

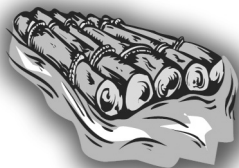


The Mystery on the

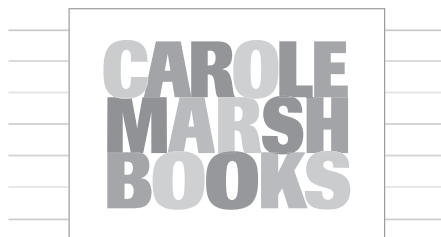
# MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI

## Teacher's Guide

by  
Carole Marsh



Editor: Sheila Phinazee • Art & Design: Lynette Rowe



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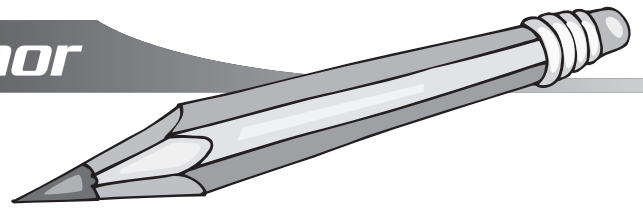
Published by Gallopade International/Carole Marsh Books.  
Printed in the United States of America.



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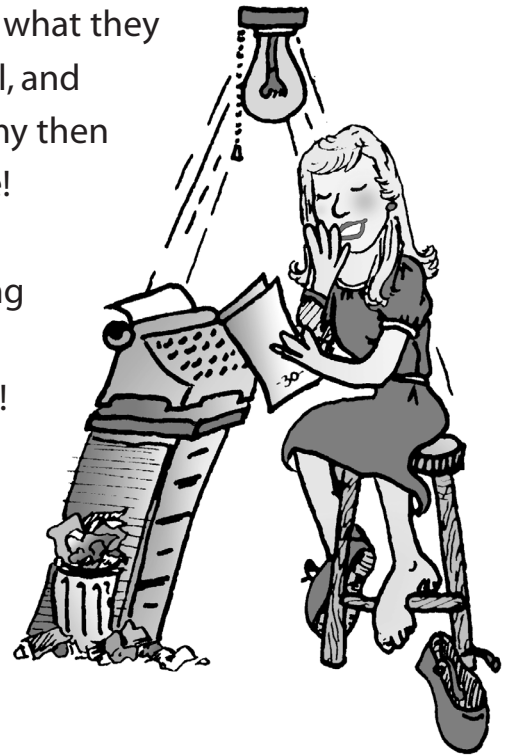


Dear Teachers,

In 1979, I began writing children's mysteries set at historic sites that still existed—primarily so that kids could go and see what they had read about. Frankly, I found no more fun, educational, and stress-free (actually, just plain joyful!) activity to do with my then school-age children than to visit a fascinating historic site!

Many people believe that visiting famous sites along the Mississippi can be moving and educational. There's history, mystery, legend, lore, fun, fantasy, and much more!

Yes, Mississippi River is a major, world-class tourist attraction, but it is also one gigantic history lesson! It is fascinating to learn how many people and how many boats and how much water travels down the Mississippi River!



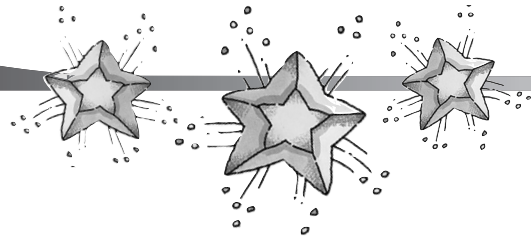
We learned a lot, but what we learned best is that kids and adults can learn together. Reading and going and seeing and doing is what education is all about, and most especially, that “adopting” a subject or place leads to a lifelong interest in an era, a place, the people, and all the fascinating facts that made up their lives. We learned that history is still “living” and is not lost on kids! In fact, it is quite a revelation!

Enjoy your Mighty Mississippi mystery adventure!

*Carole Marsh*



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The Mystery on the  
**MIGHTY  
MISSISSIPPI**

**30** YEARS  
AGO . . .

As a mother and an author, one of the fondest periods of my life was when I decided to write mystery books for children. At this time (1979) kids were pretty much glued to the TV, something parents and teachers complained about the way they do about video games today.

I decided to set each mystery in a real place—a place kids could go and visit for themselves after reading the book. And I also used real children as characters. Usually a couple of my own children served as characters, and I had no trouble recruiting kids from the book's location to also be characters.

Also, I wanted all the kids—boys and girls of all ages—to participate in solving the mystery. And, I wanted kids to learn something as they read. Something about the history of the location. And I wanted the stories to be funny.

That formula of real+scary+smart+fun served me well. The kids and I had a great time visiting each site and many of the events in the stories actually came out of our experiences there.

I love getting letters from teachers and parents who say they read the book with their class or child, then visited the historic site and saw all the places in the mystery for themselves. What's so great about that? What's great is that you and your children have an experience that bonds you together forever. Something you shared. Something you both cared about at the time. Something that crossed all age levels—a good story, a good scare, a good laugh!

30 years later,

*Carole Marsh*



## Mississippi River Tourist Information

### **The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium**

350 East 3rd Street  
Port of Dubuque  
Dubuque, Iowa 52001  
[www.mississippirivermuseum.com](http://www.mississippirivermuseum.com)  
800-226-3369

### **Lake Itasca State Park**

"Walk across the Mighty  
Mississippi as it starts"  
36750 Main Park Drive  
Park Rapids, Minnesota 56470  
[www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_parks/  
itasca/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/itasca/index.html)  
218-266-2100

### **The Gateway Arch Riverfront The Museum of Westward Expansion**

For Tram, Riverboat,  
Documentaries, and Giant  
Screen Movies  
[www.stlouisarch.com](http://www.stlouisarch.com)  
877-982-1410

### **Raging Rivers Waterpark**

"Along the Scenic Great River  
Road"  
Grafton, Illinois 62037  
[www.ragingrivers.com](http://www.ragingrivers.com)  
618-786-2345

### **The Delta Queen Riverboat Adventures**



[www.deltaqueen.com](http://www.deltaqueen.com)  
1-888-416-5063

### **The Cock-of-the-Walk Restaurant**

200 N. Broadway  
Natchez, Mississippi  
"The way it is, is the way it was"  
in this waterfront restaurant  
where ruffians also ate.  
Overlook the Mississippi River  
while you dine!



**Chapter   Subject   EXPLORE!**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Music   | Do you know any songs about your state?  |
| 1 | Career  | An artist is one who creates works of art such as a painter, sculptor, or musician. There are many forms of art. Would you like to be an artist? What kind of art would you create?              |
|   |    |  |
| 1 | Biology   | Spanish moss is a plant that grows on trees of the tropical and southeastern parts of the United States. It has gray stems that droop down in long, full clusters.                               |
|   | Arts  | A mime is an actor who uses pantomime, acting with gestures, body movements, and no words.   |
| 1 | Language  | Do you know any words in French? Ex: <i>Bonjour</i> , <i>merci</i> , etc.  |
| 1 | Geography   | What states did Mimi and Papa cross on their drive from Georgia to Louisiana?  |
| 1 | Writing   | The author uses good descriptions on this page. Which senses are used in the description of New Orleans?   |
| 2 | Language  | What does the expression, “burning daylight” mean? Can you think of similar sayings?   |
| 2 | Travel  | When you visit a new place, what do you like to see?   |
| 2 | Biology   | The vampire bat lives in Central and South America. It uses its sharp teeth to suck animals’ blood. Most bats live on insects only, but others eat fruit, nectar, or small animals. Bats are the |
|   |  |  |

## Old Fashioned Lemonade

(Makes four 8-ounce servings)

**Ingredients:**

- 4 lemons
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 quart water

**Directions:**

1. Peel lemons and save the rinds.
2. Cut lemons into slices, then set them aside.
3. Place rinds in a mixing bowl and sprinkle sugar on top. Let stand for 1 hour.
4. Boil water
5. Pour water over sugared rinds.
6. Cool for 20 minutes then remove rinds with a spoon.
7. Add juice from lemon slices to sugar mixture, straining it first if desired.
8. Mix well then refrigerate.
9. Serve cold over ice.

*Note: Preparation of all dishes requires adult supervision.*



### Lemon Bits!

- The scientific name for the lemon tree is *Citrus limon*.
- Lemons are used in more ways than any other citrus fruit.
- Florida was the main producer of lemons until the cold waves of 1894–1895.
- One fourth of the world’s lemons are grown in the United States— especially in California!



only mammals that can fly. There are many different kinds of bats—more than a thousand! The vampire bat may be the most familiar.

2 Superstitions Vampires are monsters who suck the blood of other people.

2 Writing How does the author create a sense of foreboding which means a feeling that something is going to happen? Which words create suspense? (Ex: goosebumps, etc.)

3 Language Why did Papa say the celebration was “a real zoo”? What did he mean?

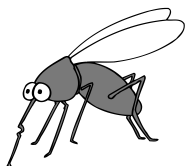
3 Weather A hurricane is a severe, tropical storm with strong winds exceeding 70 miles (115 kilometers) per hour. They originate in tropical areas in the Atlantic Ocean or Caribbean Sea and travel north, northeast, or northwest.



3 Geography New Orleans is far enough south to experience tropical temperatures and hurricanes. What large body of water is near Louisiana? (Gulf of Mexico.)

3 History In 1803, the United States purchased land from the French in the Louisiana Purchase. This land only cost four cents per acre, and included land that later became the midwestern states of the United States.

3 Medical Yellow fever is a serious, easily spread disease in tropical or subtropical New World areas. The virus for this disease is transmitted by mosquitoes.



3 Biology Crawfish, also called crayfish, resemble lobsters

## The Cabildo

Louisiana’s most important historical building was:

- Historic site for the Louisiana Purchase Transfer Ceremony in 1803.
- For five days in 1825, the residence of the French hero Marquis de Lafayette, who aided the United States during the Revolutionary War.
- Site of the Louisiana State Supreme Court from 1868 to 1910. The landmark case *Plessy v. Ferguson* was heard here before going on to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Visited by five American Presidents.

Today, the Cabildo celebrates the ethnic diversity of the people of Louisiana through its exhibits and programs.

## The Wandering River in Louisiana

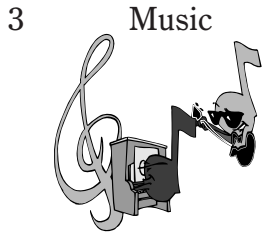
**Pointe Coupee** (or “cut point”) exists because of the Mississippi’s determined journey to the Gulf of Mexico. Since the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, the river cut through a turn and created this lake. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has its hands full in its attempt to tame this mighty force.

**The Nearby Old River Control Structure** keeps the Mississippi from flowing into the bed of Atchafalaya River and flooding Morgan City. Instead, it continues on eastward to New Orleans. The great flood of 1927 proved the point—the Atchafalaya River basin flooded terribly.





but are a lot smaller and are freshwater. Crawfish and lobsters are in the same crustacean family.



3 Music Zydeco music is popular in southern Louisiana. It combines French dance melodies with Caribbean music and the blues. The main instruments in a Zydeco band include a guitar, an accordion, and a washboard.

4 Feelings Why was Christina hesitant about going to a cemetery? How would you feel?

4 Language Onomatopoeia is the use of words that imitate what they represent like “clackety-clack.” Can you name other examples?

4 History The Victorian Era was during the reign of Queen Victoria of England in the 19th century. Buildings and homes built during this period were very ornamental or fancy, inside and out.

4 Superstitions “Step on a crack, break your mother’s back.” What other superstitions do you know?

4 Logic Who could have left the rose? Why?

5 Math Sam is how many years older than Jake?

5 Vocabulary “Tottered” means to sway as if to fall.

5 Safety Do you ever use email? It is fast and convenient. Do you know how to be safe on the Internet?

5 Vocabulary A rogue can be a scoundrel, wandering beggar, or a vicious, solitary animal. In this case, a rogue is a person full of playful mischief.

## Louisiana Music Is as Diverse as Its People

Louisiana is home to many different types of music! Across the state, you may find: New Orleans jazz, cajun music, zydeco, blues, rhythm and blues, funk, gospel, brass bands, ragtime, reggae, and more!

**Zydeco** is a popular music from southwest and south-central Louisiana. Zydeco originated with south Louisiana’s Creoles who borrowed elements from Cajun music.

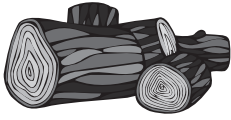
The word zydeco also called zologo, zodico, zarico, or zordico, and is associated with the Creole expression “*Les haricots sont pas sales*”—“the beans aren’t salty.” This became an expression for hard times. When money was short, the salty meat used to flavor beans was too expensive.

Zydeco is actually the most modern form of Creole music from Acadiana, first appearing in the late 1940s. The first zydeco-like recording was by Clarence Garlow’s *Bon Ton Roula* in 1949. Over the years, zydeco is more often sung in English instead of Creole dialect and contains soul, rap, reggae, and disco flavors.

The *vest frotoir*, or **rubboard**, is the driving force behind traditional zydeco bands. A precursor to the rubboard was the washboard. In the 1930’s, sheet metal was introduced to Louisiana for roofing, which was also fashioned into metal washboards. Creole musicians adopted these for zydeco music.



5 Career



Lumberjacks cut trees and transport logs to mills. They were not short of work during the days of settling the New World.

5 Career

Discuss why the clothes lumberjacks wore were important for the work they had to do.

6 Biology

Thorns are sharp, woody spines that grow on various shrubs, trees, or woody plants. Why would a plant need to grow a thorn?

6 Vocabulary

To “sashay” means to strut or flounce.

6 Writing

How does the author make the restaurant really come alive on this page?

6 Music



An accordion is a portable instrument with a keyboard. It uses pleated or folded bellows to push air into its metal reeds when it is squeezed, hence the name, squeezebox.



A washboard was used before washing machines were invented. It is a board with a ridged surface used for scrubbing clothes. Now it is more often used as a percussion instrument in zydeco music.

6 Culture

A Cajun is a native person of Louisiana believed to be a descendant of French exiles.

6 Food

Papa asked to be served “family style.” Compare and contrast this to other ways of eating out including fast food, buffet style, or formal dining.

6 Language

Grant was hungry enough to “eat a bear.” Can you think of other expressions that also show how hungry you feel?

## What's a Bayou?

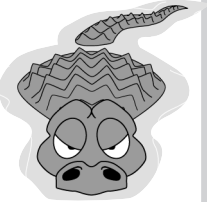
The word bayou comes from the word *bayuk* which means “small stream” in Louisiana French. It is a waterway off of a river or lake in a lowland region. It is a slow, stagnant creek that often flows through a swamp.

The Delta Region is the area near the mouth of the Mississippi River.

A swamp is a low, marshy wetland. It is usually wooded and floods often.

### Alligator Bayou Tours



Features ecotours of wilderness, lakes, bayous, and alligator swamps. See alligators, snakes, egrets, heron, hundreds of birds migrate along the Mississippi flyway, and more. Overnight Cajun cottages available. 35019 Alligator Bayou Road Prairieville, Louisiana 70769 [www.alligatorbayou.com](http://www.alligatorbayou.com) 1-888-SWAMPS



### Louisiana Crawfish

Crawfish, also known as crayfish, mudbugs, and crawdads, are a common ingredient in Cajun cuisine. These popular crustaceans live in abundance in the Atchafalaya Basin. During crawfish season, farmers sometimes flood part of their land and lay out wire traps for these crawdads. Shrimp and crab are also common in the marshes of southern Louisiana.



- 6 Writing Christina slept fitfully which means she was restless and had trouble relaxing. Why?
- 7 Vocabulary Barges are large, flat, unpowered boats used to carry freight. Barges are usually towed by other boats when transporting freight.
- 7 Vocabulary  "Spiel" is a slang word for a long speech. It can also be lengthy persuasive speech. Do you have a spiel when asking for presents during the holidays?
- 7 Math The Spanish discovered the Mississippi in 1541. How many years passed before the French traveled the river in 1673? (132 years)
- 7 Safety Is it a good idea for Grant and Christina to run on the *Delta Queen* deck? Why or why not?
- 8 Geography Bluffs are steep river banks or cliffs.
- 8 Culture For hundreds of years, Native Americans have had great respect for the buffalo. They depended on them for food and hides.
- 8 Feelings Why does Sam have goosebumps? How is he feeling?
- 8 Biology  The eagle, like the hawk and falcon, is a bird of prey. This means it hunts animals for food. They fly fast and have excellent eyesight from long distances.
- The bald eagle, the national bird for the United States, gets its name from its white head feathers. Bald eagles eat water birds, rabbits, and fish. They live along North American coasts, lakes, and rivers.



## Mississippi – the State, That Is!

### Can You Canoe?

A new way to explore the Mississippi the old way...up close via a canoe. Experience the bayous, tributaries, oxbow lakes, flood plains, and backwaters. Travelers can even stop and make time for camping in secluded areas and see the wonderful wildlife of the great Mississippi River. An experienced river guide will tag along. Trips run from Cairo, Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico or for shorter trips in between. Adventure can be for one day or for several weeks. Contact the Mississippi River Adventure, Quapaw Canoe Company, (601) 627-4070 for more information.




### Pack a Lunch and Pick Rosedale:

Rosedale is an active Mississippi River port. It has a 75-foot tall observation tower, acres of riverfront, and the Great River Road State Park. Enjoy amazing views of the Mississippi at this world's longest park. (Highway 8, Rosedale)

**Pick Up the Pace with Mississippi River Adventures** for a hydro-jet tour of the Mississippi. Guided tour of Civil War sites and the river's flora and fauna. 800-521-4363

### Port Gibson

General Grant declared it was "too beautiful to burn" and left the picture perfect town intact. Port Gibson later became the first National Historic District in Mississippi.

- 8 History Although living like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn seems fun, in reality life was pretty hard. What would you do for fun without TV, movies, or video games?
- 8 Books Books are easily available for us nowadays. What do you like to read?
- 9 Geology Silt is sedimentary material made up of fine mineral particles.
- 9 Safety What do you know about talking to people you have never met? What would you do if you were Christina?
- 9 Logic Who could this man be?
- 9 Language  Different regions have different ways of pronouncing words. Grant says “et” instead of what word?
- 9 Food Grant lists other foods when Christina calls him a ham. What do these foods have in common?
- 10 Manners Papa pulled out a chair for Christina. What are other ways to show manners at the table?
- 10 History Duels were formal, prearranged fights between two people usually made to settle a point of honor often using pistols.
- 10 Writing Is Christina being honest?
- 11 Vocabulary “Nonchalant” is a word of French origin. It means carefree, and casually unconcerned. “Cool as a cucumber!”

## No Place Like Natchez!

### **Natchez, Mississippi**

The French founded the oldest settlement on the Mississippi River in 1716. It was one of the great cotton ports of the world. Steamboats helped to make this possible.



### **Natchez-Under-the-Hill**

Created by erosion of the Mighty Mississippi, this strip is where rivermen and robbers met to drink, fight, and steal. These hooligans often hid out in the caves of bluff walls formed by floodwaters.

**Natchez Trace** is the road built through 500 miles of wilderness connecting Natchez Mississippi to Nashville, Tennessee. The road itself runs through land belonging to the Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians. General James Wilkinson and the U.S. Army, which built the road, got the Indian Nations’ OK first.

### **Natchez Quote by Mark Twain**

“Rough and hardy men; rude, uneducated, brave, suffering terrific hardships... heavy drinkers, coarse frolickers... heavy fighters, reckless fellows... elephantinely jolly, foul-witted, profane, prodigal of their money, bankrupt at the end of the trip, fond of barbaric finery, prodigious braggarts, yet in the main, honest, trustworthy, faithful to promises and duty and often picturesquely magnanimous.”—Mark Twain, describing Natchez flatboatmen



- 11 Vocabulary “Gun” the engine means to accelerate.
- 12 Travel A keelboat is a river boat with a keel but has no sails. It is used for carrying freight.
- 12 Science An earthquake is caused when the plates that make up the earth’s crust move and bump against each other. Earthquakes and volcanoes often develop on the edge of these plates.
- 13 Landmarks St. Louis is known for its gigantic Gateway Arch. Do you know any other famous landmarks for famous cities? (Ex: Eiffel Tower in Paris.)
- 13 Literature *Little House on the Prairie* is a series of books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. It was also turned into a television show.
- 13 Science Sod is a section of turf or grass-covered soil. It is held together by the matted roots.
- 13 History The Great Depression in the 1930s was a time of severe economic hardship.
- 13 Travel A Conestoga wagon was used by American pioneers to moved westward. It is a heavy covered wagon with wide wheels.
- 14 Vocabulary “Newfangled” means new.
- 14 Writing Can you imagine a time before the conveniences mentioned on page 89?
- 14 Recreation Luke is playing games appropriate for his age. What games do you like to play? Even adults have games they enjoy. Do you know any?



## Earthquake Vocabulary

**Earthquake**—when the plates that make up the earth’s crust bump together. Even though the earth’s plates move slightly each year, it causes earthquakes and volcanoes when they crash together.

**Epicenter**—where the shaking starts, the center of an earthquake.

**Tremor**—the shaking movement.

## Earthquake Technology

### Rock Mechanics and Borehole Geophysics

Scientists use borehole measurements to study heat flow, stress, and fluid pressure under the earth to help them to predict earthquakes.

### Geology

A geologist is one who studies the history, origin, and structure of the earth. They look at what earthquakes did in the past to learn about the future. Traces of past fault movement are called “footprints.”





### Strong Motion Seismology

Special instruments measure where active faults are found. Near large earthquakes, scientists use special sensors to make measurements. This information is used to make safer buildings and bridges that are more earthquake resistant. Places like California and Japan, have built buildings that can withstand the earth shaking.

(continued)



- 14 Safety What is a safer way to answer a door?
- 15 Vocabulary “Array” means variety or selection.
- 15 Biology Rats are long-tailed rodents similar to mice only larger.
- 15 Feelings What makes you feel special?
- 15 Writing Are you superstitious about the number 13 or about something else?
- 15 Language A hooligan is a young ruffian or hoodlum.
- 16 History Chuck wagons were used by American pioneers who moved westward. This wagon was equipped with food and cooking supplies.
- 16 Writing Why didn’t Christina tell Mimi where she was really going?
- 16 Life  Brainstorming is when you come up with as many possible ideas and solutions as you can. It is a great way to solve a problem. Writing down your brainstorming helps, too.
- 17 Language An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase. V.I.P. is an abbreviation for Very Important Person. Do you remember what ETA means? (Estimated Time of Arrival) What are some other abbreviations?
- 17 Career  Engineers use math and science in design, construction, and operation of structures and equipment. Their goal is to safely make things work better without wasting money.

## Earthquake Technology

(continued)

### Crustal Structure

Special scientists called geophysicists study the Earth’s crust. They create maps of the earth’s crust, and keep track of the movement of faults by keeping track of earthquakes.

### Earthquake Magnitudes:

Based on the amplitude of seismic waves and measured on the Richter scale:

Great	8 or higher
Major	7 - 7.9
Strong	6 - 6.9
Moderate	5 - 5.9
Light	4 - 4.9
Minor	3 - 3.9

### Major Earthquakes Don’t Come Solo

Whenever there is a really large earthquake, there will often be another one nearby. An aftershock is another smaller earthquake that follows the main earthquake or mainshock. Foreshocks can occur before the mainshock. Like an aftershock, the foreshock is not as strong as the mainshock.

### The Big One in New Madrid, Missouri

In 1811, the central Mississippi Valley was hit by three of the strongest earthquakes in U.S. history. They began on December 16. That was the first of three magnitude-8 earthquakes.

Townpeople reported that the ground visibly rippled in waves and large chunks of land began to rise or sink.

Damage from this major earthquake reached as far as Washington, DC and Charleston, SC!





- 17 Psychology A phobia is an on going, illogical, paralyzing fear of a particular thing or situation. Hydrophobia is a fear of water. Xenophobia is a fear of strangers or foreigners. Triskaidekaphobia is a fear of the number 13. There are many others.
- 19 Writing How does the author create excitement as the bad guy, Michael Fink, starts to speak at the banquet?
- 19 Vocabulary “Defiance” means bold resistance.
- 20 Logic How is plagiarism stealing?
- 21 Vocabulary “Flunking out” means failing his classes.
- 129 Education Michael Fink was studying journalism which is the collecting, writing, and publishing of news or news articles for magazines and newspapers.
- 21 Writing A synonym is a word that means the same as another word. Papa came up with synonyms for the word “jail.” Can you think of synonyms to say that Mike Fink made a big mistake? (Example: He blew it!)



Be sure to read Carole Marsh Mystery #15  
*The Mystery at the Kentucky Derby*



## Things To Do Around the River

### **Riverboatin'**

Two 19th century replica paddlewheel riverboats, the *Tom Sawyer* and *Becky Thatcher*, offer sightseeing and dining cruises daily through the Port of St. Louis, Missouri—the second-busiest inland port in the country.

### **Mighty Mississippi Passport Program**

Kids can join Junior Rangers at National Parks throughout the United States. Mississippi's program consists of over 100 family-friendly activities centered on the Mississippi River. Kids have fun and help the environment, too. National Park Service Mississippi National River and Recreation Area 111 Kellogg Blvd. E. St. Paul, MN 551101-1256 651-290-3030 ext. 247 <http://www.nps.gov/miss/freddie/index.html>

### **Mississippi National River and Recreation Area**

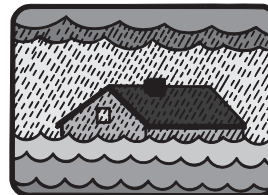
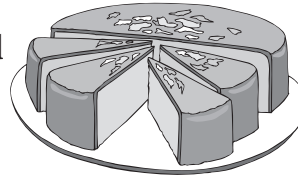
Harriet Island was named to honor Harriet Bishop, a pioneer school teacher. Harriet Island Park features things like an outdoor gymnasium, a public pavilion, concerts, picnic areas, fairs, festivals, and more.

Harriet Island drew thousands of people to the beach from 1910-1915. However, its popularity decreased as the pollution of the river increased. Popularity is increasing again as the park is revived.

Harriet Island Regional Park  
Plato Boulevard and W. Water Street, St. Paul, MN  
651-266-6400

# Discussion Questions

- ❖ Several different careers were mentioned in the story. Make a list of them, then decide which one you would choose, if you had to pick one.
- ❖ Many regions have their own favorite desserts. You may know of Mississippi Mud Pie, New York Cheesecake, or Southern Peach Cobbler. What desserts are popular where you live? What are your favorites?
- ❖ When the stranger first approached Christina on the riverboat, what could she have done when he began to ask her questions? What would you have done?
- ❖ Can kids help adults solve problems? How did the kids help in this story? When is it best for kids to let adults take responsibility? Discuss how adults and kids worked together to help Mimi.
- ❖ Mark Twain is a pseudonym or pen name for Samuel Langhorne Clemens. Think of a good pen name for yourself and tell why you chose it.
- ❖ Do you know what to do to be safe during a natural disaster like an earthquake, tornado, flood, or hurricane? Have you ever experienced a natural disaster? What did you learn that could help you to be better prepared in the future?
- ❖ Some people headed west with big hopes and dreams for success, but instead faced major disappointment on their own or were victims of river rogues. Would you go back home, keep going west, become a river rogue, or something else?
- ❖ Discuss the relationship between fact and fiction. Have students give their own definition of each. Explain historical fiction in contrast to the other two.



## Samuel Clemens

Samuel Clemens, also known as Mark Twain, was born in 1835 in Florida. His family moved to Hannibal, Missouri when he was four. There he attended public school and became a printers' apprentice. He sketched and set type for the *Hannibal Journal*. Clemens also worked as a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River until the Civil War. During the war, Clemens served in the Confederate cavalry as a volunteer soldier.



Afterward, he joined his brother in the new territory of Nevada. There he became a reporter for the *Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City and started signing his articles with the pen name Mark Twain. The phrase "mark twain" is a Mississippi River phrase for "two fathoms deep."

In 1864, Twain moved to San Francisco, and met two American writers who encouraged him. The next year, Twain refashioned a story he had heard in the California gold fields. Twain and his story became nationally known. He lectured, traveled abroad, and continued to write.

Mark Twain wrote a book celebrating the childhood of a boy in a Mississippi River town, called *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876. The sequel to this book, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is considered a masterpiece.

Twain's writing is considered important during his time for the use of real language, real places, memorable characters, and for his hatred of oppression and hypocrisy. His writing from the 1870s and 1880s is considered to be his best.

On the map below, write the names of the states that border the Mighty Mississippi River. Also, label the main bodies of water that make up the river.



**States:**

- |             |           |          |           |
|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Missouri    | Wisconsin | Illinois | Louisiana |
| Mississippi | Iowa      | Arkansas | Tennessee |
| Minnesota   | Kentucky  |          |           |

**Bodies of Water:**

- |                |            |                |                |
|----------------|------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lake Itasca    | Ohio River | Arkansas River | Gulf of Mexico |
| Missouri River |            |                |                |

## Mississippi River and the Economy

Many towns developed and continue to thrive along the Mississippi. They depend on the river. Engineers have worked hard to make the river passable for large vessels by dredging hazardous materials.

**Some Cities that Grew Because of the River**

St. Paul and Minneapolis are at the northern end of the river in Minnesota. St. Paul became a port for shipping grain grown in the west to cities in the South.

St. Louis, known as the Gateway to the West, grew as a port joining the Great Plains with the Mississippi River.



Baton Rouge is located on the southern part of the river navigable for big ocean vessels. Both Baton Rouge and New Orleans are seaports where tons of freight are carried each year on the river. The main cargos are petroleum products, coal, grain, gravel, and sand.

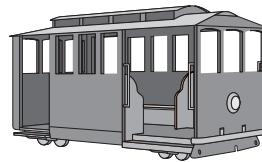
**The Rich Soil**

The Mississippi Valley has rich alluvial soils created by thousands of years of erosion and being re-deposited by the mighty river. Crops are supported by the Mississippi flood plain. Crops grown in the north are soybeans and feed grains while rice, cotton, and groundnuts are grown in the south.



# Mathematics: Calculate It!

1. A budget is a list of expenses. Total this budget for the Mighty Mississippi Mystery trip: \$250—Transportation, \$300—meals, \$35—souvenirs, and \$60—Internet service bill.
2. Grant is 7, Christina is 9, Sam is 6, and Jake is 4. Determine the total of all their ages combined.
3. If Papa gave 5 mimes a \$5 tip each, how much money would he spend?
4. If it costs 80 cents per person to ride the streetcar, how much would it cost for Papa, Mimi, Grant, and Christina to ride?
5. In 1803, the United States purchased land at 4 cents per acre. If you wanted a small piece of the deal, how much would 40 acres cost?
6. The ETA, Estimated Time of Arrival, was 10 minutes to get to the St. Louis Hotel lobby. How many seconds was it?
7. The distance from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico is 2,552 miles. How many kilometers is it? (Hint: One mile equals 1.61 kilometers)
8. Plan a schedule for a day in St. Louis. Allow 2–4 hours for each activity. Get up at 8:30 a.m. and go to bed by 9:00 p.m. How many hours will you spend in St. Louis?
9. Christina has \$15 to spend on beignets. If they cost \$1.19 each, how many can she buy before she runs out of money?



## Mississippi River and the Economy

(continued)

### **Fish and Fowl**

The Mississippi River is known for many varieties of catfish, some of which are for the market. Although it is abundant in fish, the river's shellfish population is not what it used to be. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the upper valley was used for extensive shellfish harvesting, but they were extremely depleted. The Mississippi Delta area, the largest wetland area in the United States, is habitat for hundreds of migratory birds.

### **Pollution**

The Mississippi is major artery for the United States. The River carries significant sewage and industrial pollution from United States urban and rural areas. Toxic chemicals were carried into the river during a flood in 1993, but because of its size, the chemicals were diluted to low levels. Because of its huge volume, pollution concentrations are not as great as they are in smaller rivers.

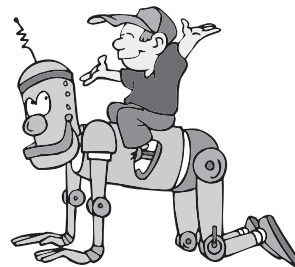
### **First Mississippi Steam Boat**

The *New Orleans* ushered in the new wave of powered shipping in 1811. Cargo was shipped between the East Coast and the Ohio Valley. Business grew rapidly because it cost less than traveling over the Appalachian Mountains.

This golden era of steamboats on the Mississippi lasted until the 1870s. Railroads then became the major mode of cargo travel.

## English: Write it!

1. Write a story pretending you are Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer having adventures on the Mississippi River.
2. Use your imagination and write your own descriptive paragraph of how New Orleans' Mulate's Restaurant could have looked. Include as many senses as you can: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing.
3. Write 5 journal entries pretending you are Sam traveling from Minnesota to Missouri. Talk about the places you see and adventures you enjoy.
4. Recall each mystery clue after you finish reading the book. Write down the reasons why each clue makes sense now that you know the ending of the story.
5. Write an ode to a flood that is either silly or serious.
6. Write a newspaper story including interview information from the mysterious mime at the end of the story.
7. Write a new ending for the last chapter of the mystery.
8. Pretend you're an inventor. Write an advertisement for your great, newfangled creation to draw a crowd at the next World's Fair!
9. Write an essay comparing and contrasting life today with life during the early 1800s. How would your life be different? In what ways would it be the same?



## Children's Books

***Around the Bend: A Mississippi River Adventure***  
by C. C. Lockwood

***Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape***  
by Anuradha Mathur

***Old Glory: A Voyage Down the Mississippi***  
by Jonathan Raban

***Life in a Mississippi River Town (Picture the Past)***  
by Laura Fischer

***LaSalle: LaSalle and the Mississippi River (Exploring the World)***  
by Ann Heinrichs



***The Mississippi (Great Rivers of the World)***  
by Kieran J. Walsh

***First Steamboat Down the Mississippi***  
by George S. Fichter

***River Journey***  
by Clarence Jonk

***The Mississippi River***  
by Jen Green

***The Mississippi (River Journey)***  
by Simon Milligan

***The Mississippi River (Ecosystems of North America)***  
by Maria Mudd-Ruth

***Swift Rivers***  
by Cornelia Meigs



# Vocabulary: Spell It!

Study the words below. All of them are taken from the mystery book. Fold the page in half and take a spelling test! Check your work in the dictionary and write its definition on a separate piece of paper.

PSEUDONYM \_\_\_\_\_

FAMOUS \_\_\_\_\_

INCREDIBLE \_\_\_\_\_

ADVENTURE \_\_\_\_\_

BANJO \_\_\_\_\_

FERRYMAN \_\_\_\_\_

EXHAUSTION \_\_\_\_\_

EARTHQUAKE \_\_\_\_\_

VANISHED \_\_\_\_\_

EXHIBITS \_\_\_\_\_

CAPSULE \_\_\_\_\_

IMAGINATION \_\_\_\_\_

ORDINARY \_\_\_\_\_

DISASTER \_\_\_\_\_

FESTIVE \_\_\_\_\_

PANIC \_\_\_\_\_

AUDIENCE \_\_\_\_\_

DEFIANCE \_\_\_\_\_

TUXEDO \_\_\_\_\_

CHAOS \_\_\_\_\_

PLAGIARISM \_\_\_\_\_

## Festivals to Experience

### **Prairie Cajun Festival**

April, LA, 318-435-7607

### **Choctaw-Apache Pow-Wow**

April, LA, 318-645-2588

### **Festival of the Bonfires**

December, LA, 1-800-367-7852

### **Washington Parish Fee Fair**

October, LA, 504-735-5731

### **Wild Catfish Festival**

April, MS, 1-800-408-4838

### **Sunflower River Blues Festival**

August, MS, 601-627-6820

### **Delta Blues Festival**

September, MS, 800-467-3582

### **Mississippi International**

#### **Balloon Classic**

June, MS, 800-748-9069

### **National Tom Sawyer Days and National Fence Painting Contest**

July, MO, 573-221-2477

### **Strassenfest**

August, MO, 314-849-6322

### **Wheels, Wings and Water Festival**

July, MN, 1-800-264-2940

### **Aquatennial**

July, MN, 651-661-4700

### **King Biscuit Blues Festival**

October, AR, 870-338-8327

### **Mississippi River Music Fest**

August, IA

### **Steamboat Days**

June, IL, 309-681-0696

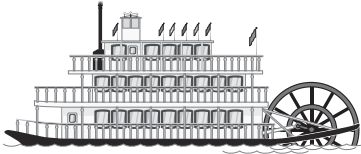
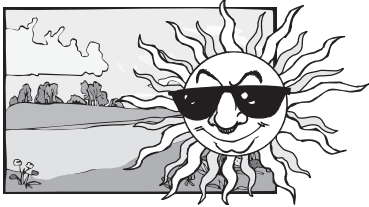
### **Fur-Traders' Rendezvous**

June, WI, 608-326-8555





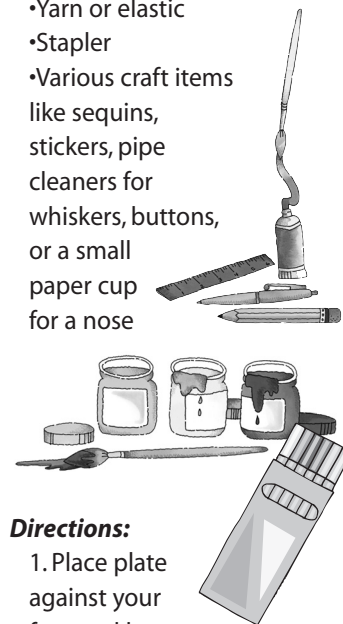
# Art: Create it!

1. Paint a picture of sea life you might find at the Aquarium of the Americas.
2. Create a shadow box of your own French Quarter. Include parks, shops, restaurants, streetcars, and a riverfront.
3. Design a new cover for *The Mystery of the Mighty Mississippi*.
4. Sketch a portrait of a mime. Include funny clothing and props.
5. Construct your own *Delta Queen* riverboat using craft materials like Popsicle sticks, paint, toothpicks, buttons, and glue.
6. Use modeling clay to create your own Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn cave.
7. Build a model of St. Louis, complete with your own arch, buildings, landscape, and people.
8. Make your own string instrument using a shoebox and rubber bands. Grab your shades and sing the Delta Bayou Blues.
9. Grab some old magazines and create a collage of “souvenirs” you might have found on your trip with Grant and Christina.

## Make a Mardi Gras Mask

### Supplies:

- Paper plate
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Markers
- Construction paper
- Yarn or elastic
- Stapler
- Various craft items like sequins, stickers, pipe cleaners for whiskers, buttons, or a small paper cup for a nose



### Directions:

1. Place plate against your face and have a friend lightly mark where your eyes and mouth are with a pencil.
2. Draw and cut out holes for your eyes. (Check to be sure that you can see clearly.)
3. Use markers and construction paper to decorate your mask.
4. After stapling one end of the yarn or elastic to the mask, adjust to fit the other side around your head to fit comfortably. Then staple in place, just below eye openings.



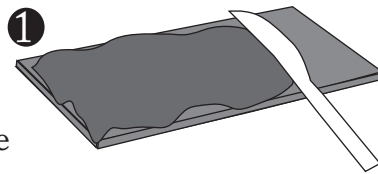
# Science: Cook It!

In the 1800s, not everyone could afford a ship to cruise the Mississippi River. Some folks had steamboats, and some folks had rafts. These water craft helped people transport goods for sale down to New Orleans. Then they would be shipped to the Atlantic Coast, South America, or Europe. You can build an edible raft!

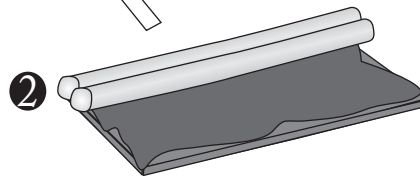
## Materials

Large pretzel rods                      Peanut butter  
Graham crackers                      Fruit roll-up (any flavor)  
Coffee stirrer, straw, or popsicle stick

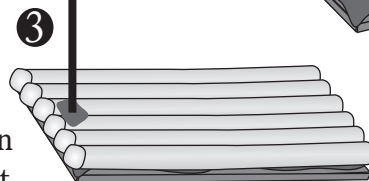
- 1 Spread a thick layer of peanut butter over two graham cracker sections. Set them close together.



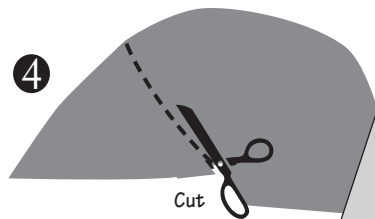
- 2 Lay pretzel rods in a row on the graham cracker.



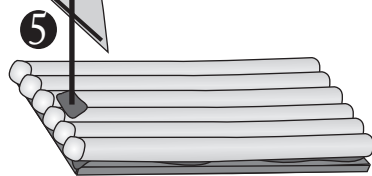
- 3 Use peanut butter to attach a standing mast on top of the raft. The mast can be a coffee stirrer, popsicle stick, straw, or whatever else.



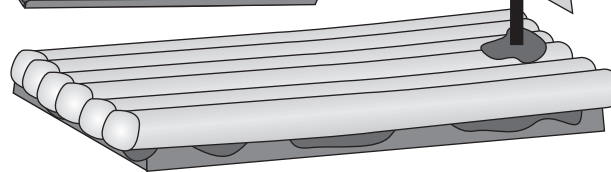
- 4 Cut a triangular sail from a fruit roll-up, piece of cheese, or other light material. Use toothpicks to make it stick and stay flat.



- 5 Attach the sail to the top of the mast with peanut butter.



- 6 Float your raft to the table where you can eat it!



## Down in the Delta Mud Pie

(Serves 8 to 10)

### Ingredients:

1 ready-made chocolate cookie crumb piecrust  
3 pints or 6 cups of your favorite chocolate ice cream, softened  
1 cup ready-made fudge topping  
4 cups whipped cream  
1 cup crushed Oreos, graham crackers, or chocolate cookies

### Directions:

1. Spread one half of softened ice cream into piecrust.
2. Place in freezer for 30–60 minutes, until firm.
3. Spread fudge topping on next, then freeze for 20 minutes.
4. Add the remaining ice cream, layer on whipped cream, and finally cookie crumbs.
5. Freeze for 3–4 hours or overnight, then serve!

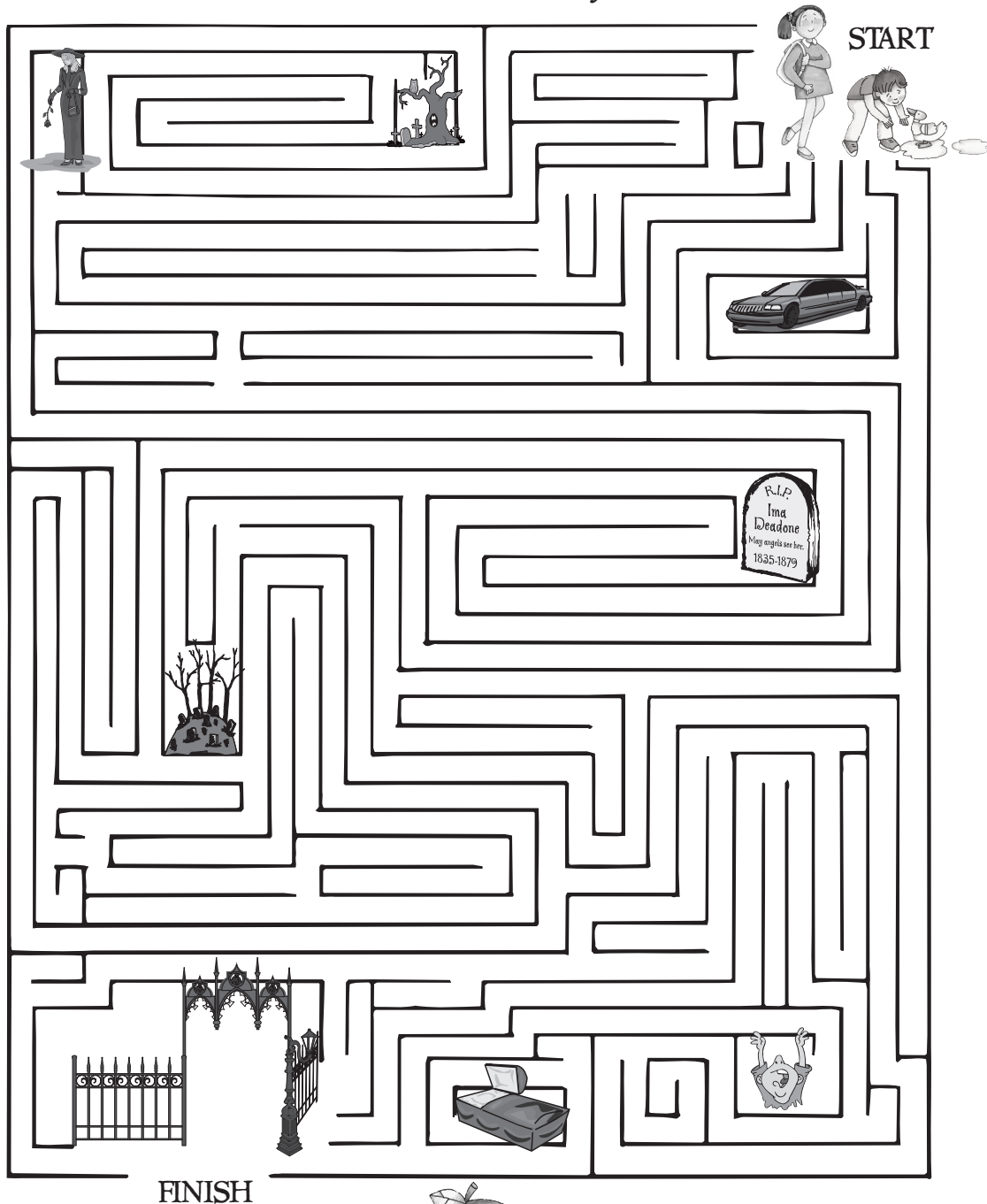
Note: Preparation of all dishes requires adult supervision.



## The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Maze



Help Christina and Grant find their way out of the New Orleans cemetery.



## ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Pair Up***



*Match the words on the left with the correct words on the right!*



JACKSON

ARCH

NEW

MOSS

GULF OF

BUCKLING

SPANISH

GRAS

ICE

ORLEANS

FRENCH

CREAM

SWASH

QUARTER

GREASE

SQUARE

MARDI

MEXICO

GATEWAY

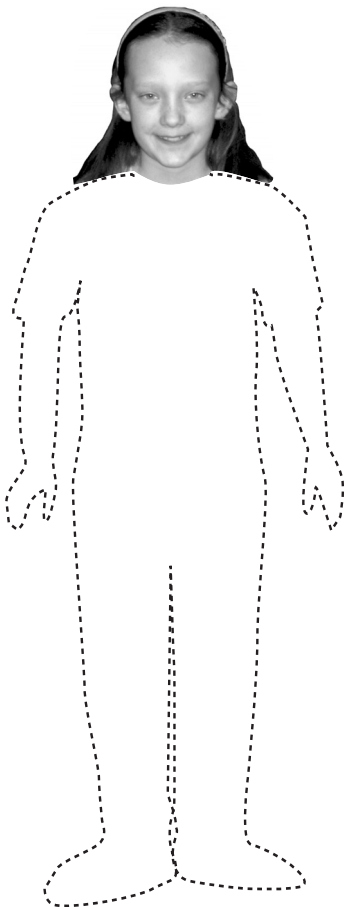
PAINT



# The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Stick Puppet Adventures



Cut out the characters below. Color them with magic markers or crayons. Use glue or tape to attach them to the tops of Popsicle sticks. Now you can act out your own Mighty Mississippi adventures!



Christina



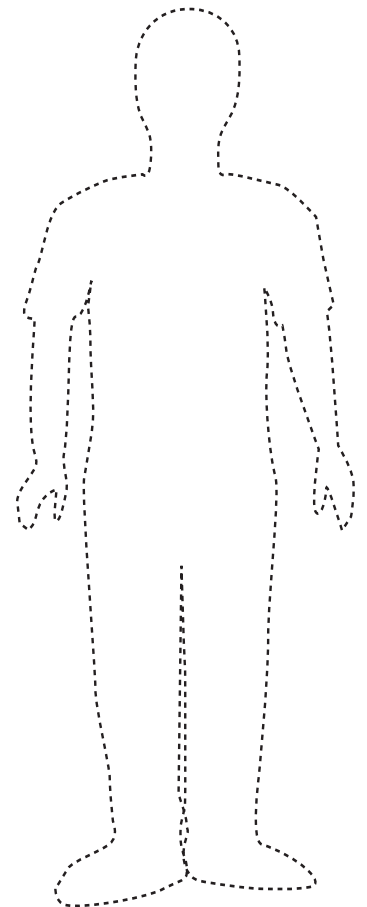
Grant



Sam



Jake



Pattern

**Tip:**

Make an additional person, like the mime in the story, by drawing their face right on the puppet!

Copy and cut for each character. Add their face and create their outfit!



# The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Clue Scramble



Unscramble the words below to find the mystery clues!

1. IMME

\_\_\_\_\_

2. CKOLS

\_\_\_\_\_



3. TOORDAN

\_\_\_\_\_



4. HYUCKLRREEB

\_\_\_\_\_

5. RTOP

\_\_\_\_\_

6. RANSTGRE

\_\_\_\_\_



7. REOUG

\_\_\_\_\_

8. EPIRTA

\_\_\_\_\_



9. EELTORAV

\_\_\_\_\_



# The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Word Search



Search for the mysteriously hidden words below!

Y N O I T A R B E L E C L A H L S  
 E D A R A P L U F N D I A S U T Y  
 P T P E P N I L I I A L E J R A R  
 B E I G N E T S I M C T U E R B E  
 C A F Q L G X U E G A T E A I A T  
 W A T E R C O L O R A T I C C S E  
 E D A N O M E L I Y C T D O A C M  
 E R I P M A V P E A A Q O T N O E  
 C A B I L D O U R Q H B G R E I C

ALLIGATOR

CABILDO

EMAIL

LEMONADE

STREETCAR

WATERCOLOR

BAYOU

CELEBRATION

FICTION

PARADE

TABASCO

BEIGNET

CEMETERY

HURRICANE

PIRATE

VAMPIRE



# The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Fill-in-the-Blank Crossword



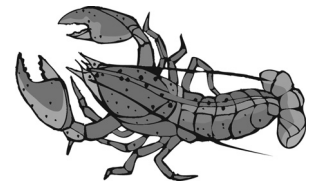
Fill in the blanks to answer the questions.

1. Tropical dampness in the air:

H \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_ I T \_\_\_\_

2. Louisiana Nickname for crawfish:

\_\_\_\_ U \_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_



3. The funeral procession was headed to:

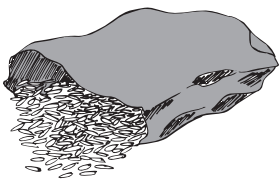
\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_ Y O \_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_

4. Felled tall trees with their axes:

L \_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_ A C \_\_\_\_

5. Common Cajun dish:



\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_ S

\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_ E

## ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Matching Characters***



*Match these mystery characters with their descriptions!*

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 1. Papa      | A. mystery writer   |
| 2. Grant     | B. wears grease paint   |
| 3. Christina | C. emailed Christina  |
| 4. Sam       | D. received clues   |
| 5. Jake      | E. loves to sing loudly with Papa   |
| 6. Mime      | F. almost fell off cliff  |
| 7. Mimi      | G. official helper, travel agent baggage carrier and best restaurant-finder |



## The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Quiz



Use the clues to recall some interesting adventures on the Mississippi!

1. Mimi, Papa, Christina, and Grant take this boat to St. Louis:

---

2. What Mississippi means in the Ojibway (Chippewa) Indians' language:

---

3. Author of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn:

---

4. Name of the dark brown soil:

---

5. Reason why the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cut passages in land surrounding the Mississippi:

---

6. Who were the River Rogues:

---

7. What shocking experience did Grant, Mimi, Papa, and Christina have on the riverboat:

---

8. Museum located beneath the Gateway Arch in St. Louis:

---

9. Missouri nickname:

---



## ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi True or False***



*Mark each statement true or false.*

*Can you replace the word (or words) that is false in each statement?*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Sometimes New Orleans seems like a big party.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Christina and Grant were on their Christmas vacation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. *Mardi Gras* is Spanish for Fat Tuesday.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Sam and Jake begin their trip at Lake Itasca.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Mississippi River has floods every few years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. On a ship, starboard means left.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Silt from the Mississippi makes the land dead.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Grant had a rose on his plate with his dessert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Christina feels a little jealous of Sam and Jake's adventures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. St. Louis, Missouri had a famous earthquake even bigger than San Francisco's.



## ***Answer Key...***

### ***to The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Activities***



#### ***Math Activities***

1. \$645 budget; 2. 26 years total; 3. \$25 total mime tips; 4. \$3.20 streetcar fares; 5. \$1.60;
6. 600 seconds; 7. 4,108.72 kilometers; 8. depends on number of activities; 9. 12 beignets

#### ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Pair Up***

JACKSON SQUARE, NEW ORLEANS, GULF OF MEXICO, SPANISH MOSS, ICE CREAM, FRENCH QUARTER, SWASH BUCKLING, GREASE PAINT, MARDI GRAS, GATEWAY ARCH

#### ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Clue Scramble***

1. MIME; 2. LOCKS; 3. TORNADO; 4. HUCKLEBERRY; 5. PORT; 6. STRANGER;
7. ROGUE; 8. PIRATE; 9. ELEVATOR

#### ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Fill-in-the-Blank***

1. HUMIDITY; 2. MUD BUG; 3. THE CITY OF THE DEAD; 4. LUMBERJACKS; 5. RED BEANS AND RICE

#### ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Matching Characters***

1. G; 2. E; 3. D; 4. C; 5. F; 6. B; 7. A

#### ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi Quiz***

1. DELTA QUEEN; 2. GREAT RIVER; 3. MARK TWAIN; 4. ALLUVIAL; 5. TO AVOID FLOODING;
6. PIRATES; 7. RUN AGROUND; 8. MUSEUM OF WESTERN EXPANSION;
9. THE SHOW ME STATE

#### ***The Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi True or False?***

1. T; 2. F–summer; 3. F–French; 4. T; 5. T; 6. F–Port means left; 7. F–fertile; 8. F–Christina;
9. T; 10. F–New Madrid, MO

