



Elmira College  
Center for Mark Twain Studies



The Trouble Begins at Eight  
Spring 2014 Lecture Series

Wednesday, May 14th in the Barn at Quarry Farm 8 p.m.

The French Face of Twain

Paula Harrington Colby College

*It is un-English; it is un-American, it is French.*

Mark Twain, *Concerning the Jews*, 1899

When most people think of Mark Twain, France does not come immediately to mind. Readers associate him, naturally, with the Mississippi River and the towns—fictional and real—along its banks made famous by Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Students and scholars of Twain also understand his life and works in the geographical and cultural contexts of the American West and the global locales he describes in travel writings from *The Innocents Abroad* to *Following the Equator*. These, wisdom has it, are the places that formed and fed Twain, on which he built the body of work considered by many the foundation of American literature. But France and the French? They have remained in the shadows as the subjects of Twain’s only admitted bias—the one place and people he detested. This lecture will challenge the assumption that France—and French culture mediated through its presence in America, especially in Missouri—played little or no role in Twain’s development as an American writer. Harrington will argue that France and the French instead exerted a formative pressure in Twain’s construction, through his writing, of a new kind of “American” identity in the later nineteenth century. She will discuss her research and lectures at universities across France as a 2013 Fulbright Scholar and preview her work with her French colleague, Professor Ronald Jenn of the University of Lille, on their book-in-progress, *The French Face of Twain*.



From *The Innocents Abroad*, Chapter XIV

**Paula Harrington**, a 2013 Fulbright Scholar, is Director of the Farnham Writers’ Center at Colby College, where she also teaches in the English Department. She has published in *The Mark Twain Annual* and the *minnesota review*

Light refreshments will precede this opening lecture of the Spring series.

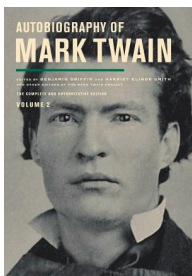
Doors open at 7:15. *Les ennuis commencent à huit heures.*

Wednesday, May 21st in the Barn at Quarry Farm 8 p.m.

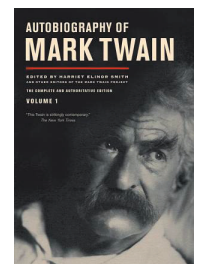
The Autobiography of Mark Twain: Did He Speak His “Whole, Frank Mind”?

Harriet Elinor Smith Editor, Mark Twain Project at the University of California, Berkeley

Mark Twain wanted to write a completely honest and candid autobiography. But he realized that he could not reveal his most provocative ideas and private thoughts in a work that would be published during his lifetime. Only from the grave, he decided, could he speak freely without fear of being judged, and “mangle and mutilate” people without wounding their feelings. Ms. Smith, editor of the *Autobiography of Mark Twain*, will discuss the author’s numerous observations about the difficulty of telling the truth and the strategies he adopted to remove his inhibitions, illustrating her talk with quotations from his letters and readings of passages he suppressed during his lifetime. In conclusion, she will answer the question of whether he did in fact speak his “whole, frank mind.”



**Harriet Elinor Smith** was educated at the University of California, Berkeley, and has been an editor at the Mark Twain Project in The Bancroft Library for over thirty-five years, producing numerous critical editions of the author’s literary works and letters. She is the editor of *Autobiography of Mark Twain*, Volume 1 (2010) and Volume 2 (2013), and is currently at work on the third and final volume (forthcoming, 2015), all published by the University of California Press.



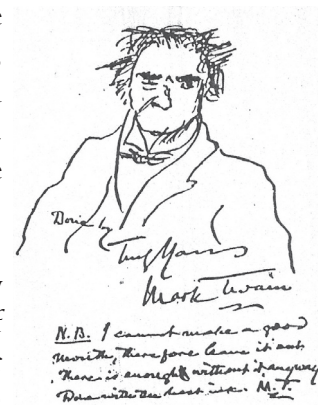
Doors open at 7:30. *The Trouble Begins at Eight.*

Wednesday, May 28th in the Barn at Quarry Farm 8 p.m.

Mark Twain's Letters to the Editor: On Politics, Potholes, the Police, and the Post Office

Gary Scharnhorst Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of New Mexico

Mark Twain addressed dozens of letters to newspaper editors during his long career, the vast majority of them soon published in Boston, New York, St. Louis, Hartford, London, and other cities. These letters are relatively self-explanatory, written extemporaneously and for no payment on a wide variety of topics, most of them hilarious letters of public protest. The "letter to the editor" was a genre in which Twain excelled, and this talk will illustrate the point by citing several of these neglected and even unknown writings.



**Gary Scharnhorst** is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English at the University of New Mexico, editor of the journal *American Literary Realism*, and editor in alternating years of the research annual *American Literary Scholarship*. He is also the author or editor of over forty books, including *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews* and *Mark Twain in His Own Time*.

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

Wednesday, June 4th in the Barn at Quarry Farm 8 p.m.

Mark Twain's Chinese Connection: Empathy, Politics & Race

Martin Zehr Ph.D., J.D., Independent Mark Twain Scholar

Mark Twain and the Chinese are not generally linked by readers, but a close look at his writings during his authorial career reveals a developing empathy and emerging political awareness that mirrors his well-known writings regarding African-Americans in the post-Civil War era. Literary clues, in the form of letters, short stories, and essays, as well as the rediscovered major work, "The Treaty With China," leave no doubt that Sam Clemens's observations of Chinese immigrants in the West and the predations of the major powers in China in the latter half of the nineteenth century stirred the "pen warmed up in hell" to action, much of the time in writings that contrasted sharply with the widely-held views of his countrymen toward the Chinese.



**Martin Zehr**, Ph.D., J.D., is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Kansas City, Missouri. He has been an avid Twain reader, collector and amateur scholar for over twenty years and is presently a member of the Board of Directors of the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum Foundation in Hannibal, Missouri.

Light refreshments will precede this concluding lecture of the Spring series.

Doors open at 7:15. *The Trouble Begins at Eight.*

**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. Quarry Farm is a fragile environment. Exercise care. For GPS: 131 Crane Road Elmira, NY 14901

*The Trouble Begins at Eight* is made possible by the support of the Mark Twain Foundation and the Friends of the Center.

Elmira College  
Center for Mark Twain Studies  
(607) 735-1941  
twaincenter@elmira.edu



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