

The Mighty Mississippi River

Grades 3 – 5

Missouri Performance Standards: Goal 1: Students will acquire the knowledge and skills to gather, analyze and apply information and ideas. Goal 2: Students will acquire the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom.

Missouri Knowledge Standards: Social Studies Standards 2- understanding continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world: 5 - the major elements of geographical study and analysis (such as location, place, movement, regions) and their relationships to changes in society and environment.

Learning Goals: Students will

- Acquire in-depth knowledge of the geographic significance of the Mississippi River
- Expand their understanding of the role of the river in the development of cities
- Gain insight into the ways that artists have depicted the river and the natural and economic activities that surround it.

Materials List: (All materials can be printed from the website or copied from the materials booklet. To obtain these materials on CDROM for your classroom, contact the curator via email at dunnmortonj@umsl.edu or by phone at 314-516-6740.)

- Map handouts and/or overhead map of the Mississippi River
- Life on the Mississippi group discussion (print/copy the information sheet provided here as an overhead projection or show the page from the website to facilitate group discussion)
- Cities on the Mississippi worksheet

Time Required: Three class periods.

Implementation:

Begin by briefly introducing the history of the Mississippi River and its significance in the nation's history.

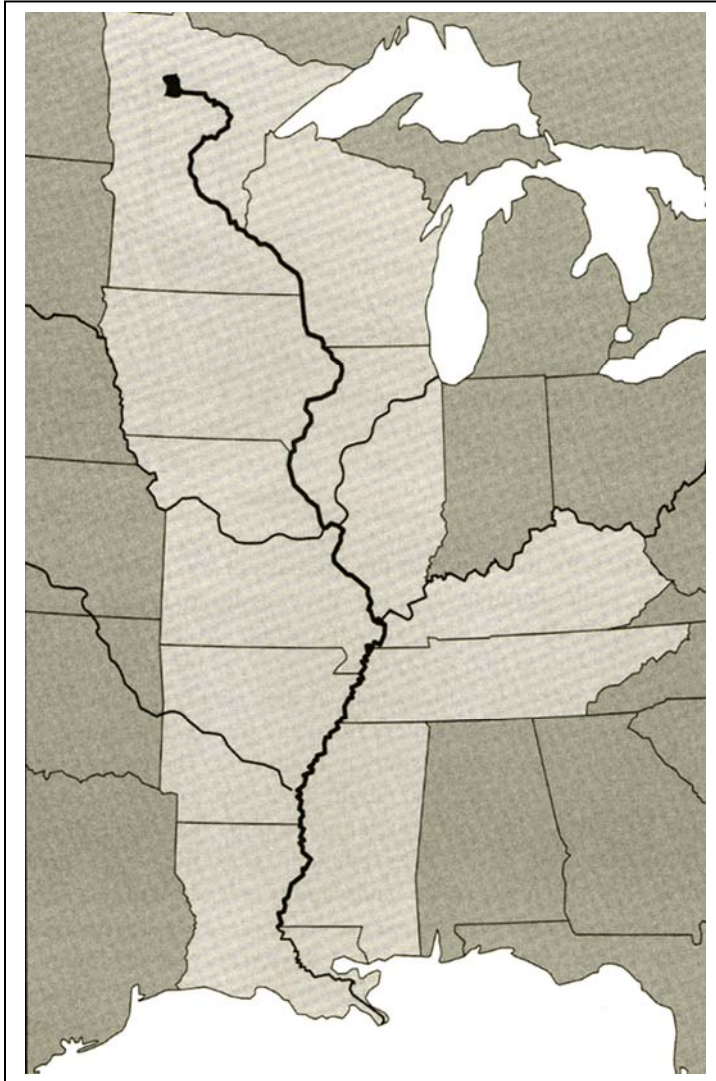
Using the Mississippi River Map worksheet, guide the students through the identification activities.

Once the students are familiar with the geography, use the Life on the Mississippi page to guide the students through a discussion of the various aspects of river life and civic development associated with the river, as depicted by artists in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Discuss the changes in cities over time using the Cities on the Mississippi worksheets to provide 19th century and contemporary images of river cities.

Name _____

Date _____



- Trace where the Mississippi River begins and ends.
- Label the ten states that border the river.
- Label the four tributaries of the Mississippi River
- Label where the river begins at Lake Itasca, Minnesota.
- Label the mouth of the river at the Gulf of Mexico.

Discuss these facts about the river:

- The Mississippi River is 2,340 miles long.
- The Mississippi River is the second longest river in the United States. (The Missouri River is the longest.)
- At its source, the river can be crossed by walking across six stepping stones.
- It takes one drop of water 60 days to travel from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico.

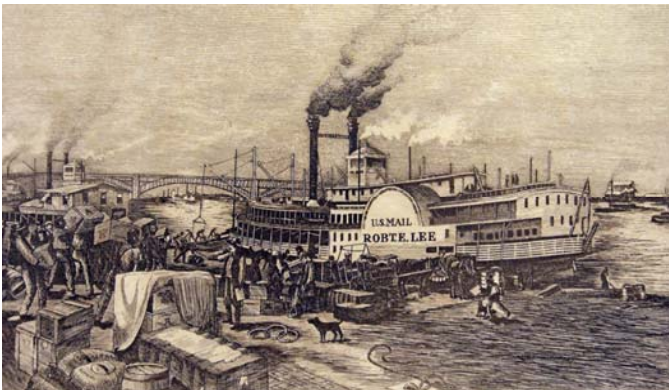
Life on the Mississippi



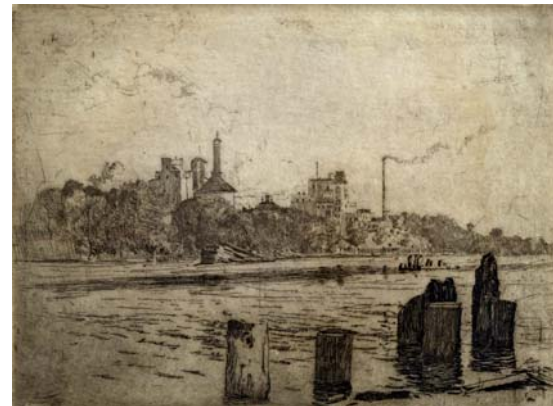
Gary Lucy, *The Eads Bridge Under Construction, 1873, 1992*



Henry Lewis, *St. Louis Riverfront, 1854*



Oscar Berninghaus, *St. Louis Levee, ca. 1910*



Gustav Goetsch, *Breweries on the River, ca. 1950*

What can you learn about the Mississippi from these paintings?
How do the artists depict different images of the same river?
What does this say about how the artist views the river?

How important is the river to the people in the artwork? What importance does the river play in today's world? In your world?

Cities along the Mississippi:

Henry Lewis traveled and lived on the Mississippi River in the mid 1800's. He began researching the river and traveling along its course sketching the cities along the way. He took three successive trips in 1846, 1847, and 1848 assembling sketches and materials for his book *The Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated*. Compare his prints of cities in the mid 1800's with images of those cities today.



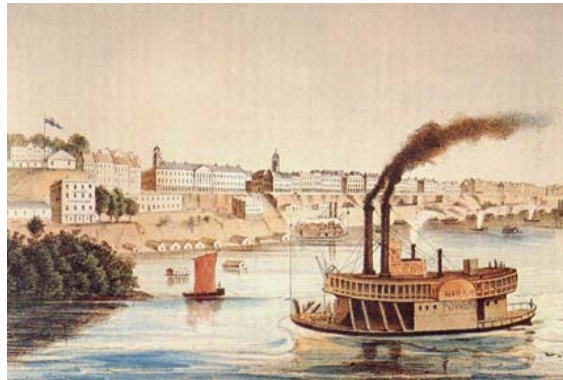
St. Paul, Minnesota, by Henry Lewis and today



Dubuque, Iowa, by Henry Lewis and today.



Hannibal, Missouri by Henry Lewis and today



Memphis, Tennessee by Henry Lewis and today



Discussion Questions:

How have the cities changed since the 1800's?

Have the changes all been man-made? (more buildings etc.) Or has the natural landscape changed as well?

Why do you think these things have or have not changed?

Would you rather live then or now? Why?

What importance do you think the river played in changing the city?

Henry Lewis created these images to let people living on the East Coast of the United States know what western cities looked like. The modern images of these cities come from their websites. These sites are designed to encourage people to visit or to live there. Think of how Lewis' pictures look. Do they make you want to visit that city? Does the city look pretty to you? Sometimes artists change small details of a scene when they paint or draw it, because it makes the picture look better. Do you think Lewis changed what he saw to make the cities look better? Why or why not?

Image sources for modern pictures of these cities:

St. Paul, MN -

http://travel.yahoo.com/p-travelguide-477062-action-pictures-st_paul_vacations-i;_ylt=AuI8.KZVc1ND1LF2BpLXhrC7R2oL

Dubuque, IA – <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/>

Hannibal, MO – www.hanmo.com

Memphis, TN – <http://www.memphisite.com/photos/>