

Rollin' on the River

**Northbound by riverboat
from New Orleans to Memphis**

Mark Twain learned a lot on the Mississippi River and some of it hasn't changed. The river drains 41 percent of the contiguous US, and its fortunes have risen and fallen almost with the ebb and flow of the river itself.

*Watercolor impressions painted in towns
along the lower Mississippi
by Michael Killelea*



The stern-wheel of the
riverboat American Queen
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Buckner Mansion (left) in New Orleans' opulent Garden District is said to be cared for by the ghost of a former slave named Josephine.

Canal Street (below) originally separated Creole society in the French Quarter from the new raucous Americans. A canal was paid for but never built because the builder ran off with the money. Nothing's new in New Orleans.





Bawdy keel-boat crews contributed to the prosperity of Natchez, Mississippi in the 1800's, along with cotton planters and slave traders. Taverns on Silver Street (above) in Natchez-Under-the-Hill kept rougher elements away from the city's gentry living on the bluffs above.

In spite of historic preservation, both Natchez and Helena, Arkansas (below) have seen better days. Today, empty stores along Cherry Street in Helena testify to the decline of this town like many others along the river.

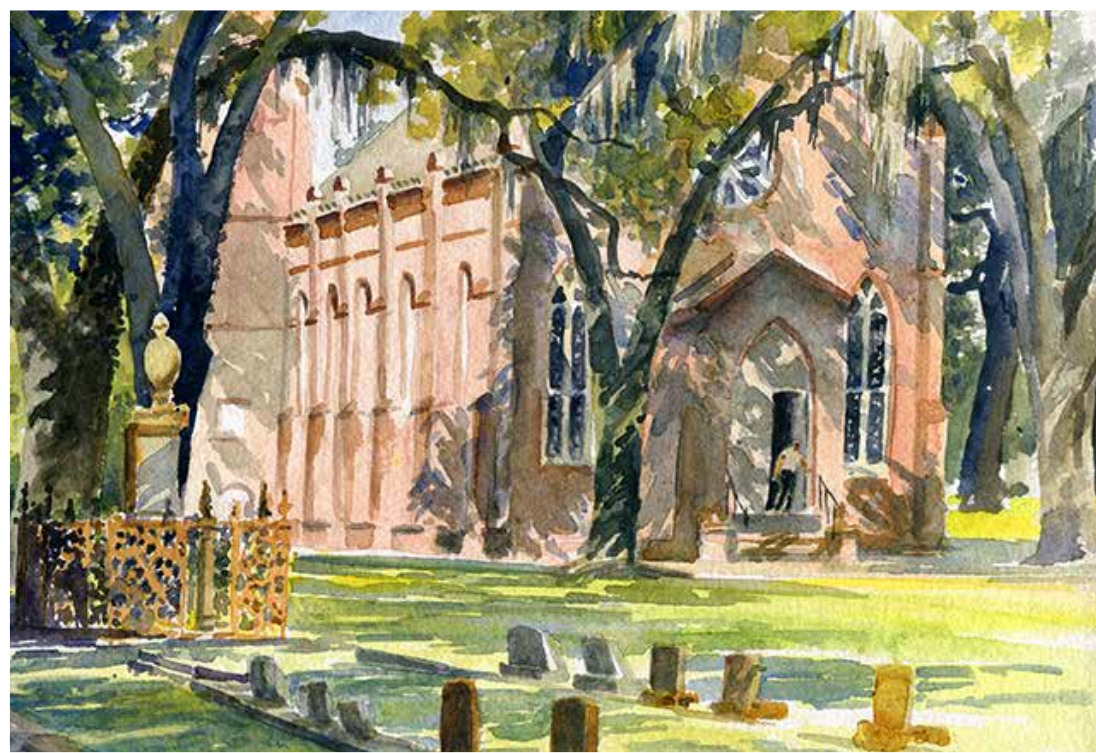




Mike Killelea takes his watercolors wherever he travels, including a graveyard in rural Louisiana.

His work can be seen at www.killeleart.com, along with weekly additions on the [Killeleart](#) page on Facebook

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The Grace Episcopal Churchyard (above) has survived Union gunboat shelling and the ravages of time. But the town it's in, St. Francisville, Louisiana, labors today to hold a place in history and a poor economy.

However, Oak Alley Plantation (below) with its 300 year old live oak trees an hour upriver from New Orleans, has become an icon for the wealthiest plantation life in the antebellum South.

