



The Mark Twain House & Museum



> A TIMELINE OF TWAIN'S LIFE AND WORK

- 1835 *November 30.* Samuel Langhorne Clemens is born in Florida, Missouri to John M. and Jane L. Clemens (their fifth surviving child). A small cabin, the Mark Twain birthplace, is preserved today as a state historic site.
Two weeks prior to his birth, Halley's Comet had passed by Earth. This rare celestial event would also mark the end of his life.
- 1838 Jervis Langdon, Clemens' future father-in-law, assists Frederick Douglass' escape from slavery; Langdon was an activist in the Underground Railroad, and his strong abolitionist sentiments were infused in his daughter, Olivia, Clemens' future wife.
- 1839 The family moves to Hannibal, Missouri, site of the current Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum.
- 1857 Clemens apprentices as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River.
- 1859 Clemens earns steamboat pilot license and works steadily as a river pilot on the Mississippi River between St. Louis and New Orleans.
- 1861 The American Civil War begins and Clemens' steamboat career ends with closing of Mississippi.
- 1862 Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation is first issued.
- 1863 Writing for various newspapers, Clemens adopts the pen name "Mark Twain," an old riverboat term which means the line between safe water and dangerous water.
- 1865 The Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution abolishes slavery and involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime.
- 1867 Twain publishes *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Stories*.
Meets Olivia "Livy" Langdon in New York City and attends a reading by Charles Dickens with her family.
- 1869 Publishes *The Innocents Abroad* about his travels in Europe and the Middle East. It is actually this work, along with his other travel writing, for which Twain is most recognized during his life.
- 1870 *February 2.* Marries Olivia Langdon in Elmira, New York. Son Langdon Clemens is born.
- 1871 Family moves to Hartford and rents a house in the Nook Farm neighborhood where they would later build their permanent home.
- 1872 Olivia Susan (Susy) Clemens born in Elmira. Sadly, son Langdon dies that same year.
Publishes *Roughing It*, about his travels in the "wild west." More than 75 years later, Warner Bros. cartoonist Chuck Jones creates Wile E. Coyote based on Twain's description of the animal as "a long, slim, sick and sorry-looking skeleton" that is "a living, breathing allegory of Want."
- 1873 The Clemens family buys land next to author Harriet Beecher Stowe's (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*) home and commissions architects Edward Tuckerman Potter and Alfred H. Thorp to design their new house.
The term "The Gilded Age" was coined by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner in their 1873 book, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, and references the extravagant displays of wealth and excess by America's upper class during the post-Civil War years of the late 19th century.
- 1874 Clara Langdon Clemens, daughter, born in Elmira.
The Clemens family moves into their new home.
- 1876 Publishes *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
- 1880 Publishes *A Tramp Abroad*.
Jane Lampton (Jean) Clemens, daughter, born in Elmira.
Twain makes the first of several investments in the "Paige Compositor" a typesetting machine. In total, he would invest more than \$300,000 (equal to millions today) and its failure would lead to his financial demise. The machine is on display today in the Museum.

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FACEBOOK FAN PAGE

The Mark Twain House & Museum

TWITTER

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BLOG

marktwainhouse.blogspot.com/

LOCATION

351 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut

Directions available on our website
www.marktwainhouse.org

HOURS OF OPERATION

Visitors should allow a minimum of two hours to tour the home & enjoy the museum.

Monday – Saturday: 9:30am to 5:30pm
Last tour leaves at 4:30pm

Sunday: Noon to 5:30pm
Last tour leaves at 4:30pm

Closed Tuesdays from January – March, New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve & Christmas Day



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- 1881 Hires Louis Comfort Tiffany and Associated Artists to decorate public rooms of Hartford home, including glasswork and stenciling.
Publishes *The Prince and the Pauper*.
- 1883 Publishes *Life on the Mississippi*.
- 1885 Publishes *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
Pays all expenses of a Warner McGuinn, the first black student at Yale Law School, who later becomes a founder of the NAACP and a mentor for Thurgood Marshall, the first black justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1889 Publishes *A Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.
- 1891 Financial hardship forces the Clemens family to leave Hartford home for a less expensive life in Europe.
- 1894 Publishes *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.
Declares bankruptcy.
Publishes *Tom Sawyer Abroad*.
Meets deafblind activist Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Sullivan. It is Twain who is credited with calling Sullivan a "miracle worker," a nickname which later became the inspiration for Tony-winning writer William Gibson's play and movie.
- 1896 Susy Clemens returns to Hartford, falls ill and dies. The Clemens family never returns to the house.
Publishes *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*.
- 1897 Publishes *Following the Equator*.
Pens his now famous remark "The report of my death was an exaggeration," after a reporter was sent to investigate whether he had died. In fact, it was his cousin who was seriously ill.
- 1903 The Clemenses sell the Hartford home to the Bissells.
- 1904 Livy dies in Florence, Italy.
- 1906 Publishes *Eve's Diary*.
Testifies before Congress for copyright legislation, wearing the white suit that would ironically become his trademark.
- 1909 Says: "I came in with Halley's Comet in 1835. It is coming again next year, and I expect to go out with it. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's Comet. The Almighty has said, no doubt: 'Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together.'"
- 1910 *April 21*. As he predicted, Samuel Clemens dies at age 74, the same year Halley's Comet once again passes by Earth.
- 1927 The Friends of Hartford save the house from a developer and from 1931 to 1950 the home serves as a branch of The Hartford Public Library, as well as an apartment building.
- 1935 Ernest Hemingway writes, "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*."
- 1956 William Faulkner calls Twain "the father of American literature."
- 1960 Restorations of the home begin in earnest as preparations are made for the 100th anniversary in 1974.
- 1963 The Mark Twain House is designated a National Historic Landmark, one of the first 100 properties to be so honored.
- 1997 The City of Hartford makes it possible for the museum to acquire the property to restore much of Twain's original holdings and to build a new museum center.
- 2003 The Museum Center, designed by Robert A.M. Stern, opens to the public as the nation's first LEED-certified museum.