

Mark Twain's Aurora Cabins - Site of his "First Success"

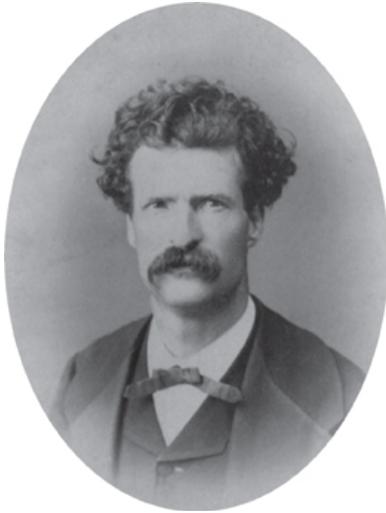
(CLIFFORD ALPHEUS SHAW)

We lived in a little cabin and cooked for ourselves; and altogether it was a hard life, though a hopeful one.

*-Mark Twain, *Roughing It**

INTRODUCTION

During his remarkable seventy-four year life, Mark Twain lived in homes ranging from a two-room cabin where he was born Samuel L. Clemens in 1835, to magnificent homes in the eastern United States and in many parts of Europe. His more important residences, including his birthplace at Florida, Missouri, his boyhood home in Hannibal, Missouri, and his homes in Elmira, New York, and Hartford, Connecticut have been preserved and are visited by thousands each year.



Mark Twain in 1867

Although Mark Twain lived in many stately homes, and counted the world's social elite, including kings, queens, and American presidents, as his friends, he began his career as a writer in a dirt-floor cabin living with miners and prospectors on the western frontier. While many have visited the homes where he wrote his most famous works, few have traveled to Aurora, Nevada, the place where he got his start as a writer. This once prosperous mining town had a population of over 5,000 at the height of the Civil War. By 1865, the town's fortunes plummeted when the mines ran out of gold ore. Today it is deserted and its buildings are gone. The cabins where 26 year-old Sam Clemens wrote newspaper stories during the summer of 1862 that led to his first writing job have not only completely disappeared, their locations in Aurora have been lost and forgotten.

The following review of historical documents focuses on Clemens' residences and living conditions during the six-months he lived in Aurora. The aim of this review is to bring to light information regarding where and how Clemens lived during this critical turning point in his life. In an effort to dispel, or to show the source of, the many myths and stories associated with his famous cabin and writing debut, many firsthand accounts written in Clemens's lifetime are included.

"SMITTEN WITH THE SILVER FEVER"

In the summer of 1861, Sam traveled with his brother Orion by overland stage from St Joseph, Missouri to Carson City, in the Nevada Territory. Orion had just been appointed Secretary of Nevada Territory and Sam, who had lost his job as riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River because of the Civil War, accompanied his brother for an adventure.

Soon after he arrived in Carson City, Sam was "smitten with the silver fever." "By the time I [Clemens] was fairly inoculated with the disease, 'Esmeralda' had just had a run."¹ Sam and his brother began buying shares of mining companies in the Esmeralda Mining District, whose principal town, Aurora, located about seventy-five miles southeast of Carson City, was just beginning to flourish. Rich new mining strikes at Virginia City and Esmeralda were making the region east of the Sierra Nevada

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Mountains one of the most famous mining areas in the country. Sam was sure his mining ventures at Aurora would one day make him rich.

He took up residence in Aurora during the spring of 1862 so he could personally attend to the many mining claims he and his brother had purchased. His first job at Aurora was as a miner digging and blasting tunnels in some of their more promising claims. Unfortunately, neither his labor as a miner, nor his speculation in Aurora's mines, provided any income. Since his only paying job "as a common laborer in a quartz mill, at ten dollars a week and board," lasted only a week, Sam was forced to live off money sent to him by his brother in Carson City.²

Clemens's failure at Aurora was not unique as only about one in a thousand of Aurora's countless mining claims ever amounted to anything. The following excerpt from an 1875 San Francisco newspaper describes how mining investments fared during the time Sam lived in Aurora:

During the great stock fever of 1862, '63 and '64, the credulous and then comparatively inexperienced people of California were most wretchedly humbugged and swindled by having wild cats [worthless mines] of all kinds, sizes and colors palmed off upon them as genuine mines by unscrupulous stock sharps and swindlers.³

Broke and disheartened, Sam quit mining later that summer. In a letter to his brother Sam complained that Aurora was "the d—dest country for disappointments the world ever saw."⁴

"FIRST ATTEMPTS AT LITERATURE"

Not everything Sam did while living in Aurora turned out to be a disappointment. A few months before his move to Aurora, several of Clemens's "travel" letters from Nevada to family members back east were published in the Keokuk, Iowa *Gate City* newspaper. After only a week in Aurora Sam was eager to write again. In a letter dated April 13, 1862, Sam asks his brother to: "Send him [Sam's new cabin mate Horatio Phillips] one of those black portfolios-*by the stage*, and put a couple of penholders and a dozen steel pens in it."⁵

About a week later, Clemens began sending stories about a miner's life in Aurora under the pen name "Josh" to the editor of the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*. Mark Twain described the importance of these letters ten years later in his book *Roughing It*:

Now in pleasanter days I had amused myself with writing letters to the chief paper of the Territory, the *Virginia Daily Territorial Enterprise*, and had always been surprised when they appeared in print.⁶

Sam's letters to the *Enterprise* so impressed the editor Joseph Goodman, he was offered a job at as a local reporter in the fall of 1862. According to an 1899 *New York Times* article entitled "Mark Twain's First Success," one newspaper story written by Clemens to the *Enterprise*, in particular, may have started Clemens on his way to fame and fortune:

The Fourth of July was at hand, and it had been decided to give a grand celebration. Twain was selected to arrange the programme, and he put the Mayor on the list as orator of the day. Now it

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so happened, as all old Comstockers can attest, that the Mayor of Aurora was not elected for his judicial or scholarly qualifications, but because he was in the habit of opening more jackpots than any other man in town. Twain was told by the Mayor that he could not make a speech, so Twain agreed to write one for him if he would read it. This was agreed on, and Twain saw chance for a joke. He wrote a burlesque speech which he began with these words: "I was sired by the great American eagle and born by a Continental dam," and winding up with "the only mistake that Washington made was that he was not born in Aurora."

The Mayor could never tell why the populace laughed at him instead of taking him seriously. Mr. Joseph T. Goodman, then the editor of *The Virginia City Enterprise*, heard of the speech and wrote for it for publication. When he learned that Twain was the author he sent him a letter saying that if he was not making more money than a certain weekly salary would make him he had better quit mining and become a reporter on *The Enterprise*.⁷

Aurora did have a grand Fourth of July celebration while Clemens was there. The celebration involved about 1,000 people, or just about half of Aurora's population, and was highlighted by a "fine oration" delivered by L. O. Stearns.⁸ While there is no evidence to confirm whether Clemens actually wrote his speech or not, Clemens did state that his position with the *Enterprise* resulted from a parody of a speech he had written while at Aurora.⁹

Calvin Higbie, Clemens' cabin mate and best friend at Aurora, witnessed Sam's beginnings as a writer. In a 1920 article in the *Saturday Evening Post* entitled "Mark Twain's Partner," Higbie states:

After we had lost out at the Wide West [mine] Sam began making his first attempts at literature. As he sat in the corner riding the bunk and spinning yarns for dear life he would stop suddenly, get out a little book, jot down something that occurred to him, and then go on with his story. I learned afterward that he was writing articles for the *Virginia City Enterprise*, which finally resulted in his going to work for that paper.¹⁰

A few months after leaving Aurora, Clemens became a successful and popular newspaper reporter in Virginia City. He began signing his articles "Mark Twain," and became widely known throughout Nevada and California for his satirical and humorous stories about the Comstock's "flush times." Five years later readers across the country were introduced to Mark Twain after his first book, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, was published.

TYPICAL MINER'S CABIN

Clemens's "first attempts at literature" at Aurora were undertaken while living in a small one-room cabin, like thousands of other miner's across the Nevada and California frontier. Miners like Clemens lived in and around Aurora, in every conceivable kind of dwelling. One of the best descriptions of how these cabins were built comes from J. Ross Browne who visited Aurora and nearby Bodie, California in 1864.

Usually it is constructed of the materials nearest at hand. Stone and mud answer for the walls where wood is scarce; but if wood be abundant, a kind of stockade is formed of logs placed close together and

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upright in the ground. The roof is made of clap-boards, or rough shingles, brush-wood covered with sod, canvas, or anything else that may be available. I have seen roofs constructed of flour-sacks, cast-off shirts, coats, and pantaloons, all sewed together like a home-made quilt. Rawhide; with big stones on the corners, is very good in dry countries, but it is apt to become flabby and odorous in damp climates. The chimney is the most imposing part of the house. Where the location permits, the cabin is backed up against a bluff, so as to afford a chance for a substantial flue by merely cutting a hole through the bank; but where such natural facilities do not exist, the variety of material used in the construction of chimneys is wonderful. Stone, wood, scraps of sheet-iron, adobe-bricks, mud, whisky-barrels, nail-kegs, and even canvas, are the component parts.¹¹

The ruins of many of these cabins are still visible in and around the ghost town of Aurora. The cabin in the photo is a typical miner's cabin from the early 1860s. It was supposedly located somewhere in Aurora and appears to have a canvas roof and stacked stone and log siding like those occupied by Clemens.



Bob Howland (far left) in front of a cabin in Aurora. (Courtesy of Robert M. Gunn and the Mark Twain Project)

MARK TWAIN'S CABINS

Although Clemens owned portions of many mining claims, he never owned residential property in Aurora. He lived in at least two, possibly three, different cabins during his stay in the community. He shared cabins with Horatio G. Phillips, Calvin H. Higbie, Daniel H. Twing, and Robert M. Howland, all recent emigrants to Aurora from various mining districts in California.

Clemens's first residence in Aurora was a cabin owned by his friend and fellow mining partner Horatio Phillips. Referred to by Clemens as "Raish" or "Ratio" in the letters he wrote from Aurora, Phillips was a friend he met in Carson City during a political convention in August 1861. In his second

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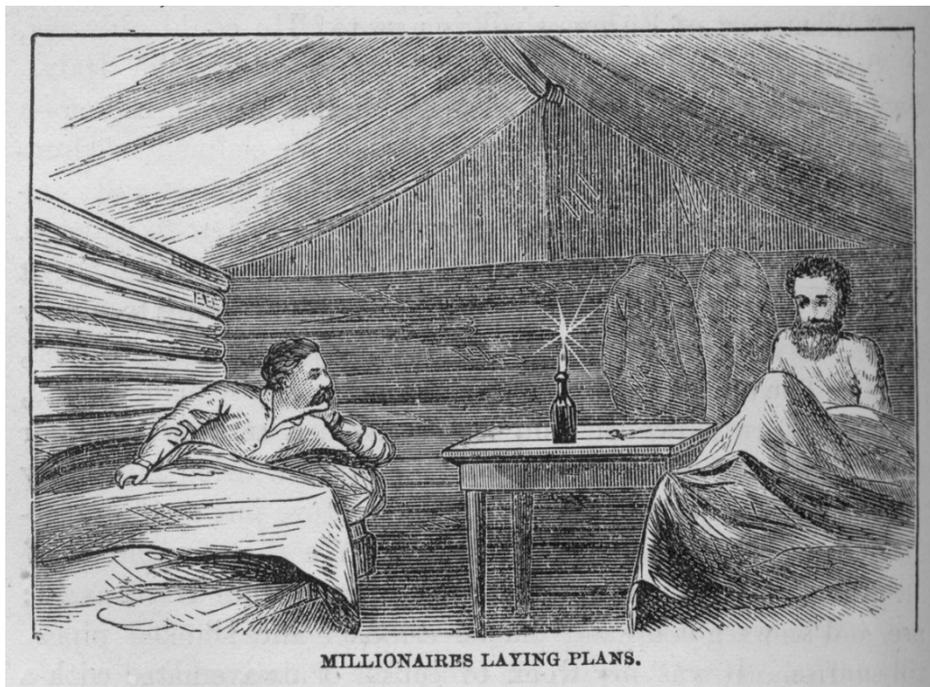
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letter to his brother from Aurora, Clemens states "I am living with 'Ratio Phillips.'"¹² Phillips and Clemens were most likely sharing this cabin with fellow mining partner Bob Howland.

Clemens was happy in Aurora even though times were tough. "I have struck my tent in Esmeralda, and I care for no mines but those which I can superintend myself. I am a citizen here now, and I am satisfied- although R. [Phillips] and I are 'strapped' and we haven't three days' rations in the house."¹³

Sometime during June or July Clemens had a falling out with Phillips and he moved in with Calvin Higbie, his next-door neighbor and friend. "He [Phillips] is a d—d rascal, and I can get the signatures of 25 men to this sentiment whenever I want them."¹⁴ Clemens first mentions Higbie in a July 9 letter to his brother: "A friend of mine, C.H. Higbie..."¹⁵ In the same letter he complained about writing in a cabin: "Besides, I have no private room, and it is a torture to write when there is a crowd around, as it is the case here [in a cabin], always." At the time Clemens moved in with Higbie, fellow mining partner Daniel Twing owned two lots adjacent to Phillips's lot. Because Higbie did not own residential property in Aurora until he bought Twing's lots in August 1862, Higbie and Clemens were probably living in one of Twing's cabins.

Higbie was Clemens' closest friend at Aurora. Ten years later, Mark Twain would dedicate his third book, *Roughing It*, to his favorite Aurora cabin mate: "To Calvin H. Higbie, of California, An Honest Man, a Genial Comrade, and a Steadfast Friend, This Book is Inscribed by the Author, In Memory of the Curious Time When We Two Were Millionaires For Ten Days."¹⁶ While they were "millionaires," Higbie's "floorless, tumble-down cabin was a palace, the ragged gray blankets silk, and the furniture rosewood and mahogany."¹⁷



Clemens (left) and Higbie inside their Aurora cabin from *Roughing It*.¹⁸

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The cabin's canvas roof and log siding pictured in the illustration from *Roughing It* are likely accurate, because Twain was involved with the work's many drawings and "clearly attended closely to the illustrations as they appeared in proof."¹⁹ In his autobiography, Clemens described what it was like to live in the tiny cabin he shared with Higbie:

Higbie and I were living in a cotton-domestic lean-to at the base of a mountain [Lover's Leap]. It was very cramped quarters, with barely room for us and the stove - wretched quarters, indeed, for every now and then, between eight in the morning and eight in the evening, the thermometer would make an excursion of fifty degrees. We had a silver-mining claim under the edge of a hill [Last Change Hill] half a mile away in partnership with Bob Howland and Horatio Phillips, and we used to go there every morning, carrying with us our luncheon, and remain all day picking and blasting in a our shaft, hoping, despairing, hoping again, and gradually but surely running out of funds.²⁰

Higbie also described his cabin in a 1920 *Saturday Evening Post* article:

Soon after [Higbie arrived in Aurora], I acquired a large lot in the lower end of town with a cabin on the rear end of it. Our new home was just eleven feet square on the outside, constructed of slabs and with a canvas roof. It had, I remember, four pairs of rafters. I put a small stove in one corner, a small table in another, and a rude bunk of willow poles in the third. As a door occupied the forth corner there was barely room to thread one's way amongst all this furniture...

I was right on the main road leading to Bodie [Spring Street], was young and strong and healthy. I had every prospect of making my fortune within a short time, and I wouldn't have traded that little shack for a mansion on Fifth Avenue, New York.²¹

It is interesting to note that Clemens never mentioned living with Higbie in any of the letters he wrote while he was living in Aurora. Clemens did, however, mention living with Daniel Twing in a letter to his sister:

Dan Twing and I and Dan's dog, "cabin" together - and will continue to do so for awhile -until I leave for- [presumably the White Mountain district, a trip he made soon after this letter was written]. The mansion is 10 x 12, with a "domestic" [canvas] roof. Yesterday it rained- the first shower for five months. "Domestic," it appears to me, is not water-proof. We went outside to keep from getting wet. Dan makes the bed when it is his turn to do it -and when it is my turn, I don't you know. The dog is not a good hunter, and he isn't worth shucks to watch -but he scratches up the dirt floor of the cabin, and catches flies, and makes himself generally useful in the way of washing dishes. Dan gets up first in the morning and makes a fire -and I get up last and sit by it, while he cooks breakfast.²²

The last cabin Clemens may have occupied while he lived in Aurora was owned by Robert Howland. This cabin was supposedly moved by Clemens and Howland from Aurora's "China garden" section, at the west end of town, to the east side of town. Clemens never mentioned living in a cabin owned by

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Howland. The source of this story is Howland who, during a trip to Aurora in 1879, was featured in an *Esmeralda Herald* article:

This gentleman arrived in town last Wednesday. He was on his way to Bodie and beyond, but upon arriving here concluded to stay a few days and look the old stamping-ground over. In years gone by, when Aurora was in its flush days and the inhabitants numbered in the thousands, Bob [Howland] and Mark Twain were pardes here. Their old cabin, which they moved from below the China garden, still stands at the head of Pine street, and Bob showed us the very flag-pole he had nailed to the rafters fifteen years ago.²³

Additional information on how Howland and Clemens moved their cabin appeared six months later in the same newspaper:

Bob also tells that when the cabin was being moved from down the gulch [China garden] to where it now stands fifteen or twenty of the boys stood to help. When they got so far with it as the Exchange saloon they put it down to go in and get a drink. As they ranged up to the bar Bob and Mark were awful jolly and happy to think how quickly they were getting their cabin moved. But as the crowd began to pour in, each man showing how and where he had blistered his hands while assisting to move the cabin, it dawned upon them that at two bits a drink it would have been almost as cheap to buy a new one with a mansard roof and observatory. Two hundred and fifty men, at least, drank on that moving, and Bob says if he had not put in a demurrer they would have been drinking until now. Those were the days when it was not necessary to ring a bell or blow a horn to collect a crowd in Aurora.²⁴

MARK TWAIN'S NEIGHBORHOOD

According to Mono County, California deed records, and an 1864 Esmeralda County, Nevada tax roll map, the lots and cabins owned by Phillips, Higbie, and Twing in 1862 were located three blocks west of Pine and Antelope Streets, Aurora's main business district.

The map on page 9 shows the lots, property owners, and streets from a portion of an Esmeralda County tax roll map prepared in early 1864.²⁵ The left half of this map depicts the general area where Samuel Clemens lived about 18 months earlier. The road running east and west across the center of the map is Spring Street which continues west approximately 12 miles to Bodie, California. Aurora Creek, an intermittent stream typically flowing only during the spring thaw, now runs west along portions of Spring Street. A steep mountain cliff face known as "Lover's Leap" during the early 1900s is located just off the map to the northwest. The intersection of Aurora's most important thoroughfares, Pine and Antelope Streets, is just off the map to the east. The Wide West Mine that made Clemens a "millionaire for ten days" in *Roughing It* is located on Last Chance Hill about a half mile to the southeast.

During the summer of 1862 this area was home to many miners who, like Clemens, lived in crudely made shanties. After Aurora's population tripled about a year later, many of these shacks were replaced with businesses including a blacksmith shop, lumberyard, stable, slaughterhouse, and brewery. Most of these businesses, as well as the remaining miners, left this part of Aurora after the mining boom collapsed

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in the mid-1860s. A few years later this part of town was referred to as "China garden" after a small population of Chinese occupied the area. By 1915, the area was abandoned. Today, the "China garden" section of Aurora is part of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

The cabin Clemens shared with Phillips was probably located on the "J Gavin" lot shown at A in the upper left hand corner of the map on page 9, and just off lower right corner of the "China garden" photo on page 9. Mono County records that establish a connection between Phillips and the Gavin lot include recorded copies of the following deeds: H. G. Phillips to C. F. Wood; C. H. Higbie to John Blasauf; and John Gavin to John Galvin.²⁶

The lot and cabins owned by Higbie and Twing were located adjacent to the Phillips lot on both the "Blasauf" lot on the north side of Spring Street (B), and "C Higbie" lot on the south side of Spring Street (C). Mono County records containing references to Higbie's lot on the south side of Spring Street include recorded copies of the following deeds: D. C. Croker to D. H. Twing, and D. H. Twing to C. H. Higbie.²⁷ Records establishing a connection between Higbie and Twing to the Blasauf lot on the north side of Spring Street include recorded copies of the following deeds: W. J. Sibby to D. H. Twing which stated that this lot included a "log & pole cabin," D. H. Twing to C. H. Higbie, and C. H. Higbie to John Blasauf.²⁸ Blasauf constructed a house and the "City Brewery" soon after he purchased this lot from Higbie. The brick ruins of these structures are still visible today.

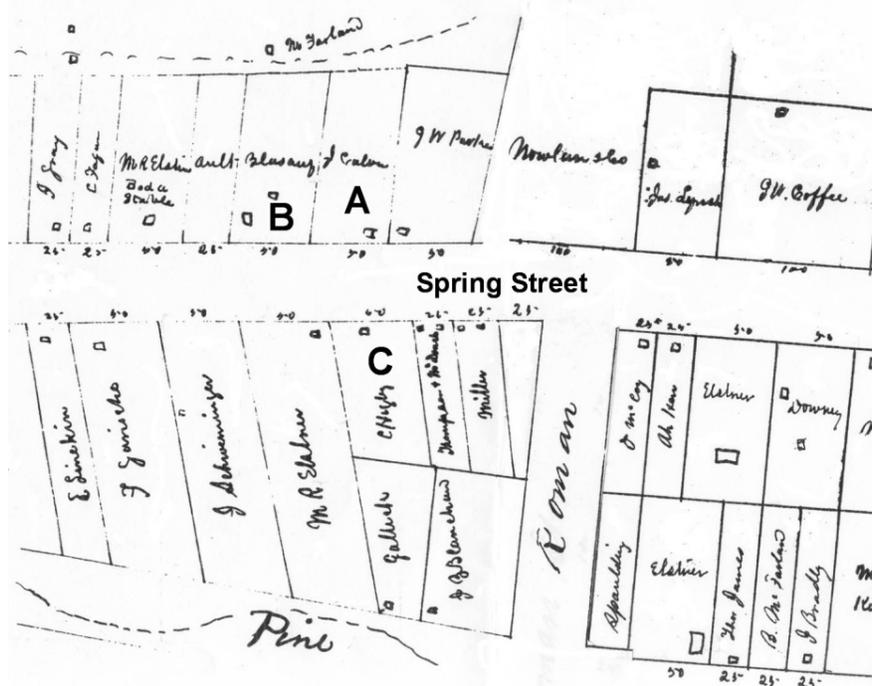
Howland's cabin was located about a third of a mile east of "China garden" where Phillips, Twing, and Higbie lived. Howland purchased a lot including a "one story frame building" on the east end of Pine Street on December 6, 1862.²⁹ This same lot was later described in an 1863 deed as having a "one story frame building now occupied as the [Esmeralda Mining] District Recorder's Office" as well as including a "cabin situated on the back end of the lot now occupied by the party of the first part [Howland]."³⁰

An on-the-ground review by this author with photographs (photo on page 10) depicting "Mark Twain's Cabin" from the early 1900s confirms this building was located on the north side of Pine Street at the east end of town on the lot once owned by Howland. It is unlikely, however, Clemens ever occupied this particular structure. The deed records previously mentioned indicate Howland did not own a lot on the north side of Pine while Clemens was living in Aurora. More important, the "Mark Twain Cabin" structure shown in the early photographs was most likely used as the District Recorder's office during the 1860s, not a residence. According to the following story "which circulated for a number of years" Mark Twain never lived in a cabin with a roof:

It seems a shingle was taken from the roof [presumably from Howland's cabin] and mailed to Clemens with a note saying he would probably like to have a piece of his old Esmeralda home. His reply was since there was no roof on his residence, there were therefore no shingles!³¹

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The area west of downtown Aurora where Sam Clemens called home in 1862. (1864 Esmeralda County tax assessors roll, Nevada Historical Society)



The bottom portion of this 1915 photograph includes part of "China garden;" downtown Aurora appears in the distant center. (Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation)

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"Mark Twain's Cabin" on the north side of Pine Street circa the early 1900s. "Lover's Leap" can be seen in the distance above the adjacent brick cabin. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

THE FATE OF MARK TWAIN'S "AUTHENTIC" CABIN

According to a newspaper story by Dan De Quille, Mark Twain's friend and former *Enterprise* associate, the "Mark Twain Cabin" at Aurora was still in pretty good shape in 1878:

Mark Twain's Cabin- The cabin in which Mark Twain lived when he was an "honest miner" is still standing at Aurora in a tolerable state of preservation. The back end, which extended into the side of the hill, and was made of stones laid up with mud, has fallen in, but the front and sides, which were of rough lumber, still stand. The door is gone, little of the roof is left and what remains of the structure has a decided "dip" to the southwest.³²

Although it is not clear which particular cabin this article referred to, the story was probably about Howland's old cabin on Pine Street because the description mentioned walls made of "rough lumber."

The growing worldwide fame and popularity of Mark Twain during the early 1900s made the cabin he supposedly lived in on Aurora's Pine Street a boon to the few residents who still inhabited this once prosperous mining camp. Tourists from across the country made the long and arduous journey to this remote part of Nevada just to see his famous cabin, and "genuine" Mark Twain souvenirs were regularly sold to gullible tourists. According to a *Nevada State Journal* article written after Twain's death in 1910, souvenir hunters regularly tore off parts of his famous cabin:

In appearance it is a plain two-room affair with a small front stoop, and it appears upon the county assessor's tax roll from year to year and up to the present time as 'Mark Twain's lot and cabin on Pine Street.'It has been necessary to repair and reshingle it many times as tourists

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and relic hunters have stripped it bit by bit, of small pieces, parts of locks, hinges, a shingle or sliver of wood.³³

Public concern for the preservation of the now famous cabin began to grow, particularly after Mark Twain's death in 1910. By 1924, the Reno Chamber of Commerce proposed to have the cabin moved from Aurora to Reno as part of the upcoming 1927 Transcontinental Highway Exposition. A *Nevada State Journal* article, published in November of that same year, mentioned that Nevada Governor James G. Scrugham and Reno Mayor E. E. Roberts "assisted materially" in arranging the cabin's move. The article went on to state that those involved with the relocation were convinced Mark Twain once lived in the cabin:

The authenticity of the Mark Twain cabin has been proved beyond a doubt and [Fried] Walker said yesterday that he has the table at which Mark Twain wrote "Roughing It" and many more of his most scintillating stories while he was a prospector at Aurora.³⁴

Fried (short for Sigfried) Walker may not have been the best source for verifying the authenticity of the cabin, and he might not have actually had the table where Mark Twain wrote *Roughing It*. Walker was one of a handful of colorful characters who inhabited Aurora after it became a ghost town in the early 1920s. He was born in Switzerland and immigrated to Aurora in 1903, some forty years after Clemens had departed from Aurora. Walker lived in the town for fifty years and was referred to by many as "the mayor of Aurora." He was Aurora's "last inhabitant" when he died in 1955 at the age of ninety-one.³⁵

"Mark Twain's Cabin" was dismantled in Aurora and loaded on two large trucks bound for Reno in the fall of 1924. It arrived at Reno's Idlewild Park on November 25. Sadly, over the next twenty five years, the cabin "was slowly dismembered piece by piece by souvenir hunters and skaters from the nearby pond" until it was "reported to have disappeared altogether" by the early 1950s.³⁶



"China garden" below "Lover's Leap" today, looking west from near "downtown" Aurora. (Courtesy of the author)

CONCLUSION

Mark Twain, one of America's greatest and most revered writers, began his literary career after several of his letters to the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* were published in the summer of 1862. He wrote those letters while living with his mining partners in one or more cabins at Aurora, Nevada. That he was able to write anything, much less create work that early on showed a spark of genius, while living in a cold and cramped dirt-floor cabin with a canvas roof, is a testament to his inherent talent.

Twain never thought much of Aurora. He was eager to leave there during the fall of 1862 for his new job as a reporter in Virginia City. In his last letter from Aurora he complained, "I don't think much of the camp- not as much as I did."³⁷ He certainly didn't like living in his "wretched" cabin. He never returned.

Abandoned and neglected for over a century, the "China garden" section of Aurora where Mark Twain once lived is now protected from souvenir collectors and further destruction by federal laws. If you visit the deserted ghost town today you won't see anything left of his cabins or any monuments commemorating his six-month residence there. His "authentic" cabin, moved to Reno in the 1920s, is also gone. We have only the historical record, and a few pictures of a cabin he likely never lived in, to remind us where Mark Twain had his "First Success."

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- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.
- ⁶ Twain, *Roughing It*, 294.
- ⁷ *The New York Times, Illustrated Magazine* (25 June 25 1899), 6.
- ⁸ *Sacramento Daily Bee* (21 July, 1862), 1.
- ⁹ Bernard DeVoto, ed., *Mark Twain in Eruption* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1940), 390-391. For a discussion on Clemens' possible role in writing the Stearns speech see William C. Miller, "Samuel L. Clemens and Orion Clemens vs. Mark Twain and His Biographers (1861-1862)," *Mark Twain Journal*, 16:4 (1973), 7,8.
- ¹⁰ Michael J. Phillips, "Mark Twain's Partner," *Saturday Evening Post*, 193 (11 September 1920), 74.
- ¹¹ J. Ross Browne, *Adventures in the Apache Country: A Tour through Arizona and Sonora, with Notes on the Silver Region of Nevada* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1868), 399-401.
- ¹² Branch, *Mark Twain's Letters*, 186.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 207.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 228.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 225, 226.
- ¹⁶ Twain, *Roughing It*, iii.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 281.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 282.
- ¹⁹ Harriet E. Smith, Edgar M. Branch, L. Salamo, and Robert P. Browning, eds., *Roughing It* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993), 853.
- ²⁰ Charles Neider, ed., *The Autobiography of Mark Twain* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1959), 257-58.
- ²¹ *Saturday Evening Post*, (11 September 1920), 23.
- ²² Branch, *Mark Twain's Letters*, 236.
- ²³ *Esmeralda Herald* (7 June, 1879), 2.
- ²⁴ *Territorial Enterprise* (2 December, 1879), 1, reprinted from the *Esmeralda Herald* (29 November, 1879).
- ²⁵ Esmeralda County Tax Assessors Roll, fiscal year ending May 1, 1864, Nevada Historical Society.
- ²⁶ *Deeds*, Mono County Archives, Bridgeport, California. Hereafter cited as *Deeds*. Book A, 570. Recorded copy of a September 10, 1862 deed from H. G. Phillips to C. F. Wood for ownership of "a certain town lot situated on Spring Street in Block La Rue adjoining on the west B. Haslett & Co's barn and lot...and extending back 150 feet & known as Phillips lot." *Deeds*, Book B, 308. Recorded copy of a June 6, 1863 deed from C. H. Higbie to John

Mark Twain's Aurora Cabins - Site of his "First Success"

(CLIFFORD ALPHEUS SHAW)

Blasauf deed for "One Lot on the West [actually north] side of Spring Street. Fronting fifty (50) ft. on said street and running back at right angles thereto one hundred and fifty (150) ft and bounded on the North [actually east] by the lot and cabin of Phillips formerly but by John Gavin & Co at this date, and on the south [actually west] by the lot now occupied by Alt of 32 ft. separating the said undescribed [sic] lot from the lot and stable of Haslett & Co. the whole of the above description property being situated about three hundred (300) [feet] below [actually west of the] the Union Mill." *Deeds* Book B, 54. Recorded copy of a March 25, 1863 deed from John Gavin to John Galvin for a lot "Commencing eighty five (85) feet East of Bodie Stable on the line of the street or road running down Esmeralda Gulch, and [on] the North side of said street or road and running back from said street one hundred twenty five (125) feet, thence Easterly fifty (50) feet,.... to the place of beginning."

²⁷ *Deeds*, Book A, 349. Recorded copy of a April 1, 1862 deed from D. C. Croker to D. H. Twing for a lot "fronting fifty (50) feet on the north of La Rue Street [actually south side of Spring Street] and running back at right angles South one hundred 100 feet said lot being directly opposite the stable and shed of Haslep [Haslett] & Co. and adjoining the lot occupied by Gallagher and McLaughlin on the East." *Deeds*, Book A, 476. Recorded copy of a August 20, 1862 deed from D. H. Twing to C. H. Higbie for "One lot on the Easterly [actually south] side of Spring St. fronting 50 ft on said street and back at right angles therewith one hundred (100) feet and being situate [sic] opposite Haslett & Co's stable adjoining the lot on the East occupied by Gallagher and Mc Laughlin," and "One lot on the West [actually north] side of Spring St. fronting fifty (50) feet on the said street, and running back at right angles thereto one hundred and fifty (150) feet and bounded on the North [actually east] by the lot and cabin of Phillips: and on the south [actually west] by vacant lot of Thirty two feet, separating the said described lot from the lot and Stable of Haslett & Co. The whole of the above described property being situated about three hundred (300) feet below [actually west] of the Union Mill."

²⁸ *Deeds*, Book A, 320. Recorded copy of a February 3, 1862 deed from W. J. Sibby to D. H. Twing. *Deeds*, Book A, 476. *Deeds*, Book B, 308.

²⁹ *Deeds*, Book B, 139. Recorded copy of a December 6, 1862 deed from H. B. Waggoner to R. M. Howland.

³⁰ *Deeds*, Book B, 400. Recorded copy of a July 10, 1863 deed from R. M. Howland to G. L. Church.

³¹ *Nevada Appeal*, *Apple Tree Magazine* (2 October, 1977), 7.

³² *Territorial Enterprise* (24 April, 1878), 3.

³³ Nevada State Journal as quoted in the Nevada Appeal, *Apple Tree Magazine* (2 October, 1977), 7.

³⁴ *Nevada State Journal* (7 November, 1924), 8.

³⁵ *Territorial Enterprise* (11 March 1955), 3.

³⁶ *Nevada Appeal*, *Apple Tree Magazine* (2 October, 1977), 7.

³⁷ Branch, *Mark Twain's Letters*, 239-240.

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