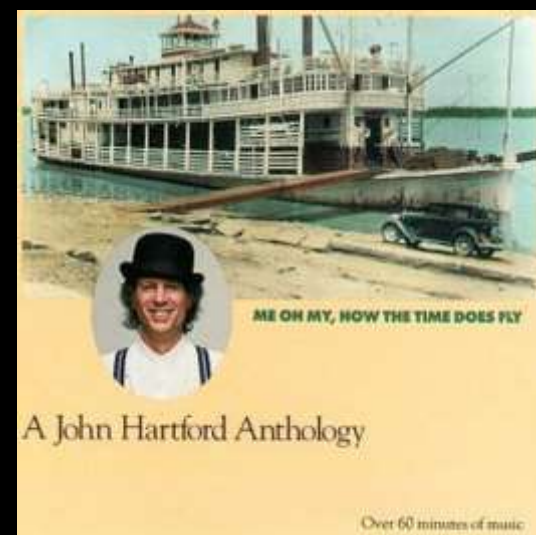
Well I dream of a girl and a steering wheel steamboat
A pilothouse stove and engine room brass
Hanging on a post by the maindeck stairway
Long hair skippin in the Mississippi dew

Oh the river run wide, run deep, run muddy
The river run long after I am gone
With the steamboat wheeling on a big wide bend
Just skippin in the Mississippi Dew

Well I went up the river come way last Sunday
Twelve feet of water on the Memphis gage
Wouldn't be home without the muddy water rolling
Paddle wheel skippin in the Mississippi dew

Oh the river run wide, run deep, run muddy
Oh the river run long after I am gone
With the steamboat wheeling on a big wide bend
Just skippin in the Mississippi Dew

Now it used to be Spring I'd ship on the river
Thirty five days on a bowline boat
I'd make a little money, get a springtime chicken
And take off a skippin in the Mississippi Dew

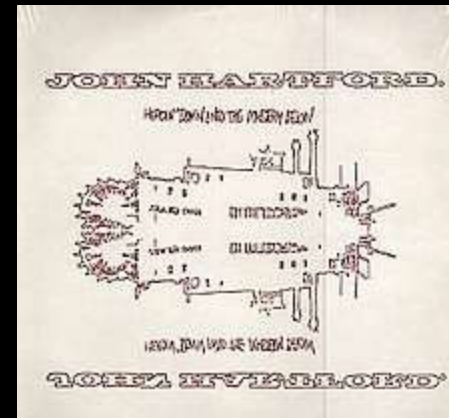




Bonfire on the bank, hard bend to the right
On the lower Mississippi, full moon tonight
Where the Spanish moss, hangs from the trees
Down in Louisiana on Christmas Eve

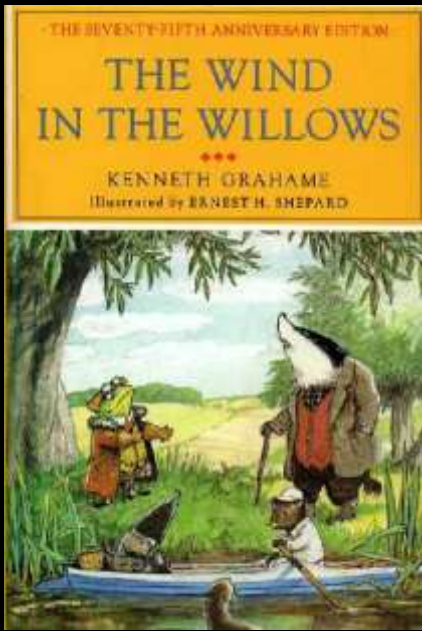
That muddy water, (that muddy water)
Never quite comes clear, (never quite comes clear)
When I try to give a reason, (when I try to give a reason)
Why I wanta be here, (why I wanta be here)

Ain't ya got no family, (ain't ya got no family)
No place to be, (no place to be)
Out on the river, (out on the river)
On Christmas Eve, (on Christmas Eve)



River Reverie

The Wind in the Willows is a classic of children's literature first published in 1908.



Piper At the Gates of Dawn - Van Morrison

The coolness of the riverbank
And the whispering of the reeds
Daybreak is not so very far away
Enchanted and spellbound
In the silence they lingered
And rowed the boat
As the light grew steadily strong
And the birds were silent
As they listened for the heavenly music
And the river played the song



The wind in the willows
And the piper at the gates of dawn
The wind in the willows
And the piper at the gates of dawn

The song dream happened and the cloven hoofed piper
Played in that holy ground
Where they felt the awe and wonder
And they all were unafraid of the great God Pan
(Chorus)

When the vision vanished
They heard a choir of birds singing
In the heavenly silence, between the trance and the reeds
And they stood upon the lawn and listened to the silence

River Reverie

Listen to the river
sing sweet songs
to rock my soul

“Brokedown Palace”

Jerry Garcia and
Robert Hunter

Fare you well my honey
Fare you well my only true one
All the birds that were singing
Have flown except you alone

Going to leave this Brokedown Palace
On my hands and my knees I will roll roll roll
Make myself a bed by the waterside
In my time - in my time - I will roll roll roll

In a bed, in a bed
by the waterside I will lay my head
Listen to the river sing sweet songs
to rock my soul

River gonna take me
Sing me sweet and sleepy
Sing me sweet and sleepy
all the way back home
It's a far gone lullaby
sung many years ago
Mama, Mama, many worlds I've come
since I first left home

Going home, going home
by the waterside I will rest my bones
Listen to the river sing sweet songs
to rock my soul



Going to plant a weeping willow
On the banks green edge it will grow grow grow
Sing a lullaby beside the water
Lovers come and go - the river roll roll roll

Fare you well, fare you well
I love you more than words can tell
Listen to the river sing sweet songs
to rock my soul

