



Samuel L. Clemens, the future Mark Twain, was born when Halley's Comet was in the skies. He died during the comet's return 74 years later. In between, Clemens traveled the world and had many experiences as he passed from typesetter to river pilot, prospector, newspaper reporter, lecturer, author, publisher, businessman and family man. On this page you will find general information on Mark Twain, including a timeline of his life, genealogy, and publishing career.

Here is a brief chronology of the life of Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain.

- 1835** Born prematurely at Florida, Missouri, November 30 to Judge John Marshall and Jane Lampton Clemens. Halley's Comet was in the skies above.
- 1839** Family moved to Hannibal, Missouri, where Judge J.M. Clemens, Samuel's father, operated general store.
- 1842-47** Spent summers at Uncle Quarles's farm near Florida, Mo
- 1843-44** Family moved into house known as Mark Twain Boyhood Home.
- 1846-47** Poverty forced family to move out of boyhood home; moved in with Dr. Grant's family above Grant's Drug Store in exchange for Jane's services as a cook.
- 1847 March 24** Judge Clemens died. Family moves back to Boyhood Home. Sam left school, made apprentice at Hannibal Gazette.
- 1848** Sam Clemens apprenticed to Joseph Ament of Missouri *Courier* newspaper.
- 1850** Elder brother Orion returned to Hannibal in September, purchased *Western Union* newspaper, Sam began working for his brother in January 1851. Joined Cadets of Temperance. Wrote "A Gallant Fireman," his earliest known published work.
- 1852** Sam edited Orion's newspaper while Orion was on trip. Sam submitted two sketches to Saturday Evening Post for no pay. His sketch, "The Dandy Frightening the Squatter," was published in the May 1 issue of Carpet-Bag of Boston, Massachusetts.
- 1853** Sam left Hannibal in June to become a journeyman printer in St. Louis, New York and Philadelphia. Orion took their mother, Jane Clemens, and Henry Clemens to Iowa, ending Clemens family residence in Hannibal.
- 1854** Sam visited Washington, DC in February. Spent summer in Muscatine, Iowa, with brother Orion on *Muscatine Journal*.
- 1855** Winter and spring in St. Louis. Went to work for brother Orion for Orion's *Daily Post*, located in Keokuk, Iowa until fall of 1856.
- 1856** In Cincinnati, Ohio, as assistant in job printing shop.
- 1857** Left Cincinnati Feb. 16, in April became apprentice river pilot under Captain Horace Bixby of the *Paul Jones*.
- 1858** Henry died June 21 of injuries following a June 13 boiler explosion on the *Pennsylvania*.
- 1859** April 9 – Clemens fully licensed to pilot steamboats "to and from St. Louis and New Orleans." By 1861 had served as "a good average" pilot on at least a dozen boats..
- 1861** Became a Freemason. River days ended with start of Civil War. Joined the Hannibal Home Guard, resigned after two weeks (recalled in his story "A Private History of a Campaign that Failed.") Traveled by stage coach to Carson City, Nevada, with Orion who had been appointed Sec. to the Territorial Gov. of Nevada, James Nye.

1862 After brief stint as a silver miner, Sam Clemens settled in as a reporter on the Virginia City, Nevada *Territorial Enterprise* in October, after sending in contributions (now lost) signed "Josh."

1863 February 3--First used pen name Mark Twain on *Enterprise*.

1864 Left for California in May, to escape prosecution for dueling. Began working for San Francisco *Call*.

1865 Visited Jackass Hill in California where he heard the Jumping Frog story; tried gold mining. "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" published in 18 November issue of New York *Saturday Press*.

1866 Worked for Sacramento *Union*, sent by the paper as a correspondent to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), commissioned to write 25 letters. Upon return to California gave his first lecture on trip experiences in October.

1867 Went to New York via Nicaragua. Made Midwest lecture tour that included stops in St. Louis, Hannibal, Quincy and Keokuk. *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, Clemens's first book, published. Excursion trip on board steamer Quaker City to Europe and the Holy Lands. Brief period as secretary to Senator Stewart of Nevada in Washington, DC. Met Olivia Langdon in New York on December 27.

1868 Courted and proposed to Livy, winning her consent in November. Traveled to California to obtain the release of some of his letters published in newspapers there. First meeting with Ulysses S. Grant. Midwest lecture tour in November and December.

1869 Engaged to Olivia Louise Langdon of Elmira, New York on February 4. In August bought one-third interest in Buffalo *Express* newspaper with a loan from Jervis Langdon and started work as an editor. *The Innocents Abroad* published. Lecture tour November to January, 1870.

1870 Married Olivia Langdon in Elmira on February 2, 1870. Moved into Buffalo home, a wedding gift from Jervis Langdon. Son, Langdon, born November 7.

1871 Trip to London. Sold home and interest in Buffalo *Express* at a loss. Moved to Hartford, Conn. in October. Received U.S. patent for adjustable garment strap. For next two decades, Clemens' family lived in Hartford and spent their summers at Quarry Farm in Elmira.

1872 Daughter, Susy, born March 19. Started large house preserved today as Mark Twain House in Hartford; son Langdon died June 2 of diphtheria; *Roughing It* published. Visited London to lecture in the fall.

1873 Received patent for self-pasting scrapbook, one invention that made money for Mark Twain. Joins Monday Evening Club. *The Gilded Age* published. Took family to England and Scotland for 5 months.

1874 Daughter Clara born June 8. Family moved into newly completed home.

1875 *Sketches, New and Old* published.

1876 *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* published.

1877 Speaker at John Greenleaf Whittier's 70th birthday celebration.

1878-79 Traveled with family to Europe: Heidelberg, Alps, Italy, Munich.

1880 Made Canadian lecture circuit. *A Tramp Abroad* published. Daughter Jean born July 26.

1881 First investment in Paige typesetting machine. *The Prince and the Pauper* published.

1882 Made trip up the Mississippi from New Orleans to Minnesota to refresh memory and gather information for his writing. Visited Hannibal.

1883 *Life on the Mississippi* published.

1884 Founded publishing house, Charles L. Webster & Co., named for a nephew by marriage. National lecture tour with George Washington Cable, November to February 1885.

1885 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* published. Mark Twain's publishing firm released best-selling *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, an autobiography that returned more than \$350,000 to the Grant family.

1888 Received Master of Arts degree from Yale University.

1889 Met Rudyard Kipling in Elmira, New York. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* published.

1890 Visited ailing mother in Keokuk, Iowa. Later attended her funeral in Hannibal.

1891 *Mark Twain's Memory Builder Game* put on the market, his third patent. Ended residence in Hartford, shut down Clemens home there, returned with family to Europe. Stopped payments on Paige Compositor.

1892 In France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy. Rented Villa Viviani near Florence. *The American Claimant* published. Dines with Kaiser Wilhelm II.

1893 Speaking successes earned Twain title "Belle of New York." *The £1,000,000 Bank-Note and Other New Stories* published. Moved family to Berlin. Clemens went to New York in September.

1894 Clemens's publishing firm declared bankruptcy following Panic of 1893. Family moved to France. Travelled between Paris and New York repeatedly on business, as HH Rogers disentangled him from Webster & Co. and the Paige typesetter. *Tom Sawyer Abroad* and *The Tragedy of Pudd'n'head Wilson* published.

1895 Clemens, facing personal bankruptcy, left on round-the-world lecture tour accompanied by Livy and Clara to pay off debts. Lectured across the US, on the Pacific Coast, in Australia and New Zealand.

1896 Visited India, Ceylon, South Africa, ended tour in London. Daughter Susy died of meningitis August 18. Jean diagnosed with epilepsy. *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* published.

1897 *Following the Equator, How to Tell a Story and Other Essays* published. Lived in London, Switzerland and Vienna. Orion Clemens died December 11 in Keokuk, Iowa.

1898 Paid last of debts in full. Lived in Vienna and Kaltenleutgeben, Austria.

1899 Lived in London, visited Budapest, Prague, Sweden.

1900 Traveled to England to argue copyright law before House of Lords. Lived in London before returning to New York in October. "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg and Other Stories and Essays" published.

1901 Received honorary doctorate degree at Yale University. "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" pub. in February. Moved to Riverdale, N.Y.

1902 Visited Florida, the Caribbean, and the Midwest. Last visit to Hannibal, May 29 to June 1. Handed out graduation diplomas to Hannibal High School graduating class. On to Columbia, Missouri, to receive honorary Doctorate Degree from University of Missouri. Livy's health deteriorated. Hired Isabel V Lyon as Livy's secretary, soon to be Clemens's secretary.

1903 Sailed for Florence, Italy with Olivia, who was very ill. Rented Villa di Quarto. Harper & Brothers acquired exclusive rights to all of Mark Twain's works.

1904 Began dictating autobiography to Lyon, Jean typed the copy. Olivia died June 5; returned to New York, lived in brownstone at 21 Fifth Avenue. "The Diaries of Adam and Eve" published. Clara has nervous breakdown.

1905 Dined with Theodore Roosevelt at White House. Spent summer in Dublin, New Hampshire, with Jean. 70th birthday dinner at Delmonico's in New York. Wrote "The War Prayer." Biographer Albert Bigelow Paine joined family at their house.

1906 Selections from Clemens's *Autobiography* appear in the North American Review. Addressed congressional committees on copyrights. Commissioned new house in Redding, Connecticut. "What Is Man" printed

anonymously for private distribution. *The \$30,000 Bequest and Other Stories* published. In October Jean sent to epilepsy colony in Katonah, NY, where she remained until April 1909.

1907 Lived in New York City and Tuxedo Park, NY. *Christian Science* and *Chapters From My Autobiography* published. Traveled to Oxford University in England to receive honorary doctorate.

1908 Moved into his last house, Stormfield, at Redding, Connecticut on June 18. Visitors included Helen Keller and Laura Hawkins Frazer (model for Becky Thatcher). Visited Bermuda. Formed the Angelfish Club, for young girls to meet regularly at his house to play cards.

1909 Fired Isabel Lyon and her new husband, accusing them of embezzlement. Jean rejoined Clemens at Stormfield in April. H.H. Rogers, Clemens's friend and financial savior, died in New York City May 19. *Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* published, the last book Clemens's published during his lifetime. Daughter Clara married Ossip Gabrilowitsch (1878-1936), a Russian concert pianist and conductor, at Stormfield, October 6. Daughter Jean died December 24 of heart failure. Delivered his last public speech. Diagnosed with heart disease.

1910 Last trip; went to Bermuda for health. Heart complications set in; left with Paine for NY on April 12, returned home to Stormfield, died April 21. Buried in wife's family's plot, Woodlawn Cemetery, Elmira, New York. Halley's Comet was in skies again. Nina Gabrilowitsch, Clemens's last direct descendant, born August 19. *Speeches*, with an introduction by Clemens's friend William Dean Howells, published posthumously by Harper and Brothers.

1931 Clara's memoir *My Father, Mark Twain* published.

1944 Clara married Jacques Samossoud (1894-1966), Russian composer.

1962 Clara died, after bequeathing Clemens's personal papers to University of California at Berkeley—now housed in the Bancroft Library

1966 Nina Gabrilowitsch, Clemens's only grandchild, died January 16, an alcoholic in a Los Angeles hotel, leaving no direct posterity.