



# Mark Twain: A Biography (Greenwood Biographies)

*Connie Ann Kirk*

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## **Mark Twain: A Biography (Greenwood Biographies)** Connie Ann Kirk

Samuel Clemens lived 75 years, 50 under the pseudonym Mark Twain. His youth could be characterized as sometimes mischievous, his older years as generally eccentric and his writing as always provocative. Twain left a literary canon of nearly 50 books, hundreds of short stories and essays, and a veritable treasury of quotable epigrams. While his words and his works have stood up to the test of time, knowing the man behind the persona, and understanding what inspired and influenced the writer, is crucial to fully appreciating the contributions Twain made to American literature. By skillfully weaving together strands of history with his personal story, this authoritative biography helps readers come to more fully understand the man and his enduring legacy. Starting with a chapter on Clemens' boyhood, readers are treated to a very personal view of Twain's early life. Twain's adult life is chronicled with five expertly developed chapters that explore his early professional years from printer to pilot, his travels westward and abroad, his gilded years with his beloved wife Livy, and his final years of widowhood and decline. This engaging biography also delves into the enduring impact of Twain's creative voice and his unique blend of humor with social commentary that not only entertained but also challenged thinking and changed the literary landscape forever.

This biography draws from the best of established Twain resources and scholarship, and adds fresh new perspectives from personal letters, original manuscripts, and extended study visits to important places including Twain's study and Quarry Farm. This work is written in a lively style that Twain himself would appreciate and students will enjoy. Researchers hoping to dig deeper into the Twain legacy will benefit from the expertly compiled information and documentation of resources offered here. A chronology, a bibliography and five additional fact-filled appendices, including quotes from Twain, books by Twain, and a rendering of his family tree will help readers get a solid handle on the details as well as the big picture of Mark Twain's life and legacy.

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