

## Introduction

### **Lake Tahoe and Mark Twain**

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The setting in this book is Lake Tahoe and the surrounding region. We see it through this book's central character, Mark Twain, and his unique viewpoint, influenced by his life and times in the West. We particularly focus on his experiences in and around Lake Tahoe. We see how they helped transform the man into one of America's greatest authors and humorists.

Fans of Lake Tahoe and Mark Twain will find this book adds new dimension and previously little-known information about both. For the first time, all the known Mark Twain travels and experiences at Lake Tahoe are documented and appear in detail in one book. Of course, it was during this period and in this area, that Samuel L. Clemens became Mark Twain and launched his writing and literary career. This book will introduce you to the Lake Tahoe that Mark Twain knew during his nearly three years of residence in the region. We see how Lake Tahoe is different and, in many ways, still the same as it was when Mark Twain prowled its shores. We learn about the first visits made by a young and opportunistic Sam Clemens and his

failed struggle to establish a timber claim on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe. He returns less than two years later as Mark Twain, a popular news reporter for the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise* and writes of his new experiences at lakeside resorts.

We follow Mark Twain's changing attitude about the name "Tahoe" and his view of the lake as a place of spiritual renewal, healthful restoration, and exceptional beauty, rivaled by no other lakes. For the first time, a comprehensive compendium of Mark Twain quotations about Lake Tahoe appears together with context and interpretation of his statements. A thorough analysis and debunking of the Mark Twain-Lake Tahoe myths and misrepresentations that have sprung up over the 150+ years since his first visit complement the descriptions of Twain's experiences at the lake.

Those interested in seeing and experiencing the same sites visited by Mark Twain will read about several locations described within this book together with directions on how to find them. It is truly inspiring for one to stand where Twain stood, see what Twain saw, and sense what Twain felt.

As you read this book, you will travel back in time. You will read about the same things that Mark Twain saw and experienced, and learn about the parallel history of Lake Tahoe during this period. Taken together, you will understand how Lake Tahoe influenced one of America's greatest writers and formed part of the foundation of his exceptional literary legacy.

For those only interested in Mark Twain's Lake Tahoe adventures, read Chapters 3 through 9. Mark Twain scholars will want to include Chapter 2 and Appendix II. If you are interested in some Lake Tahoe history in the time of Twain and how he interacted with the setting for his visits to the lake, also read Chapter 1. To get the full measure of Twain's Lake Tahoe writings, review Appendix I.

## **Notes to the 2017 Update**

Though this book describes events that occurred over 150 years ago, new information surfaced and fresh insights revealed themselves in the five years since the original publication.

Twenty-one new images of photos and maps now provide better visual accompaniment to the text. The first chapter on 1861-65 Lake Tahoe includes new and more accurate information on conditions together with more connections to Mark Twain's appearances at the lake. The North Shore timber claim narrative has more details and supporting evidence. Accounts of Twain's subsequent visits to the lake contain more background information and depth. Twain's vivid word paintings of Lake Tahoe are now explained within the context of the "Blue Mind" that embodies the positive effects of water on the human spirit. A map for a new hike that follows Twain's 1868 sleigh ride to Truckee is added. The section on debunking the East Shore timber claim legend presents newly discovered evidence that casts even more dispersions on that imaginary scenario. We update for yet another embarrassing and failed Clemens topographic naming attempt by a Nevada public agency. Readers will find the list of sources has many more new entries.

Mark Twain never seems to lose his popularity and relevance in today's world. We can expect his pronouncements to continue to be as controversial as they are incisive. Stay tuned...

The author welcomes questions and comments on this book. Contact him at [dcantonucci@msn.com](mailto:dcantonucci@msn.com).