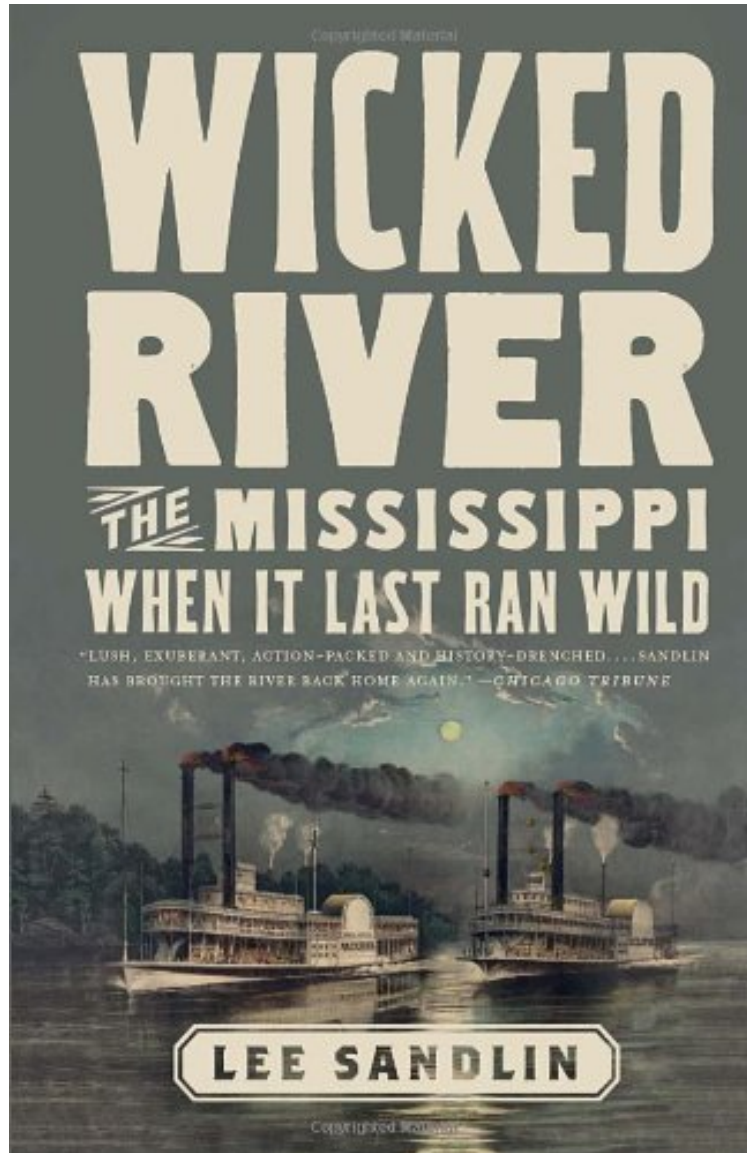


[Download ebook] Wicked River: The Mississippi When It Last Ran Wild

Wicked River: The Mississippi When It Last Ran Wild

Lee Sandlin

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#385202 in Books Lee Sandlin 2011-10-04 2011-10-04Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.98 x .74 x 5.151,
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Lee Sandlin : Wicked River: The Mississippi When It Last Ran Wild before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wicked River: The Mississippi When It Last Ran Wild:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. True History of the Mississippi RiverBy tartakdOne of the very few books describing the history of the life on the Mississippi River from the first arrival of the white settlers to the

modern days. The author shows realistic depiction of the life and culture along and on the River. The idea going through this book is how little value a life had there and how cruel the times were all the way up until the beginning of the 20th century. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Can the Mississippi really be Tamed? By John A. view of the Mississippi River that one is not used to seeing. The Mississippi was not always the romantic place as envisioned by Jerome Kerns and Oxcart Hammerstein in "Show Boat", or the nostalgic tale of Mark Twain in "Tom Sawyer." My own nostalgic memories of the River are from my days as a student at Washington University in St. Louis (pre Gateway Arch) and gathering samples of Mississippi River water at New Madrid to test for possible pollution introduced from a power plant built on the shores of the River. (There was no detectable effect on water quality due to the nearly infinite dilution by the River.) Today when one observes the Mississippi, he sees the long barges hauling agricultural and the goods for export at New Orleans. The wild river has been tamed to allow it to become a major means of transportation. The romantic days of the River are confined to "Show Boats" and other paddle-wheelers as tourist attractions. The U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers seems to have a constant battle to keep the river open for traffic in fighting the tendency of the River to want to change course. If one looks at modern mopes of the United States it is observed that parts of Illinois are on the west bank of the Mississippi. One has to wonder if taming the river is really feasible or only a pipe dream. An easy and informative read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Reading the Mississippi By L. Butcher I've been wanting to get this book ever since I heard it read on an NPR program from the University of Minnesota. A daily half hour of some great history of the way things really were, as opposed to Mark Twain's story telling some 60 years after the fact. Being from Missouri, and growing up an hour south of St. Louis and a 15 minute drive from "the river", and then attending college at Cape Girardeau, MO, I've always been fascinated by the Mississippi River. A vacation trip as a kid to Hannibal after reading (and seeing the movie of) Tom Sawyer, put me in permanent admiration for anything to do with the Mississippi. And just today, (7/20/11) as if it were a sign, I read about the last old tourist river boat that made it's home at the base of the Arch in St. Louis, being moved down river after 100 years of service, to be dismantled for scrap steel. The SS Admiral carried railroad cars across the Mighty Mississippi at Vicksburg in it's first life, then became a day cruise for families and a night hot spot for teens through seniors. Then it bombed as a 6 Flags type entertainment enterprise, and finally as a casino until last year. I spent many a summer night cruising the Mississippi River with my friends in the 70's, dancing to live music and watching the lights go by on the 4 hour cruise. But the whole thing really came to life when I heard the reading of this book on the radio, and I had to have the book. The Mississippi wasn't a place for the weak, the unwise or the faint of heart back in the old days. It was dangerous, and it was wild. Even though I've heard this read, and was glued to the radio every night (like it must have been before t.v.), I can't wait to start this book. This is the real Mississippi story, and the one that I will see as the true story compared to Samuel Clemens' boyhood memory.

A riveting narrative look at one of the most colorful, dangerous, and peculiar places in America's historical landscape: the strange, wonderful, and mysterious Mississippi River of the 19th century. 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. Here, too, is the Mississippi itself: gorgeous, perilous, and unpredictable. Masterfully told, *Wicked River* is an exuberant work of Americana that portrays a forgotten society on the edge of revolutionary change.

.com John M. Barry's *Wicked River* John M. Barry is the author of five previous books, including the highly acclaimed and award-winning studies *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America*, and *The Great Influenza: The story of the deadliest pandemic in history*. His next book, *The Creation of the American Soul*, about the development of the separation of church and state, will appear in 2011. Read his review of *Wicked River*: There are literally thousands of books about the Mississippi River, each of them attempting to capture its majesty. It is a tribute to the river's complexity and power that so few have succeeded. Lee Sandlin does. He writes elegantly and delivers what he promised--the story of the river in the days before engineers began their efforts to drain it of its mystery and protect us from its power. And by demythologizing both the river itself and the men and women on and along the river, by separating fact from legend, Sandlin actually makes it more majestic still. There's plenty of humor in here, and farce. Perhaps the single story that hits the hardest, though, has nothing about it either humorous or majestic. And it could be farce, something for Mark Twain's illumination, except for the punch line. It is the story of Virgil Stewart. In a kind of American version of the Protocols of Zion, Stewart peddled a supposed plan for a white-led slave uprising that took hold of much of the lower Mississippi Valley. The beatings, murder, and torture his lies engendered only remind us how fearful and stupid humans can be at their worst. The river today has banks lined with concrete for hundreds of miles, while dams block off tributaries and levees seal the main river in. All that constrains the river. Nonetheless, these very constraints have themselves wreaked havoc on the land the river made--physically made, by the deposit of sediment--along the modern Gulf Coast. And the power and wildness of the river which

Sandlin writes about are one great flood away from unleashing. The river is, as T.S. Eliot wrote, "unhonored, unpropitiated / by the worshippers of machine. But waiting, watching and waiting." "In this lush, exuberant, action-packed and history-drenched book, Sandlin has brought the river back home again. . . . A vivid torrent of facts and passions, in an inspired agitation of water and words. . . . Wicked River is the best kind of history book. It is organized around people and their fates, not wars and dates and treaty signings. It artfully separates reality from fables, but it recognizes that fables have a story to tell, too, that our tall tales and our songs and our exaggerations and our mythologies can be as revelatory as topographical maps and temperature charts."Chicago Tribune "Gripping stuff. . . . Appreciators of what Greil Marcus calls the Old, Weird America will savor Wicked River. Its many ghastly scenes, vividly rendered by Mr. Sandlin, started showing up in my dreams. . . . I was surprised, upon finishing Wicked River, to read that this confident and swift-moving book is the author's first. It makes one eager for the next."-John Jeremiah Sullivan, The Wall Street Journal "A biography of the river in its pre-Twain period."The Washington Post "Entertaining. . . . Chicago essayist and journalist Lee Sandlin tells tales about the Mississippi in the days when the river and the people who floated on it or lived along it were wild and untamed in the extreme. . . . Sandlin has done an impressive amount of research. For all that, his prose manages to avoid the snags and shoals of academic English. . . . A lot of fun to read."St. Louis Post-Dispatch "Remarkable. . . . Told with the same verve and affinity for a good yarn that encomia to the river tend to inspire, Wicked River looks at life along the Mississippi in the 19th century, before Twain had us thinking it was all Americana adventures. . . . Sandlin may singlehandedly destroy the view that the Midwest is a mellow place."Time Out Chicago "Marvelously captured. . . . A superb book debut. . . . Sandlin writes of a recurring sense of looming catastrophe that gripped many residents. . . . Fascinating."Chicago Sun-Times "Sumptuous writing and fascinating tales of the days when life on the Mississippi was rough and wild. . . . Sandlin transports readers back to a renegade time on the Mississippi, a rollicking ride full of marauders, floating brothels and rough characters spit straight from the pen of Twain himself. Sandlin's own prose style is a fluvial joy."Minneapolis Star Tribune "A gripping look back at the forgotten history of the river that made America."The Daily Beast "Splendid. . . . Intriguing. . . . Full of great stories. . . . makes for amusing and stimulating reading."Columbus Commercial Dispatch (MS) "[A] superb book debut. . . . Thoroughly engaging, entertaining and seductively educational history. . . . a grand, clear-eyed look at river towns' 'semi-barbarism.'"The Denver Post "Sandlin pulls no punches . . . it's almost as if he decided Twain was wrong and we need to find out the truth. He tells of pirates, drownings and slavery even uglier than most history books will tell us, of people who fell off boats and had no way of being rescued in a wilderness. . . . if you love the river and its history, read it. It's fun."Rochester (MN) Post-Bulletin "A gripping book that plunges you into a rich dark stretch of visceral history. I read it in two sittings and got up shaken."Garrison Keillor "Raucous, fascinating and fun. . . . [Lee] Sandlin debuts with a rollicking history of the Mississippi Valley before commerce and technology tamed it. . . . [He] seems to have adopted some of Twain's technique in Life On the Mississippi, disappearing for pages into long narratives/legends/rumors associated with the valley and its denizens. . . . [He] provides some John McPheelike detail about geology and riverine history, and also examines the human history of the region. . . . Apart from his generous offering of surprising facts, it's obvious that Sandlin loves the lore of the river, its narratives, legends and lies. . . . Readers will delight in stories about Annie Christmas (who wrote tales about prostitutes), Marie Laveau (the Voodoo Queen), the Crows Nest pirates and John Murrell and his so-called Mystic Clan. . . .Gorgeous. Kirkus"Wicked River almost makes you feel guilty for enjoying an education so much. I learned things at every S-curve, neck deep in a fine, fine story. I lived a stone's throw from that river, and though I knew it flowed through eons of meanness and sadness and ribaldry, I didn't know it was this twisted. "Rick Bragg, author of The Prince of FrogtownGreat stuff, essential stuff, and yeah, wicked. Roy Blount Jr, author of Alphabet Juice and Long Time Leaving Dispatches From Up South"Geographically, culturally, and metaphorically, the Mississippi River has been at the center of American reality and imagination for 400 years. In Wicked River, Lee Sandlin has lived up to his epic subject, taking us into overlooked, if not forgotten, epochs of history and folklore. Through labor and erudition he weaves the incredibly complicated strands of a story that seems too big to contemplate into a coherent tale that is surprising and entertaining on every page. He's made the river his own, and extends it as a welcome gift to the reader." Anthony Walton, author of Mississippi: An American Journey"What a wickedly wild ride of a read! I loved this book! It may be nonfiction, but Sandlin tells his stories with a narrative drive that any novelist would envy. The events and characters from the early days along the Mississippi, which he so evocatively recreates, are among the most fascinating you'll ever encounter anywhere. Honest to god, reading history has never been more fun!". William Kent Krueger, author of Heaven's KeepOne of the best books ever written about the Mississippi River. Each page rounds a new bend full of delirious missionaries, hell-bent-for-speed steamboat captains, and gaudy traders in fancy girl slave prostitutes. You won't put it down till you've read every steamy, malarial, fascinating page.Mike Tidwell, author of Bayou Farewell Today we think of the Mississippi River as an elder statesman of the American landscape, but for most of the nineteenth century it was pure frontier: unruly, unregulated, and dangerous. Wicked River perfectly captures the great river's secret history, overflowing with wonderfully chosen and impeccably delivered character sketches, set pieces, and side trips. Scott W. Berg, author of Grand Avenues In a narrative worthy of Mark Twain, Lee Sandlin tells of the Mississippi River when it was not only

wild but wicked, home to sharpers and humbuggers, jackanapes, tub thumpers, and naked revelers. This is a grand tale of America's mightiest river and the larger-than-life men and women who rode its waves into history. Sandra Dallas, author of *Whiter Than Snow* and *Prayers for Sale* A fascinating book, rich in detail and lore, the kind of strange object one wants to curl up with for long periods of time and gaze into the past we know much less well than we imagine. *Wicked River* is bound to cause a stir among readers who always want to know a little more about some place or some thing than the usual sources allow. Reading it is going to school again, in the best possible way. An entrance into a world so magical and unlikely that every page is a new episode full of real swashbuckling, nasty critters (human), and the roiling history of the big bad river. Frederick Barthelme, author of *Waveland* "[A] superb book debut. . . . Thoroughly engaging, entertaining and seductively educational history. . . . a grand, clear-eyed look at river towns' 'semi-barbarism.'" *The Denver Post* "Sandlin pulls no punches . . . it's almost as if he decided Twain was wrong and we need to find out the truth. He tells of pirates, drownings and slavery even uglier than most history books will tell us, of people who fell off boats and had no way of being rescued in a wilderness. . . . if you love the river and its history, read it. It's fun." *Rochester (MN) Post-Bulletin* About the Author Lee Sandlin is the author of *Wicked River*, *Storm Kings*, and *The Distancers*. He was also an award-winning journalist, essayist, and book reviewer for *The Wall Street Journal*. Born in Wildwood, Illinois, he grew up in the suburbs of Chicago. He died in 2014.