A black and white, high-contrast portrait of Mark Twain. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a dark vest. He has a prominent white mustache and is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark and textured.

*I am the human race compacted and crammed  
into a single suit of clothes but quite able  
to represent its entire massed multitude  
in all its moods and inspirations. . . .  
I am only human, although I regret it.*

*Mark Twain*

JANUARY 14 & 15, 2002 ON PBS

**A GENERAL MOTORS MARK OF EXCELLENCE PRESENTATION**

**A CO-PRODUCTION OF FLORENTINE FILMS AND WETA WASHINGTON, DC**



Sam Clemens around age 14 as a printer's apprentice.

When Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in the backwoods of Missouri in 1835 under the glow of Halley's Comet, his mother thought him so thin and sickly that she could "see no promise in him." But by the end of his long and eventful life in 1910 – with the comet blazing in the sky once more – he had become Mark Twain, America's best-known and best-loved author, its most popular humorist and one of its most profound social satirists.

No American saw more of his world than Twain. He grew up on the Mississippi River, came of age in the wide-open spaces of the West, made a magnificent home for himself in Connecticut, and traveled constantly. He roamed throughout the United States as a lecturer; toured Europe, the Holy Land, Asia, the Hawaiian Islands and other parts of the globe, writing continuously (and often hilariously) about everything he experienced.

Considered in his time as the funniest man on earth, Twain was also an unflinching critic of human nature who used his humor to attack hypocrisy, greed and racism. He created some of the world's most memorable characters and its most-quoted sayings. In "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (1876), he transformed his own hardscrabble upbringing into the idealized childhood of every American boy. In "The Gilded Age" (1873) he gave an entire era its name – then succumbed to the same lavish excesses he had so savagely lampooned. And, in his often-misunderstood novel "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" (1884), he brought forth a masterpiece that Ernest Hemingway called the true beginning of American literature.

Ken Burns and Florentine Films have now created a film that tells the remarkable story of Twain's extraordinary life – full of both rollicking adventure and serious literary pursuit, stupendous success and crushing defeat, uproarious comedy and almost unbearable tragedy. The two-episode film, a General Motors Mark of Excellence Presentation, will air on January 14 & 15, 2002 at 8 p.m. ET on PBS stations. *Mark Twain* will reintroduce millions of viewers to this compelling yet contradictory genius, perhaps the only man who could say with some justification, "I am not an American, I am *the* American."

Nearly three years in the making, the film draws from more than 63 hours worth of material: stunning cinematography from the places important to Twain's story; thousands of archival photographs of the man who called himself "the most conspicuous person on the planet"; and fascinating insights culled from nearly 20 interviews with some of the nation's leading writers and top Twain scholars, including Arthur Miller, William Styron, Russell Banks, Ron Powers, Hal Holbrook, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Laura Skandera-Trombley and Jocelyn Chadwick. Actor Keith David, who was the voice of *JAZZ*, is the narrator. The skilled character actor Kevin Conway breathes a fresh life into Twain's own words.



Sam and Livy Clemens on the porch of their house in Hartford, 1885. (Livy, Clara, Jean (sitting), Sam, Susy)



Mark Twain aboard the U.S.S. Mohican. 1895

*I am a border-ruffian from the State of Missouri.  
I am a Connecticut Yankee by adoption. In me,  
you have Missouri morals, Connecticut culture; and  
this... is the combination which makes the perfect man.*

– Mark Twain

**E**pisode One traces Twain's meteoric rise from his humble birth in Florida, Missouri, to his prosperous 50th birthday in Hartford, Connecticut, when he was the nation's best-selling author. It follows young Sam Clemens to the small Mississippi River town of Hannibal, where he would store up a lifetime's worth of memories that would later populate his novels; his glorious time as a riverboat pilot; and his adventures in Nevada and California, where he failed as a prospector before finding his calling – and adopting his new pen name – as a reporter.

His reputation grew with his first book, "The Innocents Abroad" (1869), the hilarious account of his trip to the Holy Land with a boatload of American tourists. And his life changed when he fell in love with and married the wealthy and refined Olivia Langdon, for whom he built a magnificent house in Hartford, the place that would witness both the happiest and saddest moments of his life. Episode One concludes with Twain's writing of his masterpiece, "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," a cunningly subversive attack on slavery and racism – and a breakthrough in American literature in its unapologetic use of the vernacular to create great art.

Episode Two, which follows Clemens from his 50th birthday to his death at age 75, includes material probably less well-known – but equally illuminating – about Twain's life: his lavish lifestyle in Hartford, where he tried to provide his wife and daughters with everything that had been missing from his own upbringing; his financial assistance to a young African-American law student at Yale; and his compulsive speculation in stocks and inventions that ultimately lead to bankruptcy, humiliation, and self-imposed exile in Europe.

The film also follows Twain on his triumphant world lecture tour, which restored him to prosperity, but which concluded with the darkest moment of his life: the death of his beloved daughter Susy, half a world away. Beset by one personal tragedy after another, Twain nevertheless became more and more famous as a humorist, the first world-wide celebrity. Episode Two dramatically keeps in balance Sam Clemens's increasing private despair and Mark Twain's irrepressible ability to make people laugh. "I am a great and sublime fool," Twain would admit near the end of his life, "but then I am God's fool, and all his works must be contemplated

with respect." At his death, William Dean Howells called him the "Lincoln of our literature." And his continuing legacy, as the novelist Russell Banks says, is to "teach us what it is to be human."

*Mark Twain* was directed and produced by Ken Burns, who has been making award-winning documentaries for more than 20 years. His series *The Civil War*, *Baseball*, and *JAZZ* are landmarks of public television. *Mark Twain* is the fifth in a series of biographical films about significant Americans that have included *Thomas Jefferson*, *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, and *Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony*. Dayton Duncan, who wrote and co-produced *Lewis & Clark*, is Burns's co-producer on *Mark Twain*. He is also the film's co-writer, along with Geoffrey C. Ward.

*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, so is Milton, so is Shakespeare, and I'm not feeling very well myself.*

– Mark Twain



Mark Twain c. 1884



Mark Twain and his friend John Lewis. 1903

## SPEAKING THE VOICE OF AMERICA

High school students across America will experience a fascinating glimpse into the life and work of one of America's greatest writers, Mark Twain, when the Ken Burns documentary premieres January 14 & 15, 2002 on PBS. The educational outreach program that accompanies the film is funded by General Motors Corporation and will be distributed to the English department chairpersons of all 31,500 public, private and parochial junior and senior high schools across the country in September 2001.

General Motors believes teachers will find this film — which develops the important themes in the life of the noted humorist — to be a valuable educational resource. The outreach program will focus on Twain's life, wit and way with words, as reflected in the wry and observant statements for which he was known.

The study guide will provide teachers with background information, discussion questions, four reproducible classroom activities and a large wall poster that will bring the genius of Mark Twain to life in the classroom, fostering an enhanced appreciation of the language arts and making Twain's classics a must-read for students. With this educational outreach program, General Motors continues its long-standing commitment to make classroom learning an integral part of all General Motors Mark of Excellence Presentations.

### HOME VIDEO DISTRIBUTION

PBS Home Video is pleased to offer *Mark Twain* in a two-video set for \$29.98. To order, call 1-800-645-4727 or purchase online at [www.shopPBS.com](http://www.shopPBS.com)

### BRINGING HISTORY HOME TO STUDENTS

PBS Video is distributing the deluxe teaching edition of *Mark Twain* that includes two index-enhanced videocassettes, a printed study guide with lesson plans and a set of educational materials funded by General Motors. The cost for this edition is \$89.95. To order, call 1-800-344-3337 or purchase online at [www.shopPBS/teachers.com](http://www.shopPBS/teachers.com)

### COMPANION BOOK

Alfred A. Knopf is publishing the companion book to *Mark Twain*, written by Geoffrey C. Ward, Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns. The 272-page volume has a retail price of \$40 and will be in bookstores nationwide in November 2001.

### PRODUCTION CREDITS:

Directed by Ken Burns  
Produced by Dayton Duncan & Ken Burns  
Written by Dayton Duncan & Geoffrey C. Ward  
Edited by Erik Ewers & Craig Mellish  
Cinematography Buddy Squiers, Allen Moore & Ken Burns  
Associate Producer Susanna Steisel  
Coordinating Producer Pam Tubridy Baucom  
Narrator Keith David  
Voice of Kevin Conway  
Mark Twain

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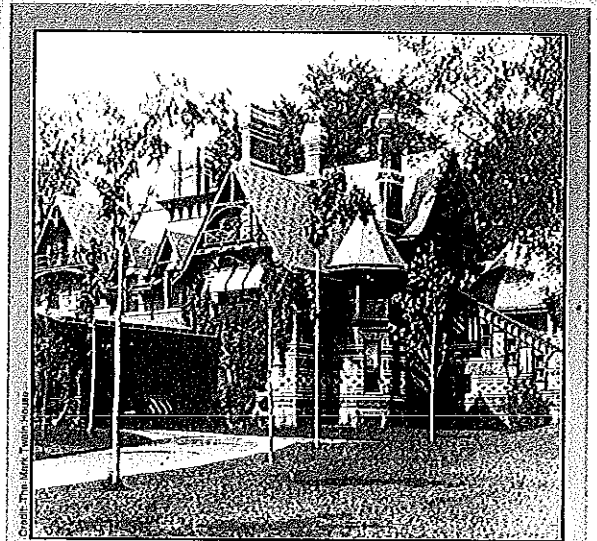
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The Clemens home on Farmington Avenue in Hartford, Connecticut.

The Connecticut Office of Tourism and Connecticut Tourism Council are proud to be sponsors of *Mark Twain*. For information on the life and times of Mark Twain in Connecticut and a Connecticut Vacation Guide, please call 1.800.CT Bound or visit the Web site at [ctbound.org](http://ctbound.org)

## A GENERAL MOTORS MARK OF EXCELLENCE PRESENTATION



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On the cover: Mark Twain, 1907. Credit: The Mark Twain House