

From Sam Clemens to Mark Twain: Sanitizing the Western Experience

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# From Sam Clemens to Mark Twain

## Sanitizing the Western Experience

Carolyn Grattan Eichin

### Abstract

*Sam Clemens adopted his famous nom de plume while writing for the Territorial Enterprise newspaper in Virginia City, Nevada Territory, during the early 1860s. Reconsidering the available documentation from the time period, including contemporary comments on the nom de plume, provides a revised theory on its adoption.*

**Keywords:** *penname; nom de plume; Nevada; saloon*

Sam Clemens arrived in Virginia City, Nevada Territory, in late September 1862 with the idea of writing for the *Territorial Enterprise* newspaper, while Mark Twain rode out in May 1864 having articulated a writing style and an identity that would last a lifetime. The fact that scholars have heatedly debated the penname origins, repeatedly trying to find justification in Clemens's own dissembling discloses something about modern culture and the icon Clemens has become, as well as Clemens's need to cleanse the western experience from his past. Clemens hid the true origin of his penname, one that evolved in the barrooms of early Virginia City, to present a "respectable" persona to his beloved Olivia and her family, as well as other influential Easterners.

Previous scholarship postulated two origins for the penname, the riverboat or the saloon as mutually exclusive. The possibility of a common ground between the two debates now exists. A fresh reading of George Cassidy's 1877 column in Nevada's *Eureka Daily Sentinel* regarding the nom de plume, the cornerstone of the saloon origin theory, allows for a reinterpretation. Previous scholarship relied on a shortened version of the original column reprinted in a different newspaper. Additional contemporary references support the saloon origin and enable conclusions about the western experience as divergent from

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what contemporary Easterners would accept, a western experience Clemens needed to reconfigure. Clemens's motivations for rejecting his ties to the early saloon culture can also be delineated as part of a larger picture of his adoption of a more stable family life after his marriage.

The first recorded use of the penname materialized in a letter Clemens wrote to the editors of the *Territorial Enterprise*, which appeared in that paper on February 3, 1863. Twain mentioned "The Unreliable," his acquaintance and fellow newspaperman, Clement T. Rice. "The Unreliable" walked up to him and casually addressed him as "Mark, old boy" (Smith, *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* 48). Historian Henry Nash Smith postulated that might mean the pseudonym had already been in use long enough to become familiar, although he dismissed the incident as fiction. But, rather than fiction, the events recalled in the letter may be a fanciful hyperbolic representation of actual events, as Clemens's early newspaper contributions vibrated with examples of his humor based on truth.<sup>1</sup> Clemens's early humorous sketches for the *Territorial Enterprise* relied on factual situations, on which he applied his deft talents of exaggeration.<sup>2</sup> A year later, in 1864, Clement Rice used "Mark Two—otherwise called Twain" to refer to Clemens in a local newspaper, securing the contemporary use of the nom de plume by Clemens and its origins in the "Mark Two" salutation (Smith, *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* 145; quoting VDU, January 29, 1864).

Clemens's official biographer, Albert Bigelow Paine, in 1912 accepted and published what became the sobriquet's origin. Captain Sellers, an early contemporary riverboat acquaintance of Clemens's used the penname "Mark Twain" and Clemens stole the name upon Sellers's death, Clemens maintained. Yet Sellers was still alive in early 1863 when Clemens pilfered the name.<sup>3</sup> Through time, scholars questioned the official origin. By 1938, Ivan Benson stated, "There was 'no original Mark Twain' other than Samuel Clemens himself" (iv, 155). He added, "Neither the name Mark Twain nor any single reference to Samuel Clemens occurs in the Sellers journal" (155). Similarly, New Orleans newspapers of the time failed to record the use of the alias "Mark Twain" (Leisy 399). Consequently, a new conclusion took shape: that the name Mark Twain was not in use during Clemens's riverboat years.

But Clemens's search for the appropriate nom de guerre during his early years as a writer included an 1859 burlesque of a Sellers's letter in the *Daily Crescent* prompting a signature as Sergeant Fathom (Leisy 402). Ernest Leisy capped his argument against the official origin with his idea that "Clemens choice of the name 'Fathom' gave rise in his mind to the term used for the same

water sounding, Mark Twain, and that only in this remote, indirect way was he indebted to the redoubtable Isaiah Sellers” (405).

That penname explanation endured until historian Effie Mona Mack in 1947 brought scholarly attention to a curious memory from someone who avowed he knew Clemens in Virginia City. Mack relied on a reprinted version of a letter from the *Daily Alta California* of May 13, 1877, which contained only part of the Nevada *Eureka Daily Sentinel*'s original column. In that column, George W. Cassidy (1836–92) characterized Clemens as a bohemian who frequented saloons during his Virginia City days, and that those saloon experiences supplanted the riverboat origins of the pseudonym (Mack 227–28).

The *Daily Alta California* truncated the original column. The *Sentinel* printed the riverboat story, as follows, with a notation that it was reprinted from the *Exchange*:

Writing sometimes for the paper on which he was employed articles of greater length or on some more pretentious subject than usual, Clemens signed these with the *non de plume* then first assumed, of “Mark Twain,” this style of signature having been adopted, as it is said, for the following reason: When acting as steamboat pilot on the Mississippi, it had been made part of his duty to take the soundings. In doing this it becomes necessary to sing out the depth of water as indicated by the lead, directing the proper scoring to be made, thus: “mark one,” “mark twain;” the latter, the ancient and now nearly obsolete form of the word two. From his peculiar manner of drawing this out, Clemens had acquired among the steamboat fraternity the soubriquet of “Mark Twain;” which droll phrase being familiar to his ear, and pleasing to him, was retained for the above purpose. This may be a fanciful explanation of the origin of the term in question, but we do not recollect of having heard any other suggested. —*Exchange*<sup>4</sup>

In response to the *Exchange*, reprinted as above, Cassidy wrote, “That story won’t work; it is too thin,” meaning Cassidy found the story incomplete (“Mark Twain,” *EDS*, May 8, 1877, 1:1). The following continuation of the *Sentinel* column mirrors the final version reprinted in the *Alta*:

We knew Clemens in the early days, and know exactly how he came to be dubbed “Mark Twain.” John Piper’s saloon, on B Street, used to be the grand rendezvous for all of the Virginia City Bohemians, Piper conducted a cash business and refused to keep any books. As a special favor, however,

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he would occasionally chalk down drinks to the boys on the wall back of the bar. Sam Clemens, when localizing for the *Enterprise*, always had an account, with the balance against him, on Piper's wall. Clemens was by no means a Coal Oil Tommy, he drank for the pure and unadulterated love of the ardent. Most of his drinking was conducted in single-handed contests, but occasionally he would invite Dan De Quille, Charley Parker, Bob Lowery or Alf Doten, never more than one of them, however, at a time, and whenever he did his invariable parting injunction to Piper was to "mark twain," meaning two chalk marks, of course. ("Mark Twain," *EDS*, May 8, 1877, 1:1; "Brevities," *DAC*, May 13, 1877 1:2, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>)

The original text added a complementary tone from Cassidy: "It was in this way that he acquired the title which has since become famous wherever the English language is read or spoken" ("Mark Twain," *EDS*, May 8, 1877, 1:1).

It is unclear as to how Effie Mona Mack, in her tome about Clemens's years in Nevada, solidified her conclusion that Cassidy was "an old friend and associate" of Clemens, given that Cassidy professed only to have known Clemens (207). There is no doubt that they could have met in Nevada Territory, and would have had much to discuss. As a child, George Cassidy relocated from Kentucky to Mexico, Missouri, settling only fifty-seven miles from Clemens's hometown of Hannibal. As an adult, Cassidy arrived in California in the mid-1850s, where he became a miner in Dutch Flat by early 1861. Cassidy lived in Silver City, about two miles south of Virginia City, Nevada Territory, from May to July 1861, when he moved to Gold Hill, only one mile south of Virginia City.<sup>5</sup> Cassidy's primary residence remained in Gold Hill from July 1863 until February 1869, his habitation overlapping the years Clemens wrote for the *Territorial Enterprise*.<sup>6</sup> Gold Hill and Virginia City enjoyed omnibus service linking the two localities as early as 1863, thus facilitating commerce for residents between the two towns (Kelly, *Second Directory of Nevada Territory* 183).

Cassidy studied law but didn't practice it, preferring newspaper work which included Nevada's Virginia City *Safeguard* beginning in 1868, Treasure City's *White Pine News*, Hamilton's *Inland Empire*, and his sojourn with the *Eureka Daily Sentinel*, which began in 1870. Cassidy represented his county to the Nevada Senate from 1872 to 1879, at the time of his writing of the subject column, and served two terms as U.S. Congressman from Nevada, 1881–85 (Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress; Cassidy Collection). Cassidy became the darling of the Nevada Silver Party in the early 1890s, being the first politician to suggest that both Democrats and Republicans join forces

for the good of the state under the banner of the new Silver Party. Cassidy died in 1892 during another bid for the congressional seat. He becomes a credible witness based on two factors: his presence in early Nevada during Clemens's sojourn, and his credibility as an educated, successful Nevadan of some integrity.<sup>7</sup>

Cassidy's motivation for the writing of the 1877 *Sentinel* column was to amend and clarify Clemens's story on the origin of his penname which had omitted any reference to early Nevada, a story deemed "too thin" by the editor. The column, abridged by the *Daily Alta California*, eliminated the original riverboat reference, and, more important, purged Cassidy's belief that the riverboat story was "too thin"—not necessarily incorrect, just incomplete ("Mark Twain," *EDS*, May 8, 1877, 1:1). Within weeks of Cassidy's declaration, the *Alta* published Samuel Clemens's strong rebuke, which affirmed his debt to Captain Sellers for the penname. The *Alta* wrote:

And this is how Samuel L. Clemens obtained the name which he has made famous. The explanation is given in a letter to Mr. John A. McPherson, of this city: Dear Sir: "Mark Twain" was the *nom de plume* of one Captain Isaiah Sellers, who used to write river news over it for the New Orleans *Picayune*. He died in 1863 and as he could no longer need that signature, I laid violent hands upon it without asking permission of the proprietor's remains. This is the history of the *nom de plume* I bear. Yours Truly, Samuel L. Clemens May 29th. ("Brevities," *DAC*, June 9, 1877, 1:2; Mack 228)

Research into the penname origins continued in the early 1960s with Paul Fatout's studies of Sam Clemens. Paul Fatout, in *Mark Twain in Virginia City*, believed Cassidy's story to be true and found additional support for a saloon origin in another newspaper (36). An 1866 Nevada City, California, *Transcript* article stated Clemens took his "regular drinks" at Johnny Doyle's saloon. The "Washoe Genius" stated, "Well Mark, that is Sam, d'ye see, used to run his face, being short of legal tenders." He "used to take two horns consecutive, one right after the other, and when he come in there, and took them on the tick, Johnny used to sing out to the barkeep who kept a lump of coal in his pocket and kept the score, 'mark twain,' whereupon the barkeep would score two drinks to Sam's account—and so it was, d'ye see, that he came to be called 'Mark Twain'" (Fatout, *Twain in Virginia City* 36). Fatout judged these two newspaper accounts, Cassidy's 1877 *Sentinel* column and the Nevada City's *Transcript*'s vernacular account from someone termed the "Washoe Genius," as more

credible and as consistent with Clemens's "Washoe ways" and the "Western life of Mark Twain" than was the riverboat story (Fatout, *Twain in Virginia City* 36). Fatout reiterated his thinking on the nom de plume in an *American Literature* article that added an Ambrose Bierce quote from the *San Francisco News-Letter* of February 19, 1870. This article also supported the notion that Twain not only drank, but asked for his drink order to be chalked down, presumably on a barkeep's slate (5). Bierce believed the "bright smile will no more greet the early bar-keeper, nor the old familiar 'chalk it down' delight his ear" when Twain married Olivia Langdon (Fatout, "Mark Twain's Nom de Plume" 5).

Later researchers criticized Paul Fatout's conclusions. Criticism of Fatout's credence in the saloon origin for the nom de plume came in a 1975 article by Guy Cardwell. Paul Fatout discovered that John Piper was, indeed, a saloon owner, and with that discovery came his acceptance of the saloon narrative. Cardwell blasted, "In confirmation of this explanation of origins, Fatout points out that a John Piper did in fact operate the 'Old Corner Saloon' at B and Union streets" (179). More recent research discloses John Piper's brothel ownership, as well as his tavern business, and this article will explore potential consequences of this new context (Grattan Eichin).

Cardwell's criticism of Fatout's acceptance of the saloon origins for the penname continued. Cardwell also dismissed the memories of the unknown "Washoe Genius" to the *Transcript* as folklore in his opinion, rather than exploring the possibility that different acquaintances of Clemens's independently recalled his drinking habit. Cardwell discoursed, "These barroom stories carry almost no conviction, perhaps especially when replicative and even though sanctified by appearance in early newsprint . . . They have about the same authority as folk etymology" (179). Cardwell misunderstood or denigrated the nature of primary historical evidence. Folklore is fragmentary while academic history desires to place the folk tradition or oral history within a meaningful context. The conviction Cardwell wanted is created by research into the motivations and verisimilitude of the speakers and the historical context which can be reclaimed surrounding their memories. The previous acquaintances of Clemens's, whose independent memories appeared in print, believed themselves to be truthful to the past and useful to others by clarifying Clemens's sobriquet, as varying historical events prompted their memories. It is the realm of the academic historian to value those memories within a context that makes the past useful to the present (Glassie).

In continuing to deconstruct the arguments against the saloon story, Cardwell's criticism of the *Transcript* as the earliest published account of the

saloon story in 1866, “a strikingly early date for the world at large to be greatly interested in the origins of Clemens’ penname,” called the integrity of the Washoe Genius into question (179). The “Washoe Genius” remembered that Clemens drank in Johnny Doyle’s saloon in Virginia City. But was the Washoe Genius a credible witness? Although Paul Fatout believed the story to be true, he erred when he placed a different Johnny Doyle in Dayton, Nevada Territory, in 1863 and placed the John E. “Johnny” Doyle of the Nevada City *Transcript* article in a different local saloon in 1864 (Fatout, *Mark Twain in Virginia City* 36). The Sacramento newspapers of the time help untangle the confusion as to which Doyle was being discussed in the *Transcript* article.

To bolster the saloon origins of Clemens’s nom de plume, the integrity of the “Washoe Genius” is supported in contemporary newspaper accounts. In 1865, John E. Doyle shot and killed a man at his own Doyle and Goodman’s saloon on C Street, Virginia City (“The Late Homicide in Virginia, Nev.,” *SDU*, March 16, 1865, 2:5, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>). A *Sacramento Daily Union* article reminded readers that Doyle was the same well-known barkeep, previously from Sacramento’s Magnolia, which Doyle owned in early 1863 (“Fatal Affray in Virginia City,” *SDU*, March 14, 1865, 3:2, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>). It is likely that Doyle fled Sacramento for Virginia City in 1863, as ads for the Magnolia in Sacramento discontinued Doyle’s name in early 1863, where Doyle’s time on the Comstock would have overlapped that of Clemens’s.<sup>8</sup> The 1865 murder made headlines in western papers, which may have stimulated the memory of the Washoe Genius in the February 22, 1866, *Transcript*, or contemporary reports of Clemens’s early literary success may have played a part. In January 1866, a San Francisco newspaper carried the news of Clemens’s success with “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog,” published the previous November, including the comment that Clemens “may be said to have made his mark” (“Podgers’ Letter from New York, Literary Matters,” *DAC*, January 10, 1866, 1:4, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>). Accordingly, news about both Doyle and Clemens appeared in California newspapers at the occasion of this memory of Clemens’s drinking pattern, providing a reasonable explanation for the timing of the Washoe Genius’s comments.

Critic Guy Cardwell believed that George Cassidy, of the Eureka *Sentinel*, and the “Washoe Genius” were motivated by a desire to associate themselves with Clemens. He wrote, “It is well known that dozens of persons have yearned to associate themselves with Twain, if only by way of circulating trumped up anecdotes,” but Cardwell failed to provide even one example (179). Neither George Cassidy, nor the unknown “Washoe Genius,” had anything to gain from



their published recollections, and motivations for both can be clearly given. Cassidy set the record straight about someone he had known in response to a newspaper item he sensed was incomplete. Cassidy, a member of the Nevada Senate and well on his way to a political career in the House of Representatives when he wrote the article, didn't need to associate himself with Clemens to forward his political career or to sell newspapers. The "Washoe Genius" was motivated by current events at the Doyle and Goodman saloon, including a murder by Doyle, and/or contemporary reporting by or about Clemens.

Modern criticism of the saloon origins of the nom de plume continued with a later reviewer, Horst Kruse, who also discounted the saloon origin of the penname, but did not use the original *Sentinel* article, only the incomplete reprint of the article that appeared in the *Daily Alta California* ("Brevities," *DAC*, June 9, 1877, 1:2, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>). By not using the original documentation, Kruse missed discovering the editor George Cassidy's comments reflecting his motivations. Kruse missed the option of the inclusion of both saloon and riverboat stories as possible explanations for the penname, inherent in Cassidy's comment that the riverboat story was "too thin." Kruse believed that Clemens was influenced by a telegraphic report (which doesn't exist) on the death of another riverboat captain. Both modern critics, Cardwell and Kruse, arguing in favor of the riverboat origins of the nom de plume, discussed the use of "Sergeant Fathom" by Clemens. Kruse concluded, "The name could indeed have dropped from his memory and then emerged, in a slightly different context, as 'Mark Twain'" (21). This is a poor argument, and Kruse even admitted to grasping at straws in trying to show the previous use of the penname (20).

A new theory distinct from both the riverboat and saloon options for the origin of the penname has been postulated by Kevin MacDonnell, who advanced the provocative theory that Clemens read an 1861 article in *Vanity Fair* that appeared to be the first time the term "mark twain" was used as a proper name (17). Inadvertently, MacDonnell demonstrated the difficulty of trying to prove that a historical figure read any given text, much less was affected by that reading. Sam Clemens could have read anything published before or during his lifetime, but evidence that he was affected by that reading is nonexistent unless Clemens specifically tied the article to his own choice of penname, or substantial evidence from other sources mentioned the changed behavior realized by Clemens's reading of the piece—details which MacDonnell's research failed to provide.

MacDonnell's article suggested that the Carson City *Silver Age*, the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, and the *Virginia Daily Union* would have had

newspaper exchange files dating back two years, which would have carried the 1861 New York *Vanity Fair* article, and that Clemens would have actually read those files in 1863, or have seen the two-year-old article at someone's home in Carson City or "elsewhere."<sup>9</sup> MacDonnell's research failed to provide the probability that Clemens read it, basing much of his article on specious argument and intuition rather than establishing probability based on documentary evidence.<sup>10</sup>

Without the "smoking gun" of a reference in a letter, diary, journal, or newspaper article, or even the faulty memory of someone who knew the author to substantiate and esteem the claim that Clemens read and was affected by the 1861 *Vanity Fair* article, it remains simply an intriguing idea. There is no substantiation for MacDonnell's assertion that Clemens "certainly would have seen" a two-year-old article that suddenly clicked with his decision to adopt a penname (25).

In contradiction to MacDonnell's theory, a newspaper similarly situated to the *Territorial Enterprise*, the *Sacramento Daily Union*, did use a few items from *Vanity Fair* in early 1861. The *Union* quoted short poems from *Vanity Fair*; an article by Artemus Ward; and summed up in a June 6, 1861, article that "*Vanity Fair* is aiming to be a powerful weapon on the side of the Union," with reference to the impending Civil War ("Atlantic Intelligence," *SDU*, June 6, 1861, 1:5, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>). The *Union* did not reprint the entire January 26, 1861, *Vanity Fair* article ridiculing the South and using the derisive term "Mark Twain" as a proper name. This January 1861 article was no more important than several others with anti-Southern sentiment, which the *Union* summarized with the brief comment on June 6. The timing of the use of the exchange articles indicates the use of current articles, not those two years old.

Arguing again against MacDonnell's theory, it is questionable as to whether the *Territorial Enterprise* utilized exchange files dating back two years before Clemens's stint at the paper. Neither *Enterprise* employees Denis McCarthy nor Dan DeQuille mentioned exchange files at the *Enterprise* that began publication in Virginia City on November 3, 1860, in a small building on A and Sutton streets.<sup>11</sup> Ownership changes in March 1861 saw Denis McCarthy and Joseph Goodman join the staff, with Dan DeQuille added later in the year (Lingenfelter and Gash 253). Editor McCarthy characterized the early *Enterprise* office on A and Sutton as "a very shaky one-story frame building. Here compositors, editors, pressmen and all hands worked together in one room. There was a shed on the north side of the building in which were fitted up 'bunks,' one above another, as on shipboard, and here slept editors, printers, carriers, and pretty

much everybody connected with the establishment except 'Joe' the Chinese cook" ("Local Intelligence, Personal," *TE*, January 8, 1875, 3:2).

Without mention of exchange files in either article, coupled with the description of the cramped quarters which precluded room for extensive files of old newspapers that had limited usefulness, the existence of these files remains moot. The *Enterprise* became a daily in September 1861 and early the following year left the A and Sutton location for C Street between Union and Sutton, where Clemens joined the paper. In August 1863 the paper moved again, this time to south C Street—all transformations that would have required the editors to throw out unneeded paperwork, or pack up exchange files, if present (Lingenfelter and Gash 254). Yesterday's newspaper became today's fire in the wood stove in all likelihood. Only a small handful of issues of the *Enterprise* exists from these early days of operation. The July 20, 1861, paper carried a small article thanking the local bookseller for passing on "Harper's magazine and papers" to the *Enterprise* staff, adding that all the Atlantic papers were available at his store, but seemingly not in the *Enterprise* office—again, details in refutation of MacDonnell's thinking ("Thanks," *TE*, July 20, 1861, 2:3).

Moreover, MacDonnell's argument on the timing of Clemens's choice of the pseudonym is faulty. Instead of cogent reasoning based on evidence, MacDonnell argued that because Clemens used the penname on February 3, 1863, he must have read the *Vanity Fair* article on that date. That reading, MacDonnell believed, gave Clemens on that date something of an "ah ha" moment while in Carson City reporting on the Nevada territorial legislature for the *Enterprise*. Clemens spent two months in Carson City the previous winter of 1862.<sup>12</sup> Why didn't this "ah ha" moment occur to him then? MacDonnell said Clemens simply did not read the two-year-old article until that date, but there is no documentation that supports the notion that Clemens ever read the article at all, nor documentation suggesting this reference to "mark twain" effected a reactive deed on the part of the author (25).

In contradiction to MacDonnell's arguments, what is more plausible about Clemens's timing in taking the penname was Henry Nash Smith's establishment of the probable causal relationship; the February 3, 1863, letter contained the answer itself.<sup>13</sup> "The Unreliable" addressed Clemens as Mark, indicating a familiarity with the author's barroom nickname of mark two or twain, based on his well-established drinking habits. The previously verbal use of the nickname became the official penname in the February 3, 1863, letter.<sup>14</sup> By the following year, "The Unreliable" could joke in the newspaper about the mark two as Twain.

In continuing to support a possible saloon origin for the penname, another contemporary of Clemens's recalled his drinking pattern while living in Virginia City. Sam Clemens's idiosyncrasies of drink were also recounted by Thomas Sawyer of San Francisco, a crony of Twain's during his early years in that city, according to his own statements. In *Black Fire*, Robert Graysmith argued effectively for Thomas Sawyer as a credible source of Twain's brief residence in the Bay City in the 1860s. However, Graysmith did not fully explore the topic of the saloon origins of Clemens's penname.<sup>15</sup>

Continuing support for the saloon origin of the penname comes from newspaper accounts of Thomas Sawyer's memories. In an 1898 interview, Sawyer recalled visiting Clemens in Virginia City, where Sawyer and Twain frequented Tom Peasley's saloon. One night barkeep Larry Ryan served up two cocktails for the pair. Larry mixed and served the drinks, expecting Sam to "ante up" for the cost. Instead, he stood there and held up two fingers, and pointing to the slate said, "Larry, mark twain." When Larry told owner Tom Peasley about it in the morning, "Peasley thought it such a good joke that he told all the boys, and after that Sam wuz dubbed Mark Twain," so Sawyer recalled.<sup>16</sup>

The structure of Sawyer's remarks appeared similar to the structure of the older Cassidy column in which Cassidy listed four other newsmen who were Clemens's drinking partners.<sup>17</sup> Conversely, Sawyer listed the following: "There wuz a set of high rollers there in Virginia City at that time, I can tell you—Bret Harte, Pat Lynch, Sam Davis, Holland of the Enterprise, Tom Fox, Doc Cole, and Sam."

To support Thomas Sawyer's memories, an attempt has been made to actually place the men he listed as Clemens's drinking friends in the mining town at the same time as Clemens, from 1862 to 1864. Larry Ryan, the barkeep, cannot be located in the mining town, although other men surnamed Ryan were there.<sup>18</sup> "Doc Cole," a well-known druggist with a long Comstock career beginning in the early 1860s,<sup>19</sup> occupied an office on B Street near Pat Lynch's Niagara Saloon and Dance Hall.<sup>20</sup> Tom Peasley owned various saloons on C Street, until his untimely death in 1866.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Doc Cole, Pat Lynch, and Tom Peasley are easy to place in the mountain mining town at the time Clemens lived there, adding to the credibility of Sawyer as a witness.

Another contemporary mentioned by Sawyer, Pat Holland, was a newspaperman in Nevada, producing the *City Review* free advertising sheet in Virginia City in 1868, and by 1873 he wrote the Pioche, Nevada *Record*.<sup>22</sup> Pat Holland lived in Virginia City "in the early days of the Comstock excitement," where as a resident of the town in 1863 he became a volunteer firefighting member

of Eagle Engine Company No. 3. Thus Holland's time in Virginia City also overlapped that of Clemens.<sup>23</sup>

Three of the men mentioned by Sawyer were members of volunteer firefighting companies that protected early Virginia City: Thomas Peasley, Tom Fox, and Pat Holland. As Sawyer was a firefighter in San Francisco it is not surprising he would remember other men who volunteered in that same field.<sup>24</sup>

Of the men listed by Sawyer, Sam Davis, the well-known editor of a Carson City newspaper during the late 1800s, didn't arrive in Virginia City until 1875, long after Clemens left, although Davis met Clemens in later years.<sup>25</sup> Placing the last contemporary mentioned by Sawyer, Bret Harte, in Virginia City in the early 1860s is also problematic. It is generally accepted that Clemens didn't meet Bret Harte until his permanent relocation to San Francisco in 1864, although Harte's residence in California during the early 1860s would have provided numerous opportunities for him to journey to Virginia City during Clemens's time on the Comstock (Scharnhorst, *Bret Harte* 28).

In support of Thomas Sawyer as a credible commentator regarding Clemens, an early newspaper article interview of Thomas Sawyer proclaimed that the naïve and unsophisticated bar owner believed that Clemens would substantiate his claims later in the year 1895, as San Francisco was a proposed stop on Clemens's western tour itinerary. "You can bet when Mark shows up here next August he'll bear me out," the barkeep related ("The Real Tom Sawyer," *SFC*, July 14, 1895, 16:4, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>). Clemens mildly rebuked Sawyer's claim to be the source of his novel character Tom Sawyer, but it is doubtful that Thomas Sawyer would have looked forward to meeting Clemens again if he was prevaricating.<sup>26</sup> Clemens did not return to the City by the Bay after his 1868 lecture tour (Rasmussen 279).

Let's return to George Cassidy's 1877 memories in an effort to understand why Clemens reacted so promptly in an attempt to squelch any additional mention of Virginia City saloons by his contemporaries. Continuing the research in support of the saloon origin of the penname, George Cassidy's 1877 *Eureka Daily Sentinel* column may be further deconstructed. In that column, Cassidy noted that Clemens was "no Coal Oil Tommy." The character Coal Oil Tommy appeared in the contemporary play *Lottery of Life*.<sup>27</sup> In *Lottery of Life*, an anti-Semitic sensation play by John Brougham published in 1867, the "promiscuous" Coal Oil Tommy, a young man, enters the Japonica Concert Saloon in New York City with a fist full of money made in the oil fields.<sup>28</sup> The play's leading character was the Jewish merchant Mordie Solomons, who personified anti-Jewish stereotypes of frugality as a moneylender, counterfeiter, and blackmailer

bent on revenge, and took two disguises in the show, but was frustrated by the events of a complicated plot (Harap 212).

*Lottery of Life* clarified the language associated with the use of chalkboards in saloons for marking drink orders, as an exchange in the saloon scene noted the terminology of running a drink tab. In the concert saloon scene, a waiter girl questioned the patron, “What a man you are Colonel—Shall I put this down!” The character responded, “No sweetest we’ll do that. You can chalk it up, though—if you like!” (Brougham 17).

Coal Oil Tommy’s saloon scene character was added to the drama in the Charles Wheatleigh productions in California and Nevada. Tommy recklessly bought drinks for the crowds in the saloon replete with “waiter girls,” their presence in the scene one of the factors making this a sensation drama. Coal Oil Tommy had nothing to do with the plot of the play, which saw the wicked punished and the oppressed made happy (“Metropolitan Theater,” *SDU*, February 25, 1868, 3:1, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>). Tommy’s appearance startled theater patrons with the sensation of reckless drinking in a concert saloon with working women.

Based on a real person, Coal Oil Tommy spent money carelessly, like his prototype John Steele. Paul Fatout, also attempting to deconstruct Cassidy’s *Sentinel* column, believed George Cassidy had simply erred or confused the name in writing Tommy instead of Johnny in his *Sentinel* column about Clemens’s penname (Fatout, “Mark Twain’s Nom de Plume” 2). The wealthy John Steele was reportedly asked to pay in advance for the first round of drinks before he could order any more for the saloon crowd; although wealthy, he appeared to be without funds. Steele’s “money was soon spent and he has sunk into obscurity; but beyond doubt he had a very good time with the proceeds of his oil well while they lasted,” according to a Bostonian, who tied the real Steele to the Coal Oil Tommy character in the play (“Letter from Boston,” *SDU*, November 1, 1867, 1:4, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>).

The drama *Lottery of Life* opened in California, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia in 1868, the same year that Clemens’s lecture circuit took him to the Golden State for an approximate three-month run, although an overlap with Clemens’s tour in a California city performing the play cannot be found.<sup>29</sup> Clemens was in the west from April through July 6, 1868, on a lecture tour, but does not appear to have been in a town at the same time as the play *Lottery of Life* appeared (Lorch 74, 81). Even if Clemens had not seen the show, knowledge of Coal Oil Tommy passed into the public consciousness and became a part of late nineteenth-century American culture.<sup>30</sup> *Lottery of Life* experienced many revivals well into the 1880s.<sup>31</sup>

As portrayed in *Lottery of Life*, the concert saloon, sometimes labeled a melodeon in the American west, offered variety entertainment to patrons on a stage set in the back of or adjacent to the saloon. The concert saloon was banned in New York in 1862 due to the presence of waiter girls in combination with alcohol and theatrics, a combination that promoted immorality.<sup>32</sup> Some concert saloons offered gambling and outright prostitution, although typical waiter girls may have been expected to serve drinks and then take a turn on stage (McNamara 88). Certainly the contact with male patrons provided options for additional encounters, if the waiter girl felt motivated. In *Lottery of Life*'s Coal Oil Tommy scene the audience was startled at the presence of working women (i.e., waiter girls in the saloon), as well as a representation of the variety entertainment typical of the male-dominated saloons. The specific representation of melodeon entertainment as it was acted in *Lottery of Life* is unknown; however, even contemporary newspaperman Alf Doten referred to melodeon entertainment as "smutty and rough" (Van Tilburg Clark 2:950).<sup>33</sup>

George Cassidy's 1877 *Sentinel* column recorded that Clemens, not a Coal Oil Tommy, drank with one friend at a time, the two drinks marked down on the chalk board behind the bar tallied one drink for Clemens and one for a compatriot. At best, Cassidy's comments pronounce Clemens a careful drinker who merely loved "the ardent," rather than the reckless Coal Oil Tommy characterization. Yet the mention of John Piper, the largest brothel owner in 1863 Virginia City, and the allusion of Coal Oil Tommy flooding readers with memories of the concert saloon scene in *Lottery of Life*, seemly offer an underlying innuendo of sex, specifically prostitution. Although largely lost to the modern reader, Cassidy's comments were redolent of meaning to Clemens, as evidenced by his sharp response.

In support of this interpretation of Cassidy's 1877 *Sentinel* column and Clemens's response, it is important to bring additional knowledge of Clemens's life in Virginia City to bear on this argument. The *Gold Hill Daily News* reported in October 1863 that Mark Twain had proposed marriage to a local woman, only to be rejected.<sup>34</sup> Was the lady a waiter girl at a melodeon? Her identity remains undiscovered. A frequently overlooked comment in the *Gold Hill News* observed that "Mark Twain said they must peel," referring to female striptease, or the melodeon show wasn't worth watching.<sup>35</sup> Again, an observation reflecting Clemens's constancy with male-centric western experiences, but potentially a source of embarrassment if publicized in his later life. Whatever Cassidy knew of Clemens's life in Nevada Territory, Clemens's strong rebuke to the *Daily Alta California* ended the printed comments. Clemens felt comfortable arguing for the riverboat origins of his penname, and he repeated the Captain

Sellers story as the sobriquet origin more than three thousand times (Fatout, *Mark Twain in Virginia City* 34). The Captain Sellers's story saved Clemens's embarrassment about his wild western years as he pursued a respectable life on the East Coast. Similar to Twain's fictional writing that showed examples of the ability to claim status and power through the exhibition of the approved forms of sensibility, Clemens's indignation over Cassidy's letter gave him power over potentially unfavorable interpretations of his own personal past (Smith, *Mark Twain* 122–23).

The desire for claiming power over his own past may rest, in large part, with the complexities of his relationship with his wife. When courting Olivia "Livy" Langdon, Clemens was determined to reform. Clemens's West Coast past was a source of embarrassment and chagrin requiring reformation (Steinbrink, *Getting to Be Mark Twain* 10, 14–15; Steinbrink, "How Mark Twain Survived Sam Clemens' Reformation" 315). After marriage, Clemens's new behavior shocked *Territorial Enterprise* editor and friend Joseph Goodman. Goodman recalled Clemens having to sneak a bottle of whiskey into his room, as Livy had banished liquor from their new home (Berkove, *Insider Stories of the Comstock Lode and Nevada's Mining Frontier* 2:1033–34). Clemens said grace before dinner to an explosion of laughter from Goodman; ultimately Clemens blamed Livy and her early childhood training for his reformed behavior (2:1034). A similar change was needed with respect to Clemens's choice of penname, thus Clemens created with Captain Sellers a solid story on which to credit his choice of nom de plume. The fact that Captain Sellers was alive when Clemens "laid violent hands" on the penname was of no concern; distancing his respectable East Coast life from his freewheeling days in the west mattered most.

A careful reading of the original Cassidy column, unfortunately not reprinted in its entirety in the *Daily Alta California*, finds truth in both the riverboat and the saloon stories. Cassidy's desire to set the record straight and add to the "too thin" riverboat story, does not preclude the idea that Clemens may have read the 1861 *Vanity Fair* article and made a mental note of the term "Mark Twain," should future evidence prove that theory, or that Clemens may have enjoyed the reminder of the riverboat's call of "mark twain" when contemporaries noted his drinking habits in the wild Virginia City of the early 1860s, and dubbed him the "mark two or twain." The first written use, February 3, 1863, of Mark Twain by Sam Clemens, represented the fact that one of Clemens's many choices of pseudonym finally resonated with him and became the perfect fit. Clemens had tried on many aliases during the first years of his writing career, but "mark twain" represented a nostalgia for his earlier life on the river, as well as his current life as a saloon patron in the many establishments in territorial Nevada.

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The contemporary notation of “Mark Two” for Twain mentioned in the *Virginia Daily Union* by Clement Rice, the Johnny Doyle saloon story recounted by the “Washoe Genius,” the Ambrose Bierce quote at the time of Clemens’s marriage, plus Thomas Sawyer’s recollections, and ultimately the column in the *Eureka Daily Sentinel* written by the very credible George Cassidy, may have flaws as substantiation of the saloon story for the origin of Clemens’s nom de plume, but they are consistently illustrative of Clemens’s drinking pattern in early Nevada. Taken together they imply a widespread proliferation of the same knowledge; that the penname Mark Twain derived from Mark Two, for an order of two drinks at a time; and that the early acquaintances of Clemens’s were simply setting the record straight as to the real story about the penname. Clemens’s drinking was probably widely known by the local bohemians and newspapermen of Virginia City. The truth in all the versions may be Clemens’s drinking pattern, a tidbit of his early life in the Wild West that he preferred to forget. Biographer Justin Kaplan observed that Clemens’s own “omissions and reshapings in themselves suggest a kind of truth,” in understanding the author’s western experiences (9).<sup>36</sup>

In much the same way his drinking habits needed reconfiguration, Clemens’s sexual experiences in the West needed to be swept under the carpet. Knowledge of Clemens’s sexual experiences in territorial Nevada is largely circumspect. Clemens acknowledged sleeping with female servants in an 1862 letter (Branch, Frank, and Sanderson 143–45). Modern researchers argued for Clemens’s having experienced sex with prostitutes as well as chambermaids (Sanborn 222–23; Harris 73).<sup>37</sup> George Cassidy’s column had an underlying innuendo related to sex, specifically prostitution, that may have reminded Clemens of sexual encounters, which, if publicized, would have brought embarrassment to himself and his family.

In terms of evidence, would the modern scholar doubt the veracity of five men who independently commented on a western writer when their memories can be contextualized, clarified, and shown to be largely fact-based if the writer in question were Dan DeQuille or Bret Harte? Would there be doubt as to a writer’s motives in protecting his family from embarrassment over his less than exemplary past if the writer was someone other than Sam Clemens? The previous debate over Clemens’s choice of nom de plume, and the discounting of independent voices from Clemens’s past, rests, in part, with the deification of Clemens that has become a piece of the fabric of American culture.

Andrew Hoffman observed, “Some people are wed to an idealized Mark Twain. . . . If however, Clemens hid a fundamental feature of his past, then his honesty comes into question and the idol becomes tarnished” (44).

By suggesting that Clemens hid a fundamental feature of his past—his drinking and possibly premarital sexual associations in establishments adjacent to drinking parlors he had patronized—rather than tarnishing the idol, don't we simply recognize his humanity and the truth of his experiences as a young man in the mining camp? His choice to protect his wife and family from these potentially painful memories brought up by past acquaintances can be tempered with an understanding of East Coast Victorian life. The West to Clemens, although a source of his early literary successes, became an embarrassment to the successful author in the East, and required a rewriting of the past, a sanitized version that could weather the storm of previous acquaintances reminding the reading public of the truth of the western experience.

## Notes

1. "But the incident is evidently fiction and can hardly be made a basis for inferences concerning historical fact," Smith opined in *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* 48. Paul Fatout, in *Mark Twain in Virginia City*, named it "interpolated fiction" (39). More recent research points to Clemens's style of reporting as based in fact. Branch, in *Clemens of the Call*, wrote, "Just as the self-advertising Mark Twain of the Enterprise poured factual information, humorous chitchat, and fanciful anecdotes into the mold of his letters, so the anonymous *Call* reporter Sam Clemens went well beyond the factual itemizing of local events" (2). See also p. 4 for a discussion of other examples of Clemens's fanciful patterns of style. Berkove in "Nevada Influences on Mark Twain" characterized Twain's debt to his years in Nevada as the use of hoaxes for the core of every major literary work of fiction he produced, and the concept that God was malevolent (164).

2. Fatout, in *Mark Twain Speaks for Himself*, found a particular style to Clemens's early newspaper reports and remarked that his early writing held "objective fact and imaginative editorializing" (8); and that he reported "in a dual role as reporter and editorializing moralist" (18). Another example of Clemens's hyperbolic writings based in fact was discussed by Rocha and Smith, who found his opinion to be "typically hyperbolic" in his early humorous writing about Nevada's notary law (84). See also Twain, *The Great Landslide Case*.

3. Rasmussen put Sellers's date of death at June 3, 1864, in Memphis (425).

4. "Mark Twain," *EDS*, May 8 1877, 1:1. The original *Eureka Daily Sentinel* is available at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno.

5. George Cassidy Collection. Letters from December 1861 to July 1863 are missing from the George Cassidy Collection. A "G. M. Cassidy" is listed in Kelly, *First Directory of Nevada Territory* 92, as a feeder at the Stewart and Henning's Mill in Empire City. This is possibly George, arguing for his residence near Virginia City during most of the time Clemens lived in Nevada Territory. The ore-milling town of Empire was located on the Carson River east of Carson City and southwest of Virginia City.

6. This is my interpretation based on the letters in the Cassidy Collection. George carried on a regular correspondence with his brother C.C. who remained in Dutch Flat. The letters comprise part of the Cassidy Collection. Cassidy wrote informative letters to the *Dutch Flat Enquirer* newspaper under various pennames including Adventurer and Quitman, which

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discussed life in Gold Hill and Virginia City. Cassidy knew the *Enquirer* editor from his previous residence in Dutch Flat.

7. Cassidy Collection; Glass 21, 36, 42, 50, 51. Cassidy was characterized as a “sparkling wit and a well-known raconteur” (50).

8. Ads for the Magnolia appear to have begun in the *SDU* on January 3, 1863, 2:1. See *SDU*, March 4, 1863, 1:1, for the last advertisement of John E. Doyle at the Magnolia Hotel, 23 J Street. <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

9. MacDonnell 23, for *TE* and *VDU*; 25 for *Silver Age* and for homes or elsewhere. Clemens never wrote for the *Silver Age* nor for the *Virginia Daily Union*. MacDonnell did provide a concise biography of Clement T. Rice, Clemens’s fellow newspaperman and acquaintance.

10. “The sort of causal explanation that the historian wants is a statement of probability or probable causal relationship; he does not want (and in any event cannot have) a logical explanation, a syllogism” (Shafer 59).

11. Dan De Quille’s article to the *Daily Alta California* presented memories of the newspaper’s early days. “Nevada Newspapers,” *DAC*, April 26, 1885, 1:1, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>. Denis McCarthy was interviewed by the *Territorial Enterprise* in January 1875. “Local Intelligence, Personal,” *TE*, January 8, 1875, 3:2.

12. Sam Clemens and Clement Rice received a resolution of thanks for their full and accurate reports of the proceedings of the legislature. “Letter from Nevada Territory,” *SDU*, December 23, 1862, 1:5, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

13. Smith, *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* 48. Smith wrote, “This might suggest that the pseudonym had already been in use long enough to become familiar.”

14. Other problems with MacDonnell’s article include the notion that Twain’s influence on the legislature through his membership in the “Third House” had a significant effect on Nevada’s lawmaking (40). The preeminent article on the Third House during Clemens’s time in Nevada is Simpson, and the contemporary account in “The Third House and Other Burlesques,” *VDU*, January 30, 1864, 2:2. There were no notes taken at the Third House gatherings, so Clemens’s contributions to Nevada legislation, if any, based on the Third House cannot be substantiated. Membership in the Third House may be more significant to Clemens’s career as a humorous speaker. The Third House may have provided him the opportunity to practice in front of an audience and hone his talents as a comic. A local doctor recorded that the Third House was the only place of amusement and “poor entertainment” in Carson City at the time, Miller, McDonald, and Rollins 671–72. See also Smith, *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* 13–15 for a discussion of Clemens’s role as lobbyist to the legislature.

Similarly, MacDonnell extrapolated a twentieth-century concept to a nineteenth-century setting when suggesting Clemens had concerns over his “brand,” again without evidence (25). The author’s uncritical acceptance of Guy Cardwell’s 1975 article (previously cited) is disappointing and does not advance Twain scholarship. MacDonnell was so committed to proving his *Vanity Fair* discovery that he failed to take a broader view of his own research, and give the saloon origins of the penname a fair critical examination, as no use of material from *Vanity Fair* was discovered in his examination of the Nevada newspapers of the time (24).

15. Graysmith stated that “Sawyer provided the most popular origin of Sam’s pen name: It happened at Tom Peasley’s Saloon near morning in Nevada City.” Graysmith errs in placing Tom Peasley’s saloon in Nevada City, California (207); crediting Clemens’s use of the penname to a July 18 letter (208), but did not fully explore previous scholarship on the penname.

16. "Here Is the Original of Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer," *SFC*, October 23, 1898, 25:1–6, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>. In *Black Fire*, Graysmith placed Sawyer's visit to Virginia City in June 1863 (207–8). Smith, *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* placed Clemens in San Francisco throughout the month of June 1863, returning to Virginia City on July 2, 1863 (62). Graysmith erroneously tied the Johnny Doyle story to Thomas Sawyer by mixing the vernacular of the "Washoe Genius" with that of Sawyer's (208).

17. Cassidy listed Alf Doten, Dan DeQuille, Charley Parker, and Bob Lowery. In November 1865, these four newspapermen and one other, William Gillespie, had their picture taken together as the reporters of Virginia and Gold Hill daily newspapers. See Van Tilburg Clark 2:872–73.

18. Kelly, *Second Directory of Nevada Territory*, listed four men surnamed Ryan, none working in a field related to saloons (277).

19. Kelly, *Second Directory of Nevada Territory*, listed A. M. Cole apothecary, at 20 N. B Street (183). See also, "Our Trip to the Bonanzas," *California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences*, June 7, 1877, 132:3, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>, for a discussion of Virginia City businessmen including Cole.

20. Pat Lynch came to Virginia City in 1862 and is listed in Kelly, *Second Directory of Nevada Territory* 254. Clemens knew of Lynch, as his reporting on the 1863 fire for the *San Francisco Call* began the fire at "Lynch's" (Branch 286). Lynch owned the Niagara Hall where Artemus Ward spoke in December 1863. "Pat Lynch," *SFE*, February 6, 1866, 3:2. See also Smith, *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* 127.

21. The Peasley and Wardle saloon business at 9 south C Street and Thomas Peasley are listed in Kelly, *Second Directory of Nevada Territory* 270. Peasley was recorded at the Sazerac Saloon at 10 south C Street in 1864–65 in Collins 181. For a short biography of Tom Peasley see Frady 87–91.

22. "City Review," *GHN*, December 3, 1868, 3:1; "Nevada Newspapers," *DAC*, April 26, 1885, 1:2; "Pacific Coast Telegrams," *LAH*, December 31, 1873, 3:4; "Miscellaneous," *SDU*, October 30, 1875, 8:6, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>, for California papers.

23. "Pat Holland's Misfortune," *SDU*, December 7, 1882, 3:4, for early Comstock days; "Artemus Ward," *SDU*, January 12, 1864, 3:2; "Virginia, Nev.," *SDU*, January 12, 1869, 3:4, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>; "Engine Company Meeting," *VEB*, August 26, 1863, 3:1, for Holland's membership in the Eagle Engine Company. Holland is not listed in Kelly, *Second Directory of Nevada Territory*. Pat Holland is listed as a printer in Collins 99. Holland may actually be the unknown theater manager recalled in Gaw, as Holland was an actor and theater manager in 1863. It is possible he returned to that profession in 1883 when the eyewitness of Gaw's article recalled rooming with Twain in Gold Hill twenty years earlier, and participating in the famous robbery of Twain on the Divide in 1866. For comments on Holland's theatrical career see Watson 215, 220–21; see *GHN*, April 30, 1873, 2:2, for a notice about Holland writing a play while in Pioche.

24. Frady pictured Tom Fox as chief of Washoe Engine Company No. 4 in 1869 (14). Alf Doten mentioned voting for Thomas H. Fox as chief of the Virginia City Fire Department in 1869 (Van Tilburg Clark 2:1037). Tom Peasley and Pat Holland were friends as of December 1865. See "Making Light of Justice in Virginia City," *SF Morning Call*, December 2, 1865, 1, reprinting *Enterprise* of the 29th.

25. Small put Davis in California in 1872 (6) and in Virginia City in late 1875 (7). Two other men surnamed Davis are listed in Kelly, *Second Directory of Nevada Territory*, one a merchant and the other a teamster. It is possible Sawyer was referring to one of these men, or was simply confused as to the exact timing (98).

26. See Scharnhorst, *Mark Twain* 174 for Clemens's rebuttal to the claim.

27. Brougham, published in 1867. The original written version of the show did not have the Coal Oil Tommy character. The character was added to the Charles Wheatleigh productions of the play in 1868 in California and Nevada. No copy exists of the Charles Wheatleigh version of the play.

28. "Piper's Opera House," *GHN*, August 29, 1868, 2:5, lists the players for the Charles Wheatleigh production in Virginia City. Coal Oil Tommy was a promiscuous character on the loose.

29. "Metropolitan Theater," *DAC*, January 19, 1868, 4:3, puffed the play's opening in eastern cities. At San Francisco's Metropolitan Theater, *Lottery of Life* ran from January 20 until February 5. ("Amusements," *DAC*, January 20, 1868, 1:1; "Amusements," *DAC*, February 5, 1868, 1:3). It then opened at the Sacramento Metropolitan Theater on February 25 through 27, then again on February 29 and March 1, for a total run of five nights in Sacramento ("Metropolitan Theater," *SDU*, March 2, 1868, 5:1). The show played Virginia City in April 1868 for two nights and again in August 1868 for two nights, and then returned to San Francisco's Maguire's Theater from December 12 through 16 for four nights. "The Lottery of Life Tonight," *GHN*, April 2, 1868, 3:1; "Piper's Opera House," *GHN*, April 3, 1868, 3:1; Miller, "An Historical Study of Theatrical Entertainment in Virginia City" 338–39; "Amusements," *DAC*, December 12, 1868, 4:3; "Amusements, etc. Maguire's Opera House," *DAC*, December 16, 1868, 1:3. The *Lottery of Life* returned to the San Francisco Metropolitan Theater in November 1871, and the California Theater in February 1872. See <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/> for California papers.

Clemens sailed from New York on March 11 for California ("Letter from Mark Twain," *DAC*, June 7, 1868, 3:1). Clemens was in San Francisco on his lecture tour on April 14 and 15, 1868; and on the 17th in Sacramento. Clemens appeared on April 18 in Marysville, California, then Nevada City on April 20 and Grass Valley on April 21. April 27 and 28 found Clemens in Virginia City, Nevada, and April 29 in Carson City. He returned to Virginia City and left there May 4. ("Departures," *GHN*, May 4, 1868, 3:2) He returned to San Francisco by June 30, and lectured on July 2 in San Francisco at the Mercantile Library building. "Amusements, Etc.," *DAC*, April 15, 1868, 1:3; "Mark Twain's Lecture," *SDU*, April 18, 1868, 3:1; *SDU*, April 30, 1868, 2:2; "Mark Twain's Lecture Last Night," *DAC*, July 3, 1868, 1:3; Lorch 78–79. Twain was to leave July 6 for the east according to "Mark Twain's Lecture Last Night," *DAC*, July 3, 1868, 1:3, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

30. A racehorse named Coal Oil Tommy first lost a race in 1871, "Nevada, Race at Reno," *DAC*, October 7, 1871, 4:1. An 1887 article used the term "Coal Oil Tommy" in comparison to Sandy Bowers as a person "when he wanted an article or took it into his head to do a thing" he never looked at the cost; see "The Bowers Mansion," *DAC*, January 24, 1887, 2:2. "Karl, the Tramp," *SDU*, February 13, 1896, 3:3, referred to a character as the "Coal Oil Tommy of today." "Strange Change Comes over Gilette," *NYMT*, April 14, 1900, 7:3, described a character giving orders for drinks and smokes which would have filled the late "Coal Oil Tommy with hopeless envy." See <http://fultonhistory.com/>.

31. *Lottery of Life* was revived for the New York Grand Opera House on April 20, 1884, *BDE*, April 20, 1884, 7:1. See "News of the Stage," *BEN*, February 29, 1888, 5:5, for the purchase of the rights of the play in anticipation of a revival. See also <http://fultonhistory.com/>.

32. "Effect of the Concert Saloon Law," *NYT*, April 30, 1862, <http://www.nytimes.com/1862/04/30/news/effect-of-the-concert-saloon-law.html>; McNamara 2, 18.

33. Actor/manager David Belasco in the early 1870s observed the funeral of a Virginia City prostitute who had committed suicide after being denied a job at the Opera House, presumably as a waiter girl. The waiter girl job provided an escape, without which she preferred death (771).

34. Fatout, *Mark Twain in Virginia City* 53, quoting *GHN*, October 28, 1863. Clemens was apparently upset at the *GHN* for publishing this brief story of his rejection. See “A Peculiar Taste,” *VEB*, October 30, 1863, 3:1, which defends the *GHN* having published “his deeds” in reference to the complaint from the local of the *Enterprise*, Clemens. See also “A Model Love Letter,” *VEB*, September 10, 1863, 3:2, which reprinted a love letter of marriage proposal from W.T.T. dated September 7, at the request of the woman who received it. The humor in the letter is reminiscent of Clemens, for example “I offer you my fortune—something I never had, but with good expectations—of never being poorer.” See also Hoffman, who quotes Clemens’s response as to how humiliating the past can be: “damned humiliating . . . What any man would say of his past if he were honest” (44).

35. The *Gold Hill News* critic wrote that “the truth is the people of Nevada seem to have a poor appreciation of theatrical entertainment, being strictly admirers of melodeon performances. As Mark Twain says, ‘they must peel’ or it is impossible to have a good audience.” “Piper’s Opera House,” *GHN*, April 24, 1867, 3:1.

36. The nineteenth-century contemporaries “told as truth but [were] heard as fiction” by twentieth-century listeners. See Quirk 49, on the humorist’s several poses.

37. Harris allowed that Clemens slept with prostitutes but felt “his fastidiousness would have prevented him from regular attendance at common whorehouses” (73).

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