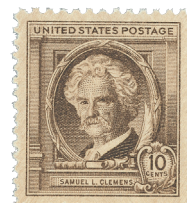


This Day in History... November 30, 1835

Birth of Acclaimed Writer Mark Twain

On November 30, 1835, Samuel Clemens (known by his pen name, Mark Twain) was born in Florida, Missouri.

When he was four years old, Clemens's family moved to Hannibal, Missouri, along the banks of the mighty Mississippi River. It was a bustling town where steamboats arrived three times a day. Circuses and minstrel shows visited often and craftsmen made their daily work into entertainment for passersby. Clemens reveled in the culture of his town and the river that made it thrive. As a young man, Clemens met a steamboat pilot named Horace Bixby. That's when he decided to become one of the best pilots on the river.



Twain is considered the "greatest humorist of his age."



William Faulkner called Twain the "father of American literature."

Clemens attended school until he was 12, a year after his father died. To help provide for his family, Clemens worked as an apprentice printer at the *Hannibal Courier*. Three years later, he began working at the *Hannibal Western Union* as a printer, and occasional writer and editor. At age 21 he realized a lifelong dream – he began training as a steamboat pilot. He earned his license two years later and found the first great success of his life. Clemens loved the excitement and notoriety. But it was cut short by the start of the Civil War, when business travel all but halted on the river. Clemens briefly joined the Confederacy until his unit disbanded after just a few weeks.

In search of excitement and fortunes, Clemens traveled west. First, he tried his hand at prospecting, but found little success. Needing to support himself and his family back home, Clemens took a job as a reporter at the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*. It was at this time he adopted his pen name, Mark Twain, which is steamboat slang for 12 feet of water. Twain quickly became known as one of the best story tellers in the west. His unique, witty style caught people's interest.

Twain first appeared on the national stage in 1865, when his short story about life in a mining camp, "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," was printed in newspapers and magazines all around America. Two years later, Twain went on a five-month cruise to the Mediterranean. During that trip he wrote a series of humorous articles for US newspapers that were compiled in his first book, *The Innocents Abroad*. The book became a best seller, and at 34 Twain was one of the country's most popular writers.



Twain reportedly named Tom Sawyer after a heroic San Francisco fireman.



"All modern American literature comes from... Huckleberry Finn." – Ernest Hemingway

Twain's most famous work, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, was published in 1876. He based the fictional town of St. Petersburg on his childhood home of Hannibal. He began working on *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* shortly after, but frequently set it aside to work on other projects. Among these were *The Prince and the Pauper*, and *Life on the Mississippi*. He also helped President Ulysses S. Grant publish his memoirs.

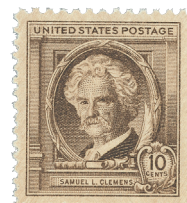
Everywhere he went, Twain was a celebrity. He received a number of public honors in his later years, including degrees from Oxford and Yale. He also traveled the world on a lecture tour and continued writing until his death in 1910.

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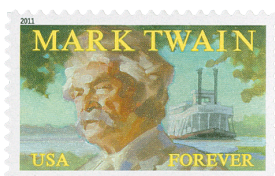
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