

QUARRY FARM WEEKEND SYMPOSIUM



MARK TWAIN & NATURE

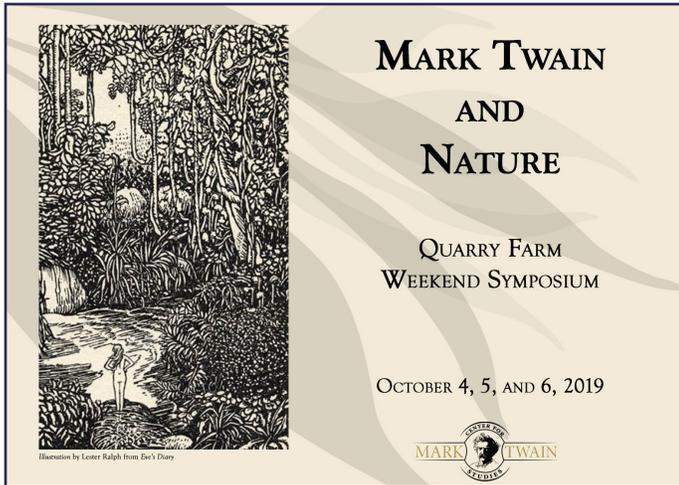
OCTOBER 4, 5, AND 6, 2019



CENTER FOR
MARK TWAIN
STUDIES

SYMPOSIUM 2019

THE SIXTH QUARRY FARM WEEKEND SYMPOSIUM



The natural world figures prominently in the writings of Mark Twain, whether as the main object of description and commentary as in *Life on the Mississippi* and *Roughing It* or as an inextricable element of fictional narratives such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* and more. However, these writings (other than short excerpts from *Life and Roughing It*) rarely find their way into anthologies of nature writing. And yet, Twain's writing about the natural world across his literary oeuvre provides prescient and germane commentary on the relationship between human beings and the natural world—revealing it to be a conflicted a relationship of antagonism and praise. On the one hand, he seemed at war with nature: “The purpose of all human laws is one—to defeat the laws of Nature.” On the other hand, he expressed both awe and respect for the

power of the natural world: “Architects cannot teach nature anything,” and “Nature knows no indecencies; man invents them.”

CMTS's Sixth Quarry Farm Weekend Symposium will offer various critical examinations of the natural world in Twain's writing: as nature writing similar to the ecocritical discourse of Thoreau, Dillard, and Abbey; as exploration of the aesthetic nexus between art and nature; as commentary on animal welfare; and as analysis of the intersection between nature and culture. Moreover, papers cut across all periods of Twain's writing life and will further the claim of Twain as a forerunner to mid-20th to early 21st century writers such as Krutch, Cuppy, Abbey, Kingsolver, Quammen, and Gessner who offer comic responses to nature as well as recognize the intrinsically humorous place of humanity in nature.

The symposium will be organized by **Ben Click** (St. Mary's College of Maryland). The keynote speaker will be **Michael P. Branch**, a writer of creative nonfiction and humor, focusing on the environment and the life in the American West. Branch is also professor of literature and environment at the University of Nevada, Reno. He has published five books and more than two hundred essays, articles, and reviews.

The symposium will begin on Friday, October 4, 2019 with a dinner in Meier Hall on the Elmira College campus, followed by the keynote address. The symposium will continue throughout the next day with presentations and discussions in the tranquil atmosphere of **Quarry Farm**, where breakfast, lunch, a cocktail hour and dinner will also be served. Registrants will be invited back to Quarry Farm on Sunday morning to enjoy an autumnal breakfast and casual discussions.

DATES: Friday, October 4, 2019 to Sunday, October 6, 2019

HOUSING: Special rates at the Elmira Riverside Holiday Inn

COST: \$175 - Price includes 5 full meals, with beer/wine at dinners, and a conference program.

Please note that due to the fragile nature of Quarry Farm, the symposium will be limited to 40 attendees.

ATTENTION GRADUATE STUDENTS: CMTS will waive all registration fees and provide free lodging for a select number of graduate students. If you are interested in this opportunity, contact Joseph Lemak (jlemak@elmira.edu).



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT MARKTWAINSTUDIES.ORG