

The Great River Road

A personal journey down the mighty Mississippi

Volume 2)

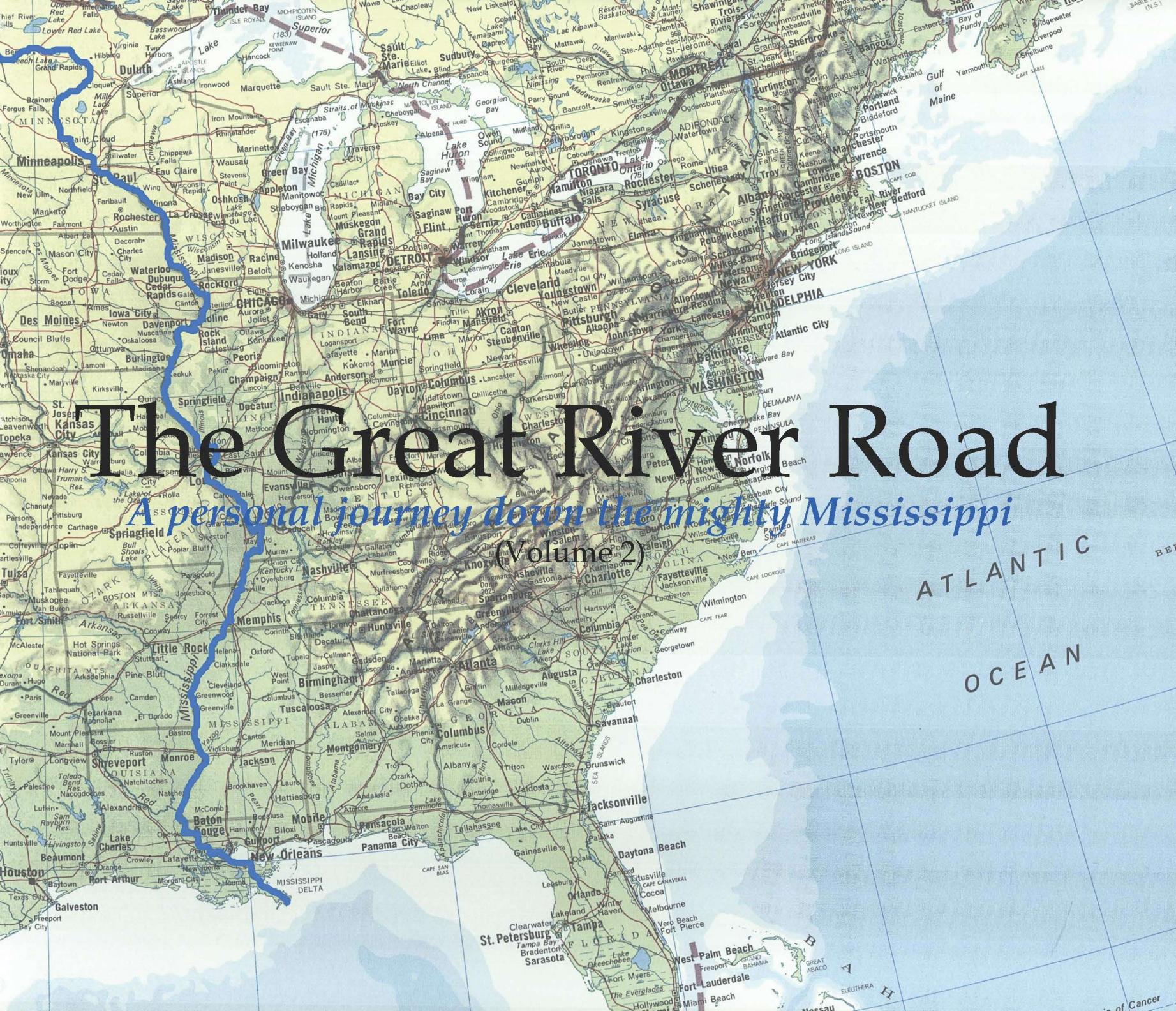


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Resources and References

Near the small town of Louisiana, Missouri I crossed over the river to the Illinois side and followed an old road through a beautiful landscape of woodland and farmland until I came to Pere Marquette State Park. Here is where the Illinois River meets the Mississippi and there was a lot of flooding still evident from the recent rains to the north. A couple of years ago I had stayed here in the old stone lodge and sat on the pier watching the towboats and barges slowly passing by. The pier was now under 8ft of water! Along this stretch of the Great River Road are spectacular views of the sheer limestone bluffs known as the "Mississippi River Palisades", rising more than 250 feet above the river. Here also is a lovely little village called Elsah with its beautiful old Victorian houses built below the steep bluffs along a small tributary flowing into the mighty river. Above the village on the top of the bluffs sits Principia College, a Christian Science institution founded in 1906, with a gorgeous campus of old red brick and white limestone buildings. Among its most notable graduates is the famous actor, Robert Duvall, class of 1953. I toured the small campus and found a spectacular view of the "Meeting of the Rivers", the place where the Missouri meets the Mississippi, with the skyline of St Louis in the distance. This is certainly a place of which only a few people are aware.

Continuing south along Illinois State Highway 100 I came to a huge complex of grain elevators, railroad depot, and barge terminal on the eastern bank of the river near the city of Alton. Several large towboats were slowly making their way upriver against a strong current that was the result of the floodwaters flowing from the north. I crossed the river again and arrived in St Louis where I was scheduled to turn in this rental car and pick up another one for the rest of the journey, since splitting the rental was much less expensive than renting one car for the entire trip, strange but true. After spending the night at the airport Marriott I drove downtown to the riverfront and the old part of St Louis, which is also the location of the spectacular Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, better known as the "Gateway Arch". The huge metal structure is a simple, but elegant design that is absolutely exquisite shining in the morning sun! Standing under the arch gives one a very unique perspective and conveys its enormous size best. Just to the north of the arch was a small pond located in such a way as to give a beautiful reflection of the arch, and apparently no one else among the large crowd had discovered it. Just below the arch the Mississippi River was flowing at a very fast pace, flooding the lower street and walkways. From the arch I walked among the many lovely old red brick buildings and cobble stone streets of old town St Louis.



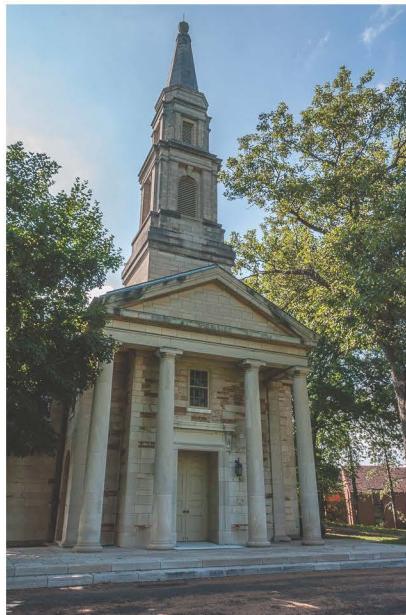
Mississippi River Palisades along Illinois State Highway 100



Gateway Arch - St Louis, Missouri



Historic house in the small village of Elsah, Illinois



Chapel at Principia College - Elsah, Illinois



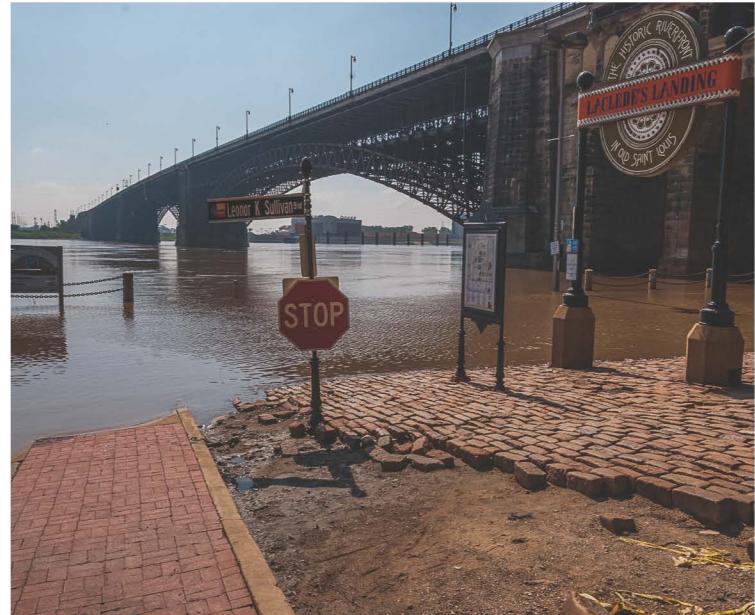
Old General store along Illinois State Highway 100



View of the "Meeting of the Rivers" from Principia College



Grain Elevators at Alton, Illinois



Waterfront of old St Louis under flood



Bridge from Alton, Illinois to St Louis, Missouri



Old St Louis



The Gateway Arch at high noon



Reflection of the Gateway Arch



Restored Sternwheel Steamboat on the Mississippi - St Louis