

On The Road Again # 2: To The Birthplace of Kermit!



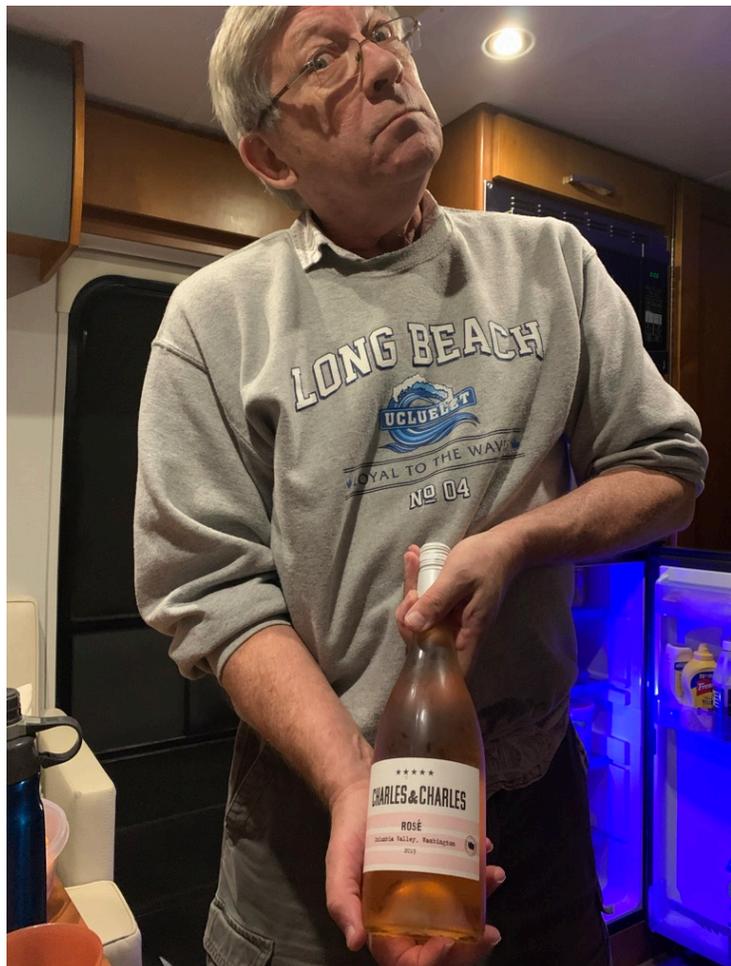
After driving around some pretty decrepit parts of Clarksdale, we decided to keep moving. We found a campground in a state park south of there, Warfield Point. It was a nice big park on the Mississippi, with lots of trees and hardly any other campers.



They had some strict rules, one of which made us feel more comfortable. One, not so much.



We quickly broke the first rule, with a very appropriately named wine. Yes, we drank Charles & Charles in Charles! (The fact that our firepit was overflowing with beer cans made us feel like we weren't likely to be charged.)



In the morning, we really felt like we were on the Mississippi. It was quite exciting to see and hear a real Mississippi paddle-wheeler chugging by.



But that wasn't the most exciting thing that would happen that day. We had discovered that, along with being the Birthplace of the Blues, Mississippi is also the Birthplace of Jim Henson! And we found out that in his hometown of Leland, there's a Jim Henson/Kermit the Frog Museum! Well, of course we had to go.

It happened that the day we arrived was the day of Leland's Santa Claus parade. We didn't stay for the parade, but we saw some of the town's Christmas decorations on the creek that ran through town. And there was a trainload of happy kids very excited about the parade. Seemed right for Jim Henson's hometown.



Just on the edge of town was the prime destination...

It was not as grand or as animated as we might have hoped. But it was still a thrill to be there.



We were welcomed by a big friendly display of Kermit, strumming his banjo in the greenery by a pond.



There was some info and photos of Jim in his youth and early part of his career. The rest was mostly Henson merchandise.



The woman who greeted us in the museum was quite surprised to find out that we knew Larry Mirkin, the producer of Fraggle Rock and that I had worked with Henson's company, if not with Henson himself. (She didn't seem to know that Fraggle was shot in Toronto – or anything about the new version produced in Alberta.)

As coincidence would have it, Fraggle Rock was playing on the screen while we were there! (Not very good quality, but Larry you'll be able to pick everyone out I'm sure.)



Perhaps not exactly a mecca for Henson fans, it was still a fun stop.

Of course, I had to buy the tee shirt. Which was available in only one colour which I assume is called "It's-Not-Easy-Being Green".



After our visit with Kermit, we continued south, heading toward the town of Natchez, Mississippi. (Did you know there was a place called Natchez Mississippi? Neither did I! Jim did because he reads mysteries set there.)

Along the way we drove through the town of Port Gibson, which had its own claim to fame. Apparently its beauty saved it from being burned by Grant and his soldiers.

As we drove through Port Gibson, we did see some stately beauty.

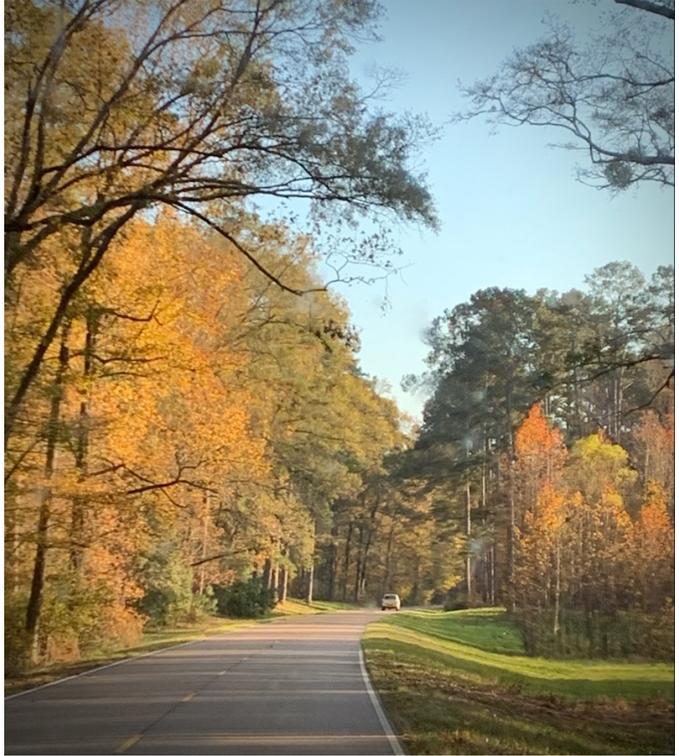
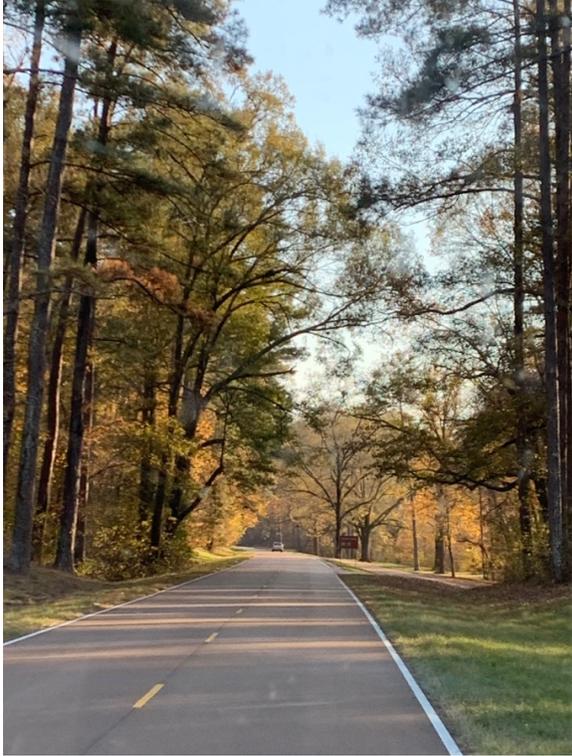


But there were also areas that might have given Grant second thoughts were he to pass through again.

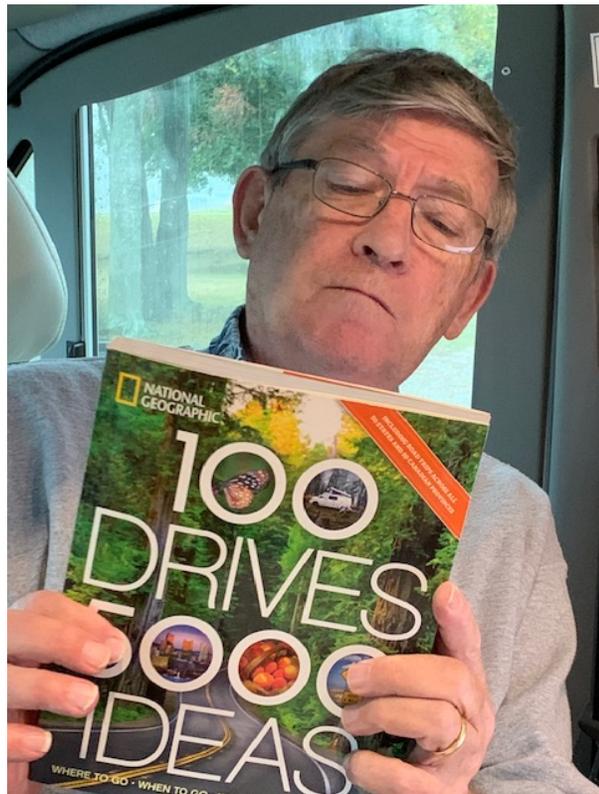


Not long after passing through Port Gibson, we veered off Hwy 61 to the Natchez Trace Trail. Another historic area about which we had known nothing, Natchez Trace Trail runs 440 miles from Nashville to Natchez Mississippi. It's a prehistoric route, first created by bison who blazed a path as they grazed, meandering between high ridges and deep valleys, avoiding steep terrain and providing a relatively level and easy northeast-southwest route. Native Americans took advantage of the path for hunting, searching for "traces" of herds. When Europeans came, they widened the path to accommodate horses and wagons and it became a major trade route. Today, it's a beautiful scenic two-lane parkway.





We discovered it thanks to a book given to us by sister-in-law Jayne MacAulay – thanks Jayne!



When we got to Natchez, Mississippi, we headed for the River View Campground. And when we crossed the bridge to get to the campground ...



Yup, it was in Vidalia, Louisiana! For the third time in four stops, we ended up in a different state than we intended to be!

It's a lovely campground, right on the Mississippi. So nice, in fact, we decided to stay for a few days. More to come about Natchez and Vidalia and the River View Campground...