

‘Nothing can be asserted with certainty respecting the length of this river. Its source is not known, but supposed to be upwards of three thousand miles from the sea as the river runs. We only know that from St. Anthony’s falls in lat. 45 deg. it glides with a pleasant clear current, and receives many large and very extensive tributary streams, before its junction with the Missouri, without greatly increasing the breadth of the Mississippi, though they do its depth and rapidity. The muddy waters of the Missouri discolour the lower part of the river, till it empties into the Bay of Mexico. The Missouri is a longer, broader, and deeper river than the Mississippi, and affords a more extensive navigation; it is, in fact, the principal river, contributing more to the common stream than does the Mississippi. It has been ascended by French traders about 12 or 1300 miles; and from the depth of the water and breadth of the river at that distance, it appeared to be navigable many miles further.

‘From the Missouri river to nearly opposite the Ohio, the western bank of the Mississippi is, some few places excepted, higher than the eastern. From *Mine au Fer* to the Ibberville the eastern bank is higher than the western, on which there is not a single discernible rising or eminence for the distance of 750 miles. From the Ibberville to the sea there are no eminences on either side, though the eastern bank appears rather the highest of the two, as far as the *English turn*. Thence the banks gradually diminish in height to the mouths of the river, where they are but a few feet higher than the common surface of the water.

‘The slime which the annual floods of the river Mississippi leave on the surface of the adjacent shores, may be compared with that of the Nile, which deposits a similar manure, and for many centuries past has insured the fertility of Egypt. When its banks shall have been cultivated, as the excellency of its soil and temperature of the climate deserve, its population will equal that of any other part of the world. The trade, wealth, and power of America may at some future period depend, and perhaps center, upon the Mississippi. This also resembles the Nile in the number of its mouths, all issuing into a sea that may be compared to the Mediterranean, which is bounded on the north and south by the two continents of Europe and Africa, as the Mexican bay is by North and

South America. The smaller mouths of this river might be easily stopped up by means of those floating trees, with which the river, during the floods, is always covered. The whole force of the channel being united, the only opening then left would probably grow deep, and the bar be removed.

‘Whoever will for a moment cast his eye over a map of the town of New Orleans, and the immense country around it, and view its advantageous situation, must be convinced that it, or some place near it, must in process of time become one of the greatest marts in the world.

‘The falls of St. Anthony, in about lat. 45 deg. received their name from Father Lewis Hennepin, a French missionary, who travelled in those parts about the year 1680, and was the first European ever seen by the natives. The whole river, which is more than 250 yards wide, falls perpendicularly about thirty feet, and forms a most pleasing cataract. The rapids below, in the space of 300 yards, render the descent considerably greater, so that when viewed at a distance they appear to be much higher than they really are. In the middle of the falls is a small island about forty feet broad, and somewhat longer, on which grow a few scragged hemlock and spruce trees; and about half way between this island and the eastern shore is a rock lying at the very edge of the fall in an oblique position, five or six feet broad, and thirty or forty long. These falls are peculiarly situated, as they are approachable without the least obstruction from any intervening hill or precipice, which cannot be said of any other considerable fall perhaps in the world. The country around is exceedingly beautiful. It is not an uninterrupted plain, where the eye finds no relief, but composed of many gentle ascents, which in the spring and summer are covered with verdure, and interspersed with little groves, that give a pleasing variety to the prospect.

‘A little distance below the falls is a small island of about an acre and a half, on which grow a great number of oak trees, almost all the branches of which able to bear the weight are, in the proper season of the year, loaded with eagles’ nests. Their instinctive wisdom has taught them to choose this place, as it is secure, on account of the rapids above, from the attacks of either man or beast.

‘From the best accounts that can be obtained