



# Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies



## The Trouble Begins at Eight

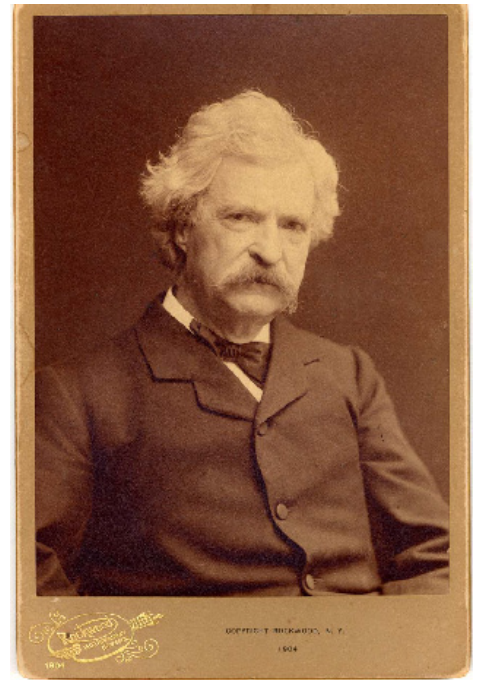
Fall 2007 Lecture Series

Wednesday, September 19th, 2007, in the Barn at Quarry Farm, 8 p.m.

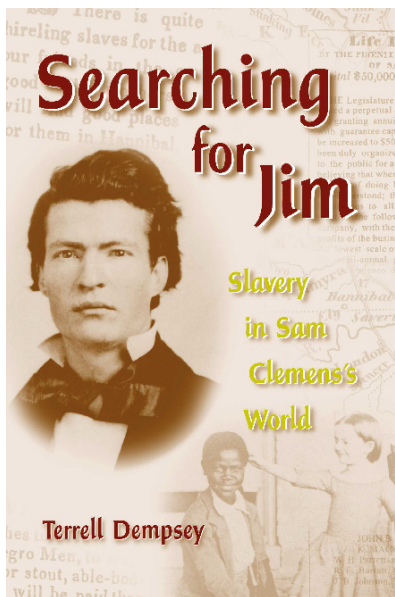
Mark Twain's *Annus Horribilis* of 1908

Laura Skandera Trombley; President, Pitzer College

Since the early days of Twain biography there have been great debates about the nature of Samuel Clemens' final years. Scholars have speculated whether Clemens' last decade was ruled by a growing misanthropy or if he retained his keen sense of humor and social commentary. The era of Mark Twain scholarship began when Clemens' last decade was first examined in depth by Hamlin Hill in his *Mark Twain: God's Fool* (1973). Hill created a furor in Twain circles with his portrayal of Clemens as a misguided King Lear spewing bitterness and alienating those closest to him with the exception of the few sycophants able to weather his storms. Hill's work was groundbreaking and Twain critics have reacted to it, positively and negatively, ever since. Most recently Karen Lystra has argued in *Dangerous Intimacy* (2004) that Hill erred in his characterization about the bleakness of Clemens' last years and that this "myth" should be put to rest. In Lystra's view, Clemens' optimism and wit remained intact until the end. As interesting as these diametrically opposed and impassioned arguments have been, what has misinformed them is that to date no one has ever determined what actually happened during Clemens' *annus horribilis* of 1908-1909.



Doors open at 7:30. *The Trouble Begins at Eight.*



Wednesday, October 3rd, 2007 in the Barn at Quarry Farm, 8 p.m.

*Searching for Jim: Slavery in Sam Clemens's World*

Terrell Dempsey, Independent Scholar

*Searching for Jim* is the ground-breaking, untold story of Mark Twain and the world of slavery that produced him. Despite Twain's remarks to the contrary in his autobiography, slavery was very much a part of his early life. Dempsey has uncovered a wealth of newspaper accounts, legal documents, 19th-century abolitionist and pro-slavery narratives, Clemens family papers, church and census records revealing that Twain's life, from the ages of twelve to seventeen was intertwined with the lives of the slaves around him in a world fraught with conflict with abolitionists.

Doors open at 7:30. *The Trouble Begins at Eight.*

(More on reverse side.)



# The Trouble Begins at Eight

Fall 2007 Lecture Series



Wednesday, October 10th, 2007 in the Barn at Quarry Farm at 8 p.m.

Mark Twain's Interviews: The Final Report

Gary F. Scharnhorst, Distinguished Professor  
of English, University of New Mexico



Courtesy of Kevin Mac Donnell.

Mark Twain's interviews, all dated between 1871 and 1910 and recently collected, shed new light on his views on war and military imperialism, on race and racism, and on his theories about humor. More specifically, in his interviews he was outspoken in his opposition to the war in the Philippines and military aggression; he expressed views on the subject of race consistent with those of a 19th-century progressive; and he offered his fullest exposition of his theories of humor.

Light refreshments will precede this closing lecture. Doors open at 7:30. *The Trouble Begins at Eight.*

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Wednesday, November 28th, 2007 in Hamilton Hall at 7 p.m.

Mark Twain's 172nd Birthday Celebration

Escaping in Style: Gender Evasion in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Linda A. Morris, Professor Emerita of English  
University of California, Davis

This talk will explore the meaning of the multiple instances of cross-dressing in the "evasion" episode that concludes *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. It will consider the racial and gender exchanges that emerge from the costumes the three main characters assume in the ending, then broaden out to explore other key instances of cross-dressing in this novel as well as elsewhere in Mark Twain's work.



Enjoy birthday cake and punch following the lecture.



Unable to attend our lecture series? Why not listen online?

Within a week of each lecture, go to <http://www.elmira.edu/twain>. Click on The Center for Mark Twain Studies and then on *The Trouble Begins at Eight*. Scroll down and click on the link for the appropriate audio file where live audio recordings of lectures will be available (with individual speakers' permission).

Directions to Quarry Farm for local attendees:

From Elmira College, head east on Washington across the Clemens Center Parkway to Sullivan Street. Turn right on Sullivan. Turn left on East Avenue. Turn left on Crane Road. Quarry Farm will be on your left. Please park on the grassy area behind the Barn.

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