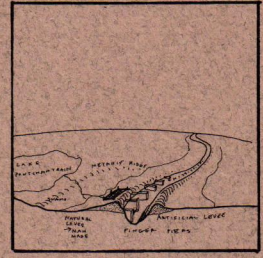
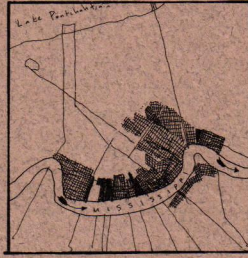
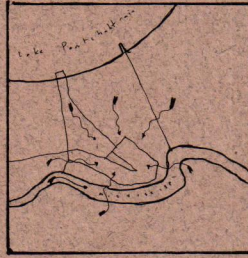
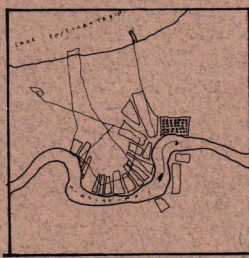
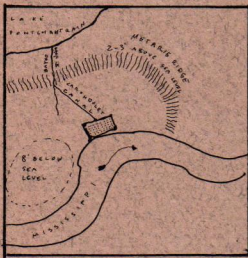
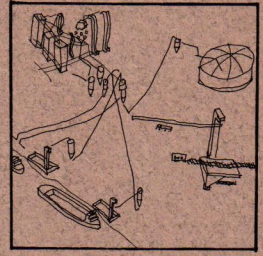
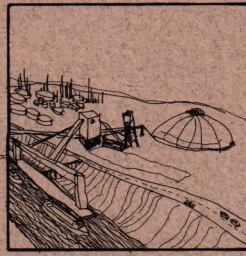
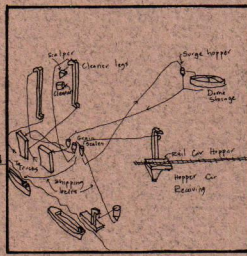
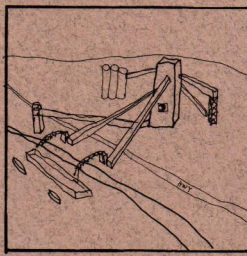
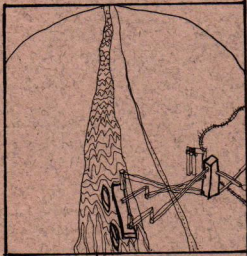


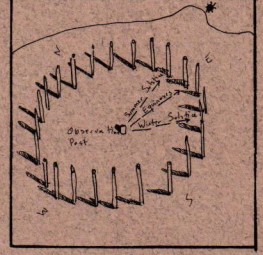
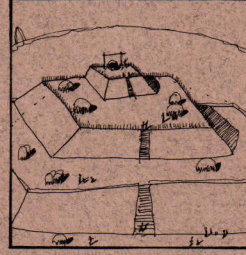
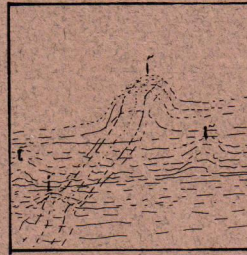
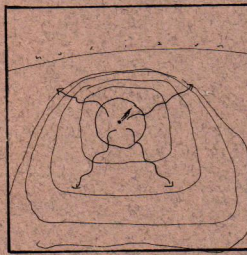
The Fourth Coast: An Expedition on the Mississippi River



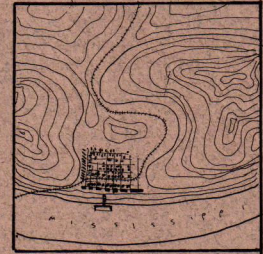
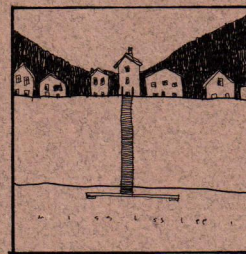
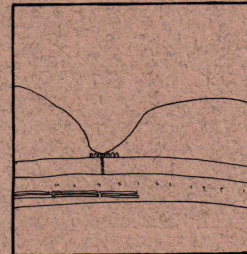
new orleans



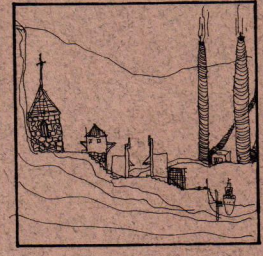
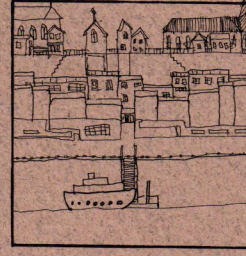
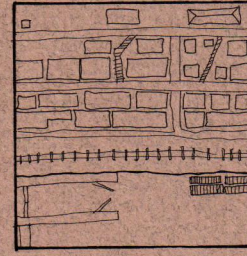
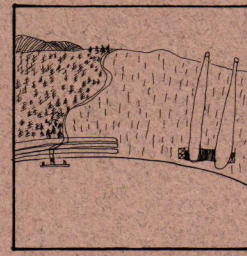
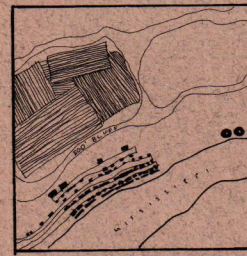
terre haute



cahokia



bellevue



alma

Editor's Notes

In summer 1990, a group of twenty-one students and faculty from the Design Center for American Urban Landscape of the University of Minnesota and some thirty occasional participants — additional faculty, artists, writers, architects — journeyed up the Mississippi River (the Fourth Coast), exploring the settlements along its shores. After flying to New Orleans, the journey began by automobile, transferred to the passenger vessel Viking Explorer at St. Louis, Missouri, and finished with a drive from St. Paul to Lake Itasca, Minnesota, and the icy rivulet that is the Mississippi's beginning.

Together, William Morrish, Director of the Design Center, and Catherine Brown, Coordinator for Special Projects, organized the trip, and in this issue of *Design Quarterly* they describe their travels and illustrate them with extraordinary drawings and photographs made by the trip's participants. These images illuminate and analyze significant sites in and around many river communities.

The Mississippi journey was the first large-scale project undertaken by the university's Design Center, which was created only three years ago. The Center's mandate is to bring design back into the planning of the urban landscape, a discipline that in recent years has been involved primarily with social and political issues, economics and statistics, neglecting, to a large degree, design issues. As a part of their quest they hope to bring more humanity and geographic understanding to urban design, and to search out what is American about American cities in order to avoid what has become the standard solution in the United States — an aping of European urban form.

The search for urban form is not new to Morrish and Brown who came to the Midwest from California where they had a design practice in which they studied the landscape of the West Coast with the same intensity and fascination they have brought to the Fourth Coast.

The Fourth Coast, which in the nineteenth century was the lifeline of mid-continent America, has all but ceased to be an active, vital element of that region's urban life. With the exception of St. Louis and New Orleans, in most Mississippi communities the river now plays a much quieter role centered around recreational activities. The primary undertaking on the waterway above St. Louis is that of the Army Corps of Engineers, which is responsible for the twenty-six locks and dams that currently control travel up and down river. Because trains, cars, trucks, and planes have, in that order, replaced river vessels as the major carriers of goods and services in mid-America, many formerly lively river towns have become backwaters, infected with the same diseases that plague many of America's small farming communities — loss of population and loss of significant reason for being, as the old needs are met by new people, systems, and commodities.

How to revitalize these places in ways that make sense in contemporary terms was the challenge put before the Design Center travelers. The group's initial responses to that challenge are gathered here — responses to the raw power and beauty of the Mississippi River landscape — responses that may inspire a new understanding of urban form.

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THE FOURTH COAST:

An Expedition on the Mississippi River

8 June – 22 July 1990

By Catherine R. Brown and William R. Morrish
Design Center for American Urban Landscape,
University of Minnesota

Postscript by Harrison Fraker,
Dean of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture,
University of Minnesota

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