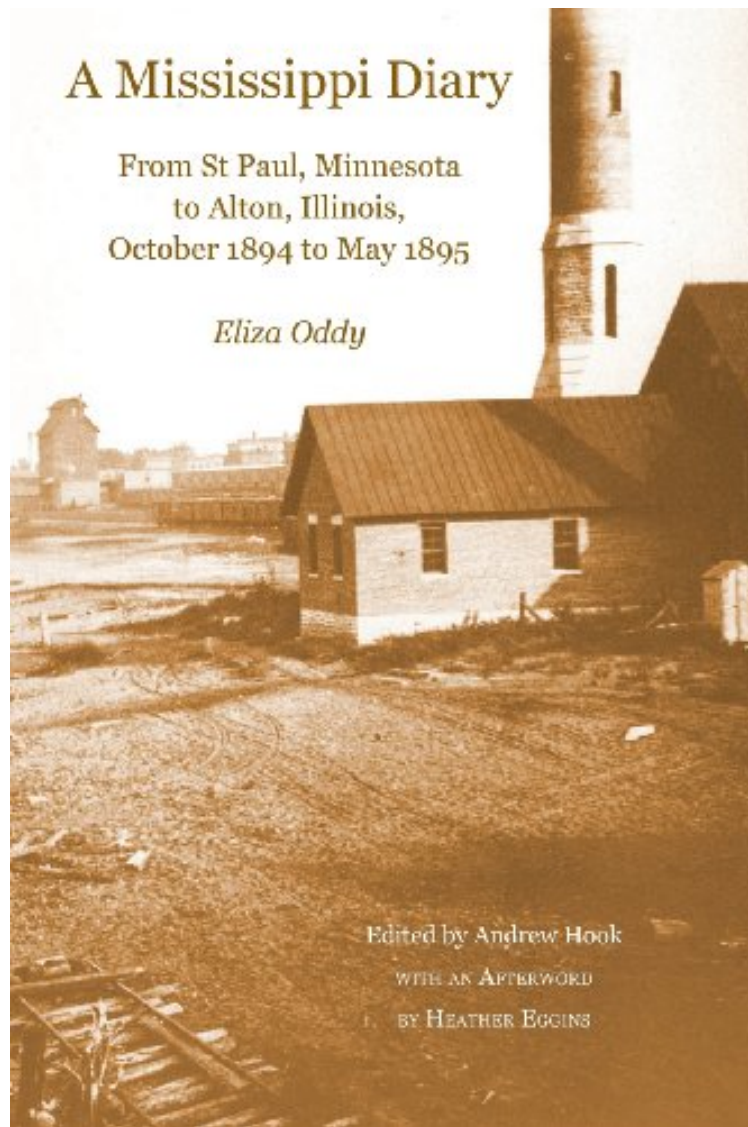


(Download pdf) A Mississippi Diary: From St Paul, Minnesota to Alton, Illinois, October 1894 to May 1895

A Mississippi Diary: From St Paul, Minnesota to Alton, Illinois, October 1894 to May 1895

Eliza Oddy

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Eliza Oddy : A Mississippi Diary: From St Paul, Minnesota to Alton, Illinois, October 1894 to May 1895 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Mississippi Diary: From St Paul, Minnesota to Alton, Illinois, October 1894 to May 1895:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read for Family HistoriansBy M H HalloranWriters charting the lives of English immigrants to North America at the end of the Nineteenth Century will relish this book.

Andrew Hook turns a magnifying glass on one of the many primary documents Heather Eggins used to retrace the journey of her great uncle and his family to the New World and a better life. In 1881 William Oddy, a 44 year-old joiner and carpenter from Leeds, decided he could provide more for his wife, two sons, and two daughters in North America. The family sailed to Toronto and then through the Great Lakes. By train they traveled to Minneapolis where there was ample work for a skilled carpenter. When the Minneapolis economy began to slow in 1894, William Oddy and his carpenter sons built a 35 foot houseboat with a cabin of some 200 square feet. In late October, thirty days before the upper river began to freeze in 1894, the family of six set out to float south down the Mississippi River to their American dream of economic success. They found what they were seeking in Alton, Illinois seven months later. Thirty year old Eliza Oddy kept an understated diary, short on dramatic reaction to strong winds and storms, treacherous sand bars and punishing ice floes. Andrew Hook has edited this diary. Hook places the Oddy family's seven month adventure on a Mississippi hoseboat in context. His easy prose provides economic background and atlas descriptions of the places Eliza mentions. Historic photographs provide views of the riverside and the steamboats that plied the Father of Waters during the 1890s. Mark Twain's own words, excerpted from *LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI*, about the river and the places the Oddy family encountered force the reader to recognize their exceptional courage and stamina. This is a good book for all family historians.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. wonderfulBy James R. SimondsThis is a wonderful book, that is an easy read about the people that help build our country and worked so hard to make it great.

"When we left Minneapolis, we were in high hopes of having a grand and glorious trip, for none of us had ever been on the water before, and it was a blessed thing we did not know some of the narrow escapes and trials we were to have. However, we got as far as Alton all in good health and strength, having gone through many anxious times, and we sincerely thanked the Lord who had watched over us, a lot of land people with no experience as to what a really grand and mighty waters the great Mississippi is." Eliza Oddy, a teenager, wrote this remarkable account of the courage, hard work, determination and friendships that sustained the Oddy family during their seven months travelling down river on a small houseboat. Introduced by Andrew Hook, with an overview of the political and engineering efforts made to improve the navigation of the Mississippi in the nineteenth-century, and of the economic changes that may have influenced migration along it, the Diary is supplemented with a gazetteer of the locations described by Eliza. Also included are an account of the same section of the river by Mark Twain - the Mississippi's most famous steamboat pilot, illustrations of contemporary working boats, and the intriguing detail of Eliza's 1910 US patent for a window sash lock. The final part of the story is told by a descendant, Heather Eggins, in a short, illustrated family history. It reminds the reader that the Diary is one part of a bigger journey made by a working class family who emigrated from industrial Leeds, Yorkshire, in 1881 and finally settled in Alton, Illinois in 1895, in 'a place where their American dream of a better life could at last be realized'.

'...Some of you may have read the diaries and stories of those who travelled across the Atlantic to America, or those who travelled westward along the great overland trails to the Pacific. But few of you will have read the stories of those who sought new lives by travelling along the mighty river that separates the Western Plains from the Eastern farmlands, and which links the Great Lakes to New Orleans and the Deep South. I recommend *A Mississippi Diary* to you.' Simon P. Newman, Sir Denis Brogan Professor of American History, University of Glasgow.