



The Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies proudly presents The Park Church Summer Lecture Series



Portrait of Thomas K. Beecher

Although Mark Twain's religious skepticism is well-known, some of his closest friends were clergymen and persons with a strong faith. In Elmira, New York, Twain became good friends with a most unusual clergyman, the Rev. Thomas K. Beecher, pastor of The Park Church, of which Jervis Langdon, Twain's father-in-law, was a founding member.

Please join us for two nights of lectures at The Park Church, one of the most important historical and cultural landmarks in American religious history and Mark Twain Studies.

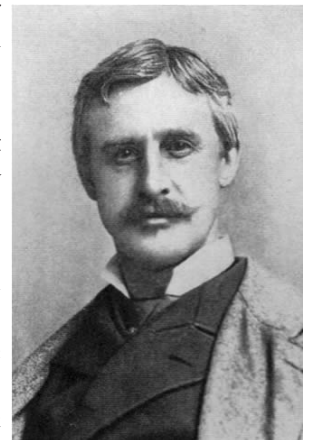
Doors open at 7:00 p.m. for guided tours of The Park Church
Lectures start at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 3rd at the Park Church

7:30 p.m.

'Never Be In A Hurry To Believe': Did Sermons Joseph Twichell Preached at The Park Church Save Huck Finn's Soul? Dwayne Eutsey, *Independent Scholar*

The Rev. Joseph Twichell, Mark Twain's close friend and pastor in Hartford, visited Elmira several times at key moments in Twain's personal life. He co-officiated Twain's marriage to Olivia Langdon with Park Church's pastor, Thomas Beecher. He was there on sadder occasions as well, officiating years later the funerals of Twain's beloved Olivia and daughter Susy. When the Congregationalist minister preached two consecutive Sundays at Park Church in April 1876, just as Twain was formulating *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, did Twichell's open-minded Christianity play an important role in developing Twain's literary masterpiece as well? The two friends unquestionably stoked the flame of literary inspiration in each other. As an 1874 article observed, "Mr. Twichell sometimes gains ideas from his companion which he embodies in his sermons and Mark Twain obtains information from his pastor which he works up into comical and humorous stories." Eutsey will examine how two eulogy sermons Twichell preached at Park Church on the passing of his mentor (and controversial theologian) Horace Bushnell may have contributed to the deep and complicated religious undercurrents coursing through the heart of Twain's classic novel.



Portrait of Joseph Twichell

Dwayne Eutsey is an independent scholar researching Mark Twain's complex religious views, with a particular focus on how they were influenced by various liberal religious movements of Twain's era. Currently working on a book on the topic, tentatively entitled *There is No Humor in Heaven: Liberal Religion's Influence on Mark Twain's Life and Writing*, Eutsey has visited Elmira several times as a Quarry Farm Research Fellow and as a presenter at conferences and lectures. A professional writer living with his family on Maryland's Eastern Shore, he has an M.A. in Liberal Studies from Georgetown University and a BA in English from the University of Maryland at College Park.

Wednesday, August 10 at The Park Church

7:30 p.m.

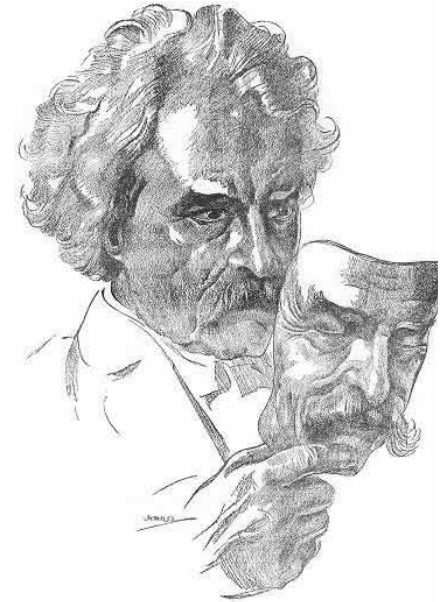
“Everybody Drinks Water: Bridging The Generation Divide in Mark Twain”

A.B. Effgen, *Boston University*

Close your eyes and picture Mark Twain. It seems like a straightforward image, and yet, in a college class entitled “The Invention of Mark Twain,” freshman students at Boston University debated the origin and interpretation of an American icon. The life of Samuel Langhorne Clemens began in the age of steam, and finished at the dawn of flight. In his time he watched the railroad cross the United States, the automobile replace the horse, and the photograph become a motion picture. With similar progress modern Americans have witnessed many facets of their life “go digital”: interconnected to a streaming media that seemed like science fiction just thirty years ago. The Millennial Generation has grown up knowing nothing else but life in a search engine.

This presentation for the Park Church will explore our generational preconceptions picturing Mark Twain in stage performance, photography, illustration, and several forms of composition (fiction, memoir, and criticism). Twain once wrote, “My books are water; those of the great geniuses is wine. Everybody drinks water.” We’ll discuss the nature of our thirst in an age of Coke and Pepsi.

A.B. Effgen earned his master’s degree in editorial studies at Boston University’s Editorial Institute, annotating and contextualizing Mark Twain’s “In Defense of Harriet Shelley” manuscripts. He has taught classes on Twain’s popular reception and media interpretation as illustration of celebrity and its sociological relevance.



*“Moralist In Disguise”
Illustration from
American Examiner magazine,
published shortly after Mark
Twain’s death in 1910*



*Mark Twain (left of center with a light-colored coat)
in front of The Park Church.*

The Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies was founded in January 1983 with the gift of Quarry Farm to Elmira College by Jervis Langdon, the great-grand-nephew of Samuel Langhorne Clemens. The Center offers distinctive programs to foster and support Mark Twain scholarship and to strengthen the teaching of Mark Twain at all academic levels. The Center serves the Elmira College community and regional, national, and international students and scholars of Mark Twain.

Founded in 1846 by a group of abolitionists, The Park Church has been a strong presence in Elmira’s history and some of its congregation were close friends and family members to Mark Twain. Known for its striking architectural features, The Park Church contained Elmira’s first public library and has a long history of charitable service to the Elmira community. Currently, it is an “Open and Affirming Congregation,” welcoming all people to worship and participate in its communal life, regardless of ethnic

Directions to The Park Church

From Route 86, take Exit 56 (Church Street Exit). Then proceed on Church Street (one way, two lanes) turn left on North Main Street (the 6th red light). You will see Park Church on your passenger’s side. The Park Church is located at **208 West Gray Street, Elmira, New York.**

Elmira College
Center for Mark Twain Studies
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Staff of the Center for Mark Twain Studies

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Mr. Steve Webb	Quarry Farm Caretaker