



Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

Volume 10

October–December 1996

Number 4

Tribute to Jim Wilson

Well-known Mark Twain scholar James D. Wilson died on Nov. 16 of cancer. Among many other accomplishments, he was the author of *A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Mark Twain* (G.K. Hall, 1987) and coeditor of *The Mark Twain Encyclopedia*. —J.S.L.

Lawrence I. Berkove
U of Mich.-Dearborn

Jim Wilson should have had more years. He had just

presented an excellent paper at a conference and was working on a book manuscript on Mark Twain and religion when the cancer he had been fighting for years, and which we all thought he had overcome, suddenly reappeared and cut his life short. At the time of his untimely death, he was at the top of his form. He had established himself as one of the leading Twain scholars. His writings were insightful, sound, and free of cant and jargon. Everyone who knew his work respected it and looked forward to years more of his productivity.

There are scholars and there are scholars. Jim was not just a scholar; he was a whole person, and an admirable one. He was deeply devoted to his family and took pleasure in the accomplishments of his wife and children. He was a dedicated teacher, a loyal friend, and a generous and helpful colleague. His religion meant a great deal to him, and his reflections on it inspired his personality and his work

and gave both a kind of intense integrity. For those of us privileged to have known him, there is a big gap now where Jim stood yesterday.

Gretchen Sharlow
Director, Elmira C
Center for Mark
Twain Studies

Jim Wilson's wife Mary Ann has informed me that The University of Southwestern

Louisiana is establishing a collection of Mark Twain books to memorialize Jim. Those wishing to participate may send contributions to the James D. Wilson Collection, English Department, Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, P.O. Box 44691, Lafayette, LA 70504.

We at the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies are grief-stricken at the loss of Jim Wilson. It was Jim's wish that we proceed with the conference on "The State of Mark Twain Studies" to celebrate the centennial of *Following the Equator* and to honor Hamlin Hill upon the occasion of his retirement. We will do this in memory of our dear friend.

Mark Twain at MLA 1996

The Mark Twain Circle will sponsor two formal panels at the 1996 Modern Language Association

conference:

I. "Mark Twain Influences Washington—And the Reverse!" Sunday, Dec. 29, 10:15–11:30 a.m.; Holmes, Sheraton Washington.

Presiding: Shelley Fisher Fishkin (U of Texas)

Speakers:

1. Jeffrey Steinbrink (Franklin and Marshall C), "Mr. Clemens Goes to Washington—The Early Years"

2. Gregg Camfield (U of the Pacific), "No Native Criminal Class Except Congress: Twain's Washington Correspondence"

3. Jim Zwick (Syracuse U), "Mark Twain on Imperial Washington, 1900-1910"

II. "Mark Twain's Early Critics: Formative Influences or Distorters?" Monday, Dec. 30, 12:00 p.m.–1:15 p.m.; Marshall, Sheraton Washington.

Presiding: Michael Kiskis (Elmira C)

Speakers:

1. David Barrow (Northern Illinois U) "De-volving DeVoto"

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2. John Bird (Winthrop U), "The Myth of Metaphor and Twain Studies"

These papers will form the basis of an extended discussion.

The Circle will also sponsor breakfast and cocktail-hour sessions in the Twain Suite. Siva Vaidhyanathan (U of Texas) will present "Double Voices, Double Talk: Mark Twain and the American Copyright"; David Sanders (St. John Fisher) will present "'Moses and the Bulrushers': The Exodus Saga in *Huckleberry Finn*." These informal, cordial gatherings in the suite allow time for extended collegial discussions. This year the suite will be in the names of Michael Kiskis and Tom Tenney.

Mark Twain at SAMLA

James Leonard
The Citadel

The Mark Twain Circle's session at the November 1996 SAMLA meeting—featuring dynamite presentations by Michael Kiskis, David Sloane, Victor Doyno, and Joseph Alvarez—drew a crowd of 42 Twainians, baffling the best laid plans of the SAMLA functionaries, who had scheduled the session in a room that was set up for only about 30.

At a business meeting following the papers, John Bird (Winthrop U) was elected Chair for 1997, and Allison Ensor (U of Tennessee) was elected Secretary. The nominating committee for 1997 will be chaired by Janet Gabler-Hover (Georgia State U); other members: Alan Gribben (Auburn U, Montgomery) and James Leonard (The Citadel).

The session topic for 1997 will be "Mark Twain at the End of the Century."

Send papers or proposals to:

John Bird
English Dept.
Winthrop University
Rock Hill, SC 29733

Mark Twain Circular and "About Mark Twain"

1995 (Vol. 9) Index

Wesley Britton
Sherman, TX

This index updates the ongoing index of items in the *Circular* and "About Mark Twain." Each item is listed by its initials (see below) followed by the page number on which the item appears. Items listed in the annotated "About Mark Twain" section are indicated by "AMT" followed by the month and page numbers. (Example: "Blair, Walter AMT M/A 10").

Both authors and subject matter are listed; Circle business, calls for papers, and conference information are not indexed.

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July/Sept. (J/S) No. 3

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of the Mark Twain Circle of America.

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The Citadel

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Reconfiguring the *Circular* and the *Journal*

James Leonard
 Editor, *MT Circular*

the *Mark Twain Journal* will no longer automatically receive the *Mark Twain Circular* as part of their subscription; the *Circular* will be mailed only to members of the Mark Twain Circle. This will

mainly impact libraries since most individuals who subscribe to the *Journal* already are members of the Circle and therefore won't be affected. The separation of subscriptions will end a rather confusing situation for which the term "bookkeeping nightmare" is not entirely inappropriate.

What's in the *Circular*? The "About Mark Twain" feature will be shifted from the *Circular* to the *Journal*—whose editor, Thomas Tenney, is, after all, the author/compiler of "About Mark Twain." The *Circular* will instead include a current bibliography of Mark Twain publications. See "Mark Twain Bibliography," below. Otherwise, the *Circular* will be pretty much the same.

Mark Twain Bibliography

James Leonard
 Editor, *MT Circular*

Beginning with the Jan.-Mar. 1997 issue, the *Mark Twain Circular* will

include, as a regular feature, a current bibliography of publications by and about Mark Twain. This will be different from Tom Tenney's "About Mark Twain" in that it will emphasize currency rather than annotation. ("About Mark Twain" will continue to be produced by Prof. Tenney but will appear in the *Mark Twain Journal*; see "Reconfiguring the *Circular* and the *Journal*," above.)

To have your new publication included in the continuing bibliography, send me a bibliographic entry for it in standard MLA form. If you would like to send a short descriptive annotation, I'll include that, too. You needn't send the actual article or book. My preferred mode for receiving bibliographic entries—or any copy for the *Circular*—is e-mail. If you can't manage that, send a clear hard copy, and I'll scan or retype it.

The Clemens Cabin

Allison Ensor
U of Tennessee

A cabin said to be the genuine, original cabin in which the Clemens family lived at Pall Mall, Fentress County, TN, in the 1830's has been moved to the Museum of Appalachia (off I-75, near Norris, north of Knoxville) and restored. It was officially opened July 4. John Rice Irwin, the owner and director of the museum, first heard about the cabin six years ago. According to local press reports, he is "convinced he has the authentic home." He says there are deeds showing that John Marshall Clemens at one time owned the land where this cabin stood. I'm tempted to quote a few lines from *Innocents Abroad*, but it may be authentic even though as the local paper says, "it is not positively documented that the cabin belonged to the Clemens family."

New Publication

The Simon & Schuster Touchstone Books paperback edition of *The Bible According to Mark Twain*, edited by Howard Baetzhold and Joe McCullough, was officially published on Dec. 1. Patricia Hassler, in *Booklist*, has declared it to be "A fascinating panoply of wit, satire, farce, fantasy, lyricism, heresy, the sardonic and the controversial." Sean Kelly, co-author of *Saints Preserve Us and Who in Hell*, notes that "Mark Twain appears actually to have read the Bible, thus gaining a sinfully unfair advantage over many of its adherents and defenders." Dan Carpenter, Indianapolis *Star* points out that the book "captures the confounding spirit of Samuel Clemens and reminds us there's hardly a

fundamental issue about which he's not stirring up trouble, even in the afterlife, whose possibility he said he was willing to entertain." And Bill Maher of *Politically Incorrect* calls it "Still blasphemous after all these years. This is the Mark Twain least likely to be adapted into an attraction at Disneyland. Get your copy before your local [schoolboard] burns theirs." Now available in bookstores. For only \$14.00.

Call for Papers Mark Twain Circle

Modern Language Association:
Toronto, Ontario.

1. Two panels: any aspect of Mark Twain's work/life.
2. Three slots for individual presentations as part of the Mark Twain Suite program.

Inquiries to: Michael J. Kiskis,
Humanities Division, Elmira College,
Elmira, NY 14901; mjkkiskis@aol.com

Deadline for papers/proposals is
February 1, 1997.

Call for Papers The Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies

The Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies announces a call for papers for a conference on "The State of Mark Twain Studies," August 14-16, 1997. The conference will celebrate the centennial of the publication of *Following the Equator* and honor Hamlin Hill upon the occasion of his retirement.

Ten-page papers suitable for 20-minute presentations are invited on the following topics:

Mark Twain's Travels Abroad
Mark Twain's Travels at Home
Mark Twain in 19th Century
Popular Culture
Mark Twain's Style
Mark Twain's Politics
The Late Mark Twain
The Legacies of Mark Twain
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Papers will be read by juries without knowledge of authorship. Send papers in duplicate to:

Gretchen Sharlow, Director
Center for Mark Twain Studies
Elmira College
Elmira, NY 14901

Deadline: January 15, 1997.

Dates to Circle

December 27-30, 1996. Modern
Language Association Annual
Conference; Washington, DC.

March 13-16, 1997. ALA Symposium,
"American Autobiography"; Puerta
Vallarta, Mexico. Conference Director:
Michael J. Kiskis, Dept. Of English,
Elmira C, Elmira, NY 14901;
mjkkiskis@aol.com.

May 22-25, 1997. ALA Conference on
American Literature; Baltimore, MD.
Conference Director: Gloria Cronin,
English Dept., Brigham Young U, Provo,
UT 84602; croning@jkhbhr.c.byu.edu.

August 14-16, 1997. Conference at
Elmira College (Elmira, NY) sponsored
by the Elmira College Center for Mark
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Twain Studies." See "Call for Papers:
The Elmira College Center for Mark
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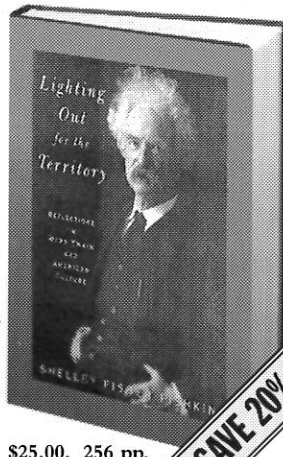
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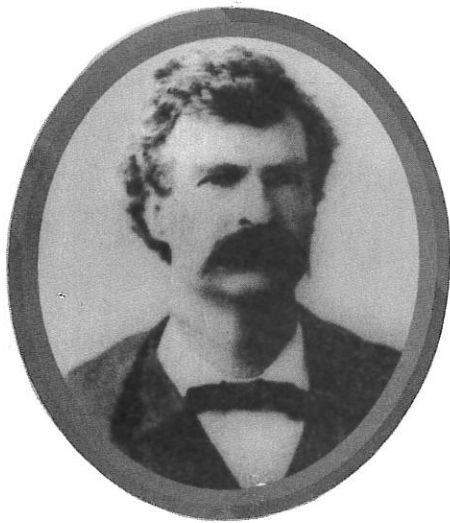
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MARK TWAIN AND WEST POINT

by PHILIP W. LEON



America's Favorite Storyteller at the United States Military Academy

MARK TWAIN visited West Point at least ten times between 1876 and 1890, sauntering about the academy grounds smoking his cigar or a corn-cob pipe, performing for an appreciative audience, and forming lasting friendships with faculty—many of whom had already achieved fame in the Civil War—and cadets who would later become the highest ranking officers in the army. Through archival sources such as cadet diaries, previously unpublished correspondence, newspapers, and official academy records, Philip W. Leon reveals Mark Twain's fascination with America's training ground for military leaders. *Mark Twain and West Point* includes all the known stories and speeches Mark Twain presented on these visits and discusses West Point's influence on his writings from this time.

"Leon heaps up materiel for foragers from many camps. The literary historian will find useful details on Twain's whereabouts and, more interestingly, on another platoon of acquaintances. . . . A literary scholar himself, he aims ultimately toward helping us read Twain." (LOUIS J. BUDD, *Professor Emeritus of English, Duke University*)

"Leon's meticulous study of Mark Twain's surprisingly sustained and extensive association with West Point has resulted in a fascinating book that will be extremely useful to literature and history students interested in the crosscurrents of nineteenth-century American culture." (JOSEPH T. COX, *Professor of English, United States Military Academy*)

"*Mark Twain and West Point* adds to our understanding of Twain's life and works, and the masculine world in which he lived; it extends our understanding of *A Connecticut Yankee*. This important study will appeal to Twain scholars and deserves a place in every library." (THOMAS A. TENNEY, *Editor, Mark Twain Journal*)

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Everything You Need to Know . . .

ABOUT THE CIRCULAR. The *Mark Twain Circular*, newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle, 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.

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 400. Current officers are displayed on p. 2. Past Presidents are Louis J. Budd, Alan Gribben, Pascal Covici, Jr., David E.E. Sloane, and Victor A. Doyno. Past Executive Coordinators: Everett Emerson, James D. Wilson, Michael J. Kiskis, and Laura Skandera-Trombley. 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. The *Mark Twain Circular* is published in cooperation with the *Mark Twain Journal*. 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), and the *Mark Twain Circular* is mailed (though often not in a very timely fashion) to *Journal* subscribers (usually bundled with *Journal* issues).

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 1993 issues rather than the 1996. 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.

[Note: The relation between the *Circular* and the *Journal* will change in Jan. 1997. See articles on p. 3.]

To: Prof. Joseph A. Alvarez
Exec. Coordinator, Mark Twain Circle
English Department
Central Piedmont Community College
Charlotte, NC 28204

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 for a non-U.S. address) made out to "Mark Twain Circle of America."

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To: *Mark Twain Journal*
English Department
The Citadel
Charleston, SC 29409

Please enter my subscription to the *Mark Twain Journal* for the year(s) circled: 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997.

I am not a member of the Mark Twain Circle. Subscription rates are \$15 for one year, \$28 for two years, \$43 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.

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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 1992 issues (30:1 and 30:2) and the Spring 1993 issue (31:1) of the *Mark Twain Journal* were mailed to subscribers in early September 1994. We hope to mail the Fall 1993 issue (31:2) and possibly the Spring 1994 issue (32:1) soon; we ask libraries not to claim these before January 1997. We're doing our best to catch up!
—Thomas A. Tenney (Editor, *Mark Twain Journal*)

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).

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James S. Leonard, Editor
Mark Twain Circular
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