## Contents

Ack	nowledgments	xi
Introduction		1
1.	Valley of Mud	9
2.	Knee Deep in Water and Snakes	24
3.	Rice	48
4.	The Rise of New Orleans and the Fall of Natchez	70
5.	Consolidation, Transformation, Conservation	86
6.	King Cotton Meets Big Muddy	108
7.	The Cotton Kingdom's Edges Made and Unmade	125
8.	Engineering the River of Empire	140
9.	Drought, Disease, and Other Symptoms of a Pathological Landscape	169
10.	Cotton, Chemicals, Catfish, Crawfish	181
11.	Nature's Return: Hurricane Katrina and the Future of the Big Muddy	204
Notes		225
Index		293