Mark Twain at the Bahia 1994

The Mark Twain Circle, as planned, presented two panels at the American Literature Association Conference in San Diego, June 2-5, but additions and cancellations made the program somewhat different from that reported in the last issue of the Circular. These are the sessions as they actually occurred:

1. "Conceptualizing Mark Twain's Style" (Chair: David E. E. Scott, U of New Haven)
   - Papers:
     1. Chris Keams (Indiana U), "Divided in Twain: Detecting the Post-Colonial in "Pudd'nhead Wilson"
     2. William B. Millard (Rutgers U), "All the Poetry that you can't understand": Emersonian Strategies in the Language of Mark Twain"
     3. Joseph B. McCullough (U of Nevada, Las Vegas), "Mark Twain's First Chestnut: Revisions in "Extracts from Adam's Diary"
     4. Pamela A. Boker (Columbia U), "The glory which is built upon a lie": Mark Twain's Humor as an "American Art"
   - Respondent: Michael J. Kiskis (Elmira C)

2. "Mark Twain and Social Matters" (Chair: Victor Doyono, SUNY-Buffalo)
   - Papers:
     1. Laura Skandera-Trombley (SUNY, Potsdam), "Mark Twain's Last Work of Realism: The Ashcroft/Lyon Manuscript"
     2. Jeff Abernathy (Illinois C), "To Hell and Back: Huckleberry Finn and Racial Representation in the Twentieth Century"
   - Respondent: James S. Leonard (The Citadel)

A third Mark Twain session, "Mark Twain's Early Career: Alternative Perspectives" (Chair: Bruce Michelson, U of Illinois), not sponsored by the Circle, included the following:

1. Susan K. Harris (Pennsylvania State U), "Case Studies in Gender and Reading: Livy and Sam"
2. Tom Quirk (U of Missouri), "Intellectual Incompatibilities and Comic Incongruities: Mark Twain's Early Humor"
3. Donald Florence (U of Illinois), "Dreaming Other Dreams: Persona and Humor in Mark Twain's Early Writings."

In addition, (1) the Circle sponsored a riverboat cruise in Mission Bay (to which all conference participants were invited) for the purpose of discussing Robert Hirst of the Mark Twain Papers with a Distinguished Achievement Award; (2) Shelby Fisher Fishkin (U of Texas, Austin) led a seminar on
The Mark Twain House Annual Fall Twain Symposium
October 1, 1994

The Mark Twain House (Hartford, CT) announces that its Fall Twain Symposium on "The Power of Language" will be held on Saturday, October 1, 1994. The symposium will address the role of language in the African-American identity through the language of the arts and the effects of political correctness on the English language. It will feature a full program of literary, musical, family-oriented, scholarly, and educational programs. The symposium is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and by the Connecticut Historical Commission.

Mark Twain's Meeting with "Sociable Jimmy": New Evidence About When and Where It Took Place

At the time my book went to press, I was able to identify and obtain a range of vogue parameters concerning the time and place of the meeting in question. I suggested the manner in which the "William Athon" profiled in the History is quite likely the "Bill" described by Jimmy. The fact that the census does not list a child of Jimmy's age as residing at the hotel is not significant, since Jimmy would have been only eight or nine years old when the 1870 census was conducted, and may have not started working at the hotel until he was older.

The census data and the history of Edgartown were supplied in January 1984 by Linda Cary, volunteer librarian of the Edgartown Genealogy Library in Edgartown, Massachusetts. The book was written in response to an inquiry from a newspaper publisher in Edgartown, Massachusetts, Associate Editor of the Mark Twain Papers, who generously shared these materials with me.

Shelley Fisher Fishkin
University of Texas, Austin

---

Mark Twain for Breakfast at MLA 1994: Call for Papers

At the annual Modern Language Association conference for 1994, the Mark Twain Circle will sponsor a call for papers. Submissions on Twain's life and work are invited. There are two available slots: December 27, 9:00-10:00 a.m., and December 29, 9:00-10:00 a.m. Please send 1-2 page abstracts to: Laura Skandera-Trombley, Executive Director, Mark Twain Circle, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676.

---

"Teaching Huckleberry Finn," (3) Victor Dorno (SUNY, Buffalo) presented a paper titled "Discoveries in the New Huck Manuscript" in a session titled "Genesis, Composition, and Interpretation" (chaired by Tom Quirk); (4) Jeffrey Melon (Austin, U., Montgomery), gave a paper titled "Same Trip, Different Holy Lands: About the Quaker City with Mark Twain and Mrs. Stephen M. Griswold," and Lawrence E. Berkove gave a paper titled "A Comstocker Abroad: Joe Goodman's European Travel Letters" in a session titled "Nineteenth-Century American Travel Writers." At the business meeting of the Circle, a change of officers was effected. David E. Stavans ended his successful third term as President—marked by further expansions of Mark Twain activities, as demonstrated by the high visibility of Twain scholarship and dissemination of the Circle's newsletters, and by new initiatives such as the efforts to gain greater participation by high-school teachers. Victor Dorno completed his term as Vice President and succeeded in his first term as President. Michael Kiskis completed his three-year term in the arduous job of Executive Director and moved to the post of Vice President. Laura Skandera-Trombley, after a year as "obx" to the Executive Director, succeeded to that position. Jennifer Rafferty joined the Executive Committee succeeding Shelley Fisher Fishkin, and David E. Stavans succeeded Pascal Covici on the Committee.

---

James S. Leonard
Editor, MT Circular
Cincinnati Hears 50th Anniversary Performance of Jerome Kern’s Orchestral Portrait of Mark Twain

Cincinnati’s Music Hall, which witnessed the world premiere of Jerome Kern’s “Mark Twain: Portrait for Orchestra” in 1942, was recently the setting for a fiftieth anniversary performance, tabulated to include a spoken text, drawn from Twain’s writings.

In the days following America’s entry into World War II, Alan Kostelanetz, then conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony, after consideration of what he called “the manner in which music could be employed to mirror the magnificent spirit of the country” (Program 4) commissioned three composers to write pieces based on notable American figures. Aaron Copland chose Abraham Lincoln; Virgil Thomson selected New York’s Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia; Jerome Kern’s choice was Mark Twain. The three pieces were played for the first time in the symphony’s concert of May 14, 1942. Perhaps in an attempt to ensure a good house—and certainly a more varied program—Kostelanetz also scheduled several operatic arias to be sung by his wife, the well-known soprano Lily Pons. Thus Verdi’s “Caro Nome,” arias from Lucia di Lammermoor, and songs by Darius Milhaud and Wolfgang A. Mozart were heard along with the new works by Kern, Copland, and Thomson.

To assist the audience in understanding this new composition, Jerome Kern prepared program notes indentifying and explaining the four sections of the work: “Hannibal Days,” “The Gorgeous Pilot House,” “Wanderings Westward,” and “Mark in Eruption.” Apparently Kern had recently read Bernard DeVoto’s Mark Twain in Eruption, since the titles of the first and last sections are taken from it.

Kern’s note for the opening section included a passage from the fourth chapter of Life on the Mississippi describing the effect of an arriving steamboat on the town of Hannibal but attributing the cry of “S-t-e-o-a-mboat a-comin’!” to “voice (Mark Twain’s, the young boy) rather than to the Negro dryman, famous for his quick eye and prodigious voice” described in the book (Program 5). Annotating the second section, Kern pointed out how its music depicts not only Twain’s years on the Mississippi but also “runnings of the Civil War, and then the war itself—the spirited marching and gay singing of the Confederate soldiers.” A “triumphal trombone solo” described as “the ballyhoo man or miner” introduces the third section. The final section drew only brief comment: “Once established, Mark Twain’s career was triumphant to the end. However, the recapitulation of the River theme and the Gorgeous Pilot House illustrates that his nostalgia for both river and pilot’s life never left him” (5). Although the program included sixteen different themes portraying “highlights in Twain’s career” (Brownell 2), these were not identified in the program notes.

When Kostelanetz conducted the Kern piece on a nationwide CBS broadcast, Sunday afternoon, June 7, 1942, the composer, best known for his 1920s Show Boat score (including “Old Man River,” “Billie,” and “Can’t Help Lovin’ That Man of Mine”), provided oral program notes, beginning with an explanation for his choice of subjects:

When Andre Kostelanetz asked me to write a musical portrait of a great American, I said, “Which one?” He answered, “Pick your own.” I suggested Mark Twain, pretending that I had thought of him on the spur of the moment. Andre said, “Splendid.” So there we were. It just had to be Mark Twain. It was hard to resist, but Mark’s Huckleberry Finn was the first book I ever read. It was first issued in 1858—so was 1” (Brownell, 2).

Kern then gave his readers a brief description of the piece’s four sections, with a much shorter quotation from Life on the Mississippi which offered the suggestion of its being a black voice which regularly proclaimed the imminent arrival of a steamboat (3). Kern spoke of the final section as portraying “the triumph of the career of an honored, beloved great American man of letters” and added, “If you can’t remember all that, just keeping of Tom Sawyer and Huckle Finn—that’s always a good idea anyway” (3).

Kern’s orchestral portrait of Twain was recorded by Andre Kostelanetz and His Orchestra for Columbia Records in 1942, and resulted in Kern’s being given an honorary charter membership in the Mark Twain Association of America, but over the years it was largely forgotten. The principal studies of Kern’s work give it short shrift; Gerald Bordman, for example, described it as a “diffuse, meandering work, lacking even Kern’s usual melodic invention.” It created, he said, “few ripples and was soon forgotten” (391). A 1971 fate overtook Thomson’s “Mayor LaGuardia Waltzes,” while Copland’s “Lincoln Portrait” went on to be performed again and again.

In May of 1977 the present conductor of the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, Erich Kunzel, recorded a slightly abridged version of the “Mark Twain: Portrait for Orchestra” as part of a Vox Turnabout album entitled American Fantasia. As the fiftieth anniversary of the Kern piece approached, Maestro Kunzel planned to have his orchestra repeat it but, perhaps mindful of the value of the spoken portion of Copland’s “Lincoln Portrait”—he decided to include a spoken text. Originally scheduled for fall 1992, the piece was actually played in the concerts of January 17-18, 1993, in Music Hall, Cincinnati. Although Maestro Kunzel’s original plan was to have the text read by a professional actor, scheduling proved difficult, and he read the text himself while an assistant conducted the orchestra. This time the Kern work was balanced, not by Lily Pons, but by the Kingston Trio.

The spoken text, which I provided at Maestro Kunzel’s request, consisted of a brief sketch of Twain’s life, passages from Life on the Mississippi for the first two sections, a passage from Roughing It for the third, and for the final section, statements from Ernest Hemingway and William Dean Howells about Mark Twain and a series of Twain epigrams, drawn from Pudd’nhead Wilson and Following the Equator.

For contemporary tastes Kern’s music is surely all too tame; the “Wanderings Westward” section fails to provide any sense of the kind of raucous, uproarious behavior which characterized those years. The final section, despite the title “Mark in Eruption,” contains no eruption; it lacks entirely the disorder and clashing harmonies which our present-day knowledge of Twain might call for, though one must surely say that had Kostelanetz wanted such a piece, he would have asked someone other than Jerome Kern to compose it. Kern’s program notes for the final section, quoted above, indicate all too well his oversimplified view of the greater part of Twain’s life. Just as Norman Rockwell’s illustrations for Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn pictured a happier, brighter world than that depicted in the novels themselves, Jerome Kern’s music presented the familiar, popular side of Mark Twain in an idiom more calculated to please an early 1940’s audience which wanted to be reminded of America’s greatness than to portray more accurately the contrariness, the self-centered, satirical nature, and the torment of America’s greatest humorist.

WORKS CITED


Program, Cincinnati Symphony, May 14, 1942.

Allison Ensor
University of Tennessee

Sam Clemens Strikes It Rich

A 53-year-old salesman who faithfully kept score of animated beer bottles playing football during Super Bowl XIX received $1 million Thursday as the grand-prize winner in Budweiser’s “Bud Bowl V” sweepstakes.

While neighbors gawked and television cameras rolled, a Brinks armored truck led by a Fountain Valley police car with its siren blaring, turned onto Sam Clemens’ quiet cul-de-sac and delivered the cash. As stacks and stacks of $50 and $100 bills carried by serious-looking men with guns. Rather than present Clemens with a check and a hand shake, the Anheuser-Busch Inc. arranged to pay off the prize in cash in an elaborate public stunt. The beer company withdrew the money from a bank, hired an armored car and off-duty, plain-clothes Los Angeles police officers for extra security and asked Fountain Valley police to provide an escort.
As the convoy entered Tulipan Circle, longtime neighbor Jean Williams, who thought she was going to see Clemens and his wife, Joanne, receive a simple check, exclaimed, "A Briar!" Most likely a trucker's good luck charm.”

“That’s hype for you,” added her husband, John.

Two armed guards pulled out four sacks of money from the back of the Clemens’ driveway. One sack was opened and bundled stacks of money were shown to the Clemens and a sworn of about 45 other people, including reporter, TV crews, company representatives and neighbors.

“Community property,” shouted Joanne Clemens as she held up a bundle of her husband’s winnings.

Her husband rifled through several stacks of bound cash. “Fifty thousand dollars. OK, it’s all in the bank,” he quipped.

Sam Clemens, who markets new inventions to area companies for the National Idea Center in Washington, is a distant cousin of writer Mark Twain. His parents live on the banks of the Missouri River, he said.

So far, he and his wife have no definite plans for the money beyond traveling a little and replacing a 1987 Chevrolet with 207,000 miles on it.

"Kind of put a little money away for a rainy day and retirement," Sam Clemens said.

"No commitment is on the horizon, though. "I think I’d get tired of living on the beach every day," he said.

Joanne Clemens said she will continue teaching kindergarten at Moffett School in Huntington Beach through the next school year. After that, she said, she will become a part-time substitute teacher so she can enjoy a life of travel and leisure.

Once the last photograph was shot and the TV cameras were turned off, the armored Brinks truck pumped the money to the armored truck and drove off. The $1 million would be placed in the Clemens’ bank account via wire transfer.

By picking up the Heisman Bowl game card from an AM-PM Mini Mart, Clemens also won another $1 million from Atlantic Richfield Co. That million will be awarded through payments of $50,000 a year for 20 years.

As the ceremony was wrapping up, neighbor John Ross, 31, continued watching from the sidewalk across the street. “It looks like he’ll make it through the recession OK,” he said.

Tom McQueeney
Los Angeles Times

[Thanks to Harold Aspil (Long Beach, CA) for sharing the above article from the “Orange County Register” section of the Los Angeles Times (Friday, Feb. 26, 1993). Note: The Sam Clemens in this story is the son of Cyril Clemens, founder of the Mark Twain Journal.]

Mark Twain Bibliography

The name of our group, the Mark Twain Circle, suggests to me mutuality, fellowship. I am sure that all members of the Circle will join me in honoring and celebrating J. R. LeMaster and James D. Wilson for the informative and enjoyable encyclopedia they have given us. I am grateful to have been included as a contributor. It is now in the spirit of mutuality that I am responding with some suggestions for additions to the bibliographies at the end of most entries. Perhaps fellow Circlers want to copy the list that follows and stick it into their copy of that good book. Perhaps other Circlers will want to make further contributions--perhaps to MY entries?

Additions to Bibliographies in The Mark Twain Encyclopedia:


DATES TO CIRCLE


December 27-30, 1994. Modern Language Association annual conference, New York, NY, including Mark Twain Circle sessions, cocktail hour sessions, and breakfasts with Mark Twain.

May 26-28, 1995. ALA Conference on American Literature, Baltimore, MD. Conference Director: Gloria Cronin, English Dept., Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; fax number: (801) 373-4661; internet: cronin@jkbhbrj.byu.EDU.

ABOUT MARK TWAIN

Abbreviations used in this bibliographical series are listed in the January-March 1992 Mark Twain Circular. In addition, a combination of year, letter, and number refers to an entry in my Mark Twain: A Reference Guide (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1977), and ALR refers to one of its supplement issues in the journal American Literary Realism. Readers wishing to keep up to date on Twain scholarship may also want to consult the list of other recommended bibliographical sources in the January-March 1992 Circular.

Thomas A. Tenney
(Editor, MT Journal)


KERSTEN, HOLGER. Von Hannibal nach Heidelberg: Mark Twain und die Deutschen. Eine Studie zur literarischen und soziokulturellen Quellen eines Deutschlandbildes. (From Hannibal to Heidelberg: Mark Twain and the Germans. A Study in Literary and Sociocultural Sources of a View of Germany.) Kieler Beiträge zur Anglistik und Americanistik, Bd. 4. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1993. Originally presented as a dissertation at Universität Kiel, this exhaustive study superseded everything previously written on the subject of Mark Twain and Germany from Schoenemann, Hemmingshaus, and Krumpelman to the present. With thorough research both in the MTP in Berkeley and in his native Germany, Kersten neglects nothing in tracing the cumulative development of Clemens's interest in and knowledge of Germany, its people, and its language from his childhood experiences with immigrants in Hannibal through his days in the Far West (especially in San Francisco), in Buffalo and Hartford, and finally in his two long periods of residence in Bismarck's Reich itself. Since too few American scholar read German these days, this book should be translated and published in this country without delay. [Carl Dolmetsch]

NICKELS, CAMERON. New England Humor from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1993. This solidly researched and valuable study will interest Twain scholars and extend our understanding of the traditions in which he wrote, including newspaper and magazine humor. While the emphasis is on the period up to the Civil War, there are occasional mentions of parallels (indexed), and Nickels has much to say on MT in his "Bibliographic Essay," concluding that "now that we know more about New England Humor, something meaningful can be written on its place in the humor of Mark Twain, especially CT, which may well mark the 'end' of the New England tradition of native American humor."

SCHRANSTORST, GARY. Bret Harte: New York: Twayne, 1993. This clear and well-researched study of Harte's life and works provides a corrective to the portrait sketched by MT, who is mentioned passim (indexed), but only incidentally.

ZWICK, JIM. "An American Anti-Imperialist: Mark Twain on the Philippine-American War." Filipinos: A Magazine for All Filipinos (San Francisco; copy deposited at Elmira College) No. 5 (September 1993): 50-54. On MT's membership in the Anti-Imperialist League and his opposition to the atrocities inflicted by American troops, with photographs of slaughtered Filipinos. In "To the Person Sitting in Darkness"... MT wrote that a reader will say: "Good God, those niggers spare their wounded, and the Americans massacre theirs!" In another essay he said: "Do not wince at the word. I note that many of our people out there use it to describe the Filipino." An American soldier wrote home in 1899: "Our fighting blood was up and we all wanted to kill 'niggers',... this shooting human beings beats rabbit hunting all to pieces.'
ABOUT THE CIRCULAR. The Mark Twain Circular was launched in January 1987 by Thomas A. Tenney (Editor of the Mark Twain Journal), who edited the first issue, and then passed the Circular baton to the present editor. An individual who pays dues to the Mark Twain Circle and/or subscribes to the Mark Twain Journal receives one subscription (four issues per year) to the Circular.

ABOUT THE CIRCLE. The Mark Twain Circle of America was formed at an organizational meeting held at the December 1986 Modern Language Association convention in New York. The membership has since grown to approximately 400. Current officers are: President—Victor Doyon; Vice-President—Michael J. Kiskis; Executive Director—Laura Skandra-Trombley; Executive Committee—David E. Slocane, Susan K. Harris, and Jennifer Rafferty. Past Presidents: Louis J. Budd, Alan Gribben, Pascal Cavoli, Jr., David E. Slocane. Past Executive Directors: Everett Emerson, James D. Wilson, Michael J. Kiskis. Although many members are academic specialists, the Circle also includes many non-academic Twain enthusiasts. The Circle is in communication with other Mark Twain organizations, including those associated with sites important in his life, and cooperates with them.

ABOUT THE JOURNAL. Founded in 1936 by Cyril Clemens, the Mark Twain Journal is the oldest American magazine devoted to a single author. In 1982 Mr. Clemens retired, and the Journal moved to its present home in Charleston, S.C., under the editorship of Thomas A. Tenney. There are two issues per year, Spring and Fall, with a new volume each year (rather than every second year, as in the past). The Journal tends to appear late, and begins your patient indulgence. Subscribers may wish to begin with the 1992 issues (to be mailed in summer 1994) rather than the 1994. Although the Mark Twain Circle and the Mark Twain Journal are separate entities, Circle members enjoy a reduced subscription rate for the Journal (see coupon below for prices). Most back issues from 13:1 to the present are available at $2.50 to $3.00 each, postpaid ($2.50 on orders for ten or more; pre-1983 issues are thinner than modern ones, and some are badly reprinted). An index 1936-83 counts as a back issue.

To: Mark Twain Journal
Box 1834
Charleston, SC 29402

Via: Thomas A. Tenney, 324 West Main Street
Charleston, SC 29403

Please enroll me as a member of the Mark TWAIN CIRCLE OF AMERICA and subscriber to the Mark TWAIN CIRCULAR. I enclose a check for $10.00 ($11.00 if you include an S.U.S. address) made out to "Mark Twain Circle of America.

To: Mark Twain Journal
Box 1834
Charleston, SC 29402


I am not a member of the Mark Twain Circle. Subscription rates are $10 for one year, $18 for two years, $27 for three years, or $50 for four years.

I am a member of the Mark Twain Circle, or about to join. Subscription rates are $10 for one year, $18 for two years, $25 for three years, or $30 for four years.

Order your copy of Was Huck Black? today!

Please return this form with credit card information, check, or money order to Oxford University Press, Dept. KWI, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

PAINMENT INFORMATION

Q Enclosed in check or money order for $10.00 made out to Oxford University Press

Q Charge my credit card as follows:

Q VISA Q MasterCard Q American Express

Acct.
Name
Exp. Date
Signature

Please send me _copy(copies) of Was Huck Black? at $10.00 per copy, ISBN 0-19-507181-8. (NC and CA residents must add sales tax.)

SHIP TO:
Name
Address

City/State/Zip

Q Libraries: $18.00/year, no discount
Q Foreign: Add $2.00/year for postage

(printed name)

(printed name)
LIBRARIANS: Please note in your computer that the Mark Twain Circular provides publication information on the Mark Twain Journal. This may help reduce avoidable claims.

FULFILLMENT NOTICE: Both 1991 issues of the Mark Twain Journal (29-1, Spring and 29-2, Fall) were mailed to subscribers on June 30, 1993. We will mail both 1992 issues (30-1, Spring and 30-2, Fall) in summer 1994.

SERIAL LIBRARIANS: The Mark Twain Circular is entered selectively in the annual bibliographies of the Modern Language Association and the Modern Humanities Research Association, and in the American Humanities Index, the Literary Criticism Register, American Literary Scholarship, and "A Checklist of Scholarship on Southern Literature," which appears annually in the Mississippi Quarterly (Spring issues).

Publication of the Mark Twain Circular is funded in part through a grant from the Citadel Development Foundation.

James S. Leonard, Editor
Mark Twain Circular
English Department
The Citadel
Charleston, SC 29409
leonardj@citadel.edu
leonardj@citadel.edu
Ph: 803-953-5138
Fax: 803-953-7084