

Epilogue, in accepting there are limits to growth, building a wall is not the only option. Instead, Grandin suggests we pick up a social democratic thread from the past, one that was evidenced in the Freedmen's Bureau and the New Deal, in order to move into the future with more justice for all.

Great River City: How the Mississippi Shaped St. Louis, by Andrew Wanko. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2019. 308 pp. Images, maps, bibliography, index \$35.00 paperback.

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In this beautiful and affordable coffee table book, public historian Andrew Wanko puts the Mississippi River where it belongs: at the heart of the history of St. Louis. This book is a “remedy,” Wanko states, because St. Louisans “don’t spend much time pondering how the Mississippi River seeps into our daily lives” (7). The book’s origins are in a museum exhibit; the layout of big, colorful images alongside succinct text keeps it feeling like a browsable exhibit full of historical eye candy. In over fifty short chapters containing hundreds of images—maps, photographs, art, documents, and material culture—Wanko spans centuries to broadly tell this river city’s social, cultural, economic and environmental history.

Readers realize that a lot has disappeared. The first city to thrive at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers was Cahokia, the crown jewel of the Mississippian mound builders. Though Cahokia was abandoned by the fourteenth century, St. Louisans of the eighteenth century integrated the mounds into their city. These elevated earthworks became landmarks and one hosted the city’s first waterworks. Mound removal required reverse engineering—hauling dirt away with human and animal power—in order to flatten the landscape. In one poignant set of photographs, a half-domed Big Mound overlooks its own dismantling for a railroad passage (12–13).

Growth and manipulation erased caves, sinkholes and islands from the landscape. The sandy isle of Bloody Island was used for dueling contests, and Quarantine Island hosted the infected during the 1849 cholera epidemic. That same year, a disastrous fire destroyed ships and buildings alike, but within a decade, the rebuilt city hosted up to five

miles of boats, chockablock along the levee. Lastly, so many boats sank into watery graves. Readers will delight in the details and be amazed by the images.

The book develops the nineteenth century well, owing to the available materials and the central place of the river in transportation and commerce. The river's edge teemed with social and economic activity. The fur trade had made St. Louis a key city in North America, even before it became a gateway city for U.S. expansionism. After the Civil War, industrialization brought European immigrants and freed blacks, including Exodusters—on their way to farm in Kansas—who were welcomed and supported in their travels by black people living in St. Louis.

In the late nineteenth century, railroads replaced the liquid highway, and Mark Twain lamented the loss of the old river and its culture. Steamboats now hosted the well-to-do with restaurants and upper-deck roller skating rinks, while below-deck roustabouts loaded and unloaded cargo. In 1874 the engineering marvel Eads Bridge opened, abruptly changing the city's relationship to the river. The thriving ferry business declined. Riverside real estate no longer held the same value. Despite the connection made by bridges, East St. Louis remained "over there" (132). One of the nation's worst race riots occurred on the east side of the river in 1917. Other chilling shadows of racism include officials closing the Eads Bridge in 1987 to prevent African Americans from attending a riverside festival. The river offers a unique lens for examining class and race issues.

In the twentieth century, infrastructure and technology distanced the city from the river, though drinking water and waste removal remained essential uses. The idea of turning the wharf into parkland appeared as early as 1907. Increasingly, residents associated the river with recreation, as evidenced by the entertainment cruises like the Streckfus-owned SS *Admiral* at mid-century. Not until 1935 did Congress approve funds for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. The empty wharf and demolition of forty historic blocks created a "blank canvas" that would be filled by architect Aero Saarinen's winning design (239). Images of passed-over designs impress, as do those showing the construction of the Gateway Arch, officially opened in 1965. Today, Laclede's Landing is the only part of the old riverfront city remaining. Although the riverside has evolved dramatically, it is still the city's "welcome mat" (284).

Many readers may expect flooding to be a common topic, but Wanko does not fully introduce it until a chapter on the 1993 Flood, a disaster exacerbated by over a century of river engineering. In the last two decades, rivers have rightly received more attention as historical

agents, especially in cities. The river has “shaped” and been a “stage” for St. Louis’s “triumphs, embarrassments, joys and tragedies,” Wanko writes (7). Some of Iowa’s Mississippi River towns are within the orbit of St. Louis, and this story has similarities to those of the Quad Cities or Dubuque, albeit on a smaller scale. I hope this book inspires more river-city exhibits and books.

The Mound Builder Myth: Fake History and the Hunt for a “Lost White Race,” by Jason Colavito. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. vii, 386. Illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95 paperback.

Reviewer Mary Wise is a PhD candidate in history at the University of Iowa. Her research focuses on the Iowa effigy mounds and the establishment of Effigy Mounds National Monument in northeastern Iowa.

Jason Colavito’s timely work is not the first that historicizes the origin of the Mound Builder myth, but it is one that is incredibly accessible and serves as a one-stop-shop for all those interested in understanding the development, spread, and persistence of the “Lost Race” myth. According to Colavito, the Mound Builder myth alleged that a lost white race had built the massive earthworks found throughout the American Southeast and Midwest.

The work’s first two chapters chronicle the foundation of American archaeology and the rise of the Mound Builder myth. The third and fourth chapters explore how a fascination with ancient India intersected with early speculation about the identity of the mound builders. In the fourth chapter, Colavito identifies previously marginalized literary figures who worked diligently to expand the “Lost Race” mythology. Caleb Atwater’s biography features prominently here alongside several minor literary figures, like Solomon Spalding and Constantine Samuel Rafinesque, who worked to expand the mound builder mythology beyond high circulating popular magazines.

Colavito turns his attention to Mormonism and the relationship between Joseph Smith and the mythic lost race theory in the fifth and sixth chapters. His background as a blog writer is best put to use in these two chapters. It would be easy to get lost among the notable authors, theologians, and politicians who theorized about the identity of the mound builders, suggesting that ancient Phoenicians, shipwrecked ancient Israelites, or a lost group of Nordic explorers built the massive earthworks; but Colavito’s sense of humor strikes an effective balance and keeps the reader grounded.