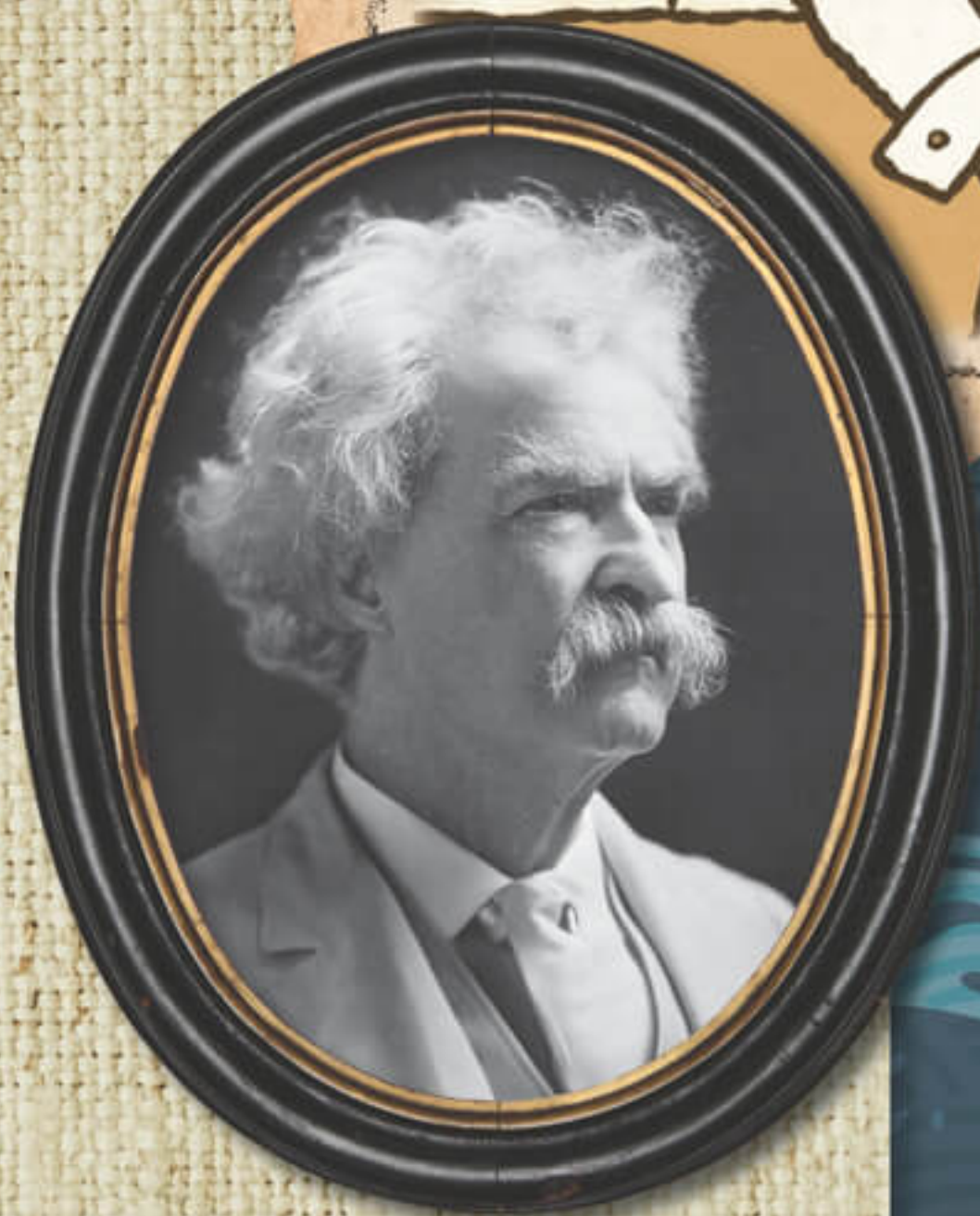


Before They Were Famous

Mark Twain



Written by Stephen Krensky
Illustrated by Bobbie Houser



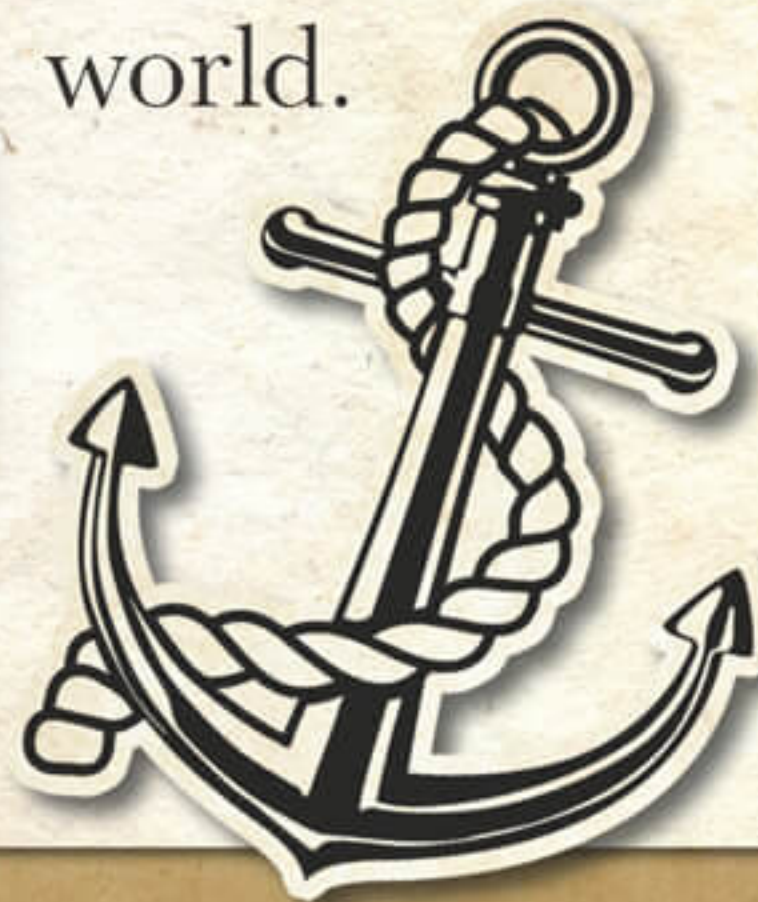
Table of Contents

Piloting a Riverboat	4
Growing Up in Hannibal	8
Home on the River.	14
Heading West.	18
Mark Twain Steps Out	22
Glossary	30
Index.	31
Comprehension Questions	31

Piloting a Riverboat

Sam Clemens was working hard — and proud of it. He was twenty years old and an **apprentice** steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River. It would take him a few years to learn his craft, but that time would be well spent.

When he was done, Sam would have the best job in the whole world.





Steamboats along the Mississippi River, 1850s.



Early Facts

Like most young men of his time, Sam Clemens never went to college.



Riverboat pilots had a lot to learn. They had to know the different **currents** that ran over the length of the river, the shape of the shoreline, and the changing depth along the river bottom.



Then there was the boat itself to understand — how to steer it and adjust the speed as necessary. On top of all that, changes in the weather meant that what a pilot did one time at a place on the river, he might not do the same way again in the future.



Early Facts

Traveling on a steamboat could be dangerous. Between 1834 and 1870, at least 100 boats sank after their **boilers** exploded. Thousands of passengers died in these disasters, including his brother Henry.

Growing Up in Hannibal

Sam had always been drawn to life on the Mississippi River. Born in 1835, he had spent his childhood along its western shore in the small town of Hannibal, Missouri. On long summer days, he and his friends spent hours roaming through the woods and fields. One of their favorite pastimes was to pretend they were pirates looking for treasure in the nearby caves.





View of Hannibal, Missouri



Sam's boyhood home.



Fun Facts

As a boy, Sam loved to read. And he was good at spelling even though going to school was not his favorite thing.