

# The Land Where The Blues Began

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lomax who has done more than anyone else to make black music of the south known as a glorious expression of american art sums up sixty years of discovering the african american musical heritage in this journey through the mississippi delta

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sounding the color line explores how competing understandings of the u s south in the first decades of the twentieth century have led us to experience musical forms sounds and genres in racialized contexts yet though we may speak of white or black music rock or rap sounds constantly leak through such barriers a critical disjuncture exists then between actual interracial musical and cultural forms on the one hand and racialized structures of feeling on the other this is nowhere more apparent than in the south like jim crow segregation the separation of musical forms along racial lines has required enormous energy to maintain how asks nunn did the protocols structuring listeners racial associations arise how have they evolved and been maintained in the face of repeated transgressions of the musical color line considering the south as the imagined ground where conflicts of racial and national identities are staged this book looks at developing ideas concerning folk song and racial and cultural nationalism alongside the competing and sometimes contradictory workings of an emerging culture industry drawing on a diverse archive of musical recordings critical artifacts and literary texts nunn reveals how the musical color line has not only been established and maintained but also repeatedly crossed fractured and reformed this push and pull between segregationist cultural logics and music s disrespect of racially defined boundaries is an animating force in twentieth century american popular culture

instant bestseller winner of the 2024 willie morris award for southern nonfiction a chicago public library must read book of 2024 a booklist editors choice a sweeping history of the mississippi river and the centuries of human meddling that have transformed both it and america the mississippi river lies at the heart of america an undeniable life force that is

intertwined with the nation's culture and history its watershed spans almost half the country mark twain's travels on the river inspired our first national literature and jazz and blues were born in its floodplains and carried upstream in this landmark work of natural history boyce upholt tells the epic story of this wild and unruly river and the centuries of efforts to control it over thousands of years the mississippi watershed was home to millions of indigenous people who regarded the great river with awe and respect adorning its banks with astonishing spiritual earthworks the river was ever changing and indigenous tribes embraced and even depended on its regular flooding but the expanse of the watershed and the rich soils of its floodplain lured european settlers and american pioneers who had a different vision the river was a foe to conquer centuries of human attempts to own contain and rework the mississippi river from thomas jefferson's expansionist land hunger through today's era of environmental concern have now transformed its landscape upholt reveals how an ambitious and sometimes contentious program of engineering government built levees jetties dikes and dams has not only damaged once vibrant ecosystems but may not work much longer carrying readers along the river's last remaining backchannels he explores how scientists are now hoping to restore what has been lost rich and powerful the great river delivers a startling account of what happens when we try to fight against nature instead of acknowledging and embracing its power a lesson that is all too relevant in our rapidly changing world

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