



Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

Volume 12

July-September 1998

Number 3

The Circle at ALA

Laura Skandera-Trombley
Vice-President, MTCA

American
Literature
Association

Conference participants were greeted with blue skies and balmy weather in San Diego during the last week in May. The conference was held at the Bahia Hotel, Clara Clemens' last residence of note, and was well attended and generated several sessions that I have no doubt will be remembered as pivotal in terms of determining new directions in scholarship. Those interested in Mark Twain and American humor were privy to two excellent panels.

The first was "Machines, Illustrations, and Indian Wars: Mark Twain's Creative Process," chaired by Michael J. Kiskis. Papers by Jeff Steinbrink, Beverly David, and Kerry Driscoll suggested new approaches to our understanding of Twain's creative work with an eye toward the great care he took in composing and revising both his own persona and his prose. The second session, "Performing Dialect in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a round table," chaired by Laura Skandera-Trombley, was indeed a treat for both participants and audience members. John Bird and Dennis Eddings performed readings that were both fearsome and awe-inspiring. The power of their

oratory was such that David Sloane was moved to join the group of performers and did his rendition of Pap's angry tirade, which was well received by all.

On Thursday evening, conference participants were treated to a cruise on board the Evans Riverboat, sponsored by the Mark Twain Circle. On board, outgoing president Michael Kiskis raised a glass and toasted John C. Gerber and Carl Dolmetsch on their being recognized for their achievements in Twain studies: professors Gerber and Dolmetsch received Lifetime Achievement Awards. Additional toasts recognized and celebrated the incoming president Shelley Fisher Fishkin, who was unable to attend due to illness [see "Another Toast to Shelley Fisher Fishkin," below], and vice-president Laura Skandera-Trombley.

The series of toasts went toward fulfilling the two-drink minimum announced at the beginning of a very efficient business meeting. It is safe to say that a good time was had by all and enthusiasm for both the Twain Circle and Twain studies ran high throughout the four days of the conference.

A special note for those interested in Twain and American humor who would

like to participate in next year's ALA conference. Michael Kiskis and Laura Skandera-Trombley will be the co-directors of the Baltimore conference, and paper and panel proposals should be directed toward Laura Skandera-Trombley, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402.

Another Toast to Shelley Fisher Fishkin

James S. Leonard
Editor, MT Circular

Shelley
Fisher
Fishkin,
the new
President

of the Mark Twain Circle, is
Professor of American Studies and

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English at the University of Texas (Austin). She is well known to Twainians as General Editor of the Oxford Mark Twain, author of *Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African American Voices* and *Lighting Out for the Territory: Reflections on Mark Twain and American Culture*, and a frequent contributor to Mark Twain gatherings. She is also author of *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America*, and coeditor of *The Encyclopedia of Civil Rights in America*, of *People of the Book: Thirty Scholars Reflect on Their Jewish Identity*, and of *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*. The Vice-President/President-Elect during Shelley's term is Laura Skandera-Trombley, Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Coe College, former Executive Director of NEMLA, former Executive Coordinator of the Mark Twain Circle, and author of *Mark Twain in the Company of Women*. Outgoing president Michael Kiskis will replace Laura on the Executive Committee.

As indicated above, Shelley, due to illness, could not attend this year's American Literature Association conference to be "sworn in" as President of the Mark Twain Circle. As those who did make it to ALA and were present at the toasting of new Circle officers (aboard the Evans Riverboat) know, the illness that kept her away was breast cancer. During ALA she was recovering from surgery. Shelley discovered the lump (later revealed to be cancerous) herself, only six months after a mammogram which had shown nothing. She credits early discovery of the problem in part to her response to a former classmate's account (in the Yale alumni magazine) of the classmate's bout with breast cancer. Shelley hopes her openness about her own experience will similarly help prompt Twain Circle members and people they love to be vigilant about those life-saving self-exams. She is currently completing a course of

chemotherapy. This is a stressful process, to say the least; but thanks to early detection, the outlook is good, and Shelley should be ready for action as Circle president very soon. So here's to Shelley Fisher Fishkin, with thanks for her many excellent contributions to Mark Twain studies and all good wishes for a strong and speedy recovery.

Twain at MLA '98

The Mark Twain Circle will sponsor two panels at the 1998 Modern Language Association Conference in San Francisco (Dec. 27-30).

Session: The Author as Public Intellectual

Chair: Shelley Fisher Fishkin (U of Texas)

Participants: Siva Vaidhyanathan (U of Wisconsin); Jim Zwick (Syracuse U); Fred Kaplan (Queens C & CUNY Graduate Center); David Bradley

Session: New Perspectives on Established Works

Chair: Laura E. Skandera-Trombley (Coe C)

Papers:

1. "Mark Twain as Western Outlaw: Language and Manhood in *Roughing It* and *Life on the Mississippi*," Joseph L. Coulombe (U of Delaware)

2. "'a man nobody wouldn't be ashamed of': Drinking and Temperance in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*," Rosemarie L. Coste (U of Texas)

3. "'The Crying Defect of My Character': Hank Morgan, Mark Twain, and the Business of Determinism," Susanne Weil (Whittier C)

In addition to the Mark Twain Circle sessions, there will be a Mark Twain panel sponsored by the Society for the Study of Southern Literature:

Session: "Reassessing Mark Twain as a Southern Writer"

Chair: David B. Kesterson (U of North Texas)

Papers:

1. "Unframing the Vernacular Voice: Mark Twain and the Liberation of Southern Voices" Susan K. Harris (Penn State U).

2. "Sham Civilization and Its Discontents: Racial Caricature as Cultural Therapy in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*" Henry Wonham (U of Oregon).

3. "'Villagers of 1840-3' as Southern Microcosm," Hamlin Hill (Texas A & M).

Twain at SAMLA '98

The Mark Twain Circle will sponsor a session at the 1998 SAMLA Annual Conference, which will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, GA, November 5-7:

Session Topic: Mark Twain's Shorter Writings

Time: Saturday, Nov. 7, 8:00-9:30 a.m.

Chair: Allison R. Ensor (U of Tennessee, Knoxville)

Secretary: Janet Gabler-Hover (Georgia SU)

Panelists:

1. Peter H. West (Emory U), "One Hundred Years in Hadleyburg" (20 min.)

2. John Bird (Winthrop U), "Composing Metaphor in Mark Twain's Short Fiction" (20 min.)

3. Alan Gribben (Auburn U, Montgomery), "Mark Twain's Shortest Works: Wise Sayings and Quotable Maxims" (20 min.)

Respondent: Janet Gabler-Hover (Georgia SU) (10 min.)

Business Meeting (10 min.)

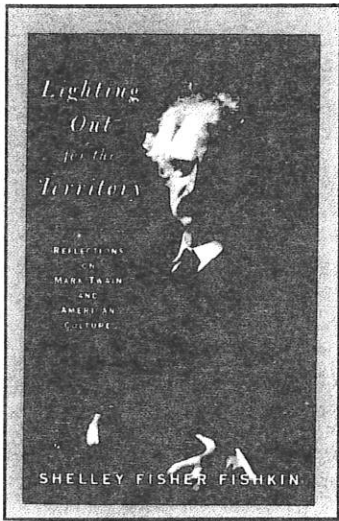
Nominating Committee: John Bird (Winthrop U), James S. Leonard (The Citadel), Alan Gribben, chair (Auburn U, Montgomery)

Last Call for Cancún

Dave Sloane is still looking for chairs, respondents, and even a few good papers or proposals for the AHSA/MTC Conference in Cancún, Mexico, Dec. 10-13, 1998. Contact Dave by e-mail at dees@charger.newhaven.edu. Information on the conference is on the AHSA website and on the ALA website, or by mail from Dave

SHELLEY FISHER FISHKIN

ON TWAIN, RACE, AND AMERICAN CULTURE



LIGHTING OUT FOR THE TERRITORY

Reflections on Mark Twain and American Culture

Shelley Fisher Fishkin explores how this son of slaveholders came to write one of the greatest anti-racist novels of all time—and why this remarkable odyssey is so often erased or ignored today.

"An energetic report on how Twain's attitude toward race developed, how his works have been used and abused, and how the image of himself that he so carefully invented has been coerced into making guest appearances in other people's fiction, movies, plays, even 'Star Trek: The Next Generation.'"

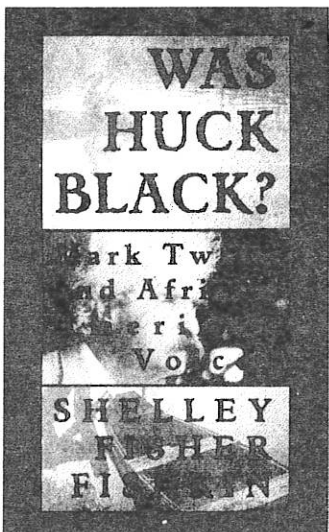
—*The Washington Post Book World*

"Easily the most courageous work on Mark Twain in recent memory...the kind of book that Mark Twain himself would have loved: it boils over with facts, wisdom, opinions, and speculations and fits no known literary genre."

—*Magill's Literary Annual*

"Ms. Fishkin's 'reflections on Mark Twain and American culture' are an illuminating companion to any consideration of Twain's work."

—*The New York Times Book Review*



WAS HUCK BLACK?

Mark Twain and African-American Voices

Shelley Fisher Fishkin argues that in *Huckleberry Finn*, more than in any other work, Mark Twain let African American voices, language, and rhetorical traditions play a major role in the creation of his art.

"A dazzling and highly persuasive bit of detective work."

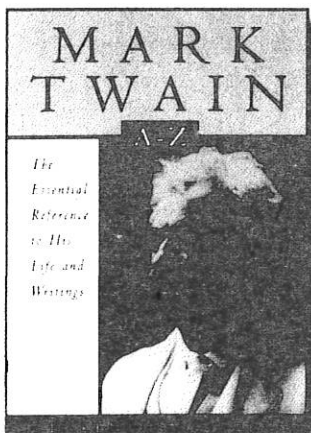
—*Henry Louis Gates, Jr.*

"A major addition to the understanding of a central work of American letters."

—*The New York Times*

"Fishkin's claim is strong and simple...and, so far as I am concerned, she is right....She brings the material together with lucidity, elegance, and a non-polemical judiciousness and poise."

—*London Review of Books*



ALSO OF INTEREST

MARK TWAIN A-Z

The Essential Reference to His Life and Writings

Edited by R. Kent Rasmussen

With over 1,200 entries and more than 130 illustrations, this remarkable guide includes detailed analyses of Mark Twain's writings, thousands of precise chapter citations and cross-references to related subjects, biographies of people whom he knew, places that he visited, newspapers and journals for which he wrote, and more.

"[A] remarkably thorough and coherent study that one prominent MT scholar finds 'impossible to overpraise;' it leaves another wishing 'our alphabet had more than twenty-six letters'....The index and chronology of MT's life are excellent."

—*Mark Twain Circular*

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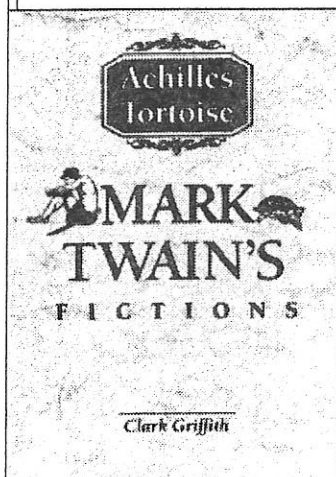
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NEW from *Alabama*

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CLARK GRIFFITH

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Covering the entire body of Mark Twain's fiction, Griffith defines and demonstrates Mark Twain's poetics, revealing his ability to create and sustain human laughter.

As he attempted to attain the comic resolution and comically transfigured

characters he yearned for, Twain forever played, for Griffith, the role of the Achilles of Zeno's paradox. Like the tortoise that Achilles cannot overtake in Zeno's tale, the richness of comic life forever remained outside Twain's grasp.

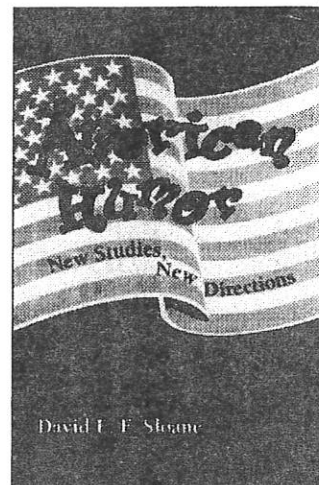
*"Achilles and the Tortoise is effortlessly witty yet built upon long cogitation with meticulous carpentry, fitting and refitting together the intricate sections of his argument. With deceptive simplicity yet, eventually, multilayered sophistication it keeps asking: Why is Mark Twain 'funny'? It culminates with a dazzling analysis of all three of the *Mysterious Stranger* fables, but the entire book conducts a challenging, original, and bracing experience."*—Louis Budd
Duke University

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EDITED BY DAVID E. E. SLOANE

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Call for Papers Twain at NEMLA '99

I'm chairing a panel called "Mark Twain at the Fin de Siecle" at next spring's North East MLA convention in Pittsburgh (April 16-17). I invite one-page abstracts by September 15 on any topic related to Mark Twain's later works or on Mark Twain's reception at the end of the present century. For more information about the conference, see NEMLA's website at:
www.anna-maria.edu/nemla

Thanks,
Kim Martin Long
Shippensburg U of Pennsylvania
Dept. of English, DHC 113
Shippensburg, PA 17257
(717) 532-1215
FAX: (717) 530-4025

Comprehensive Index

Thanks to the efforts of Wesley Britton, the *Mark Twain Circular* index has been brought up to date, and is available for browsing or downloading. A single e-text containing the indexes to vols. 1-11 (1987-97) is now available at TwainWeb, at the following URL:

<http://web.mit.edu/linguistics/www/forum/>

Just follow the link to the "Mark Twain Circle" page.

[From a Mark Twain Forum message by Taylor Roberts (3/3/98)]

Current Mark Twain Bibliography

James 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

Collins, Brian. *When In Doubt, Tell the Truth and other Quotations from Mark Twain*. New York: Columbia UP, 1996. Pp. xvii + 142. Cloth. \$19.95. ISBN 0-231-10498-7. [Reviewed on the Mark Twain Forum by Barabara Schmidt (Tarleton State U) on May 11, 1998]

Fulton, Joe B. *Mark Twain's Ethical Realism: The Aesthetics of Race, Class, and Gender*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1997. Pp. xii + 174. Bibliography, index. Cloth, 6-1/4" x 9-1/4". \$27.50. ISBN 0-8262-1144-5.

Heck, Peter J. *A Connecticut Yankee in Criminal Court: A Mark Twain Mystery*. New York: Berkley Prime Crime, 1996. Pp. viii + 311. Paper, 4-1/4" x 6-3/4". \$5.99. ISBN 0-425-16034-3.

—. *The Prince and the Prosecutor: A Mark Twain Mystery*. New York: Berkley Prime Crime, 1997. Pp. viii + 324. Cloth, 5-1/2" x 8-1/2". \$21.95. ISBN 0-425-15970-1.

Rasmussen, R. Kent. *The Quotable Mark Twain; His Essential Aphorisms, Witticisms, & Concise Opinions*. Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1997. Pp. xxvi + 356. Bibliography and index. Cloth. \$25.00. ISBN 0-8092-3088-7. [Reviewed on the Mark Twain Forum by Barbara Schmidt (Tarleton State U) on May 11, 1998]

Special Issue

The July/August 1998 (Vol. 8, No. 7/8) issue of *Firsts: The Book Collector's Magazine* contains the first of a two-part series on "Collecting Mark Twain," written by Kevin MacDonnell, of MacDonnell Rare Books, Austin, Texas. MacDonnell prepared all of the articles for this issue about Twain, including "The Leap to Fame," "A History of Twain Collecting," and "The Primary First Editions," (a book-by-book analysis of Twain's major works, including first edition identification and points of issue. The magazine is a 76-page glossy with spectacular color and black-and-white photos of Twain and his works. The cover of the current issue features a color photo of the cover of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and the issue is entitled "Summer with Mark Twain." The September issue of *Firsts* will present the second of two issues devoted to Mark Twain.

This is a magnificent issue which is destined to become an indispensable reference for years to come—as well as being a much sought-after collectible. The price of the magazine is \$4.50.

[Text prepared by Kevin Bochynski for the Mark Twain Forum.]

Dates to Circle

Nov. 5-7, 1998. South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference; Atlanta, GA. See "Twain at SAMLA '98" (p. 2).

Dec. 10-13, 1998. American Humor Studies / Mark Twain Studies Conference; Cancún, Mexico. See "Last Call for Cancún" (p. 3).

December 27-30, 1998. Modern Language Association Annual Conference; San Francisco, CA. See "Twain at MLA '98" (p. 2).

April 16-17, 1999. Northeast Modern Language Association Annual Conference; Pittsburgh, PA. See "Call for Papers: Twain at NEMLA '99" (p. 3).

Mark Twain Sites

What's Past, and Passing, and to Come

Mark Twain Museum (Hannibal, MO)

Henry H. Sweets, III
Director

Mark Twain Museum

*N e w s
R e l e a s e
— T o m
S a w y e r
M o v i e
P o s t e r*

Display: The David O. Selznick film version of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* made its screen debut sixty years ago in 1938. The Mark Twain Museum in Hannibal, Missouri is commemorating this release with a special exhibit featured throughout 1998.

This Mark Twain Museum exhibit features fifty original movie posters from the releases of the film in 1938, 1946, 1958, and 1966. These include movie posters used to

announce upcoming attractions and lobby cards in place while the movie was running. These are on loan from the collection of Mr. Nick Karanovich of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The posters are truly a world-wide collection and are quite rare. Examples from Argentina, Mexico, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, and Poland accompany American specimens.

About his collection, Karanovich related: "Most people who are film lovers care about the essence of the film, and some even become infatuated with the posters that promote the film. The portraits of certain actors, scenes from the film, or the graphic artistry enhance the viewer's remembrance of a meaningful cinematic experience. The poster is an important and enduring part of film history.

"When American movies were shown in foreign lands, the promoting posters had to be adapted to the people of that country and included the title in a foreign language and usually new graphics. Some foreign posters have attained historical significance." One Belgian poster has the name of the Cine Rex imprinted, a theater destroyed during World War II bombing.

The art on the posters is varied. Some used stills from the movie itself. Most use true artist's work and range from realistic to impressionistic.

The posters are accompanied by artifacts including a final shooting script for the movie, musical scores, souvenir booklets, and even an ice cream cup lid with movie advertising. Three items from the museum's collection have been added to Mr. Karanovich's materials: a "property bat" used in the cave scenes; one of Tommy Kelly's straw hats used in his role as

Tom; and a promotional water color set and coloring book.

Mark Twain Museum Director Henry Sweets notes: "This is an unprecedented opportunity to see such an extensive coverage of posters and artifacts for a single film. This display emphasizes the world-wide popularity of this film which depicts one of Mark Twain's best-known stories."

The Selznick *Tom Sawyer* was one of the first films to use Technicolor. It is an elaborate production and one of the best film versions of this novel. The film used a number of actors and actresses familiar to movie fans. Major roles were played as follows: Tom Sawyer, Tommy Kelly; Aunt Polly, Mae Robson; Injun Joe, Victor Jory; and Muff Potter, Walter Brennan.

In 1936, the motion picture crews came to Hannibal for background information. Hannibalians were very helpful in the research for this production. Following the release of the film, the studio purchased the John M. Clemens Law Office (Mark Twain's father) and presented it to the City of Hannibal.

In addition to the *Tom Sawyer* movie posters, new exhibits this year at the Mark Twain Museum include artifacts from the steamboat *Arabia*, which sank in 1856 and (until August 15) "Norman Rockwell's *Saturday Evening Post*," an exhibit of all 322 *Post* covers Rockwell painted.

The Mark Twain Museum properties include Mark Twain's Boyhood Home, the John M. Clemens Law Office, Grant's Drug Store, and three museum buildings. For more information, contact the museum at 573-221-9010 or fax 573-221-7975.

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 14 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, and Michael J. Kiskis. 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. 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 1997 issues rather than the 1998. 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. Joseph A. Alvarez
Exec. Coordinator, Mark Twain Circle
English Department
Central Piedmont Community College
Charlotte, NC 28204

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The *Mark Twain Circular* is the Newsletter
of the Mark Twain Circle of America.

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The Citadel

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 Spring issue of the *Mississippi Quarterly*).

The Mark Twain Circle has a new president, Shelley Fisher Fishkin (U of Texas, Austin), and a new vice-president, Laura Skandera-Trombley (Coe C); see "The Circle at ALA" (p. 1) and "Another Toast to Shelley Fisher Fishkin" (p. 1). Also, please note that the *Circular* editor has a new phone number.

Publication of the *Mark Twain Circular* is funded in part through a grant from the Citadel Development Foundation.

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