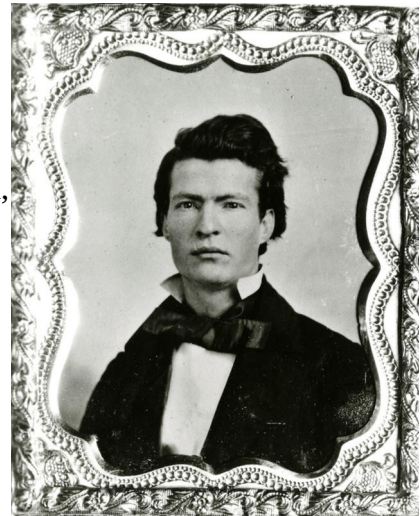


Twain's Geography: An Introduction

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, aka Mark Twain, was a complex man that experienced a number of changes in his life and his attitude towards that life.

It is not my intention to write a biography of Mark Twain, there are already too many of those for anyone but the most serious of scholars. My intention is to explore the context of Twain's life in terms of the geographical and cultural features of his life and times.

Born in 1835, on what was then the American frontier, in Florida, Missouri, Sam's father was not the financial success his ambitions required. John Clemens soon moved his family to Hannibal, Missouri, where Sam grew up. Mark Twain would later create portraits of the town in his best known books, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.



Sam's first career, as a type-setter, allowed for his first departure from the Mississippi River Valley, 1853 to 1854. He found employment in New York and Philadelphia and visited Washington DC.

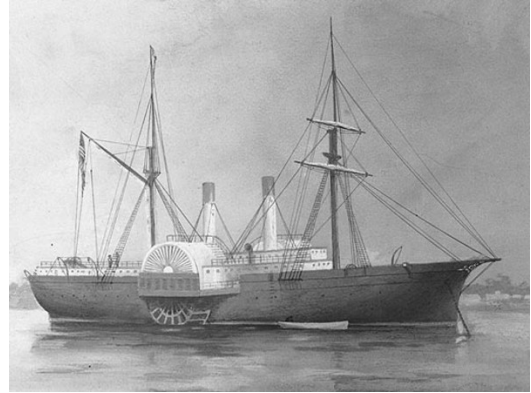
Sam's next career, and the one most commonly associated with Mark Twain (although the name *Mark Twain* had not yet been invented) was as a Mississippi Riverboat pilot on the Lower Mississippi River. In order to become a certified pilot Sam was apprenticed to Horace Bixby, a noted pilot of the Mississippi River, the Ohio River and the Missouri River. Mark Twain provided an account of his apprentice days in the first part of his book *Life on the Mississippi*. His time on the river was from 1857 to 1861. The second half this book is an account of Sam's return visit to the Mississippi River in 1882.



Samuel Clemens, 1863, Carson City, Nevada. (Courtesy of the Mark Twain Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley)

The Civil War put an end to Sam's career as a pilot and he moved to Washoe, Nevada Territory. He tried his hand at mining for silver and gold but soon became a newspaper reporter. Virginia City is where Sam Clemens invented the name *Mark Twain* as his *nom de plume*. A rather fanciful account of this period can be found in Mark Twain's book *Roughing It*.

Sam wrote for the Virginia City Daily *Territorial Enterprise*, the San Francisco Daily *Morning Call* and others. He contracted with the Sacramento *Daily Union* to write letters from the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), that became the subject matter of his first lecture, the later part of *Roughing It*, and Sam's next career. The letters from Hawaii were popular enough to convince the San Francisco *Alta California* to finance a trip to Europe and the Holy Land on board the *Quaker City*. The letters from this journey became the material for a new lecture tour as well as Mark Twain's book *The Innocents Abroad*.



James Leonard, in *Mark Twain in Context*, writes: "Somewhere in the Nevada, California, and Hawai'i years, as well as the 1867 *Quaker City* tour and some time spent doing successful lecturing, Sam finally followed Orion's example by turning Republican — meaning that he supported the now-accomplished emancipation of slaves, the establishment of their rights as free men and women, and an additional agenda designed to undergird the interests of northern industry and commerce. The Republican Party, though based in a humanitarian impulse (the end of slavery), was clearly the party of big business, and Mark Twain's association with it coincided with his own accession to the world of the affluent few."

Sam was introduced to his future wife, Olivia Louise Langdon, sister of Charlie Langdon a fellow passenger on the *Quaker City*. There remains some controversy about when they actually met.

There were two lecture tours associated with the *Quaker City* excursion material. The first is referred to as the Pilgrim Life tour, in California and Nevada, April and May of 1868. This would mark Sam's last visit to California and Nevada. He would return east to publish *Innocents Abroad*, conduct American Vandal Abroad Tour (November of 1868 to March of 1869), and romance Olivia (they would wed February 2, 1870). He became associated with the Boston Lyceum Bureau, recently established by James Redpath. He promised Redpath ten nights in the state of New York, "provided the towns were

close together, but for the most part intended to accept engagements only in the six New England states."

By August 14 of 1869, Sam Clemens had a one third interest in a Buffalo, New York newspaper, *The Buffalo Express*, thanks to a guarantee from his future father-in-law Jervis Langdon. In a letter to James Redpath, 14 August 1869, Sam attempted to "beg off & withdraw from the lecture field". Redpath refused. Mark Twain took on the Our Fellow Savages Tour (November 1, 1869 to January 21, 1870) which ranged up and down the coast from Maine to Washington D.C. and throughout New York State and eastern Pennsylvania.

Tragedy hit in Buffalo. Olivia became pregnant, but was devastated when her father was diagnosed with stomach cancer and died on Aug. 6, 1870: Emma Nye, a dear friend of Olivia's who was visiting, was stricken with typhoid fever and died in their home Sept. 29: Finally, their son, Langdon, was born prematurely November 7, frail and sickly, and Olivia then fell ill with typhoid.

They had had enough. Olivia was carried out of their home on a mattress to the train station for the trip to Elmira, March 18, 1871. Both the home and Twain's stake in the Express were sold at a loss.

Sam, Livy and Langdon moved to the Langdon home in Elmira and Sam would walk to the Quarry Farm house, "a mile & a half up a mountain, where I write every day" on his book *Roughing It*. In October of 1871, they moved to the Hooker House in Nook Farm, on the western side of Hartford, Connecticut. This was a period of a somewhat unsatisfactory Three Speeches lecture tour, three trips to England, the birth of his first daughter, known as Susie, and the building of his Hartford Home on Farmington.

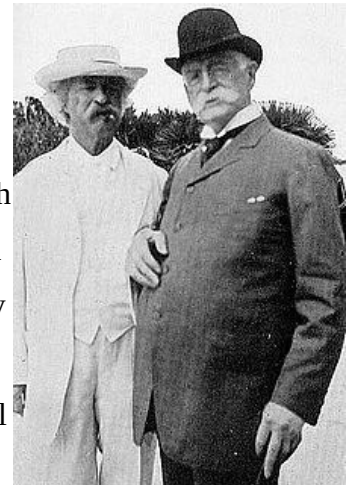
The Clemenses left Elmira on September 10, 1874 and spent a week shopping for carpeting and other home furnishings in New York. They arrived in Hartford on September 19, 1874. The house served as their official residence until Sam took his family to Europe in April of 1878.

During this first period of residency, Sam did not sit still but made several trips, primarily to New York City and Boston. The family took summer vacations away from Hartford: 1875, Newport, Rhode Island; 1876 & 1877 at Quarry Farm.

Their time in Europe provided the source material for Mark Twain's book, *A Tramp Abroad*. For part of their time in Europe Sam was accompanied by Joe Twichell, disguised as Harris in the book.

Returning from Europe, the Clemens family had their longest period of residency at their Hartford Home on Farmington Avenue, from September of 1879 to June of 1891. They spent their summers in Elmira with Mark Twain writing in his octagon at Quarry Farm. The summer of 1890 found them in the Catskills and by June of 1891 Sam had decided the family needed to economize by relocating to Europe.

Sam made thirteen voyages across the Atlantic, during this period, to deal with his financial concerns. Following his fifth voyage he met and befriended Henry Huttleston Rogers, a vice president of Standard Oil, September 15, 1893. Mark Twain was in dire financial straits, as was much of the country. His publishing firm, Charles L. Webster and Company, and the perpetual financial drain of the Paige Type Setting Machine was largely responsible. Rogers became a close friend and comrade as well as a financial savior (with assistance from Katherine Harrison, Rogers' personal secretary). Sam would soon give power of attorney to Rogers and assign all rights to his books to Olivia.

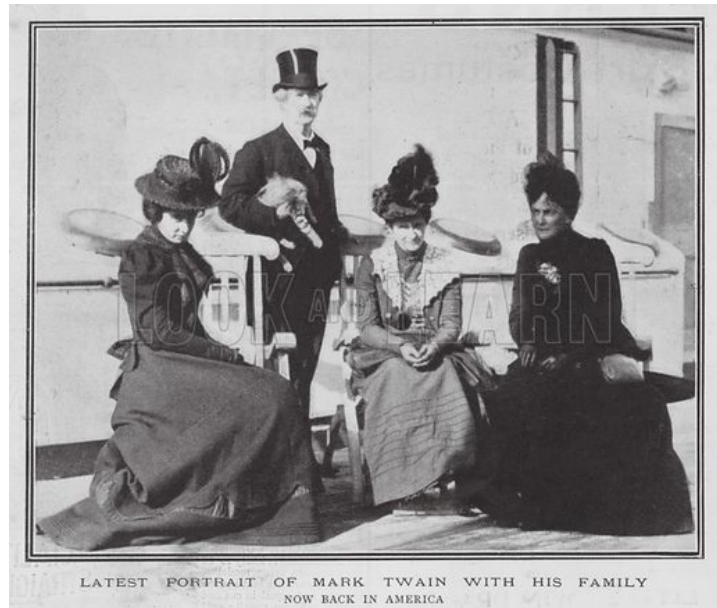


Part of H. H. Rogers' strategy for returning Mark Twain to wealth was to have him pay-off all his debts by taking a lecture tour around the world. The tour would also result in his book *Following the Equator*. The book does not include the tour across the northern tier of North America. Sam, Livy and daughter Clara, accompanied by Major Pond, who managed this portion of the tour, and his wife, started from Cleveland; crossed the Great Lakes; through the Prairies; over the Rocky Mountain and the Cascades to the Pacific Northwest. From there the family crossed the Pacific Ocean to Australia, visited New Zealand and went on to India and South Africa. Ending the tour in England. Olivia and Clara started for the U.S upon hearing that Susy was sick. They were *en route* when she died from Spinal Meningitis. Susy's death sent the family into a self-imposed exile of mourning. But Sam's debts had been paid off.



The Clemens family spent the next four years chasing about Europe and England, seeking cures for their ailments and treatments for Jean's epilepsy.

With the idea that Jean would receive better treatment for her epilepsy, the family returned to the United States. Twain had stated in the New York Herald, October 15, 1900, that he had departed the U. S. as a "red-hot imperialist" but had returned home an "anti-imperialist". Much of the family's time was spent finding a comfortable place for Livy, who's health was always fragile, and seeking treatment for Jean. They resided, for the most part, in New York City but also spent time at

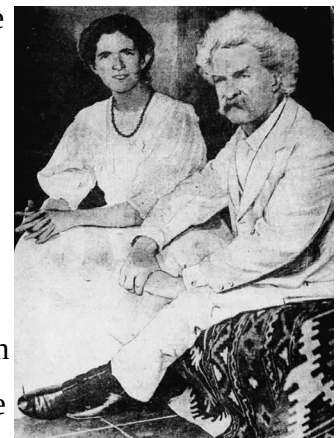


LATEST PORTRAIT OF MARK TWAIN WITH HIS FAMILY
NOW BACK IN AMERICA

Saranac Lake, Riverdale-on-the-Hudson, and at Quarry Farm. They finally took Livy to Florence, Italy where she died in June of 1904. The family would return to New York July 12, 1904.

Livy's funeral was held in Elmira, New York July 14 of 1904. Sam would take residence in Tyringham, Massachusetts for four months before moving into an apartment at 21 Fifth Avenue, New York, where he would keep residence until June of 1908, when his final home, known as Stormfield, was built in Redding, Connecticut.

It is often reported that Mark Twain turned cynical and morose following the deaths of Olivia and his daughter, Jean. Jean's passing could not have been related. Mark Twain wrote nothing but "The Death of Jean" following her death on the day before Christmas, 1909. The "darker" characteristics of much of what he published following the passing of Olivia may have been due to her no longer serving as a filter against his reported cynicism. His noted anti-imperialist stance occurred following the U.S.'s military actions in the Philippines, long before Olivia's passing. Mark Twain's trademark white suit first appeared in December of 1906 at a Senate Hearing on copyright laws.



As with all who reach a more advanced age, friends and family members die. Among several others there were two that may have hit Sam the hardest. His favorite nephew, Samuel E. Moffett, died while struggling in rough surf at Normandie-by-the-Sea on August 1, 1908. Sam's close friend, Henry Huttleston Rogers died May 1909.

Following the death of his youngest daughter, Jean, on December 24th of 1909, Sam was emotionally devastated and alone. He took his final trip to Bermuda, January 7th of 1910. He stayed there until April 12. While departing the Islands, he was too weak to be dressed. Wrapped in his coat

and a few rugs, Clemens was carried in a canvas chair to the *SS Corona*, then taken by the tender to the *RMS Oceana*. He died from a heart attack on April 21, 1910, in Stormfield, one day after Halley's comet's closest approach to Earth

