



“Deeply researched and compellingly told, this book presents early Memphis in its full historical context. A brilliant achievement.”

—Carroll Van West, Tennessee State Historian

Timed to coincide with major 2026 milestones including the 230th anniversary of Marcus Winchester’s birth on May 28, the 230th anniversary of Tennessee’s statehood on June 1, the bicentennial of Memphis’s incorporation on Dec. 19, 1826, and the nation’s America250 celebration.

Discover the forgotten story of the man who transformed a frontier settlement on a Mississippi River bluff into the thriving city of Memphis. This first full-length biography of Marcus Winchester explores ambition, race, politics, and identity in early Tennessee, uncovering a chapter of Southern history that shaped the nation.

Marcus Winchester (1796–1856) devoted his life to transforming the small settlement on the fourth Chickasaw Bluff into a thriving center of transportation, commerce, and industry that became Memphis.

Sent there at Andrew Jackson’s request while still barely out of his teens, Winchester became the city’s first real estate agent, mayor, store owner, banker, postmaster, and one-man chamber of commerce.

Winchester championed vital infrastructure projects that connected the frontier town to the wider world, including a stagecoach line, regular ferry crossing, major roads, and the first railroad tracks laid in the Midsouth.

Despite his many accomplishments, Winchester and his family faced relentless attacks because his wife, Amarante Loiselle, was a free woman of color during an era of growing hostility and division over slavery.

Forced to move his wife and children outside the very community he had built, Winchester experienced firsthand the dangers of defying entrenched racial boundaries.

This meticulously researched biography reveals the extraordinary story of Marcus Winchester and illuminates the struggles and triumphs of Memphis’s earliest residents.



Scott Williams is the CEO of Discovery Park of America in Union City, Tennessee. He is dedicated to uncovering the forgotten stories of those who helped shape American history and popular culture. Williams is the author of biographies on adventurer Richard Halliburton, pioneering entertainment reporter Odd McIntyre, and American folk hero David Crockett.

For more, visit rscottwilliams.info.

