

The Mississippi River in 1953: A Photographic Journey from the Headwaters to the Delta (Center Books on American Places)

Charles Dee Sharp

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The Mississippi River flows through American history and culture as a mythic waterway brimming with tragedy and hope, and awash in passionate ambitions and harsh realities. In 1953, a young Charles Dee Sharp traveled twice down the Mississippi (first by towboat and then by car along the renowned river road Highway 61) to make a documentary film of it, taking black-and-white photographs of the river, its communities, and its people.

While Sharp's documentary never came to fruition, the striking images he captured survived as moving and evocative historical testaments to a lost era, now collected in his new book *The Mississippi in 1953*. These images create a vivid portrait of America's heartland a half century ago, and they are enriched with excerpts from Sharp's original trip journal, intriguing anecdotes from the people he encountered along his journey, and an engaging environmental history of the river by historian John O. Anfinson. *The Mississippi in 1953* offers an original and poignant look at the living artery of the American landscape and how it molded the United States into the nation it is today.



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