



# Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America  
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James S. Leonard, Editor, **Mark Twain Circular**  
The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409

Thomas A. Tenney, Editor, **Mark Twain Journal**  
The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409

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## **Federal Cutbacks Threaten Mark Twain**

The Mark Twain Circle of America held an open business meeting on Saturday morning, December 28 (10:15-11:30), in the Cypress Room of the San Francisco Hilton, to discuss the crisis that faces the Mark Twain Project of The Bancroft Library.

This scholarly edition of all Mark Twain's books, short stories, letters, and unpublished manuscripts has been sponsored chiefly by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and by The Friends of The Bancroft Library. The Project has so far published 22 of a projected 70 volumes.

But warning signs are now flying on several fronts that continued funding of the editorial work may be frozen.

The Mark Twain Circle feels a national responsibility to support the Mark Twain edition, and to encourage the federal government to continue to support a project that makes the work of this country's best-known and best-loved author increasingly available.

One action anyone can take now to demonstrate broad support for the Mark Twain edition is to send a tax-deductible check of any size (made out to "The Friends of The Bancroft

Library") to Robert H. Hirst, General Editor, Mark Twain Project, 480 Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. Checks received before March 1 will be matched, dollar for dollar, by the NEH.

For additional information contact me at the above address or Pascal Covici, Jr. (President of the Mark Twain Circle) at Dept. of English, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75218.

Robert H. Hirst, General Editor  
The Mark Twain Project

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## **President's Note**

Meeting in San Francisco (as noted in the plea/press-release above), we discussed both the plight of the Mark Twain Project and most of the other items mentioned below.

1. All Members: The press release printed above (headed "Federal Cutbacks Threaten Mark Twain") deserves the attention and concern of all members of the Circle. Please do what you can to get your local newspapers to print it. Those of you who live in cities with particular Twain significances and associations might well add a brief paragraph to give

the piece local appeal and relevance.

2. The next meeting of the Circle will be held on Saturday, May 30, beginning at 6:00 p.m., in the Buena Vista Room of the Bahia Resort Hotel, in conjunction with the American Literature Association meeting. We will chat, imbibe, visit, and then convene. Instead of a group dinner, we have decided to encourage free-form conviviality, with informal dining by individual choice following the meeting. Agenda items include, but are not limited to, the following:

a) Nominations from the nominating committee (Chairperson Vic Doyno, Larry Berkove, and Jim Wilson): Our by-laws call for a three-person Executive Committee, along with a President, Vice President, and Executive Coordinator. Alan Gribben and Susan Harris will be ending their terms on the Executive Committee. V. P. David Sloane will become President, and I shall become a member of the Executive Committee. Michael Kiskis will continue as Executive Coordinator, and Shelley Fisher Fishkin as member of the Executive Committee.

b) A proposed amendment to the by-laws (requires a two-thirds vote of those present at the meeting): The second sentence of Article IV now reads, "Normally, each officer will serve a two-year term." The proposed amendment would put a comma after "term" and add the following: "except that the executive coordinator will normally serve for three years." So much detail-work is involved in the changing of executive coordinators that efficiency cries out for this amendment.

c) The awarding of the Second Annual Mark Twain Circle Award for long and distinguished service in the elucidation of the work, thought, life, and art of Mark Twain.

Also, we will have a report from Bob Hirst on what is happening with the Mark Twain Project.

I look forward to seeing you at the ALA and having a chance to exchange ideas, insights, and news of the day at our meeting Saturday evening.

Pascal Covici, Jr.  
President, MTCA  
(Southern Methodist Univ.)

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### The Circle in San Francisco

Mark Twain's spirit was alive and well at December's MLA conference in San Francisco. The city that witnessed Twain's escapades as a reporter and social critic echoed with new ideas about and perspectives on Twain, generated by MTCA panels and presentations. Two panel discussions were part of the formal program. Victor Doyno and Victor Fischer had a packed house for their discussion of the newly discovered *Huck Finn* manuscript (William Loos was not able to join that discussion because of the negotiations that will decide who "owns" the manuscript). David Sloane's panelists--Alan Gribben, Susan Harris, Andrew Hoffman, and Suzi Naiburg Asher--also had a large audience (Judith Y. Lee was not able to join the discussion, but her paper was presented). From *Huckleberry Finn* to new perspectives on such topics as boy books, Olivia's intellectual life, and Twain's comedy, Mark Twain continues to generate substantial interest generally among teachers and scholars. The Circle also held a business meeting that focused on the present concern over continuation of the Mark Twain Project (Pascal Covici has more to say about that in "President's Note," above).

Along with the formal meetings, the Circle and the *Mark Twain Journal* hosted two open-house sessions. These gatherings have evolved (from earlier hospitality suites that offered Circle members a friendly

place to sit and chat) into true oases--refuge from the roar and formality of the MLA rush--with an emphasis on informal mingling and good talk. That talk was energized by two presentations: Laura Skandera-Trombley discussed her research efforts to uncover the truth behind Twain's tale of Olivia's fall on the ice (which supposedly led to her lifelong weakness and ill health) and of her miraculous cure; Kelly Anspaugh lent a new twist to *Huck Finn*, reading the tale as posthumous narrative.

All those who attended the evening events were treated to a mix of serious discussion and outrageous storytelling. By the end of the evening, the air was thick with stories, puns, and lies. No one was expelled to Jackass Hill--but not for lack of trying.

Michael J. Kiskis  
Executive Coordinator, MTCA  
(Empire State College, SUNY)

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### Lives on the Mississippi

Too often paperback editions designed for classroom use are treated indiscriminately. I too have been guilty of selecting a text for a course from a list of paperbacks in print simply by choosing the cheapest. Two recent editions of *Life on the Mississippi* should be brought to the attention of Mark Twainiacks, for both have important and special virtues.

The earlier of the two is in the Penguin American Library, the series edited by John Seelye. *Life on the Mississippi*, with an Introduction by James M. Cox. New York: Penguin Books, 1984. 450 pp. \$4.95. Of course one is happy to have an essay on the book by the author of the much admired *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor*, but that is not to make the point that ought to be made. Profes-

sor Cox explains in his valuable "Note on the Text" that his edition includes the so-called suppressed passages that Willis Wager had included in the 1944 Heritage Press edition of the work, passages omitted from the 1883 first edition. Wager had made use of the holograph manuscript of *Life on the Mississippi* at the Morgan Library in New York. These passages appear in an appendix in the 1944 edition; here they appear, clearly identified, at their proper places in the text. Since I do not own the 1944 edition, I am grateful. But Cox has done much more than simply put to good use (one might say better use) what Wager included. Cox has gone back to the manuscript to locate "editorial changes of words designed to tone down Mark Twain's diction," and in his notes he reports some "significant instances of such editorial emendations" (p. 28). Moreover, he located a truly valuable passage that Wager had overlooked, one that was written for Chapter LIII, "My Boyhood Home." I'd call it an important addition to the Mark Twain canon. Here our favorite author pays a visit to a Hannibal Sunday school. Please find the Cox edition and look it up, on pages 449-50. You'll be glad you did.

Cox also provides fifty-nine footnotes, all of which I'd want my students to read. They are the comments of a longtime Mark Twain specialist, one who has made use of Horst Kruse's book on the composition of *Life*.

(Since Mark Twain did not forbid himself digressions, perhaps I may be permitted one here. In the summer of 1979 I read Henry Nash Smith's *Democracy and the Novel*, where I came across a reference to Horst Kruse's 1970 German book on *Life on the Mississippi*. Although I had once been certified as having a reading knowledge of German, my knowledge had become rusty from neglect, and I dreaded having to wade through the book. I decided to delay looking it

up till I arrived at the Mark Twain Papers, where I was to spend the academic year. There I found the book and went into raptures when I read at the end of the "Vorwort" this sentence: "Eine englische Fassung dieser Arbeit befindet sich in den Mark Twain Papers de University of California Library, Berkeley." Kruse's English translation was only feet away.

I sat right down and read the translation, then walked into the next room to report my experience to the man who was acting director of the Mark Twain Papers, the critic who had led me to Kruse in the first place. To cut a long story short, Henry Nash Smith and I agreed that the book ought to be available in English, and in 1981 it was published by the University of Massachusetts Press. Both English and German versions are books of the same size; both feature the same jacket illustration, a panorama of the Mississippi at Baton Rouge. End of digression.)

The latest edition of Mark Twain's classic is *Life on the Mississippi*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by John Seelye. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1990. xlviii, 475 pp. \$4.95. It's a volume in *The World's Classics*. The author of *The True Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Mark Twain in the Movies* supplies an introductory essay that I'd score as the equal of Cox's and a text that "reproduces the *World's Classics* text of 1962, which was set from the first (1883) edition." Score one for Cox. The special virtue of the Seelye edition is the notes, over three hundred of them. The information they provide is a mix of the elementary (e.g., "*buffalo*: the American bison (*Bos bison*)"; "*Good Samaritan*: Luke 10: 334") and the delightfully learned (e.g., "*Rosin the Bow*: a common misspelling (hence misunderstanding) of 'Old Rosin, the Beau', c. 1840. a lament of a drunkard named Rosin, with the choric line, 'Drink to Old Rosin, the Beau', whose con-

nection with the application of rosin to a violin bow is obscure"). The notes are indeed a remarkable achievement. Score one for Seelye. *Wait a minute!* The prefatory statement to the Explanatory Notes lists among the many credits this one: "To Professor James M. Cox, of the Department of English, I owe an especial debt, reflected throughout these annotations." Perhaps justice requires that we give equal thanks to both Cox and Seelye. Both of their editions are valuable. I keep mine together.

Everett Emerson  
UNC, Chapel Hill

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### Mark Twain on the Oregon Coast

Dear Editor: I was travelling about the west coast countryside this summer when I was fortunate enough to come across the Sylvia Beach Hotel, which is located in Newport Beach on the Oregon coast. The hotel is a wonderfully quiet place and features rooms named and decorated for authors. I had the Mark Twain suite, one of the larger rooms in the hotel, complete with a deck facing the ocean and a fireplace. The night before I left I was doing what many guests probable do, trying to think of something to write in the diary that is left on the nightstand for that very purpose. Instead I came across the following entry which I thought you might be interested in for your newsletter.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Edward James  
Palos Verdes C.C.

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I must say that I feel particularly gratified with my stay in the Mark Twain room at the Sylvia Beach Hotel as I look around the room one more time before I go inasmuch as it feels



something like a homecoming to me even though I've never been here before because, you see, I not only specialize in teaching the works of MT and the life of SLC at the university back home but they tell me that I look a lot like the old boy himself, especially with a favorite brand of cigar in mouth and a glass of whiskey in hand and I suppose there is more than a mustard grain of truth in their observation though of course I don't like to brag about it since I don't have his curly hair and I'm too tall and I don't have anywheres near *that* lazy of a drawl when I'm yarning with the boys, deficits not made up for even by my big droopy mustaches and a fondness for good cussing, which some say I make into an art when they aren't saying something worse about me. But I can't be blamed for either one, the mustaches or the profanity, truly, since it's all really his fault because he was the one who kept taking my razor which started the whole thing, that is, started both the hair on my upper lip and my swearing too, but then Sam always was the dangdest red-haired fellow I ever met for stealing a body's gear if he needed something though of course he never saw it as stealing only borrowin' was what he said, and then he would always go into that infernally long story of his about the farmer and the watermelon until I would holler "enough" and I would not only say take the razor and welcome to it but usually end up also giving him my fancy-scented water, soap, tooth powder, chewing gum, and spending money that he would first and always spend for a treat, as he called it, at the bar so that I ended up in his debt for the whiskey that my money paid for and then would have to treat him in return with my money again and that would set my profanity mill to working once more, which it would do most naturally to *any* man and he would just give me in return that derved deadpan of his he used on the

lecture platform as Mark Twain to bilk all those folks out of their four bits for a few so-called jokes, and that flat-faced innocent look would cause me to cramp down on my swearing just to show I too could be calm but such a-capping of the safety valve was dangerous and one day I blew all my boilers and killed a nearby boy scout troop and crippled my own self too which is why I now walk with a slight limp. But perhaps I am getting off the subject of the Mark Twain room and its appointments which are first rate, especially the binoculars. In eight days I saw most of the coast guard and nearly all of the Newport bay fishing fleet, lots of seabirds and airplanes and tourist folks desperately trying to have fun on the beach and sort of *in* the water but mostly just *in* the wind and fog, one whale, two submarines (one theirs, one ours), three tankers--one of them Iranian I judge since the crew all had those special dishrags on their heads and one of them had a picture button pinned to his shirt with the Ayatollah's phiz on it. I believe it was him since you could see those wonderful eyebrows of his and that mole just below his cheek and half hidden in his beard which is how I always separate those other mule-ahs from the whole-mani[ac]. They are good binoculars. I believe I've gotten the general drift of my sense of this room set down though some of the particulars may be a trifle off here and there, which I want to admit straight out because I have such a high and mightily sincere regard for the sacredness of the unvarnished truth, just as Sam did, that I don't use it very often so as to save it pure and intact when it seems required, which as any child nowadays can tell you isn't very often.

Jimmy Ray  
Honolulu

P.S. My one suggestion for improvement is to re-do the deck so as to make it look like the pilot's room of

a Mississippi steamboat. (You know, like his house in Hartford?) It is a small suggestion, true, but it should elicit the required "wows" from the tourists--and make a great postcard too. (No charge for the above.)

[Editor's note: The above letter, invoking the spirit of the Mark Twain of the *Territorial Enterprise* and doubly attributed to Jimmy Ray and Dr. Edward James, is attributable at a more literal level to James E. Caron, University of Hawaii at Manoa.]

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### **Play It Again, Boris**

Boris Yeltsin to the news media (January 30, 1992): "The reports of my demise are somewhat exaggerated."

[Reported on the ABC Evening News]

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### **A Mark Twain Anecdote**

The following item appeared in a column titled "Writers and Books" in the *Boston Evening Transcript* on Wednesday, August 28, 1929 (part 3, p. 3):

The Mark Twain Society has just awarded its prize for the best

anecdote about Mark Twain to John Dallam of Philadelphia. Here is the anecdote: Mark Twain was visiting in Washington during the time that Mr. Melville Fuller was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. A little girl saw him on the street and, mistaking him for the Chief Justice, whom he resembled because of his luxuriant white hair and mustache, approached him and said: "Oh, Mr. Chief Justice Fuller, won't you please write something for me in my autograph album?" "With pleasure," Mark replied instantly. Taking the book she handed him, he wrote: "It's glorious to be full, but it's heavenly to be Fuller." Signing his name, he walked away without further comment, leaving her to discover later the prize she had unknowingly obtained.

[Thanks to Stanley Blair, Duke University, for providing the above for publication in the *Circular*.]

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### **Dates to Circle**

May 30, 1992. Meeting of the Mark Twain Circle at the American Literature Association's annual conference: Buena Vista Room, Bahia Resort Hotel, 6:00 p.m.

## ABOUT MARK TWAIN

These bibliographic pages in each issue of the *Mark Twain Circular* continue the lists in my *Mark Twain: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1977) and supplements in *American Literary Realism* from 1977 to 1983. Cross-references to these will be given by the year-letter-number system used in the *Reference Guide* (e.g., 1862.B1 or 1975.B12), or by year and page to supplements in *American Literary Realism* (five of those are in issues for Autumn; the 1977 is Winter, and the 1982 is Spring).

Abbreviations for works by Mark Twain (MT) and the major bibliographic sources should be self-explanatory: AC (*The American Claimant*); CY (*A Connecticut Yankee*); FE (*Following the Equator*); GA (*The Gilded Age*); "Hadleyburg" ("The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg"); HF (*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*--purists do not precede it with the article "The," as the first edition did not); IA (*The Innocents Abroad*); JA (*Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*--again, not "The," since she is not the narrator); LOM (*Life on the Mississippi*); MS (*The Mysterious Stranger*, and also the fragments from which it was cobbled together after MT's death); P&P (*The Prince and the Pauper*); PW (*Pudd'nhead Wilson*); RI (*Roughing It*); TA (*A Tramp Abroad*); TS (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; also used as part of other titles, such as *TS Abroad* and *TS, Detective*).

OTHER SOURCES: It is generally well to use a number of bibliographies when possible, because even the best are outdated by the time they appear in print and each misses a significant amount of material which others list.

By far the fullest and most comprehensive is "A Checklist of Scholarship on Southern Literature," appearing each year in the Spring issue of *Mississippi Quarterly* (MQ), with nearly a hundred annotated listings. More selective is the survey

in the annual volume *American Literary Scholarship* (ALS, Duke University Press), with brief, sound critical estimates. There are fewer Twain items listed in *Abstracts of English Studies* (AES), but annotations are very full and these sometimes appear ahead of others because of quarterly publication.

The two standard annual literary bibliographies are those of the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA) and the Modern Language Association (MLA). In the past, about a quarter of the listings in each of these did not appear in the other. The MHRA also lists reviews and a certain number of pieces from out-of-the-way sources such as *Playboy* magazine, but is presently behind schedule in publication. Although the MLA bibliography has moved to a useful computerized access, the number of Twain listings has been sharply reduced and the method of selection does not necessarily reflect their significance.

The most current listings are in *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and the microfilm *Magazine Index*; the latter is more comprehensive but difficult to use and sometimes inaccurate. Readers with access to large university or public libraries can also consult the *Literary Criticism Register* (Stetson University) and *Current Contents / Arts & Humanities*. Because they strive to be timely, each of these four sources lists items not yet included in the others.

No slight is intended to the following, which have more restricted coverage or which largely (but never entirely) overlap the sources given above: *American Literature*, *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *America: History and Life*, *The Year's Work in English Studies*, *Essay and General Literature Index*, *Humanities Index*, *Western American Literature*, and *Midamerica*. All of these in the past have included items not listed elsewhere, and several are considered major bibliographic sources. They

are available in major college and university libraries, some as periodicals and some as reference volumes.

Thomas A. Tenney  
(Editor, *MT Journal*)

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#### Current Books and Articles

BEIDLER, PETER G. "Christian Schultz's *Travels: A New Source for Huckleberry Finn?*" *English Language Notes* 28.2 (Dec. 1990: 51-61. Schultz's two-volume *Travels on an Inland Voyage through the States of New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and through the Territories of Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi and New-Orleans, Performed in the Years 1807 and 1808; including a Tour of Nearly Six Thousand Miles* (1811) is not mentioned by MT, but it would have interested him in his piloting days; and he collected travel books while writing *LOM*. Common elements in the Schultz book and *HF* are the fog, houses endangered by the river, bragging riverboat men, "muddy water vs clear," and weapons at social functions.

CHAMPION, LAURIE (ed.). *The Critical Response to Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn*. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 1991. This is one of the better critical anthologies, and deserves a place in every college library. In addition to the familiar criticisms that no such collection should be without, there is a judicious selection from the period 1930-1959 (including Asa Don Dickinson on his correspondence with MT on the banishment of *HF* from the children's room at the Brooklyn Public Library) and the period 1960-1985 (including a piece by John H. Wallace, who briefly succeeded in ejecting *HF* from the Mark Twain Intermediate School, in Fairfax County, Virginia). Of par-

ticular interest are several pieces on the controversy over *HF* and race, including a transcript of the ABC *Nightline* program (4 February 1985) featuring as guests Wallace, Meshach Taylor, and Nat Hentoff. Teachers may well benefit from "Mark Twain and the Fires of Controversy: Teaching Racially Sensitive Literature; Or, 'Say that Word and out You Go!'" by Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua, who identifies herself as "an African-American feminist who has required and would yet require the exploration of works such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to high school students"; she includes sensible and important guidelines for teaching *HF*. Finally, the editor includes a valuable chapter of her own on book and film adaptations of *HF*.

COOPER, STEPHEN. "'Good Rotten Material for Burial': The Over-determined Death of Romance in *Life on the Mississippi*." *Literature and Psychology* 36:1/2 (1990): 78-89. In incidents, language, and imagery, *LOM* constantly returns to death in "a virtual aesthetic of anti-romanticism." Like the Child of Calamity, MT "employs his considerable linguistic skills to declare himself imaginatively capable of dishing out what the world forces him concretely to take: death and desolation, disaster and sickness, on, as well as off the Mississippi." Deeply affected by the death of his brother Henry in a steamboat accident, he wrote in *LOM* of the sufferings of other victims and deflected his personal guilt into rage against the pilot Brown, who had abused Henry, and against Sir Walter Scott, whose romanticizing MT blamed for the Civil War.

DOYNO, VICTOR A. *Writing Huck Finn: Mark Twain's Creative Process*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1991. This will take a well-deserved place in every library beside Walter Blair's *Mark Twain and Huck Finn*; it is no less generous with new informa-



tion and fresh insights. Doyno has much to say, as his title promises, about the actual writing and revisions of *HF*, but also draws on the manuscript for new interpretations of such themes as the significance of nobility and religion in *HF*, and provides useful information on such topics as literacy and the economics of authorship. His extended discussion of the concluding chapters rightly argues that the slavery system was too strong for Jim to make any real escape at the Phelps farm, certainly not with the help of young boys (even if they had taken a more sensible approach), and in an informed discussion of the system of convict labor that restored a kind of slavery, shows how meaningless any "freeing" of Jim or other black men could be.

EMERSON, EVERETT. "Mark Twain's Quarrel with God." *Order in Variety: Essays and Poems in Honor of Donald E. Stanford*. Ed. R. W. Crump. Newark: U of Delaware P; London, Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1991. 32-47. MT began in a Sunday-school fundamentalism, and owned at least thirty-two different copies of the Bible or the New Testament, some with heavy annotation. Exposure to the writings of Thomas Paine and the scientific discoveries of his day helped turn him from such literal beliefs, as did his 1878 purchase of the three-volume *The Bible for Learners*, containing a great deal of the new "higher criticism." His lifelong experiences, his conflicting reticence about exposing unorthodox beliefs and joy in showing off combined to make "his religious thinking . . . not surprisingly, that of his age."

HOFFMAN, ANDREW JAY. "The Unspendable Fortune: from Mark Twain's 'The fl Million Banknote' to *Trading Places*." *Connecticut Review* (Connecticut State University; Fall 1991): 55-61. The 1984 *Trading Places* film apparently was based on

the 1954 film *The Man with a Million*, which in turn was based on MT's 1893 story. Hoffman traces parallels, in particular the various attitudes toward money and the power brought by wealth in the three pieces. "For Mark Twain, money was always the kindly English brothers' unspendable fortune, a tantalizingly close promise he could never possess," although he was surrounded by the wealth of his in-laws, friends, and neighbors. "A real, spendable fortune was a dream; his reality was bankruptcy."

LEONARD, JAMES S., THOMAS A. TENNEY, AND THADIOUS M. DAVIS (eds.). *Satire or Evasion?: Black Perspectives on Huckleberry Finn*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1992. A broad range of essays on the controversy over racial aspects of *HF*, concluding with a 31-page annotated bibliography of other works pertaining to *HF* and race. Contents: "The Case Against *Huck Finn*"--John H. Wallace; "The Struggle for Tolerance: Race and Censorship in *Huckleberry Finn*"--Peaches Henry; "History, Slavery, and Thematic Irony in *Huckleberry Finn*"--Richard K. Barksdale; "The Ending of *Huckleberry Finn*: 'Freeing the Free Negro'"--Charles H. Nilon; "The Veil Rent in Twain: Degradation and Revelation in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*"--Mary Kemp Davis; "Mark Twain and the Black Challenge"--Carmen Subryan; "Huck, Jim, and American Racial Discourse"--David L. Smith; "Twain's 'Nigger' Jim: The Tragic Face Behind the Minstrel Mask"--Bernard W. Bell; "Minstrel Shackles and Nineteenth-Century 'Liberalism' in *Huckleberry Finn*"--Fredrick Woodard and Donnarae MacCann; "Huck and Jim: A Reconsideration"--Betty H. Jones; "Nigger and Knowledge: White Double-Consciousness in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*"--Rhett S. Jones; "Morality and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*"--Julius Lester; "A True Book--With Some Stretchers"--Charles H. Nichols; "*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Afro-American Literature"--Arnold Rampersad; "*Adventures*

of *Huckleberry Finn*; or, Mark Twain's Racial Ambiguity"--Kenny J. Williams.

MANDIA, PATRICIA M. *Comedic Pathos: Black Humor in Twain's Fiction*. Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland, 1991. Black humor links pain and laughter, may blur the line between dream and reality, and may be recognized by tone, setting, irony of fate, and antiheroic characters, often in the setting of a wasteland, either literal or moral. The structures may be cyclical, with no escape from a pluralistic universe lacking right and wrong, cause and effect. Works treated in chapters of their own are *HF*, *PW*, "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" and "The \$30,000 Bequest," *CY*, and *MS* and *3,000 Years among the Microbes*.

McLUHAN, MARSHALL. *Letters of Marshall McLuhan*. Ed. Matie Molinaro, Corinne McLuhan, and William Toye. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1987. Writing his mother Elsie McLuhan (11 December 1935, pp. 76-78), recommends "1st state stuff" in *IA* for "your pupils," including "they spell it Vinci" and *MT*'s being mistaken for the historian Mommsen; tells her Henri Bergson's 1911 *Laughter (Le Rire, 1900)* quotes two pages of *MT*'s account of telling an interviewer he and a twin were switched in the bath one later died--which is unknown. Writing Ronni Fiedler of *Harper's Magazine* (19 December 1973) on Stephen Darst's "Prufrock with a Baedeker" (in the January 1974 issue), quotes Darst's quotation of T. S. Eliot's words on *HF* and *MT*'s contribution to the American language (485; from familiar

Eliot sources not here stated). McLuhan adds, "As a man from St. Louis, Eliot regarded New England as relatively local compared to St. Louis and the Mark Twain territory it includes. The 'up-dating' process--which Eliot notes as having been performed by Dryden and Swift, on one hand, and Mark Twain, on the other--is to be understood as a *figure-ground* interplay. Dryden and Swift, in the age of Newton, stripped the rhetorical flowers from English, bringing it into relation with mathematics and astronomy. Mark Twain, in the age of the telegraph, retrieved the full tribal dialect of group-speech, the stripping away of the façade of written respectability and polish in favor of the audible-tactile involvement which came to fruition in jazz."

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#### An Additional Entry

REGAL, PHILIP J. *The Anatomy of Judgment*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1990. A most learned and (to my mind) sophisticated book on critical thinking from a distinguished biologist. Several times he cites Huck Finn as an example of what insight and objectivity even an uneducated mind in an observant personality can achieve. Indeed, Regal closes (pp. 330-31) with Huck as a model for common-sense character.

Louis J. Budd  
Duke University  
(Professor Emeritus)

**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, 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 more than 350. Current officers are: President--Pascal Covici, Jr.; Vice President--David E. E. Sloane; Executive Coordinator--Michael J. Kiskis; Executive Committee--Alan Gribben, Susan K. Harris, and Shelley Fisher Fishkin. Past Presidents: Louis J. Budd, Alan Gribben. Past Executive Coordinators: Everett Emerson, James D. Wilson. 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 begs your patient indulgence. New subscribers may wish to begin with the 1989 issues rather than the 1992. 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). 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: Michael J. Kiskis  
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FULFILLMENT NOTICE: The two 1989 issues (27:1 and 27:2) of the *Mark Twain Journal* were mailed to subscribers in December 1991. The Editor hopes to mail the two 1990 issues (28:1 and 28:2) by April 1992.

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James S. Leonard, Editor  
*Mark Twain Circular*  
English Department  
The Citadel  
Charleston, SC 29409