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**MARK TWAIN**

DIRECTIONS: Read and highlight the important facts and information about Mark Twain

**BIOGRAPHY**

On Nov. 30, 1835, the small town of Florida, Missouri witnessed the birth of its most famous son. Samuel Langhorne Clemens was welcomed into the world as the sixth child of John Marshall and Jane Lampton Clemens. Little did John and Jane know, their son Samuel would one day be known as Mark Twain - America's most famous literary icon.

Approximately four years after his birth, in 1839, the Clemens family moved 35 miles east to the town of Hannibal. A growing port city that lie along the banks of the Mississippi, Hannibal was a frequent stop for steam boats arriving by both day and night from St. Louis and New Orleans.

Samuel's father was a judge, and he built a two-story frame house at 206 Hill Street in 1844. As a youngster, Samuel was kept indoors because of poor health. However, by age nine, he seemed to recover from his ailments and joined the rest of the town's children outside. He then attended a private school in Hannibal.

When Samuel was 12, his father died of pneumonia, and at 13, Samuel left school to become a printer's apprentice. After two short years, he joined his brother Orion's newspaper as a printer and editorial assistant. It was here that young Samuel found he enjoyed writing.

At 17, he left Hannibal behind for a printer's job in St. Louis. While in St. Louis, Clemens became a river pilot's apprentice. He became a licensed river pilot in 1858. Clemens' pseudonym, Mark Twain, comes from his days as a river pilot. It is a river term which means two fathoms or 12-feet when the depth of water for a boat is being sounded. "Mark twain" means that is safe to navigate.

Because the river trade was brought to a stand still by the Civil War in 1861, Clemens began working as a newspaper reporter for several newspapers all over the United States. In 1870, Clemens married Olivia Langdon, and they had four children, one of whom died in infancy and two who died in their twenties. Their surviving child, Clara, lived to be 88, and had one daughter. Clara's daughter died without having any children, so there are no direct descendants of Samuel Clemens living.

Twain began to gain fame when his story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calavaras County" appeared in the New York Saturday Press on November 18, 1865. Twain's first book, "The Innocents Abroad," was published in 1869, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" in 1876, and "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" in 1885. He wrote 28 books and numerous short stories, letters and sketches.

Mark Twain passed away on April 21, 1910, but has a following still today. His childhood home is open to the public as a museum in Hannibal, and Calavaras County in California holds the Calavaras County Fair and Jumping Frog Jubilee every third weekend in May. Walking tours are given in New York City of places Twain visited near his birthday every year.

**FAST FACTS**

**Birth name:** Samuel Langhorne Clemens

**Nickname (name change):** Mark Twain, Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass

**Occupation:** Novelist

**Birth date:** November 30, 1835

**Birth place:** Florida, Missouri

**Death date:** April 21, 1910

**Death place:** Redding, Conn.

**Spouse:** Olivia Langdon

**Children:** Langdon Clemens, Susy Clemens, Clara Clemens, Jean Clemens

**Did you know?**

* Haley's Comet was visible in the sky both on the night that Mark Twain was born and on the night he passed away.
* Mark Twain published more than 30 books throughout his career.
* Hannibal, Mo. served as the inspiration for the fictional town of St. Petersberg in "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."
* As a teenager, Twain worked as an apprentice printer.
* As a riverboat pilot, Twain earned from $150 to $250 a month.
* During the Civil War, Twain formed a Confederate militia known as the "Marion Rangers." The militia disbanded after approximately two weeks.
* Twain left Missouri after his militia disbanded and moved to Nevada. There he worked as a miner.
* "Roughing It" describes Twain's journey out West with his brother Orion.
* "Huckleberry Finn" was ranked as the fifth most frequently challenged book in the United States by the American Library Association.

• Prior to adopting Mark Twain as his pen name, Clemens wrote under the pen name Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass for a number of humorous pieces that he contributed to the Keokuk Post.

**Quotes About Twain**

"The first truly American writer, and all of us since are his heirs."

-- William Faulkner

"All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called "Huckleberry Finn." All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since."

-- Ernest Hemingway

**Quotes By Twain**

"The lack of money is the root of all evil."

"A sin takes on a new and real terror when there seems a chance that it is going to be found out."