

# History Explorer

A publication of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing

June 24, 2010

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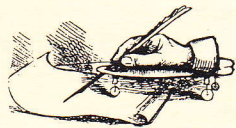
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History Explorer is published during the months of September to May by the HSGL. Articles and news of historical interest are always welcome.

## Mark Twain in Lansing

December 14, 1871

The following lecture was given by Mark Twain at Mead's Hall on December 14, 1871 and was published in *The State Republican* on December 21, 1871

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: By request, I will ask leave to introduce the lecturer of the evening, Mr. Clemens, otherwise Mark Twain — a gentleman whose great learning, whose historical accuracy, whose devotion to science, and whose veneration for the truth, are only equaled by his high moral character and his majestic presence. I refer in these vague and general terms to myself. I am a little opposed to the custom of ceremoniously introducing a lecturer to an audience, partly because it seems to me that it is not entirely necessary, I would much rather make it myself. Then I can get in all the facts.

But it is not really the introduction that I care for — I don't care about that — that don't discommode me — but it's the compliments that sometimes go with it. That's what hurts. It

would hurt anybody. The idea of a young lady being introduced into society as the sweetest singer or the finest conversationalist! You might as well knock her in the head at once. I never had but one public introduction that seemed to me just exactly the thing — an introduction brimful of grace. Why, it was a sort of inspiration. And yet the man who made it wasn't acquainted

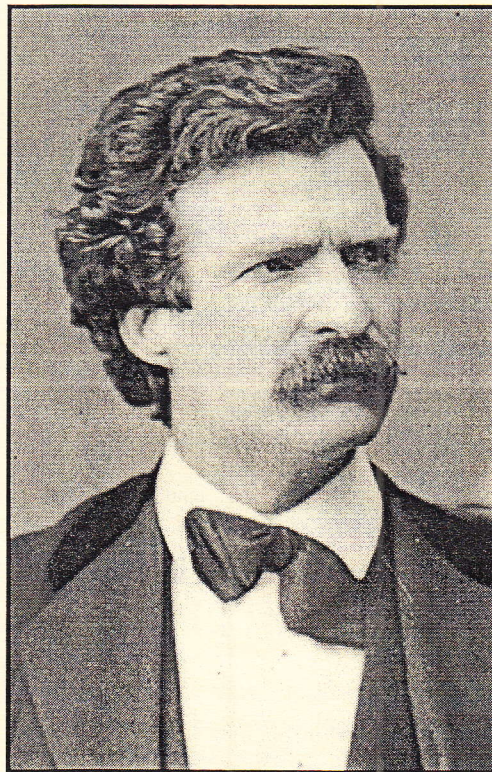
with me; but he was sensible to the backbone, and he said to me: "Now you don't want any compliments?" Of course I did not want any compliments at all. He said: Ladies and gentlemen — I shan't fool away any unnecessary time in this introduction. I don't know anything about this man; at least I only know two things: One is, that he has never been in the penitentiary;

and the other is, I don't know why." Such an introduction as that puts a man at his ease right off.

I must not forget to make the announcement of the next lecture, the second of course, to be delivered by President Angell of the State University on Tuesday evening, the 26th of December. I don't know what his subject is going to be, but it will be good and well handled no doubt. In fact I forgot to ask what the subject is going to be.

Now when I first started out on this missionary expedition, I had a lecture which I liked very well, but by-and-by I got tired of telling that same old stuff over and over again, and then I got up another lecture, and after that

another one, and I am tired of that: so I just thought tonight I would try something fresh, if you are willing. I don't suppose you care what a lecturer talks about if he only tells the truth — at intervals. Now I have got a book in press (it will be out pretty soon), over 600 octavo pages, and illustrated after the fashion of the *Innocents Abroad*. Terms — however I am not around



Mark Twain

New trustee = Sara Anthony



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canvassing for the work. I should like to talk a little of that book to you tonight. It is very fresh in my mind, as it is not more than three months since I wrote it. Say 30 or 40 pages — or if you prefer it the whole 600.

Ten or twelve years ago, I crossed the continent from Missouri to California, in the old overland stagecoach, a good while before the Pacific Railway was built. Over 1,900 miles. It was a long ride, day and night, through sagebrush, over sand and alkali plains, wolves and Indians, starvation and smallpox — everything to make the journey interesting. Had a splendid time, a most enjoyable pleasure trip, in that old stagecoach. We were bound for Nevada, which was then a bran' new Territory nearly or about as large as the state of Ohio. It was a desolate, barren, sterile, mountainous, unpeopled country, sagebrush and deserts of alkali. You could scarcely cast your eye in any direction but your gaze would be met by one significant object, and that was the projecting horns of a dried, shrunken carcass of an ox, preaching eloquent sermons of the hardships suffered by those emigrants, where a soil refused to clothe its nakedness, except now and then a little rill (or, as you might call it, a river) goes winding through the plain. Such is the Carson River, which clothes the valley with refreshing and fragrant hayfields. However, hay is a scant crop, and with all the importations from California the price of that article has never come under \$300 per ton. In the winter the price reaches \$800, and once went up to \$1,200 per ton, and then the cattle were turned out to die, and it is hardly putting the figure too strong to say that the valleys were paved with the remains of these cattle.

It is a land where the winters are long and rigorous, where the summers are hot and scorching, and where not a single drop of rain ever falls during eleven tedious months; where it never thunders, and never lightens; where no river finds its way to the sea or empties its waters into the great lakes that have no perceptible outlet, and whose surplus waters are spirited away through mysterious channels down into the ground. A territory broad and ample, but which has not yet had a population numbering 30,000, yet a country that produced \$20,000,000 of silver bullion in the year 1863, and produces \$12,000,000 to \$16,000,000 every year, yet the population has fallen away until now it does not number more than 15,000 or 18,000. Yet that little handful of people vote just as strongly as they do anywhere, are just as well represented in the Senate of the United States as Michigan, or the great state of New York with her 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 of people. That is equality in representation.

I spoke of the sagebrush. That is a particular feature of the country out there. It's an interesting sort of shrub. You see no other sort of vegetable, and clear from Pike's Peak to California's edge the sagebushes stand from three to six feet apart, one vast greenish-gray sea of sage brush. It was the emigrant's fast friend, his only resource for fuel. In its appearance it resembles a venerable live oak with its rough bark and knotty trunk, everything twisted and dwarfed, covered with its thick foliage. I think the sagebrush are beautiful — one at a time is, anyway. Of course, when you see them as far as the eye can reach, seven days and a half in the week, it is different. I am not trying to get up an excitement over sagebrush, but there are many reasons why it should have some mention from

an appreciative friend. I grant you that as a vegetable for table use sagebrush is a failure. Its leaves taste like our ordinary sage; you can make sage tea of it; but anybody in this audience who has ever been a boy or a girl, or both, in a country where doctors were scarce and measles and grandmothers plenty, don't hanker after sage tea. And yet after all there was a manifest providence in the creation of the sagebrush, for it is food for the mules and donkeys, and therefore many emigrant trains are enabled to pull through with their loads where ox teams would lie down and die of starvation. That a mule will eat sagebrush don't prove much,

because I know a mule will eat anything. He don't give the toss up of a copper between oysters, lead pipe, brick dust, or even patent office reports. He takes whatever he can get most of.

In our journey we kept climbing and climbing for I don't know how many days and nights. At last we reached the highest eminence — the extreme summit of the great range of the Rocky Mountains, and entered the celebrated South Pass. Now the South Pass is more suggestive of a straight road than a suspension bridge hung in the clouds though in one place it suggests the latter. One could look below him on the diminishing crags and canyons lying down, down, down, away to the vague plain below, with a crooked thread in it which was the road, and tufts of feathers in it which were trees — the whole country spread out like a picture, sleeping in the sunlight, and darkness stealing over it, blotting out feature after feature under the frown of a gathering storm — not a film or shadow to mar the spectator's gaze. I could watch that storm break forth down there; could see the lightnings flash, the sheeted rain drifting along the canyon's side, and hear the thunder crash upon crash reverberating among a thousand rocky cliffs. This is a familiar experience to traveling people. It was a miracle of sublimity to a boy like me, who could hardly say that he had ever been away from home a single day in his life before.



Photograph of Mead's Hall, the city's first theater where the Young Men's Society of Lansing held their lecture course and where Mark Twain lectured on two occasions December 23, 1868 and December 14, 1871. Mead's was located in the 100 block of North Washington Avenue. This image is circa 1910.



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We visited Salt Lake City in our journey. Carson City, the capital of Nevada, had a wild harem-scarem population of editors, thieves, lawyers, in fact all kinds of blacklegs. Its desperadoes, gamblers, and silver miners went armed to the teeth, every one of them dressed in the roughest kind of costumes, which looked strange and romantic to me and I was fascinated.

Now, instead of making a tedious description, I will say that they had a curious and peculiar breed of horses out there. I will give you the main points in regard to a little personal adventure which I had with one of these horses, leaving your imaginations to do the rest. Everybody rode horseback there. They were most magnificent riders. I thought so at least. I soon learned to tell a horse from a cow, and I was just burning with impatience to learn more. I was

determined to have a horse to ride, and just as the thought was rankling in my mind an auctioneer came along on a beast crying him for sale, going at 22, 22, horse, saddle, and bridle. I could hardly resist. There was a man standing there. I was not acquainted with him (he turned out to be the auctioneer's brother). He observed to me, "That is a remarkable horse to be going at that price." I said I had half a notion to buy it. He said: "I know that horse — know him perfectly well. You are a stranger, and you may think that he is an American horse. He's nothing of the kind; he's a genuine Mexican plug; that's what he is." Well, I didn't know what a "genuine Mexican plug" was, but there was something about that man's way of saying it that I made up my mind to have that horse if it took every cent I had, and I said: "Has he any other advantages?" Well, he just hooked his forefinger into the breast pocket of my army shirt, led me off one side, and said in a low tone that no one else could hear, said: "He can outbuck any horse in this part of the country. Yes," he repeated, "he can outbuck any horse in America." The auctioneer was crying him at 24, 24, going at 24. I said, 27

— "and sold." I took the "genuine Mexican plug," paid for him, put him in the livery stable, had him fed, then I let him rest until after dinner, when I brought him out into the plaza, where some of the citizens held him by the head while others held him down by the tail, and I got on him. As soon as they had let go, he put all his feet together in a bunch. He let his back sag down and then he arched it suddenly and shot me 180 yards into the air. I wasn't used to such things, and I came down and lit in the saddle, then he sent me up again and this time I came down astride his neck, but I managed to slide backward until I got into the saddle again. He then raised himself almost straight up on his hind legs and walked around awhile, like a member of Congress, then he came down and went up the other way, and just walked about on his hands as a schoolboy would, and all the time kept kicking at the sky. While he was in this position I heard a man say to another, "But don't he buck!" So that was "bucking." I was very glad to know it. Not that

I was particularly enjoying it, but I was somewhat interested in it and naturally wanted to know what the name of it was. While this performance was going on, a sympathizing crowd had gathered around, and one of them remarked to me: "Stranger, you have been taken in. That's a genuine Mexican plug," and another one says: "Think of it! You might have bought an American horse, used to all kinds of work, for a very little more money." Well I didn't want to talk. I didn't have anything to say. I sat down. I was so jolted up, so internally, externally, and eternally mixed up, gone all to pieces. I put one hand on my forehead, the other on my stomach; and if I had been the owner of 16 hands I could have found a place for every one of them. If there is a Californian in this audience he knows what a Mexican plug is, and he knows that I have hardly exaggerated that exasperating creature.

Now if you would see the noblest, loveliest inland lake in the world, you should go to Lake Tahoe. It is just on the boundary line between California and Nevada. I have seen some of the world's celebrated lakes and they bear no comparison with Tahoe. There it is, a sheet of perfectly pure, limpid water, lifted up 6,300 feet above the sea — a vast oval mirror framed in a wall of snowclad mountain peaks above the common world. Solitude is king, and in that realm calm silence is brooding always. It is the home of rest and tranquility and gives emancipation and relief from the griefs and plodding cares of life. Could you but see the morning breaking there, gilding those snowy summits and then creeping gradually along the slopes until it sets, the lake and woodlands, free from mist, all a gleam, you would see old Nature, the master artist, painting these dissolving views on the still water and finally grouping all these features into a complete picture. Every little dell, the mountains with their dome-turned pinnacles, the cataracts and drifting clouds, are all exquisitely photographed on the burnished surface of the lake, suffused with the softest and richest

color. This lake is ten miles from Carson City, and in company with a friend we used to foot it out there, taking along provisions and blankets — camp out on the lake shore two or three weeks at a time; not another human being within miles of us. We used to loaf about in the boat, smoke and read, sometimes play seven-up to strengthen the mind. It's a sinful game, but it's mighty nice. We'd just let the boat drift and drift wherever it wanted to. I can stand a deal of such hardship and suffering when I'm healthy. And the water was so wonderfully clear. Where it was 80 feet deep the pebbles on the bottom were just as distinct as if you held them in your hand; and in that clear white atmosphere it seemed as if the boat was drifting through the air. Out in the middle it was a deep dark indigo blue, and the official measurement made by the State Geologist of California shows it to be 1,525 feet deep in the center. You can imagine that it would take a great many churches and steeples piled one upon another before they would be perceptible

### Amusements.

#### Y. M. S. SOCIETY—1871-2.

#### BRILLIANT LECTURE COURSE.

The Directors of the Young Men's Society of Lansing would respectfully announce a brilliant course of lectures for the coming winter, including several of the most popular lecturers of last season. The price of tickets for the course of six lectures has been fixed at \$2.00 for a single person, and \$1.00 for each ticket after the first to members of the same family purchasing the first. A limited number of reserved seats will be sold at 50 cents each, prior to 6 o'clock on the evening of each lecture, to be taken on any part of given sections. The course will comprise the following lecturers:

MARK TWAIN..... Dec. 14th.  
[Subject: Artemus Ward, Humorist.]

J. B. ANGELL.....  
FRED. DOUGLASS..... Jan. 8d.  
[Subject: William the Silent.]

S. M. HEWLETT.....  
[Subject: Him at the Times.]

MRS. MARY A. LIVERMORE.....  
[Subject: Xantippe, the Greek Targant.]

WILLIAM PARSONS.....  
[Subject: Paris and the Parisians.]

Tickets can be purchased of A. A. NICHOLS, Treasurer of the Society, or of any of the Directors.

Lansing, November 30, 1871

This ad was published in the December 14, 1871 issue of *The Lansing Republican*. Tickets were priced at \$2.00 for the first and \$1.00 for each additional.



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above its surface. You might use up a great deal of ecclesiastical architecture in that way. Now, notwithstanding that lake is lifted so high up among the clouds, surrounded by the everlasting snowcapped mountain-peaks, with its surface higher than Mt. Washington in the East, and notwithstanding the water is pretty shallow around the edges, yet the coldest winter day in the recollection of humanity was never known to form ice upon its surface. It has no feeders but the little mountain rills, yet it never rises nor falls. Donar Lake, close by, freezes hard every winter. Why Lake Tahoe does not is a question which no scientist has ever been able to explain.

If there are any consumptives here I urge them to go out there, renew their age, make their bodies hale and hearty, in the pure, magnificent air of Lake Tahoe. If it don't cure you I'll bury you at my own expense. It will cure you. I met a man there — he had been a man once, but now he was only a shadow, and a very poor sort of shadow at that. That man took the thing very deliberately. He had fixed up things comfortable while he did stay, but he was in dead earnest. Thought he was going to die sure, but he made a sickly failure of it. He had brought along a plan of his private graveyard, some drawings of different kinds of coffins, and he never did anything but sit around all day and cipher over these plans, to get things to suit him, and try to find out which coffin would be the most becoming. Well, I met that man three months afterward. He was chasing mountain sheep over mountains seven miles high with a Sharp's rifle. He didn't get them, but he was chasing them just the same. He had used up his graveyard plans for wadding and had sent home for some more. Such a cure as that was! Why, when I first saw that man his clothes fitted him about as a circus tent fits the tentpole; now they were snug to him; they stuck to him like postage stamps, and he weighed a ton. Yes, he weighed more than a ton, but I will throw in the odd ounces, I'm not particular about that, eleven I think it was. I know what I am talking about, for I took him to the hay scales and weighed him myself. A lot of us stood on there with him. But I hope you won't mind my nonsense about it. It was really a wonderful cure, and if I can persuade any consumptive to go out there I shall feel at any rate that I have done one thing worth having lived to accomplish. And if there is a consumptive in this house I want to say to him: Shoulder your gun, go out there and hunt. It's the noblest hunting ground on earth. You can hunt there a year and never find anything — except mountain sheep; but you can't get near enough to them to shoot one. You can see plenty of them with a spyglass. Of course you can't shoot mountain sheep with a spyglass. It is our American Shamwah (I believe that is the way that word is pronounced — I don't know), with enormous horns, inhabiting the roughest mountain fastnesses, so exceedingly wild that it is impossible to get within rifleshot of it. There was no other game in that country when I was there — except seven-up; though one can see a California quail now and then — a proud, stately, beautiful bird, with a curved and graceful plume on top of its head. But you can't shoot one. You might as well try to kill a cast-iron dog. They don't mind a mortal wound any more than a man would mind a scratch.

I had supposed in my innocence that silver mining was nice, easy business, and that of course all you had to do was to pick it up, and

that you could tell it from any other substance on account of its brightness and its white metallic look. Then came my disenchantment; for I found that silver was merely scattered through quartz rock. Gold is found in cement veins, in quartz veins, loosely mingled with the earth, in the sand in beds of rivers, but I never heard of any other house or home for silver to live in than quartz rock. This rock is of a dull whitish color faintly marbled with blue veins. A fine powder of silver ore makes these blue veins and this yields \$30 in bullion. A little dab of silver that I could crowd in my mouth came out of this 2,000 pounds of solid rock. I found afterward that \$30 rock was mighty profitable. Then they showed me some more rock which was a little more clouded, that was worth \$50 a ton. The bluer and darker the rock the richer it was. Sometimes you could find it worth \$400, \$500, and \$600 a ton. At rare intervals rock can be found that is worth \$1,500 and \$2,000 per ton, and at rarer intervals you would see a piece of quartz that had a mass of pure silver in its grip, large as a child's head — more than pure, because it always had a good deal of gold mixed up in its composition. The wire silver is Nature's aristocratic jewelry. The quartz crystallizes and becomes perfectly clear, just as clear and faultless as the diamond, and almost as radiant in beauty. Nature, down there in the depths of the earth, takes one of these quartz rocks, shapes a cavity, and right in its heart imprisons a delicate little coil of serpentine, pure white, aristocratic silver.

It was uphill work, this silver mining. There were plenty of mines but it required a fortune to work one; for tons of worthless rock must be ground to powder to get at the silver. I was the owner of a hundred silver mines, yet I realized that I was the poorest man on earth. Couldn't sell to anybody; couldn't pay my board; so I had to go to work in a quartz mill at ten dollars per week. I was glad to get

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Mark Twain, December 14, 1871 continued from Page 4

that berth, but I couldn't keep it. I don't know why; I was the most careful workman they ever had. They said so. I took more pains with my work than anybody else. I was shoveling sand-tailings as they call it. It is silver bearing rock that has been ground up and worked over once. It is then saved and worked over again. I was so particular about it that I have sat still for one hour and a half and studied about the best way to shovel that sand; and if I couldn't cipher it out in my mind I wouldn't go shoveling around recklessly — I would leave it alone until the next day. Many a time when I have been carrying sand from one pile to another 30 or 40 feet apart I would get started with a pailful when a splendid idea would strike me and I would carry that sand right back and sit down and think about it. Like as not I would get so absorbed in it as to go to sleep. I most always go to sleep when I am excited.

I knew there was a tiptop splendid way to move that sand from one pile to another and I told the boss so. "Well," he replied, "I am all-fired glad to hear it," and you never saw a man so kind of uplifted as he was. He seemed as if a load had been lifted from his breast — a load of sand.

I said to him: "What you want now is to get a cast-iron pipe about 14 feet in diameter — boiler iron will do — and about 42 feet long. Have one end raised up 35 or 40 feet, and then you want to have a revolving belt. Work it with the waste steam from the engine. Have a chair fastened to that belt and let me sit in that chair. Have a Chinaman to load up that big box, pass it to me as I come around, and I will up it into that pipe." You never saw a man so overcome with admiration. He discharged me on the spot. He said I had too much talent to be fooling away my time in a quartz mill.

If you will permit me, I would like to illustrate the ups and downs of fortune in the mining country with just a little personal experience of my own. I had a cabinmate by the name of Higby — a splendid good fellow. One morning the camp was thrown into a fearful state of excitement, for the "Wide West" had struck a lead black with native silver and yellow with gold. The butcher had been dunning us a week or two. Higby went up and brought a handful away and he sat studying and examining it, now and then soliloquizing in this manner: "That stuff never came out of the Wide West in the world." I told him it did, because I saw them hoist it out of the shaft. Higby went away by himself, and came back in a couple of hours perfectly overcome with excitement. He came in, closed the door, went and looked out of the window to make sure there was nobody in the neighborhood, and said to me, "We are worth a million of dollars. The Wide West be hanged — that's a blind lead." Said I: "Higby, are you *really* in earnest? Say it again: say it strong, Higby." He replied: "Just as sure as I am standing here, it's a blind lead. We're rich." Poverty had vanished and we could buy that town and pay for it, and six more just like it. A blind lead is one that doesn't crop out above the ground like an ordinary quartz lead. The Wide West had simply tapped it in their shaft and we had discovered it. It belonged to us. It was our property and there wouldn't anybody in the camp dispute that fact. We took into partnership the foreman of the Wide West, and the Wide West had to stop digging. We were the lions of

Esmeralda. People wanted to lend us money; other people wanted to sell us village lots on time; and the butcher brought us meat enough for a barbecue and went away without his pay.

Now there is a rule that a certain amount of work must be done on a new claim within the first ten days, or the claim is forfeited to any one who may first take it up. Now I was called away to nurse an old friend who was dangerously ill up at the Nine Mile Ranch, and I just wrote a note and threw it into the window telling Higby where I was gone. The fellow I went to nurse was an irascible sort of fellow, and while carrying him from the vapor bath because I let my end of him fall we had a quarrel and I started for home. When I reached there, I saw a vast concourse of people over at the claim and the thought struck me that we were richer than ever, probably worth two million certain. Presently I met Higby looking like a ghost, and says I: "What on earth is the matter." "Well," he says, "you didn't do the work on the mine. I depended on you. The foreman's mother dying in California, he didn't do the work, our claim is forfeited and we are ruined. We haven't a cent." We went home to the cabin. I looked down at the floor. There was my note, and beside it was a note from Higby, telling me that he was going away to look for another mine which wouldn't have amounted to anything even if he had found it, in comparison with our claim.

It don't seem possible that there could be three as big fools in one small town, but we were there, and I was one of them. For once in my life I was absolutely a millionaire for just ten days by the watch. I was just ready to go into all kinds of dissipation and I am really thankful that this was a chapter in the history of my life, although at the time of course I did a great deal of weeping and gnashing my teeth. When I lost that million my heart was broken and I wanted to pine away and die, but I couldn't borrow money enough to live on while I did so, and I had to give that up. Everything appeared to go against me. Of course, I might have suicided, but that was kind of disagreeable.

I had written a few letters for the press, and just in the nick of time I received a letter from the Virginia City *Daily Enterprise* offering me \$25 a week to go and be a reporter on that paper. I could hardly believe it, but this was no time for foolishness and I was in for anything. I never had edited anything, but if I had been offered the job of translating Josephus — from the original Hebrew — I should have taken it. If I had translated Josephus I would have thrown in as many jokes as I could for the money and made him readable. I would have had a variety, if I had to write him all up new.

Well, I walked that 130 miles in pretty quick time and took the berth. Have you ever considered what straits reporters are sometimes pushed to in furnishing the public with news? Why, the first day items were so scarce, I couldn't find an item anywhere and just as I was on the verge of despair, as luck would have it, there came in a lot of emigrants with their wagon trains. They had been fighting with the Indians and got the worst of it. I got the names of their killed and wounded, and then by-and-by there was another train came in. They hadn't had any trouble and of course I was disappointed, but I did the best I could under the



Mark Twain, December 14, 1871 continued from Page 5

circumstances. I cross-questioned that boss emigrant and found that they were going right on through and wouldn't come back to make trouble, so I got his list of names and added to my killed and wounded, and I got ahead of all the other papers. I put that wagon train through the bloodiest Indian fight ever seen on the plains. They came out of the conflict covered with glory. The chief editor said he didn't want any better reporter than I was. I said: "You just bring on your Indians and fetch out your emigrants, leave me alone, and I will make the fur fly. I will hang a scalp on every sagebrush between here and the Missouri border." That was all first rate, but by-and-by items got low again and I was downhearted. I was miserable, because I couldn't strike an item. At last fortune favored me again. A couple of dear delightful desperadoes got into a row right before me and one of them shot the other. I stepped right up there and got the victim to give me his last words exclusively for the Enterprise, and I added some more to them so as to be sure and get ahead of the other papers, and then I turned to the desperado. Said I, "You are a stranger to me, sir, but you have done me a favor which I can never sufficiently thank you for. I shall ever regard you as a benefactor." And I asked him if he could lend me half a dollar. We always borrowed a piece whenever we could — it was a public custom. The thought then struck me that I could raise a mob and hang the other desperado, but the officers got ahead of me and took him into custody. They were down on us and would always do any little mean thing like that, to spite us. And so I was fairly launched in literature, in the business of doing good. I love to do good. It is our duty. I think when a man does good all the time his conscience is so clear. I like to do right and be good, though there is a deal more fun in the other thing.

Now you see by my sort of experience a man may go to bed at night not worth a cent and wake up in the morning to find himself immensely wealthy, and very often he is a man who has a vast cargo of ignorance. To illustrate my point I will give you a story about a couple of these fresh nabobs whose names were colonels Jim and Jack. Colonel Jim had seen considerable of the world, but Colonel Jack was raised down in the backwoods of Arkansas. These gentlemen after their good luck suddenly determined on a pleasure trip to New York; so they went to San Francisco, took a steamer, and in due time arrived in the great metropolis. While passing along the street, Colonel Jack's attention was attracted by the hacks and splendid equipages he saw, and he says: "Well I've heard about these carriages all my life and I mean to have a ride in one. I don't care what it costs." So Colonel Jim stepped to the edge of the sidewalk and ordered a handsome carriage. Colonel Jack says: "No, you don't. None of your cheap turnouts for me. I'm here to have a good time, and money's no object. I'm going to have the best rig this country affords. You stop that yellow one there with the pictures on it." So they got into the empty omnibus and sat down. Colonel Jack says: "Well! ain't it gay? Ain't it nice? Windows and pictures and cushions, till you can't rest. What would the boys think of this if they could see us cut such a swell in New York? I wish they could see us. What is the name of this." Colonel Jim told him it was a barouche. After a while he poked his head out in front and said to the driver, "I say, Johnny, this suits me. We want this shebang all day. Let the horses go." The driver loosened the strap and passed his hand in for the fare. Colonel Jack, thinking that he wanted to shake hands, shook him heartily and said: "You understand me. You take care of me and I'll take care of you." He put a \$20 gold piece into the driver's hand. The driver says: "I can't change that." Colonel Jack replied: "Put it into your pocket, I don't want any change. We're going to ride it out." In a few minutes the bus stopped and a young lady got in. Colonel Jack stared at her. Pretty soon she got out her money to pay the driver.

Colonel Jack says: "Put up your money, Miss; you are perfectly welcome to ride here just as long as you want to, but this barouche is chartered and we can't let you pay." Soon an old lady got in. Colonel Jack told her to "sit down. Don't be at all uneasy, everything is paid for and as free as if you were in your own turnout, but you can't pay a cent." Pretty soon two or three gentlemen got in, and ladies with children.


Colonel Jack says, "Come right along. Don't mind us. Free blowout." By and by the crowd filled all the seats and were standing up, while others climbed up on top. He nudged Colonel Jim and says: "Colonel, what kind of cattle do they have here? If this don't bang anything I ever saw. Ain't they friendly, and so awful cool about it, but they ain't sociable." But I have related enough of that circumstance to illustrate the enormous simplicity of these unfledged biddies of fortune.

When I told the chairman of the society this evening that I wanted to change my subject he said it was a little risky; he didn't know about it, but I pleaded so hard and said the only reason was I didn't want to talk that Artemus Ward lecture because it had been printed in the papers. I told him that I would put in a little scrap from that Artemus Ward lecture, just enough to cover the advertisement, and then I wouldn't be telling any lies. Besides this anecdote had a moral to it. Well, the moral got him.

As nearly as I can cipher it out, the newspaper reporter has got us lecturers at a disadvantage. He can either make a synopsis or do most anything he wants to. He ought to be generous, and praise us or abuse us, but not print our speeches. Artemus Ward was bothered by a shorthand reporter and he begged him not to do him the injustice to garble his speech. He says, "You can't take it all down as I utter it." The reporter said, "If you utter anything I can't take down I will agree not to print the speech." Along in the lecture he tipped the reporter the wink and then he told the following anecdote:

(Whistle wherever the stars occur. If you can't, get somebody that can.)

He said that several gentlemen were conversing in a hotel parlor and one man sat there who didn't have anything to say. By and by, the gentlemen all went out except one of the number and the silent man. Presently the silent man reached out and touched the gentleman and says: "\*\*\* I think, Sir, I have seen you somewhere before. I am not \*\* sure where it was or \*\* when it was \*\* but I know I have seen you," The gentleman says: "Very likely: but what do you whistle for?" \*\* I'll tell you all about it \*\* I used to stammer \*\* fearfully and I courted a \*\* girl \*\* and she wouldn't \*\* have me because I was afflicted with such an \*\* infirmity. I went to a doctor and \*\* he \*\* told me that every time I went to stammer \*\* that I must whistle, which I did, and it completely cured me. But don't you know that \*\* girl \*\* wouldn't have me at last, for she \*\* said that \*\* she wouldn't talk to a man that whistled as I did. \*\* She'd as soon hold a conversation with a wheelbarrow that wanted \*\* greasing."

Ladies and gentlemen, For three or four days I have had it in my mind to throw away that other lecture, but I never had the pluck to do it until tonight. The audience seemed to look friendly, and as I had been here before I felt a little acquainted. I thought I would make the venture. I sincerely thank you for the help you have given me, and I bid you goodnight. 

*Thank you for joining us this evening for this Special Program*



**Evening with Mark Twain on a Riverboat, June 24, HSGL Annual Meeting at 6:00, Dinner at 6:30. Admission \$39 general public, HSGL members \$35. Kevin Burnham will be Mark Twain.**

### **The Lecture of Mark Twain**

Last Wednesday evening Mead's Hall was well filled to hear Mark Twain discourse on the American Vandal abroad. He is a young man, little over thirty years of age, and looks as though he had never been a drawing room pet, but had been used to the rough and tumble, the ups and downs of life. His wit was eminently dry and the force of his manner, which is natural, and not affected, made it still more striking. He talked easily, walking up and down the stage at a pace that slowly marked the time of his words. His delightful description of Venice by moonlight, the Sphinx, the Acropolis at Athens; were as fine specimens of word painting as can be drawn by any other lecturer. Each of these telling passages would be followed by some humorous comment that would convulse the house with laughter. The lecture was intended to amuse, as well as to instruct, and the object was fully attained. A lecturer tells his own jokes best, and we will not repeat them. Those who heard appreciated the fun, and those who failed to hear, had not business to be somewhere else. The Vandal, who yet disgraces the national name in the classic cities of the old world, was drawn to the life.

The real name of Mark Twain is S. L. Clemens, and he was for several years city editor of a paper in Virginia City, Nevada, and first attracted the attention of the reading public by contributions to California papers. He is a special correspondent of the New York *Tribune*, and every thing he writes adds to his reputation as an American humorist. His manner is judged by many to be affected on the stage, which is untrue, his manner being the same in personal conversation, and an infirmity which, as he says, was honestly inherited.

As a humorous lecturer we have no hesitation in giving Mark Twain a decided preference over the renowned and lamented Artemus Ward. If Nasby, by the will of Lowell, becomes his successor as a humorist, we think Twain is destined to more than make good the place formerly filled by Ward. He is sure to provoke the hearty laugh that shakes the cobwebs from the brain and the hypochondria from the ribs. And as laughter is no sin, if it takes the proper time to come in, we hope Twain will make his calling and election sure, and continue to amuse as well as instruct the grave, austere, American nation.

Transcribed from the *Lansing Republican*, December 31, 1868. Twain's lecture was given on December 23, 1868.





*Starring Kevin Burnham  
as Mark Twain*

*Historical Society of Greater Lansing Presents*

# *An Evening with*

# *Mark Twain*

*Annual Dinner & Cruise*

*Thursday,*

*June 24, 2010*

*Boarding the*

*Michigan Princess at 6:30 PM*

*from Grand River Park*

*We invite you to reserve your tickets for this memorable evening on the Grand River...*

6:00 p.m. Registration and Fellowship, Annual Meeting & Election of Officers aboard the Michigan Princess

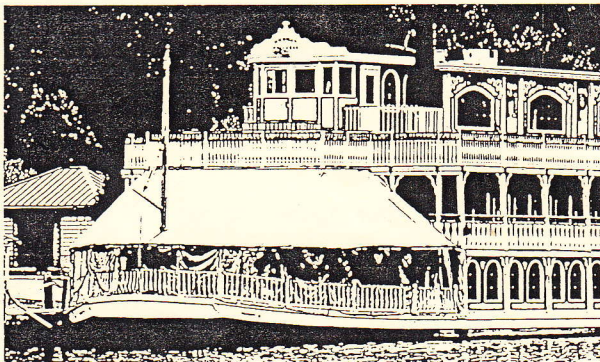
6:30 p.m. Dinner aboard the Michigan Princess

7:30 p.m. Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Mark Twain's passing with "An Evening with Mark Twain - Memories of My Visit to Lansing" presented by Kevin Burnham. Experience life on the river as Mark Twain knew it. Take a leisurely cruise on the Michigan Princess while you relax and enjoy a dinner buffet. Cash bar available.

From Downtown Lansing take I-496 west to Exit 4 (Lansing Road). Continue under the RR trestle. Go 500 feet and turn left into Grand River Park. There's plenty of parking.

## **Historical Society of Greater Lansing Annual Dinner & Cruise**

*(RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2005)*



Any questions, please contact:  
Michigan Princess  
517.627.2154

[www.michiganprincess.com/contactus.htm](http://www.michiganprincess.com/contactus.htm)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of the dinner for HSGL Members is \$35 per person.  
Non-members is \$39 per person. Selections include:

"Better than Thanksgiving" Turkey Buffet with roasted turkey, vegetarian lasagna, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, green beans, assorted salads, rolls, dessert, coffee, iced tea and a cash bar.

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ x \$35.00 = (HSGL Members) = \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ x \$39.00 = (Non-Members) = \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill in ALL information and return with your check (Make checks payable to HSGL) to:  
Historical Society of Greater Lansing, P.O. Box 12095, Lansing, MI 48901; 517.484.8802

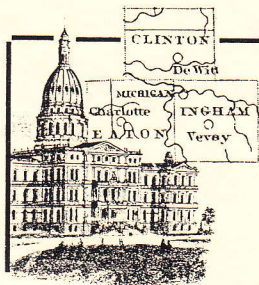


Historical Society  
of Greater Lansing

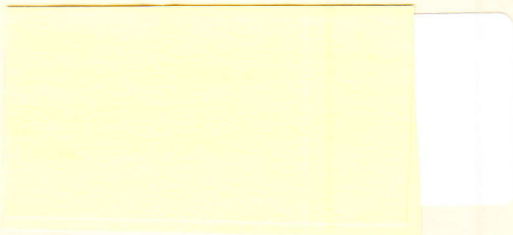
P.O. Box 12095 Lansing, MI 48901



R: Fri. June 4-2010



Please RUSH to:



An Evening with  
Mark Twain

### Historical Society of Greater Lansing By-Laws Proposed Changes

The following proposed changes to the HSGL By-Laws will.

Promote additional participation and discussion at Executive Board meetings by allowing the number of trustees to be increased from four up to eight at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Implement several additional minor changes required for the authorization to elect additional trustees. Modify the month specified for Board nominations and the month specified for the annual membership meeting to reflect current practice.

The changes will be voted on by the membership at the June 24, 2010 annual meeting. A full copy of the HSGL By-Laws may be reviewed on the HSGL website. <http://lansinghistory.org>

Below are the portions of the HSGL By-Laws proposed for change. The current language to be changed or removed is in italics, the proposed change in bold follows in brackets.

\*

“The Officers are president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, immediate past president and *four* [**up to eight**] trustees, constituting the Executive Board”.

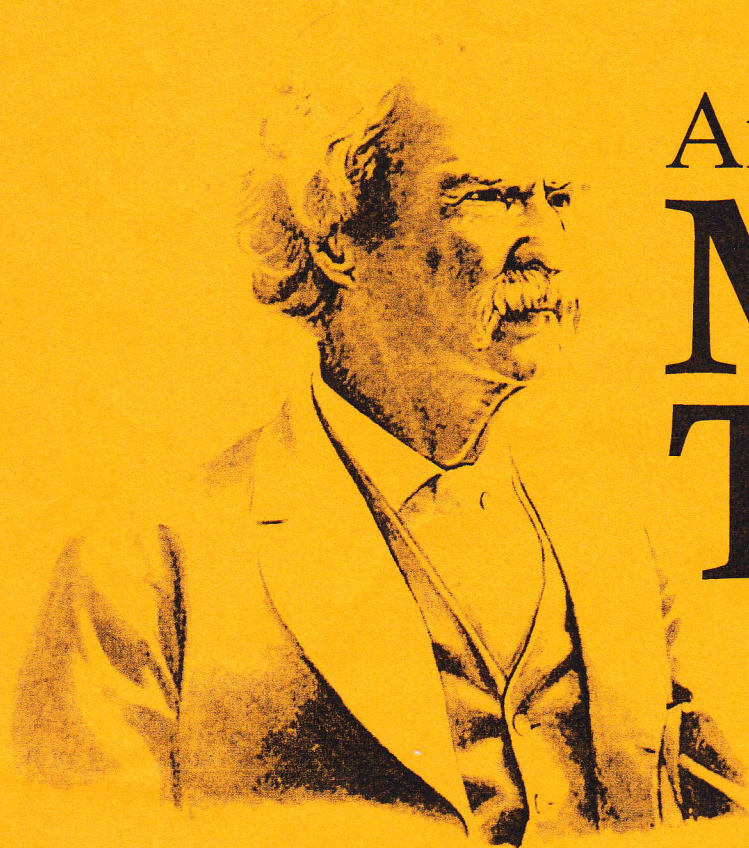
\*

“The president, vice president, secretary and treasurer serve one year terms; the trustees serve two year terms, *two* [**up to four**] elected in each alternate year. Officers and trustees are nominated at the *April* [**May**] meeting and elected at the annual general meeting, with new terms beginning at the end of the annual general meeting”.

\*

“Meetings include general meetings set by the Executive Board and an annual membership meeting held in *May* [**June**]. \_\_\_\_\_ Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called, after seven days’ notice, at the request of a majority (*seven members*) of the Board”.





An Evening with  
**Mark  
Twain**

**Thursday, June 24 • 6-9:30 pm**  
*2010*

Join the Historical Society of Greater Lansing for “An Evening with Mark Twain—Memories of My Visit to Lansing” presented by Kevin Burnham. Experience life on the river as Mark Twain knew it. Take a leisurely cruise on the Michigan Princess while you relax and enjoy a dinner buffet. Cash bar available. For more information contact Doug Johnson at (517) 484-8802.

Contact the Michigan Princess at (517) 627-2154 or [michiganprincess.com/contactus.htm](http://michiganprincess.com/contactus.htm). Historical Society of Greater Lansing members may call for discounted tickets.

Historical Society  
of  
Greater Lansing

THE  
MICHIGAN  
**PRINCESS**