



*Mark Twain and
His Frog*

A Background of “The
Notorious Jumping Frog
of Calaveras County”

The Notorious Jumping Frog



- According to The Norton Anthology of American Literature, “ ‘The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County’ is one of the most famous tall tales written by the most famous author of the west, Mark Twain.”
- It is considered the tall tale that brought Twain into the public eye

Pen name--Mark Twain

- The pen name Mark Twain was created here, in the office of the Nevada *Territorial Enterprise*, when Clemens first used that name on an article published February 3, 1863.



Travels

- When he was writing for newspapers he was also traveling a lot, for example, to California.
- On the ship he made the acquaintance of Bret Hawk



Sharing



- When they reached San Francisco Mint, Twain told Hawk this story of "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" as it was called at first, when it was told to him at Angel's Camp.

First published work



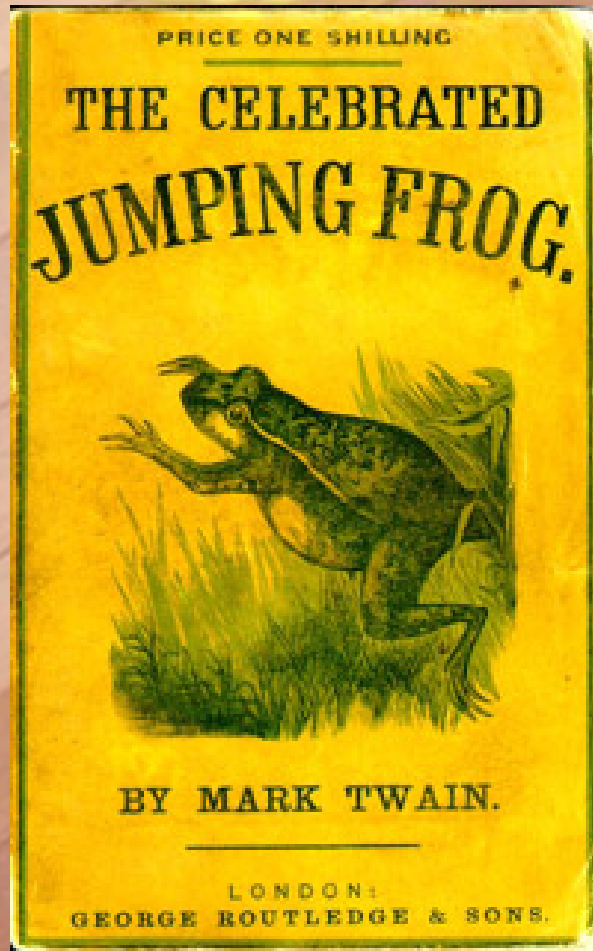
- The story written by Samuel Longhorn Clemens, aka Mark Twain first appeared on November 18, 1865 in the New York Saturday Press and has been published thousands of times since then.

Originally Written



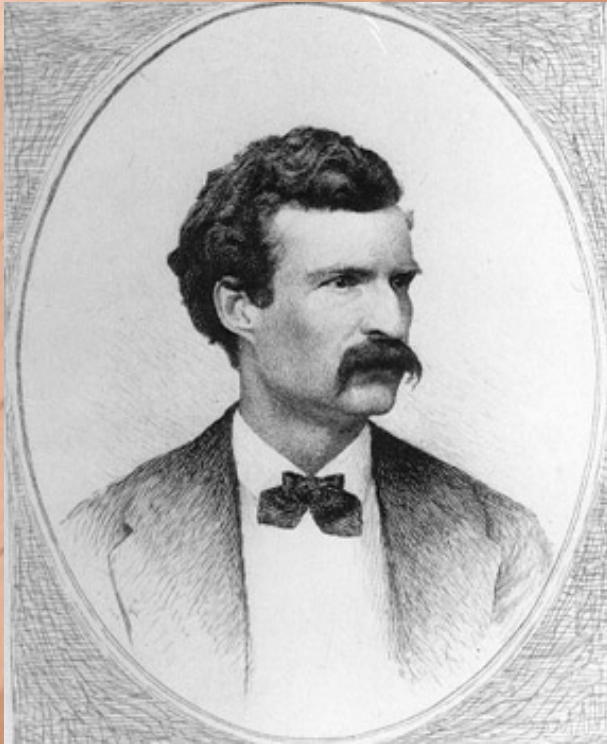
- "Jumping Frog" was originally told in letter form, although some reprints of the tale have since omitted this letter-frame convention.

Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog



- Mark Twain revised it several times, in modest ways. The original text was entitled "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog." The cover at left is from the first (1867) British publication of the sketch.

Success as a Writer



- In 1866 Clemens arranged to publish his first book, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog Of Calaveras County and Other Sketches*, a collection of published stories from his Western days.
- Once published, the 31-year-old Clemens became quite a well-known celebrity.

Angels' Camp

- The setting of the “Jumping Frog” story is Angels' Camp, a mining town in the west, which still exists today.
- The date was between the winter of 1849 and the spring of 1850 during the Gold Rush.



Confusing?



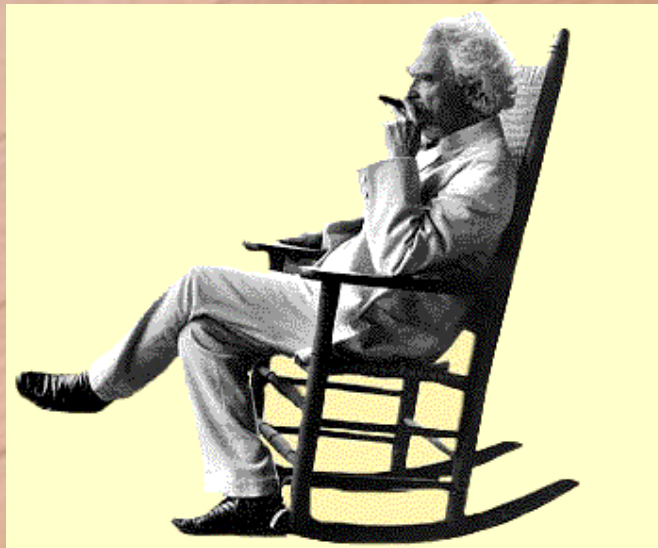
- It may seem confusing at first reading because it is a story within a story- a background story.
- In the beginning we are dealing with a narrative that disorients (confuses) the reader who does not know whether he/she is being confronted with a lie or the truth.

Story within a story

- The story is divided into two parts:
 - The story's first part with a narrator with high-registered speech, a symbol for the educated and civilized Easterners.
 - The Westerners had a exaggerated drawl and twang conveyed by Twain's spelling
 - The narrative is now in strong dialect English and told with a great comical exaggeration.



Twain's storytelling style



- humor of exaggeration
- dialect use for each character
- story within a story
- educated vs. uneducated

Halley's Comet & Twain's Death



- After dealing with his wife and daughters' deaths, Clemens died on April 21, 1910.
- Halley's Comet was again visible in the night sky, as it had been 75 years earlier, when he was born!

About His Death

- "I came in 1835 with Halley's Comet . . . and I expect to go out with it. It'll be the great disappointment of my life if I don't. The Almighty has said, no doubt, 'Now here are two undefinable freaks. They came in together. They must go out together.' Oh, I am looking forward to that."



SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS
— MARK TWAIN —
NOV. 30, 1835 — APR. 21, 1910