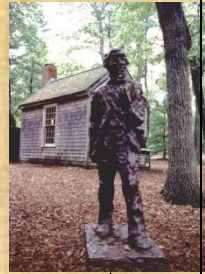
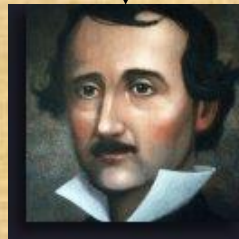


Realism and Huckleberry Finn

American Literature



The
Puritan
Era

Age of
Reason

Romanticism

Transcendentalism

Realism

Modernism

Contemporary and
Post-Modern Period

1600 - 1750

1750-1800

1800-1840

1840-1855

1865-1915

1916-1946

1946 – Present

What is realism?

- Define in a sentence or two.





REALISM

Artists felt that they should portray political, social, and moral issues, without glorifying the past or presenting romantic views of the present. *The artists presented familiar scenes as they actually appeared, hence REALISM.*

- Painting realistic situations
- Celebrating working class and peasants;
- *en plein air*
- rustic painting

Realism as a style or movement needs to be distinguished from "realism" as a term to describe the very precise, detailed and accurate representation in art of the visual appearance of scenes and objects.



Jéan Francois Millet, *The Gleaners*, 1857, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

Painting, Oil on canvas

[Critique of The Gleaners](#)



Jéan Francois Millet, Haystacks: Autumn 1874, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Painting, Oil on canvas



Winslow Homer, Sailing the Catboat, 1857



Winslow Homer, *Beach Scene*



James McNeill Whistler, Whistler's Mother 1871, Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Whistler, The Last of Old Westminster 1862, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, M.A., United States Of America Oil on canvas

20th Century "Modern Realism"



Andrew Wyeth, Christina's World, 1948

- Realism revolted against the exotic subject matter and exaggerated emotionalism and drama of the Romantic movement.
- portrayed real and typical contemporary people and situations with truth and accuracy, and not avoiding unpleasant or sordid aspects of life.
- Realist works depicted people of all classes in situations that arise in ordinary life, and often reflected the changes wrought by the Industrial and Commercial Revolutions.
- The popularity of such 'realistic' works grew with the introduction of photography — a new visual source that created a desire for people to produce representations which situations or settings looked “objectively real.”
- The Realism movement overlapped Impressionism

What is Realism?

- A faithful representation of reality in literature
- A reaction against Romanticism
- Emphasis on development of believable characters.
- Written in natural vernacular, or dialect.
- Prominent from 1855-1870.

Realism

“The Civil War was a violent clash, not just of armies, but of ideas. Who was right, and who was wrong? What did it mean to be an American? Was any price too high to pay to keep the nation whole?”



What brought about Realism and Regionalism?

- Cultural Divide
- The Civil War
- The urbanization and industrialization of America
 - 1870 Chicago population-20,000 by 1910= 2 million
- Increasing rates of democracy and literacy
- The emerging middle class

From these social changes come two literary movements

- Realism,
 - first begun as the local color movement
- Naturalism

Realism

- Begins in France, as *realisme*, a literary doctrine calling for “reality and truth in the depiction of ordinary life.”
 - Grounded in the belief that there is an objective reality which can be portrayed with truth and accuracy as the goal;
 - The writer does not select facts in accord with preconceived ideals, but rather sets down observations impartially and objectively.

Realism began in America as Local Color

- A synthesis of romantic plots and realistic descriptions of things;
- Definition of Local Color:
 - Literature that focuses on the characters, dialect, customs, topography, and other features particular to a specific region that exploits the speech, dress, mannerisms, and habits of that specific region .

Realism in American Literature

- The purpose of the writing is “to instruct and entertain”
- Character is more important than plot.
- Subject matter is drawn from real life experience.
- The realists reject symbolism and romanticizing of subjects.
- Settings are usually those familiar to the author.
- Plots emphasized “the norm of daily experience”
- Ordinary characters

Regionalism and Naturalism

“Vast, varied, filled with seemingly limitless possibilities – that was the United States in the years following the Civil War. Yet, all around them in this land of hope and opportunity, writers saw fellow Americans living lives of hardship and even despair. Regionalism tried to capture the reality of ordinary people’s lives; naturalism searched for explanations.”

Objectives of Naturalism

- Presentation is objective and detached
- Subject matter—raw and unpleasant experiences which reduce people to degrading circumstances in order to survive;
- Setting commonplace and un-heroic
- Novelist discovers qualities in lower class characters usually associated with heroes
 - Suggestion that life on lowest levels is more complicated

Themes in Naturalism

- Man is fundamentally an animal, without free will;
- Governed by determinism
 - External and internal forces, environment or heredity control behavior;
 - Characters have compensating humanistic values which affirm life;
 - Struggle for life becomes heroic and affirms human dignity
- Pessimistic view of human capabilities—life is a trap

Regionalism

- Often called “local color.”
- Focuses on characters, dialect, customs, topography, and other features specific to a certain region (eg. the South)
- Coincided with Realism and sharing many of the same traits.
- Prominent from 1870-1910.

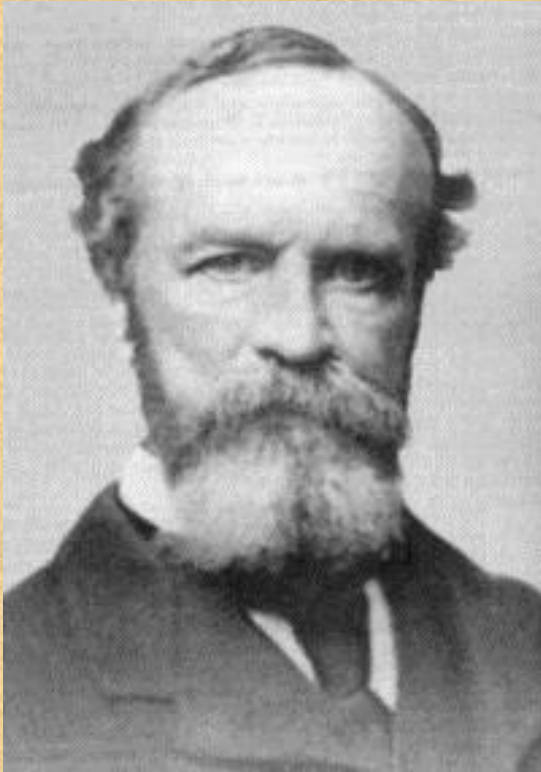
Why did Regionalism develop?

- The Civil War and the building of a national identity
- An outgrowth of realism with more focus on a particular setting and its influence over characters
- Transcontinental Railroad completed in 1869
- Flood of settlers=declaration by the Government that the Frontier is closed in 1890
- Westward Expansion = appreciation for regional dialect, customs, culture, and diversity

Historical Context

- Population of the United States is growing rapidly.
(1865 -1915)
- Science, industry and transportation are expanding.
- Literature also was growing, but most new writers were not Romantics or Transcendentalists. They are Realists.
- The “Frontier” did not exist as before; its legacy changed and impacted Realists in its new form.
- The aftermath of the Civil War meant that Americans were less certain and optimistic about the future.
- The idealism of the Romantics and philosophy of Transcendentalists seemed out of date and irrelevant to many readers.

Philosophy: American Pragmatism



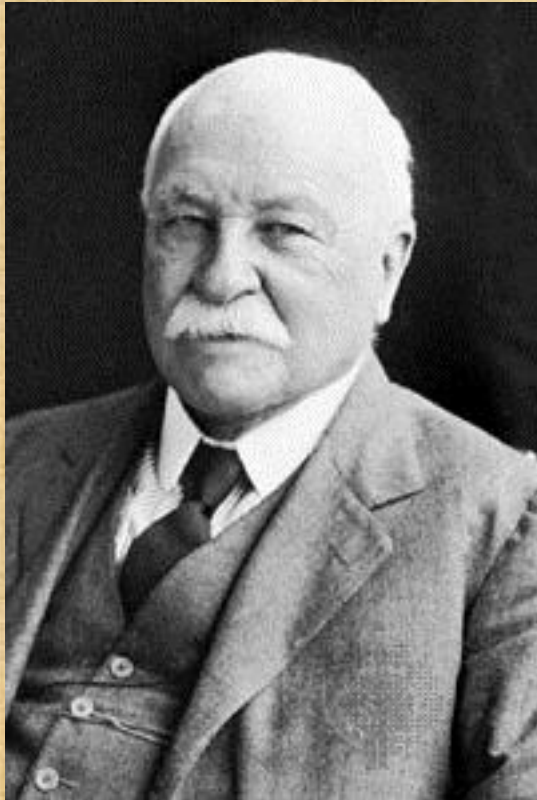
William James

- Truth is tested by its usefulness or practical consequences;
- Truth is a commodity accessible on the surface of things;
- It's perceptible to the senses and verifiable through experience;
- Permanent truths exist apart from the material world—the mind of God, Plato's ideal forms

Other Ideologies

- God
- Government
- Education
- Man's Purpose in Life
- **American Dream**
- Evidence of Influence

A Reaction against Romanticism



- These authors sought to portray life as they saw it, insisting that the ordinary and local were just as suitable for art as the sublime.

“Nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material. “

William Dean Howells

Realism vs. Romanticism

“The trapper was placed on a rude seat which had been made with studied care...His body was placed so as to let the light of the setting sun fall full upon the solemn features. His head was bare, the long thin locks of gray fluttering lightly in the evening breeze. ”

He was most fifty and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and you could see his eyes shining through...there warn't no color in his face; it was white...a white to make a body sick...a tree-toad white, a fish belly white. As for his clothes, just rags, that's all.

Literary Style and Concerns

- Uniformity and diversity
- “The art of depicting nature as it is seen by toads...and a story written by a measuring worm.” ~ Ambrose Bierce
- Capturing the commonplace
- For Twain and other authors, narrative voice is one of division – before and after war; conventions versus personal conviction
- Writing in vernacular and local dialect
- Local stories
- Nature again
 - Yes, its beauty, but also its hardship and how it wears the human spirit down

Some Writers from Realism

- Stephen Crane
 - The Red Badge of Courage
- Willa Cather
 - O Pioneers!
 - My Antonia
- Bret Harte “Outcasts of Poker Flats”
- Jack London
 - The Call of the Wild
- Kate Chopin
 - Story of an Hour
- Mark Twain
 - Life on the Mississippi
 - The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
 - The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Mark Twain

- Born as Samuel Longhorn Clemens, November 30th, 1835 in Missouri.
- Traveled throughout the United States during his adult life, including to California and Europe.
- Much of his writing stemmed from his travel and boyhood experiences.
- Was well known for his sense of humor and his satirical writing style.
- Died in 1910

Some Mark Twain Quotes:

- A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way.
- Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter
- Classic: A book which people praise and don't read.
- Don't let schooling interfere with your education.
- Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.

Mark Twain on slavery and Huckleberry Finn

- In those old slave-holding days the whole community was agreed as to one thing:...the sacredness of slave property. To help steal a horse or a cow was a low crime, but to help a hunted slave...or hesitate to promptly betray him to the slave-catcher ... was a much baser crime, & carried with it a stain, a moral smirch which nothing could wipe away. That this sentiment should exist among slave-owners is comprehensible--there were good commercial reasons for it--but that it should exist & did exist among the paupers, the loafers the tag-rag & bobtail of the community, & in a passionate & uncompromising form, is not in our remote day realizable. It seemed natural enough to me then; natural enough that Huck & his father the worthless loafer should feel it & approve it, though it seems now absurd.

It shows that that strange thing, the conscience--the unerring monitor--can be trained to approve any wild thing you want it to approve if you begin its education early & stick to it.

The Ultimate Problem in Realism

- Whose reality is portrayed?
 - Those in power, usually male, white and privileged
- Whose reality is marginalized and ignored?
 - Those without power: women, people of color, people of lower economic means

Setting:

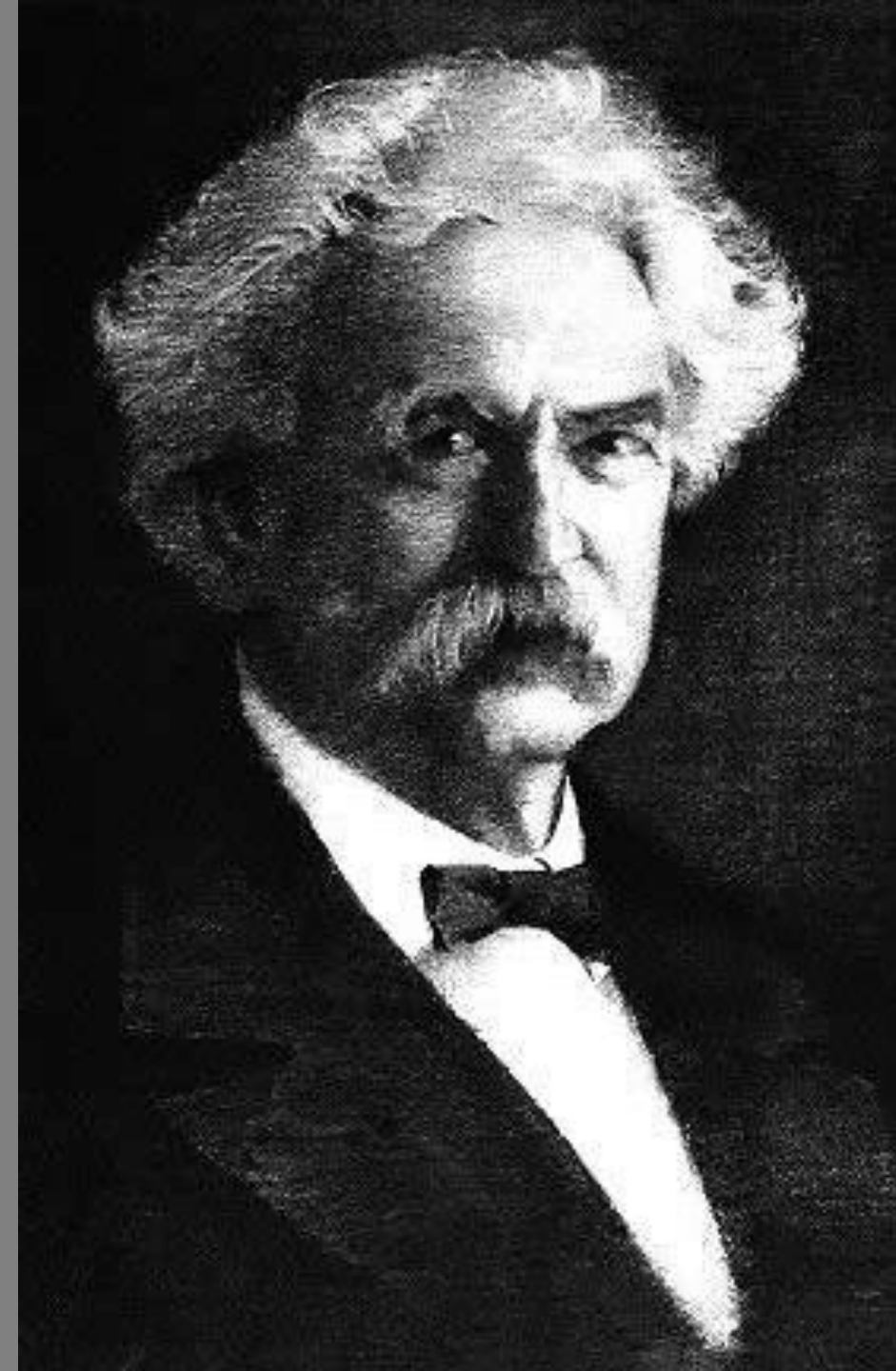
- Effectiveness depends on description
- Geographical location and physical features: river, a camp, a house or a mode of transportation
- Time events take place: season of year or historical period
- The jobs and daily activities of the characters
- The culture of the characters
 - Religious and moral beliefs
 - Social and economic conditions in which they live

Dialect as part of setting

- Def: distinct form of a language spoken in one geographic area by a particular group.
- Why does Twain use it?
 - Establish Setting, provide local color and develop characters Relationship between characters and setting
 - How characters react to and in the setting
 - How characters react because of the setting and why this is significant to the plot
- helps differentiate the characters and adds to the satire of the story.
 - Twain: uses standard, grammatical English.
 - Simon Wheeler: he uses the common dialect of the West.
- The regional dialect is an important element of Twain's humor and use of the ridiculous.
 - capture the local color and make the characters more interesting and amusing.
 - For example, Simon relates,
 - " **This-yer** Smiley had a mare--the boys called her the **fifteen-minute nag....**"
 - Such colorful language creates humorous images in the mind of the reader.
 - Creates satire because character is unaware of ridiculousness of what he is saying.

Literary Devices

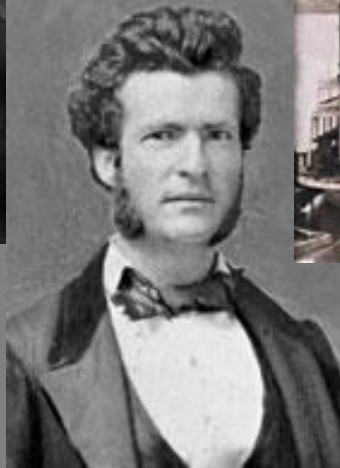
- Overstatement: an exaggeration used for emphasis or for humorous effect
- Hyperbole: form of overstatement. Figure of speech exaggerating or overstating a point.
- Understatement: technique of downplaying the significance of the outlandish often to be humorous or ironic.



Introduction to
Mark Twain
and *The
Adventures of
Huckleberry
Finn*

[mark twain video](#)

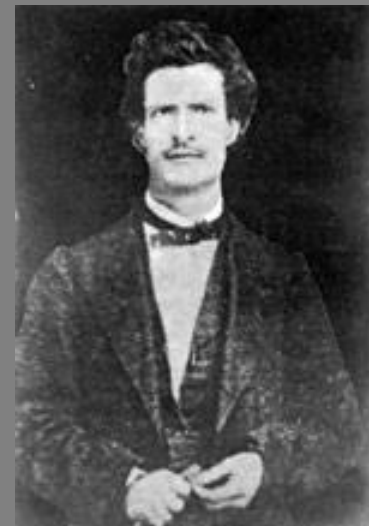
Life and Times of Mark Twain



- Born Samuel Clemens in 1835, he worked as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River.
- When he started his writing career, Samuel Clemens adopted the name “Mark Twain,” which meant two fathoms, a safe depth for a riverboat.

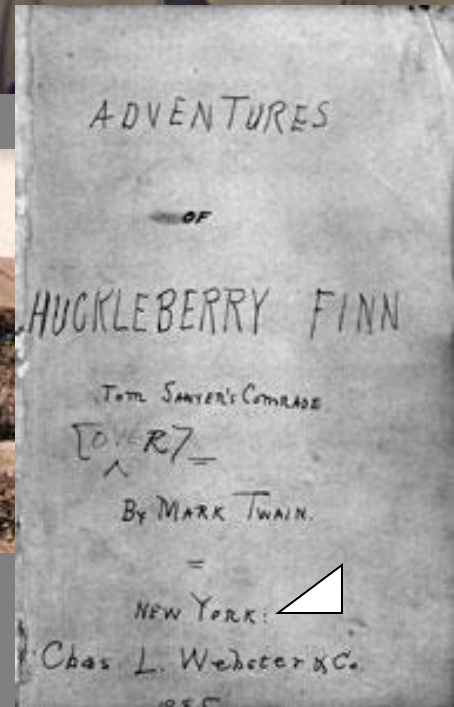
Life and Times of Mark Twain cont.

- In 1861, Samuel Clemens avoided the brewing Civil War by going west. He took his first writing job as reporter at the Virginia City Territorial Enterprise.
- Serious news was often mixed with “reports” that had to be taken with a grain of salt. Soon, he began using the name Mark Twain and affixing it to sketches, reportage, and an occasional hoax. It was a time when he first discovered his talent, his calling, and his voice.



Life and Times of Mark Twain cont.

- At 34 years of age he married Olivia Langdon Clemens. She was the daughter of a New York coal magnate, a member of the country's wealthy elite.
- She would be partner, editor, and fellow traveler in success and failure for the next thirty-five years.
- She would also furnish him her family's home in Elmira, New York, a place where he visited often and wrote many of his best-loved books.

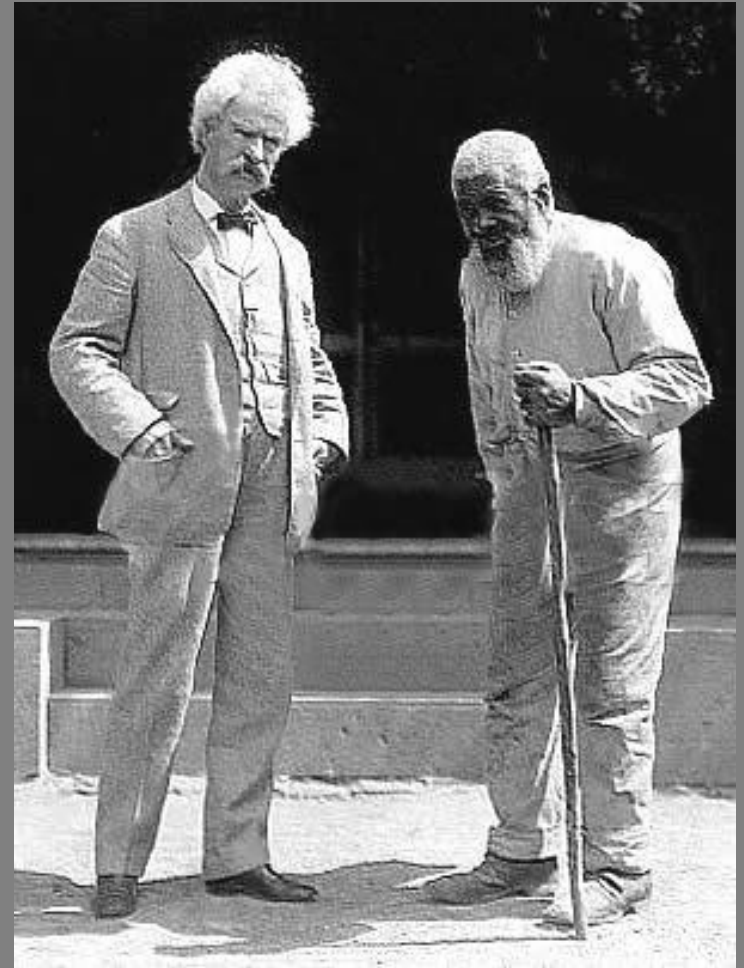


Life and Times of Mark Twain cont.

- Although his most famous novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, is criticized for being racist, Mark Twain never expected nor intended the controversy that arose with the publication of *Huckleberry Finn*.
- Mark Twain was not racist, but depicted life in his times.



"I vividly remember seeing a dozen black men and women chained to one another, once, and lying in a group on the pavement, awaiting shipment to the Southern slave market. Those were the saddest faces I have ever seen." – Mark Twain



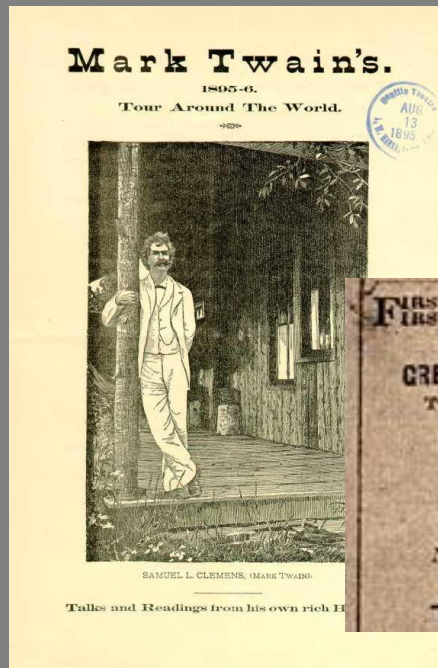
"I have no color prejudices nor caste prejudices nor creed prejudices. All I care to know is that a man is a human being, and that is enough for me; he can't be any worse."

Life and Times of Mark Twain cont.

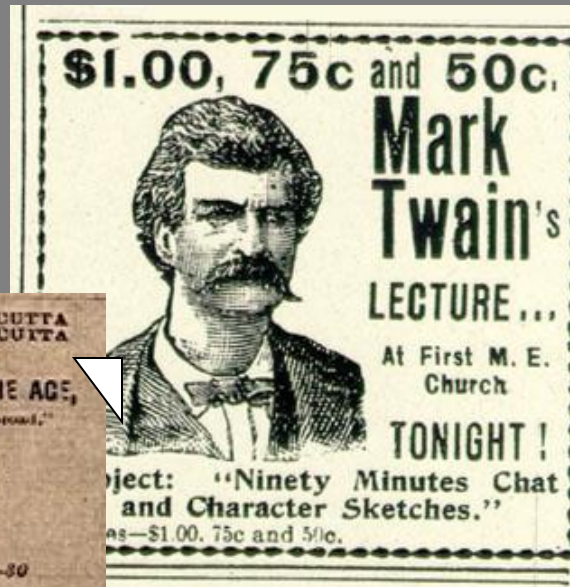
- By 1900 Twain had become America's foremost celebrity.
- He was invited to attend ship launchings, anniversary gatherings, political conventions, and countless dinners.
- Reporters met him at every port of call, anxious to print a new quip from the famous humorist.
- To enhance his image, he took to wearing white suits and loved to stroll down the street and see people staring at him.



Life and Times of Mark Twain cont.



FIRST APPEARANCE IN CALCUTTA
FIRST APPEARANCE IN CALCUTTA
OF THE
GREATEST HUMORIST OF THE AGE,
The Author of "The Innocents Abroad,"
MARK TWAIN,
MARK TWAIN,
MARK TWAIN,
MARK TWAIN,
WHO,
Next Monday afternoon, at 5-30
IN THE
THEATRE ROYAL,



- He developed as a speaker and traveled on lecture circuits, much in demand.
- His early performances combined humor, information and eloquence in measures that delighted most people.

Life and Times of Mark Twain cont.

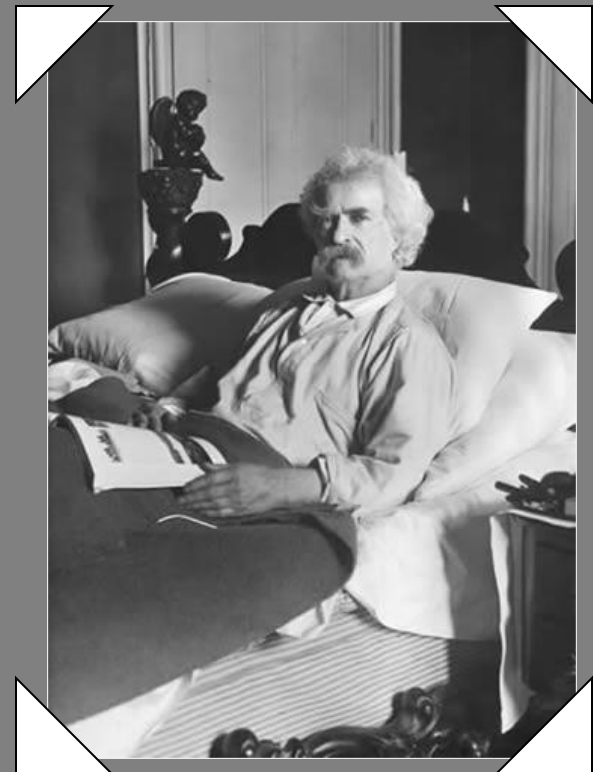
- When he died on April 21, 1910, newspapers around the country declared, “The whole world is mourning.”
- By then, Sam Clemens had long since ceased to be a private citizen. He had become Mark Twain, a proud possession of the American nation.



ALL THE WORLD
IS WEEPING FOR
MARK TWAIN

“I was sorry to have my name mentioned as one of the great authors, because they have a sad habit of dying off. Chaucer is dead, Spencer is dead, so is Milton, so is Shakespeare, and I’m not feeling so well myself.”—Mark Twain

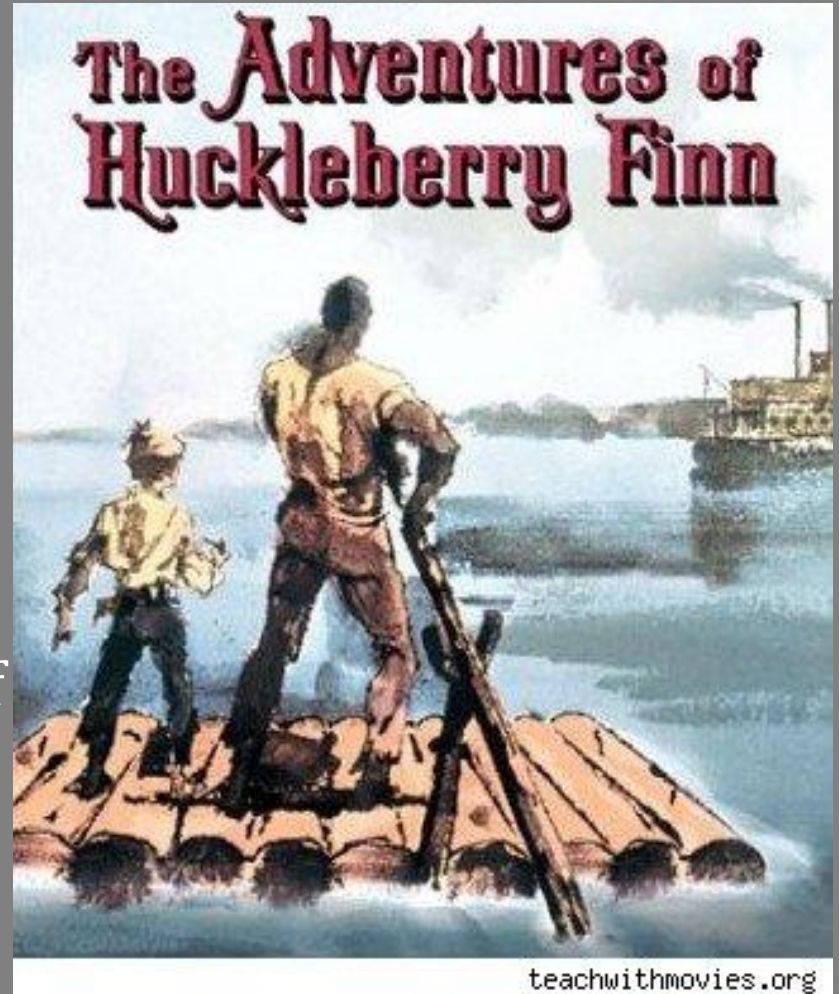
“I came in with Halley's Comet in 1835. It is coming again next year (1910), and I expect to go out with it. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's Comet. The Almighty has said, no doubt: "Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together."



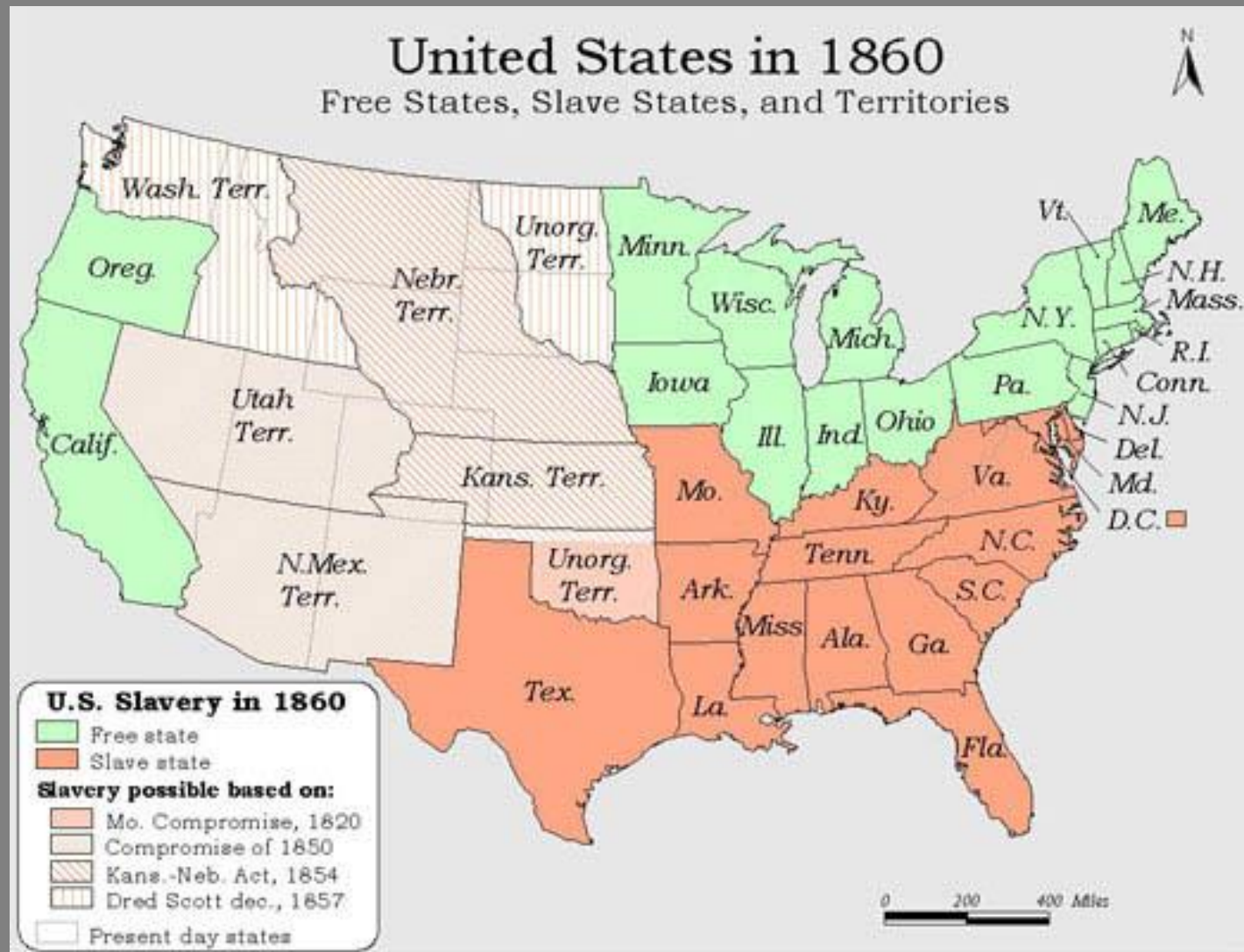
Mark Twain died in 1910, the year Halley's Comet appeared.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

- Twain's most famous novel is about the relationship between a young white boy, Huck, and a black slave, Jim as they travel along the Mississippi River
- The novel is set in the mid 1800's in the South in a fictional town called St. Petersburg
- During this time, about half of the country was considered "free" and half still supported slavery



Free vs. Slave States in America in the mid 1800's



Themes in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

- Racism and Slavery
 - In *Huck Finn*, Twain exposes the hypocrisy of slavery. It does not support slavery.
- Intellectual vs. Moral Education
 - Huck is forced to make a decision between education and moral correctness
- Mocks or pokes fun at “Civilized” Society
 - Twain shows the ways in which society of his time did not act in a civilized manner

Symbolism in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

- The Mississippi River
 - For Huck and Jim, the river symbolizes freedom.
 - The two follow the river from the South to the North to escape the oppression they both face at home.
 - Huck wants to get away from his abusive father and family while Jim, a black slave, wants to live in a free state.

Path of the Mississippi River



States that touch the Mississippi River-

- Minnesota
- Wisconsin
- Iowa
- Illinois
- Missouri
- Tennessee
- Arkansas
- Mississippi
- Louisiana

Controversy Surrounding *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

- Huck Finn has been a controversial novel for many years for its use of the “n” word.
- In 1885, it was considered to have "low morals" and later it was considered a racist text.
- Even today, many school districts choose not to teach this novel because it can be uncomfortable for many students.
- Video Clips 😊