



Introduction:

**Traveling Mark Twain's
America**

Map: Mark Twain's America

Mark Twain's Gazette

"Steamboat A-Comin'!"

"The Cave"

Puzzle:

Celebrated Jumping Frog

"Expectations"

"The Flying Ponies"

Be a Spelunker

"My First Literary Venture"

Be a Writer/Inventor

Things to Make & Do

Family Fun

Game: How to Talk Western

**Glossary/
Bibliography**

It's summertime, the best of times — carefree barefoot days of mischievous fun and the joys of *jes' doin' nothin'*. Steamboats glide easy and slow, churning river waters in a seemingly endless splash and spill. Gleaming white vessels, brilliant in the sun, puff the promise of great doings ahead. It's life along the mighty Mississippi River.

The captain gives a sign. Whistles blare a hearty hoot. Planks go down for the All Aboard! And packets bulge full of the goods — tales, like you wouldn't believe:

- mysterious caves and dazzling finds;
- rafting the river — muddy, thick, and deep;
- a boy in search of manhood and a man driven by the freedom denied him in youth;
- pony riders, swift as the wind, pounding trails west;
- stagecoaches left behind in a flash of time.

This is the world of Mark Twain.

He was born Sam Clemens in 1835. As a boy in love with the river, life as a riverboat pilot was his greatest ambition and pride. Even when the Civil War ended his glorious pilot's days, he and the river were never apart. His pen name comes from the age-old cry of the riverman: MARK TWAIN! It was a measure of the river's depth; two fathoms (or 12 feet). And that meant "safe waters!"

"Go West, young man, and grow up with the country!" was the rallying cry of the 1850s and 60s. And so he did, adventuring the Wild West. His dreams of striking it rich in the Gold Rush never panned out. But he struck the "gold" of his own rich imagination with his very tall tale of a miner and a frog in Angel's Camp, California.

From his earliest newspaper days, Twain was forever the reporter, the recorder, of people, places and the times. He lived in several American and European cities. But the story he knew best, loved best, wrote best, and for which he is still best-loved, is his version of America. Come, see for yourself.

Travel Mark Twain's America.