



Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

Volume 15

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Number 1

Mark Twain at ALA 2001

This year's American Literature Association Annual Conference will be held in Cambridge, MA. The Mark Twain Circle will sponsor a plenary session, a panel, and a business meeting.

Plenary Session: *Mark Twain Whither Thou Goest?*

Chair: Michael J. Kiskis, Elmira College

Participants:

- Laura Skandera-Trombley, Coe College
- John Bird, Winthrop University
- Ann Ryan, LeMoyne College
- Gary Scharnhorst, University of New Mexico
- Tom Quirk, University of Missouri

Panel: *Distance lends enchantment to the view." Uncovering Mark Twain*

Chair: Tom Quirk, University of Missouri

Papers:

- Louis J. Budd (Duke University), "Mark Twain Sounds Off on the Fourth of July"
- Neil Schmitz (SUNY, Buffalo), "Mark Twain, Traitor"
- Paul Sorrentino (Virginia Tech), "Mark Twain's 1902 Visit to Missouri"
- Gerry Brenner (University of Montana), "Through Another Looking-Glass: The Complex (Self-)Satires of Twain's 'A Fable.'"

Mark Twain at MLA 2001 Call for Papers

Laura Skandera-Trombley, President of the Mark Twain Circle, has issued a call for papers for the Modern Language Association Annual Conference, which will be held in New Orleans, Dec. 27-30, 2001. Topics:

- *Theorizing Mark Twain; A Critical Look at Twain Biography*
- *Twain for the New Millennium*

Send proposals or papers suitable for 20-minute presentation to:

Laura Skandera-Trombley
Dean of the Faculty
Coe College
1220 First Avenue NE
Cedar Rapids IA 52402
lskander@coe.edu

Deadline: April 1.

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Mark Twain at SAMLA 2001

Philip Leon
The Citadel

The South Atlantic Modern Language Association will hold its annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, 9-11 November 2001, and, as usual, the Mark Twain Circle will host a session as one of the more popular affiliated groups. With the following Call for Papers, I invite complete papers or detailed abstracts, due no later than 20 April 2001. Topic:

Mark Twain's Detractors And Defenders

Beneath this broad topic might appear papers dealing with Mark Twain's personal and/or his professional life. A typical paper for this session might present interesting details about MT's friendship with, for example, Henry Huttleston Rogers of Standard Oil, who provided financial advice following MT's bankruptcy. Another paper might present new information about MT's friendship with non-literary figures such as Ulysses S. Grant.

MT also had his detractors. Examples include his bitter feud with former friend Bret Harte, or the vilification MT received in the national press over his involvement with the anti-imperialism movement at the turn of the century.

If you are pursuing a research question that might fit this general topic, you may want to consult Paul Machlis' *Union Catalog of Clemens Letters* (1986) and his *Union Catalog of Letters to Clemens* (1992). This also would be a good starting point to discover little-known but interesting personalities with whom MT corresponded.

If you have a special MT project that does not quite fit the Call for Papers topic, please send it along, and perhaps we will be able to fine-tune the program to accommodate your paper. I look forward to hearing from you. Philip W. Leon, Prof. of English, The Citadel, 171 Moultrie Street, Charleston, SC 29409-6310.

Mark Twain Writing Competition

"A Murder, a Mystery, and a Marriage"

[The following is drawn from the Buffalo-Erie County Public Library web site.]

In a turn of events that Twain himself certainly would have appreciated, *The Atlantic Monthly*, one of the most well-respected national literary magazines, has obtained the publishing rights to the "A Murder, A Mystery, and A Marriage" short story – more than 125 years after Twain had originally approached then-editor William Dean Howells!

Judging from the overwhelming response received in recent months from Twain enthusiasts nationwide, the B&ECPL realized the tremendous interest the contest would generate when fully publicized and undertaken. In order to maximize this potential, the B&ECPL initiated the process of acquiring the print rights to "A Murder, A Mystery, and A Marriage." The Library was successful in its efforts and was granted these rights in December 2000.

The B&ECPL began negotiating with several large publishing firms in order to establish a partnership and connect large-scale promotion of the competition with the short story's future publication. Twain could not have conceived of a more fitting ending when *The Atlantic Monthly* agreed to purchase the rights to the short story. Competition participants will have the chance to read Twain's ending when the magazine publishes the full story and related correspondence in its July issue hitting newsstands on June 15th. "A Murder, A Mystery, and A Marriage" will also be published as a hardcover book by W.W. Norton & Company this fall.

These publications will further stimulate interest and excitement in the Mark Twain Writing Competition!

History

In 1876, Mark Twain composed his only unpublished short story, "A Murder, a Mystery, and a Marriage." During that same year, Twain sent the story to William Dean Howells, editor of *Atlantic Monthly*, with the idea that several leading authors of the day would develop the plot described in his work into their own story, each of which would be published thereafter in the magazine. For reasons which are somewhat mysterious, the plan never materialized and Twain's story was never published.

More than 100 years later, the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, home of the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* manuscript and other writings of Mark Twain, will carry out Twain's original intent. The "A Murder, a Mystery, and a Marriage" Writing Competition will conclude with the official release of the CD-ROM edition of the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* manuscript complete with historical and scholarly information.

Competition Details

Contestants will be asked to compose their own conclusion to this unpublished short story by one of America's most revered authors. This national competition will award cash prizes based on several categories to participants who develop the material introduced by Twain into the most effective and interesting plot resolution. Panels of judges for the different categories will include Twain experts and national writers as well as local community figures.

The partial text of the short story, as well as guidelines, entry forms and other contest information, will be posted on the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library's web site:

<<http://www.buffalolib.org/twain.html>>.

If you would like to receive all competition updates and information through email, please send your request to savignya@buffalolib.org.

Current Mark Twain Bibliography

James S. Leonard
The Citadel

Current Mark Twain Bibliography is a means of giving notice of what's new in Mark Twain scholarship. Where annotations are used, they are in most cases descriptive blurbs provided by publishers (or in some cases, by authors) with value judgments edited out. If you have recently published something that you would like to have included in this list, send it to me by e-mail (leonardj@citadel.edu), or by other means.

Books

Fulton, Joe B. *Mark Twain in the Margins: The Quarry Farm Marginalia and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. University of Alabama Press, 2000. 205 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 0-8173-1033-9. The common characterization of Mark Twain as an uneducated and improvisational writer took hold largely because of the novelist's own frequent claims about his writing practices. But using recently discovered evidence Twain's marginal notes in books he consulted as he worked on *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* Joe Fulton argues for a reconsideration of scholarly views about Twain's writing process, showing that this great American author crafted his novels with careful research and calculated design. Fulton's transcriptions of marginalia and underlinings found in books in the Quarry Farm library comprise about half of this book. [Text drawn from dust jacket and Mark Twain Forum book notice.]

Griffith, Clark. *Achilles and the Tortoise: Mark Twain's Fictions*. Tuscaloosa:

University of Alabama Press, 1998. Pp. iv + 272. Notes, bibliography, index. Cloth. \$34.95. ISBN 0-8173-0903-9. [Reviewed for the *Mark Twain Forum* on October 14, 1999 by Kim Martin Long.]

Obenzinger, Hilton. *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. Pp. xxi + 309. Bibliographical notes and index. Paperback. \$18.95. ISBN 0-691-00973-2. [Reviewed for the *Mark Twain Forum* on July 20, 2000 by Barbara Schmidt.]

Twain, Mark. *Huck Finn; Pudd'nhead Wilson; No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger; and Other Writings.* Ed. Guy Cardwell and Louis J. Budd. Library of America College Editions. 808 pp. Paperback. ISBN 1-883011-88-4. \$12.95. Contains *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn; Pudd'nhead Wilson; No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*; "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog"; "The Facts Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut"; "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed"; "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences"; "How To Tell a Story"; "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg"; "To the Person Sitting in Darkness"; "The United States of Lyncherdom"; "Corn-Pone Opinions"; "The War Prayer"; "The Turning Point of My Life."

Wieck, Carl F. *Refiguring Huckleberry Finn.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000. Cloth. \$40.00. ISBN 0-8203-2238-5. *Refiguring Huckleberry Finn* looks at ways contemporary American culture and history influenced the formation of Mark Twain's master-

work. It also shows how the novel reflects Twain's deep investment in what Wieck calls "an open-minded, unbiased perception of the well-springs of the American spirit."

Clearly, Twain knew the Mississippi River and its people well. With Frederick Douglass, William Dean Howells, Ulysses S. Grant, and John Hay (Abraham Lincoln's personal secretary) among his friends, Twain also knew America. That understanding, Wieck shows us, is richly evident in *Huckleberry Finn* by the ways Twain explored themes of justice, rights, knowledge, and truth; engaged with the thoughts of Douglass, Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson; and expressed concern over the public discourse on race and equality.

In addition, in discussions that range from number play in the novel to the symbolic potential of the Mississippi's awesome, one-way flow, Wieck looks closely at Twain's storytelling craft. [Text drawn from jacket.]

Articles

Budd, Louis J. "A Supplement to 'A Chronology' in *Mark Twain Speaking.*" *Essays in Arts and Sciences* 29 (Oct. 2000): 57–68.

Csicsila, Joseph. "Mark Twain as He Is Taught: Critical Trends and American Literature Anthologies, 1919–1999." *Essays in Arts and Sciences* 29 (Oct. 2000): 69–92.

Pepper, Robert D. "Ned Buntline's Corner." *Dime Novel Round-up* (Aug. 2000): 134–36. Facsimile, transcription, and discussion of note, dated December 24, 1884, from E.Z.C. Judson ("Ned Buntline") to Mark Twain.

Dates to Circle

- **May 24-27, 2001.** American Literature Association Annual Conference. Cambridge, MA.
- **August 16-18, 2001.** "Elmira 2001: The 4th International Conference on The State of Mark Twain Studies." Elmira, NY.
- **December 27-30, 2001.** Modern Language Association Annual Conference. New Orleans, LA.

Audiotapes

Hirst, Robert H. *Mark Twain in the West. Tape 3, History of Early California.* The Bancroft Library. In 1861, Sam Clemens traveled by stagecoach from his home state of Missouri to the deserts of Nevada. At the time he was a licensed Mississippi pilot, temporarily out of work because of the Civil War. He surely did not think of himself as a writer, much less a humorist. Those professions simply could not compare, in his mind, with the rank and dignity of piloting. But it was to be in Nevada and later in California that he was transformed into a writer, reluctantly embracing his own extra-ordinary talent, what he referred to at the time as his "call to literature, of a low order" (i.e., humorous.)

In two lectures, "Those Were the Days!" and "Heaven on the Half-Shell," Robert Hirst tells the story of how Clemens came to the West, what he did there, and why he stayed longer than he planned, eventually adopting the name "Mark

Twain" to sign his letters to the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*.

The files of that newspaper are largely lost, but Hirst reads from dozens of little-known text survivors, including "Petrified Man," which have been recovered from scrapbooks and other sources by the editors of the Mark Twain Project.

When Mark Twain moved to San Francisco in 1864 he wrote for several journals, but again most of what he wrote has been lost, despite the brilliance of what survives. From these survivors Hirst reads "Ministerial Change" and "Explanation of a Mysterious Sentence," among others. And he concludes with one of Mark Twain's minor masterpieces, "Baker's Blue Jay Yarn," which illustrates the long-lasting effect of the West on Mark Twain's best work. [Text from brochure accompanying the audiotape.]

The State of Mark Twain Studies

Elmira 2001 will feature a variety of panels and seminars devoted to advancing research and teaching in the field, as well as a number of social interludes that will provide opportunities for informal exchanges and conversations about Mark Twain. Special events include a Finger Lakes Wine Tasting, a Mark Twain Movie Poster Exhibit, a preview of Ken Burns' Mark Twain biography, fine dining, a party at Quarry Farm, and much more...

Special Guests:

Florentine Films

Panel Chairs:

Lawrence Berkove, University of Michigan-Dearborn
John Bird, Winthrop University
Horst Kruse, Munster, Germany
Joseph McCullough, University of Nevada at Las Vegas
Peter Messent, University of Nottingham
Bruce Michelson, University of Illinois
Miriam Schillingsburg, LeMar University
Laura Skandera-Trombley, Coe College
Peter Stoneley, The Queens University of Belfast
Henry Wonham, University of Oregon

Discussion Leaders:

Westey Britton, Grayson County College
Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua, Harvard University
Beverly David, Western Michigan University
Alan Gribben, Auburn University at Montgomery
Linda A. Morris, University of California at Davis
Jeff Steinbrink, Franklin and Marshall College

The Octagonal Gang:

Leader: Susan K. Harris, Pennsylvania State University at University Park

Gregg Camfield, University of the Pacific
Victor Doyno, University of Buffalo
Shelley Fisher Fishkin, University of Texas at Austin
Tom Quirk, University of Missouri-Columbia

Conference Planning Committee:

Chair: Gretchen Sharlow, Elmira College
Louis J. Budd, Duke University
Alan Gribben, Auburn University at Montgomery
Susan K. Harris, Pennsylvania State University at University Park
Michael J. Kiskis, Elmira College
Leland Krauth, University of Colorado at Boulder
Lynne Rusinko '90, Elmira College
Nina Skinner, Elmira College
Mark Woodhouse, Elmira College

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Everything You Need to Know . . .

ABOUT THE CIRCULAR. The *Mark Twain Circular*, newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America, was launched in January 1987 by Thomas A. Tenney (Editor of the *Mark Twain Journal*). James S. Leonard (The Citadel) assumed editorial responsibility with the February 1987 *Circular* and has continued in that capacity until the present. The *Circular* is published four times per year (Jan.–March, April–June, July–Sept., and Oct.–Dec.) and is mailed, by the editor, to all members of the Mark Twain Circle. The *Circular* prints news of Mark Twain events and scholarship, directories of members, short biographical articles and critical commentaries, and current bibliography. Subscribers are distributed among 44 states and 15 foreign countries.



ABOUT THE CIRCLE. The Mark Twain Circle of America was formed at an organizational meeting held at the 1986 Modern Language Association convention in New York; the membership has since grown to approximately 350. Current officers are displayed on p. 8. Past Presidents are Louis J. Budd, Alan Gribben, Pascal Covici, Jr., David E. E. Sloane, Victor A. Doyno, Michael J. Kiskis, and Shelley Fisher Fishkin. Past Executive Coordinators: Everett Emerson, James D. Wilson, Michael J. Kiskis, Laura Skandera-Trombley, and Joseph A. Alvarez. 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 MARK TWAIN JOURNAL. Founded in 1936 by Cyril Clemens, the *Mark Twain Journal* is the oldest American magazine devoted to a single author. In 1982, 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 begs your patient indulgence. New subscribers may wish to begin with the 2000 issues rather than the 2001. Back issues from 13:1 to the present are available at \$5.00 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: Prof. John Bird
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Rock Hill, SC 29733

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The Citadel
Charleston, SC 29409

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