



Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

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The Death of Jervis Langdon, Jr.

**Gretchen Sharlow, Director
Center for MT Studies at Quarry Farm**

It is with deep appreciation and respect that the Elmira College community mourns the loss of Mark Twain's grand-nephew, Jervis Langdon, Jr., who died February 16, 2004, at his home in Elmira, New York, at the age of 99.

With his 1982 gift of the beloved family home Quarry Farm to Elmira College, and his vision to nurture Twain scholarship, Jervis Langdon, Jr. made a major impact on the world of Mark Twain studies. The Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies was developed in 1983 with a mission to foster the study Mark Twain, his life, his literature, and his significant influence on American culture. Scholars from around the world come to Elmira College to stay at the Farm as Quarry Farm Research Fellows in Residence. Since 1983, scholars acknowledging the Mark Twain resources at Elmira College have published over 30 books and numerous articles. Since it's founding, the Center has hosted four quadrennial international conferences on The State of Mark Twain Studies. The fifth conference is scheduled for August 4-6, 2005.

We wish to thank Shelley Fisher Fiskin for her fitting tribute to Jervis Langdon, Jr.

Jervis Langdon, Jr. 1905-2004

**Shelley Fisher Fishkin
Stanford University**

I was saddened to learn of the death of Jervis Langdon, Jr. on February 16, 2004, and wanted to take this opportunity to remember him as a gracious, generous and public-spirited man. I had the pleasure of meeting Jervis Langdon, Jr. and his wonderful wife, Irene, three years ago in Elmira. I was struck by the way he embraced the legacies both of his great grandfather, Jervis Langdon (Olivia Langdon Clemens' father, and Sam Clemens' father-in-law), and of his grand-uncle Mark Twain, with wisdom and sensitivity.

In May, 1869, his great grandfather, Jervis Langdon, purchased the East Hill property in Elmira that would become Quarry Farm, the home of Olivia Langdon's sister Susan Crane, and the summer retreat in which Sam Clemens wrote many of his most important books. A little more than a century later, in 1982, Jervis Langdon, Jr. donated Quarry Farm to Elmira College (an institution of which his great grandfather had been a founding trustee) for use as a Center for Mark Twain Studies. Since that time, innumerable Twain scholars have had the unalloyed pleasure of spending several days or several weeks working in rooms that Clemens and his family inhabited, imbibing the spirit of the place that unfailingly revived his creativity. I will never forget what it felt like to sit on the porch where Mary Ann Cord told the Clemens family the story that

would become the basis for "A True Story, Repeated Word For Word as I Heard it," and I will never forget the special treat it was to chat with Donald Blandford, a distant relation of Cord's, in Mary Ann Cord's kitchen. Jervis Langdon, Jr.'s generosity allowed Quarry Farm to become the unique haven for Mark Twain scholars from around the world that it has become.

Jervis Langdon, Jr., who was born in Elmira in 1905, was 99 years old at his death. A graduate of Cornell University Law School, he was commissioned a captain, and later a colonel, in the air transport division of the Army Air Corps in World War II, and served as chief of staff to the U.S. commander in the Philippines. During his long and productive life he served as chief executive of three major railroads—the Penn Central, the Baltimore and Ohio, and the Rock Island.

While Twain scholars will always be indebted to him for having donated Quarry Farm to Elmira College for use as a Center for Mark Twain Studies, I want to recognize, as well, another institution—a younger institution—that he also helped launch. Jervis Langdon, Jr., who was in charge, at various points in his career, of some of the nation's leading railroads and was a member of the Railroad Hall of Fame, also helped sustain the legacies of his great grandfather's commitment to another railroad, the Underground Railroad, by helping to found the John W. Jones Museum in Elmira.

With funds supplied by Jervis Langdon and others, John W. Jones, a former slave himself, helped make Elmira a key stop on the Underground Railroad, shepherding hundreds of other fugitive slaves to freedom. His "day job" was looking after the dead in Elmira's Civil War prison camp. Some time after the war, when members of the Daughters of the Confederacy learned

that a Black man, an ex-slave—Jones—had been in charge of burying their dead there, they were outraged. They stormed up to Elmira in a fury, with an eye towards removing their dead for proper re-interment in the South. But when they arrived, the meticulous records kept by Jones (who had been taught to read and write by Clara Thurston, the same woman who taught Olivia Langdon) stunned them into silence, as did the exemplary grave markings and 2,973 well-kept graves for which he was responsible. Jervis Langdon, Jr. and Irene Langdon had the wisdom and the foresight to recognize that if action were not taken to preserve a house in which John W. Jones had lived, that fascinating chapter of history might vanish. They helped found the John W. Jones Museum a couple of years ago as a museum to commemorate not only the life and work of Jones himself, but also the history of the Underground Railroad in the region. It is an institution that Twain scholars should embrace and support.

When I was in Elmira in 2001 for the Fourth International Mark Twain Conference, Jervis and Irene Langdon were kind enough to invite me to a delightful lunch at their home. I was intrigued to hear Mr. Langdon's reminiscences about his family, and to learn about John W. Jones and the museum they hoped to establish. After lunch I was taken for a fascinating drive past the Jones house, and past other Jones- and Langdon-related sites in Elmira. During the last three years, we corresponded now and then, sharing items of mutual interest. It was a privilege and a pleasure to have the chance to meet Jervis Langdon, Jr., and to count him as a friend. I will miss him.

[For more on John W. Jones, see a recent issue of *The Chemung Historical Journal* devoted to him: *The Chemung Historical Journal* vol. 49, No.2 (December 2003). See in particular, "History of John W. Jones" by Barbara S. Ramsdell, pp. 5408-5424" and the photo on p. 5407. I am grateful to Irene Langdon for having shared this material with me.]

Spend Two Weeks with Mark Twain

Elmira College announces the 2004 Summer Mark Twain Teachers Institute.

Who? Sponsored by the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies and the Elmira College Office of Continuing Education and Graduate Studies, the institute is under the direction of Michael J. Kiskis, Professor of American Literature, Elmira College. Visiting faculty include accomplished Mark Twain scholars Victor A. Doyno, Professor of English, SUNY Buffalo; Kerry Driscoll, Professor of English, St. Joseph's College; and Laura E. Skandera Trombley, President, Pitzer College.

What? Participants will come away with resources both practical and theoretical to enhance their understanding of Mark Twain within the context of American literary culture. The primary focus of the two-week seminar is on strategies for teaching Mark Twain. One week will focus on Twain's major novels; the second will focus on travel writings, essays, short fiction, and auto/biography. Participants will be eligible to earn 3 graduate credits through Elmira College's graduate program.

When? July 19 - 30, 2004

Where? Seminar meetings will be held at Quarry Farm, on East Hill overlooking the city of Elmira, NY. Quarry Farm was the summer home of the Langdon family and became the home of Olivia Langdon Clemens' sister and brother-in-law, Susan and Theodore Crane. Participants will stay on the Elmira College campus.

Cost? \$2000, which includes opening reception, graduate tuition, room and board from July 18 - 30, 2004. Lunches will be provided at Quarry Farm.

Enrollment is limited to a maximum of 25 participants.

Information and registration materials can be requested by contacting Elmira College's Office of Continuing Education and Graduate Studies. Phone 800-354-4720 or 607-735-1825; fax 607-735-1150; email summer@elmira.edu. You may also contact Dr. Michael J. Kiskis, Institute Director: phone 607-735-1827; email Mkiskis@elmira.edu. Website addresses: www.elmira.edu/graduate; www.elmira.edu/Twain.

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

Budd, Louis J. *Mark Twain: Social Philosopher*. University of Missouri Press, 2001. 276 pages. \$19.95. Reissue of Budd's classic 1962 study. Called by the *Indiana Magazine of History* "the most comprehensive study of the subject [Twain's social and political views] that has been made."

Camfield, Gregg. *The Oxford Companion to Mark Twain*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

News from the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies

Jane McCone Moves On

Jane McCone recently resigned as the Director of the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies to seek a position in museum work. Director Emerita, Gretchen Sharlow has returned to Center leadership to insure that programs will continue without interruption.

Call for Papers

The Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies announces the **Second** Call for Papers for Elmira 2005: The 5th International Confer-

ence on the State of Mark Twain Studies, August 4-6, 2005.

The Co-chairs of the Elmira 2005 conference are Dr. Michael J. Kiskis of Elmira College and Dr. Thomas Quirk of the University of Missouri. Along with the Co-chairs, the Conference Planning Committee members are Dr. Kerry Driscoll, Saint Joseph's College; Dr. Charles Mitchell, Elmira College; Dr. Linda Morris, University of Davis, California; Gretchen Sharlow, Elmira College; Dr. Peter Stoneley, The Queen's University of Belfast; and Mark Woodhouse, Elmira College.

To see the full Call for Papers please visit the Elmira College web site; from Quick Links select Mark Twain Connection, or go directly to :

http://www.elmira.edu/academics/MarkTwain/2005_Conference.shtml

To receive a printed copy please call the Center office at 607-735-1941.

800 pages. Cloth. \$75.00. Representing both original research and a synthesis of the most important scholarship of the past century, the *Companion's* three hundred essays create a compelling portrait of one of the most fascinating figures of English literature and American history. Feature essays by noted scholars and writers such as Susan Harris, Bruce Michelson, Arthur Miller, and Judith Martin give more personal reactions to Twain's work and times. In addition to the A-Z entries and essays, Gregg Camfield has included an appendix on Researching Mark Twain, outlining secondary reading available in the library and on the web, and a comprehensive annotated bibliography of Twain's staggeringly prolific output—covering over 1,700 novels, plays, poems, and newspaper articles. Entries on relatives (Olivia Langdon Clemens), friends (Joseph Twichell), enemies (Whitelaw Reid), famous contemporaries whom he met or corresponded with (Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, Harriet Beecher Stowe), and places he lived (Hartford, Connecticut) and visited (Canada). Placing Twain in the context of his times are entries on the political (Democracy,

Race Relations, War) and intellectual (Determinism, Spiritualism) currents of his age. The portrait of Twain's view of his world, and its view of him, is rounded out with articles on subjects as diverse as Music, Tobacco, Confidence Games, Law, Sexuality, and Childhood. A parallel chronology of Twain's life, work, and times allows readers to see at a glance Twain's career in the wider world. [Text from dust jacket.]

Chou, Steve. *Hannibal, Missouri: Bluff City Memories.* Images of America Series. Arcadia Publishing, 2002. 128 pages. Paperback. \$19.99. ISBN 0-7385-2018-7.

Coulombe, Joseph L. *Mark Twain and the American West.* University of Missouri Press, 2003. 208 pages. \$29.95 Coulombe explores how Mark Twain deliberately manipulated contemporary conceptions of the American West to create and then modify a public image that eventually won worldwide fame. He establishes the central role of the western region in the development of a person that not only helped redefine American manhood and liter-

Mark Twain at ALA

The 2004 Annual Conference of the American Literature Association will be held May 27–30 at the Hyatt Regency (Embarcadero Center) in San Francisco. The tentative conference program indicates the following arrangements for Mark Twain Circle sessions:

Session 4-D *Mark Twain: Autodidact*

Thursday, May 27, 1:00–2:20 p.m.

Chair: John Bird, Winthrop University

Papers:

"Mark Twain and Anti-Imperialism," Susan K. Harris, University of Kansas

"Urban Twain: Street Wise and House Broken?" Ann Ryan, Le Moyne College

"Learning Modernism the Hard Way: Mark Twain's Later Years," Bruce Michelson,
University of Illinois

Session 7-F *Mark Twain and Talk*

Thursday, May 27, 5:30–6:50 p.m.

Chair: Tom Quirk, University of Missouri

Papers:

"White Hunter Heap Big Liar": Mark Twain Meets the Indians of the Adam Forepaugh Circus," Kerry Driscoll, St. Joseph's College

"Dead Man Talking: Mark Twain's Autobiographical Deception," Michael Kiskis, Elmira College

"Sam's Ears-Mark's Right Hand: Ventriloquism!" Victor Doyno, University at Buffalo

There will also be a Mark Twain Circle business meeting at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, May 28, and two additional Mark Twain presentations are listed:

Session 9-D *American Visions of Europe*

Friday, May 28, 9:30–10:50 am

"The Boomerang Effect: Aspects of Mark Twain's Response to European Arrogance," Daniel Royot, Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris, France

Session 20-E *The Child Who Questions: Transcultural/racial Renegades in Asian American Literature*

Saturday, May 29, 12:30–1:50 p.m.

"The Adventures of Mona in the Promised Land: Subversive Humour in Mark Twain and Gish Jen," Kyoo Lee, University of Memphis

For more information on the conference, visit the American Literature Association web site:

<http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/ala2/>

ary celebrity in the late nineteenth century, but also produced some of the most complex and challenging writings in the American canon. [Text from dust jacket.]

Fanning, Philip Ashley. *Mark Twain and Orion Clemens.* Forward by Alan Gribben. University of Alabama Press, 2003. 288 pages. Cloth. \$29.95. Philip Ashley Fanning's history of the fractious fraternal relationship between Twain and his older brother, Orion Clemens, reveals that Orion's influence on Twain's life and writing was profound.

From Hannibal, Missouri in the 1830s to Orion's death in Iowa in 1897, Samuel Clemens perpetually and sometimes obsessively defined himself against his older brother's formidable background—a circumstance Twain masked by treating Orion dismissively in his autobiographical writings and letters. Orion was the chief financial and psychological support for the Clemens family following his father's death in 1847. Orion led the way for his younger brother into printing, journalism, and mine speculation, taking Sam out west with him. It was Orion who served as Sam's first

real editor and literary mentor, recognizing and encouraging his younger brother's talents as a writer. Fanning follows the wavering fortunes of these contentious talents as Twain rose to become a national celebrity and financial success, Orion's finances and self-esteem disintegrated, and Twain's portrayal of his brother became evermore harsh and mocking. Fanning's account draws upon extensive archival sources, unpublished letters between the brothers, and the Mark Twain papers at the University of California, Berkeley. [Text from dust jacket.]

Gold, Charles H. *"Hatching Ruin," or Mark Twain's Road to Bankruptcy.* University of Missouri Press, 2003. 192 pages. \$29.95 The 1880's were a time when Samuel Clemens was more businessman than author. In *"Hatching Ruin,"* Gold provides a complete description of Samuel Clemens's business relationships with

Charles L. Webster and James W. Paige during this period. Gold analyzes how these relationships affected Clemens as a person and an artist, most notably in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.* Gold uses previously unpublished material from family correspondence and Clemens's autobiographical dictations to present a far more complex picture of the man most people know only as Mark Twain.

Kaplan, Fred. *The Singular Mark Twain.* Doubleday, 2003. 736 pages. Cloth. \$35.00. Mark Twain invented American literature. His humor, his fearless evocation of how ordinary people live and speak, his ferocious social criticism, all make him the progenitor of a truly national literature. And his extraordinary books—including *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,*

The Gilded Age, Innocents Abroad, Life on the Mississippi—were drawn from his extraordinary life. Based on original research, including access to previously unpublished correspondence. Kaplan proposes that Twain's ferociously progressive ideas about race informed all his later works and absolve him from charges of racism laid in recent years. Kaplan also details the darker side of Twain's story—the illnesses and death that plagued his family and darkened his vision, his almost comically terrible business sense that *lost* him his great fortune, and his paranoid sensitivity to *slights* and betrayals. [Text from dust jacket.]

Sloane, David E. E. *Student Companion to Mark Twain.* Student Companions to Classic Writers Series. Greenwood Press, 2001. 208 pages. Cloth. \$41.95. Mark Twain's legacy is an extensive canon of writings that includes some of the most widely read, staged, debated, reinterpreted, and filmed works ever. This introductory critical study helps students and general readers appreciate the myriad perspectives of the man, his life, and his contributions

to American literature. Sloane traces Twain's colorful life through his varied careers and adventures, from his rise to national prominence as a writer of short stories to the creation of masterpieces like *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Also examined are the thematic concerns, plot structure, character development, and historical background in the travel narratives, a selection of short stories, and Twain's novels. [Text from dust jacket.]

Taper, Bernard, ed. *Mark Twain's San Francisco.* Heyday Books, 2003. 264 pages. Black and white illustrations, 6 x 9. Paperback. \$14.95. ISBN 1-890771-69-4.

Twain, Mark. *Is He Dead? A Comedy in Three Acts.* Edited with Foreword, Afterword, and Notes by Shelley Fisher Fishkin; illustrations by Barry Moser. Text established by The Mark Twain Project, Bancroft Library. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. 244 pages including three wood engravings and 12 black-and-white photographs. \$24.95. ISBN 0-520-23979-2.

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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. Although many members are academic specialists, the Circle also includes many non-academic Twain enthusiasts.

ABOUT THE CIRCULAR. The *Mark Twain Circular* is the newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America. It is published twice per year (April and November) 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, and current bibliography. Subscribers are distributed among 44 states and 14 foreign countries.

ABOUT THE ANNUAL. The Mark Twain Circle also publishes an annual volume titled *The Mark Twain Annual*, edited by John Bird (Winthrop University) and featuring criticism and pedagogy related to Mark Twain and his works.