

# The WILD WEST

*People and Events  
That Shaped the  
American West*



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## MARK TWAIN

Mark Twain was born in Missouri in 1835 on the banks of the Mississippi River. To help his family, he took jobs in printing and newspaper offices as a teenager. Then, at age 22, he set out on a journey along the Mississippi to New Orleans. He became a steamboat pilot until his brother got a job in Nevada and he decided to join him out west. He used his newspaper experience to get jobs writing for the local newspaper in Nevada, and a few years later, in San Francisco, where he wrote true stories about his travels around California and around the world. In 1872, he moved to Connecticut with his wife and began writing fiction that was inspired by his childhood in Missouri, most famously *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In both his fiction and non-fiction writing, Mark Twain influenced how others thought of the then-uncharted American West, and still influences what we think life was like in the early days of the West. Mark Twain was one of America's first native Westerners, one of the first journalists to write about life in the West, and is considered one of the greatest American authors.

*Fun Fact!*

Mark Twain was known for his humorous writing style. An award called the Mark Twain Award is given out to comedians every year.

### IN YOUR OWN WORDS...

"The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter." - *Mark Twain*

Mark Twain is known as much for his humorous quotes as for his funny writing. What does the above quote mean to you? Do you agree? Why or why not?

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