

THE  
OKEE DOKEE  
BROTHERS



FIELD JOURNAL  
(MISSISSIPPI EDITION)

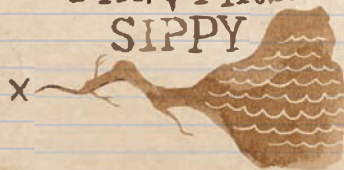
## CAN YOU CANOE?



IT HAS BEGUN! WE'RE CAMPING UP AT LAKE ITASCA RIGHT NOW. OUR TENTS ARE SET UP, THE GEAR IS READY TO GO, AND THE CANOES ARE AWAITING TOMORROW'S FIRST PUSH-OFF THROUGH THE HEADWATERS OF THE GREAT MISSISSIPPI RIVER. WE WISH WE COULD BRING ALL OF YOU WITH US AS WE PADDLE, CAMP, SING AND GENERALLY GET INTO TROUBLE. (NOW THAT YOU HAVE THE CD AND DVD, YOU'RE MORE THAN WELCOME TO JOIN US. CAN YOU CANOE?)

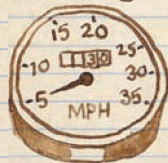
WE CAN TRAVEL AT AN AVERAGE OF 5 MILES PER HOUR IN OUR CANOES. AT THAT SPEED, WE HOPE TO COVER ABOUT THIRTY MILES EVERYDAY. PADDLING 6 HOURS EACH DAY CAN GET TIRING, SO TO KEEP OUR CANOES UPRIGHT WE ALL SING OUT OUR FAVORITE ROWING CHANT, "KEEP A-ROWIN' ME BOYS"! BESIDES KEEPING OUR BALANCE IN THE CANOE, WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO FIND A BALANCE BETWEEN THE TIME WE SPEND "A-ROWIN'", AND THE TIME WE SPEND OFF THE RIVER FILMING AND WRITING SONGS. WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

## MR. & MRS. SIPPY



THE RIVER SURE IS NARROW AT THE START. UP HERE IT SHOULD BE CALLED THE MISSISSIPPI CREEK! IT'S SO INSPIRING TO THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH THIS LITTLE STREAM HAS TO LOOK FORWARD TO. AS IT GATHERS WATER FROM TRIBUTARIES FROM ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY, IT WINDS THROUGH CITIES LIKE ST. PAUL, ST. LOUIS, MEMPHIS, NEW ORLEANS AND THEN FINALLY ENDS UP IN THE GULF OF MEXICO. WHAT A LIFE!

## HAUL AWAY JOE



WE WOKE WITH THE SUN THIS MORNING AND FOLLOWED KENNY SALWEY, THE LAST RIVER RAT, TO SEE HIS SHACK ON THE BACKWATERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI. KENNY LIVED HERE ALONE FOR 28 YEARS AS A FISHERMAN, TRAPPER AND ROOT/HERB GATHERER. VISITING HIS RIVER HOME WAS A MYSTIC EXPERIENCE, LIKE WALKING INTO A STORYBOOK. MANY OF US LIVE LIVES GREATLY REMOVED FROM NATURE. ROADS, HOTELS AND COMPUTERS SEPARATE US FROM TREES, FLOWERS AND ANIMALS. KENNY BELIEVES THAT IF WE ARE DISCONNECTED FROM THE EARTH, THEN WE ARE MISSING SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT. WE AREN'T FIGHTING THE MISSISSIPPI. WE AREN'T USING IT. WE AREN'T SEPARATE FROM IT. WE ARE FLOWING WITH IT.

WE NEED TO RESPECT ITS STRENGTH AND ALLOW IT TO CARRY US.

BUGS! THE OTHER DAY JOE SOMEHOW MANAGED TO GET COVERED IN WOOD TICKS. APPARENTLY IT'S ONE OF HIS MANY HIDDEN TALENTS. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN 25 OF 'EM! LUCKILY, WE NOTICED SOON ENOUGH TO GET HIM CLEANED OFF BEFORE GETTING BACK ON THE RIVER. ALSO, DID WE MENTION THAT EACH ONE OF US HAS AT LEAST 22 MOSQUITO BITES RIGHT NOW? I GUESS THESE MINNESOTA SKEETERS ARE ATTRACTED TO US!

## ROSITA



## CAMPIN' TENT



IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI, ON A SMALL SANDBAR, WE MADE OUR CAMP. WE WERE JUST ZIPPING UP OUR TENTS FOR THE NIGHT, AND A POWERFUL WIND SUDDENLY SWEEPED IN. IN THE SPACE OF AN INSTANT, EVERYTHING WAS CHAOS. IT WAS AS THOUGH NATURE HAD DECIDED TO THROW A ROCK CONCERT ON OUR CAMPSITE AND FORGOT TO TELL US ABOUT IT.

WE COULDN'T HEAR OVER THE THUNDER AND WIND. WE COULDN'T SEE THROUGH THE CROWD OF RAIN. WE WERE BLINDED BY LIGHTNING PYROTECHNICS. OUR TENTS WERE PULLED OUT OF THE GROUND AND BLOWN ACROSS THE

SANDBAR. IT WAS APPARENT THAT WE WERE GOING TO HAVE TO LEAVE, AND QUICK! DON'T WORRY, WE GOT TO SHORE SAFELY. NO ONE WAS HURT, BUT NATURE HAD LEFT US WITH A LESSON TO ALWAYS BE PREPARED!





WHEN SOMEONE THINKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT COMES TO MIND...TRAINS. NO? WELL THEY OUGHT'A. YOU'D BE SURPRISED TO KNOW HOW MANY TRAINS WE SEE AND HEAR CHUGGING ALONG THE RIVER. WE ENTERTAIN OURSELVES BY RACING THE TRAINS AS WE PADDLE DOWNSTREAM, BUT SOMEHOW THEY ALWAYS WIN. WHEN WE'RE SLEEPING, TRAIN WHISTLES MAKE FOR GREAT ALARM CLOCKS... EVERY 20 MINUTES.

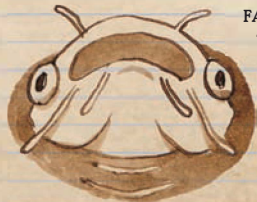
## ALONG FOR THE RIDE

REMEMBER HOW WE SAID THE BEGINNING OF THE RIVER WAS SO SMALL THAT IT SEEMED LIKE THE MISSISSIPPI CREEK?

WELL, THIS PART OF THE RIVER IS SO BIG THAT IT'S MORE LIKE THE MISSISSIPPI OCEAN! AS WE HEAD SOUTH, WE PASS THROUGH DOZENS OF RIVER TOWNS EACH DAY. IN ONE PARTICULAR TOWN WE CAME FACE-TO-FACE WITH TOM SAWYER AND BECKY THATCHER. WELL, THESE WERE ACTUALLY KIDS WHO WON A CONTEST A YEAR AGO TO BECOME THEIR TOWN'S AMBASSADORS FOR TOM AND BECKY. THEY LED US ALL AROUND TOWN AND SHOWED US ALL THEIR SECRET HIDE-OUTS. BEST TOUR GUIDES EVER!



## MUDDY RIVER



WE MET A FAMILY LAST NIGHT AT OUR CAMPSITE AND THEY STARTED TELLING US TALL TALES ABOUT THE RIVER. OUR FAVORITE ONE WAS ABOUT A THOUSAND POUND CATFISH THAT IS SO BIG THAT IT CAN SWALLOW A SCHOOL BUS WHOLE. MERE MINNOWS WILL NOT SATISFY THE HUNGER OF THIS GREAT SWIMMING BEAST. IT LIVES OFF THE TONS OF CORN SPILLED BY PASSING RIVER BARGES AND LEGEND HAS IT THAT HE'S OVER 100 YEARS OLD! CATCH THAT AND I GUARANTEE YOU'LL LOOSE THOSE FISHIN' BLUES.

WE'VE MET A LOT OF COOL PEOPLE SO FAR ON OUR TRIP. IN FACT, THERE IS A MAN FROM SCOTLAND AT OUR CAMP RIGHT NOW. HE'S CANOEING DOWN THE ENTIRE MISSISSIPPI...ALONE! WE GOTTA GO TALK TO HIM AND FIND OUT HOW MUCH HE LOVES ADVENTURE. FROM HERE, IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S DOING SOME SORT OF JIG.

## KING KONG KITCHIE KITCHIE KI-ME-O



TODAY WE STUMBLED ACROSS WHAT LOCALS CALL "PELICAN ISLAND", A STRANGE PLACE INHABITED BY BIRDS—THOUSANDS, AND THOUSANDS OF BIRDS. THE TREES ON THE ISLAND LOOK LIKE THE TRUFFULA TREES FROM DR. SEUSS BOOKS. FROM THE WATER WE SAW THEM—BLUE HERONS, EGRETS, DUCKS, AND PELICANS. GOOD THING WE BROUGHT OUR POETRY HATS ALONG, FOR IT WAS JUST AT THAT MOMENT WE REALIZED...

WHAT A WONDERFUL BIRD IS A PELICAN  
FOR ITS BEAK CAN HOLD MORE THAN ITS BELLY CAN  
AND IT CAN FLY MUCH FURTHER THAN A FELLA CAN.

## THE BOATMAN'S DANCE





## THOUSAND STAR HOTEL



TODAY WE LANDED ON AN ISLAND TO MAKE CAMP. IT WAS HOT AND WE NEEDED A PLACE TO SWIM. AFTER A LITTLE EXPLORATION, WE FOUND A ROPE SWING THAT HUNG OVER A SWIMMING HOLE. WE WOULD SWING OUT OVER THE RIVER, LET GO OF THE ROPE, AND SPLASH INTO THE COOL WATER. WE MUST HAVE PLAYED IN IT FOR HOURS. AFTER THAT, WE GOT TO SPEND MOST OF THE DAY WRITING MUSIC. ONE SONG WE MADE WAS ABOUT STAYING IN NATURE'S MOST ELEGANT HOTEL. AHHH...

WE DECIDED TO PADDLE 70 MILES ALL IN ONE DAY. YOU MAY KNOW THAT A CONVERSATION CAN GET STRANGE OVER THE COURSE OF 12 HOURS, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S WITH SOMEONE YOU'VE KNOWN SINCE YOU WERE 3 YEARS OLD. IT WENT FROM DEEP PHILOSOPHIZING TO SONG-SINGING TO INTENSE ARGUMENTS TO MORE SINGING AND THEN FINALLY TO JOKES. BUT MORE MEMORABLE THAN THE CONVERSATION WAS THE SILENCE. WE DID A LOT OF REFLECTION. THE REPETITION OF THE PADDLING MOTION BECOMES HYPNOTIZING AND KINDA COMFORTING IN A WAY. IT WAS EASY TO GET SWEEPED UP IN THE RHYTHM OF YOUR BREATHING, THE SOUND OF MOVING THROUGH THE WATER, THE MINIATURE WHIRL-POOLS LEFT IN THE WAKE, AND SHARING IT ALL WITHOUT WORDS.

## SMALL AND SIMPLE



WE PULLED OUR CANOES UP ON SHORE AND FOUND A PAINTED TURTLE LAYING HER EGGS IN THE SAND. STRETCHED ABOVE HER IN THE SKY WAS A BRIGHT RAINBOW. THE SCENE WAS SO UNBELIEVABLE. SHE LAID 15 EGGS (THAT WE WITNESSED) AND COVERED THE EGGS WITH SAND. THEN WE WATCHED HER SLIDE BACK INTO THE RIVER.

## BROTHER



BEFORE WE KNEW IT, THERE WAS ST. LOUIS AND HER GATEWAY ARCH TO THE WEST. EVEN THOUGH SEEING THE CITY AROUND THE RIVER BEND WAS AN ABSOLUTELY EUPHORIC MOMENT THAT SIGNALED QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT, THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE. A TUGGING SENSATION THAT MADE US WANT TO KEEP PADDLING. WHAT'S THE NEXT CITY? WHAT'S THE RIVER LIKE FURTHER DOWN? IS THERE ANY REASON WHY WE CAN'T JUST KEEP GOING? WITH ALL JOURNEYS LIKE THIS, YOU REALIZE THAT GETTING THERE ISN'T THE POINT. MAYBE SOMEDAY WE'LL TAKE ANOTHER TRIP, AND NOT BECAUSE WE WANT TO GET SOMEWHERE. THE DESTINATION ISN'T THE BEST PART OR EVEN THE REASON FOR GOING, IT'S JUST A PLACE TO STOP. THE RIVER ROLLS ON.

