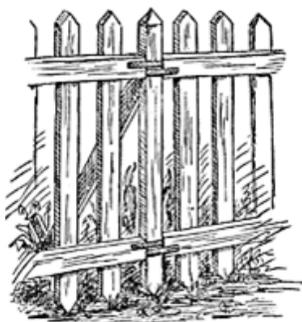




## MARK TWAIN BOYHOOD HOME

### Virtual Tour by Max Sopher, age 13



#### Special points of interest:

- The whitewashed fence
- Antiques and furniture from the mid-1800s
- The corresponding properties - Huck Finn's house, Becky Thatcher's house, etc.
- Be sure to notice the stairwell going to the second floor at the inside of the house, and then remember Tom Sawyer sneaking in to overhear Aunt Polly and the others planning the boys' funeral.

"[Tom] took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently.

'Say—I'm going in a-swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther work—wouldn't you? Course you would!'

Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said:

'What do you call work?'

'Why, ain't *that* work?'

Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly:

'Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know is, it suits Tom Sawyer.'

'Oh, come now, you don't mean to let on that you *like* it?'

The brush continued to move.

'Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?' That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth - stepped back to note the effect -

added a touch here and there - criticized the effect again - Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said,

"Say, Tom, let *me* white-wash a little."

**Mark Twain** used many elements of his own boyhood in *Tom Sawyer*. For instance, in *Tom Sawyer*, Tom pours the pain-killer his aunt gives him down a crack in the floor and feeds some to his cat, Peter. Mark Twain, whose real name was Sam Clemens, also took pain-killer in his childhood, and it's easy for visitors to imagine young Sam mending the cracks in the wooden floor of his boyhood home. In *Tom Sawyer*, Tom crawls out of his window at night to join in escapades with his friends. Mark Twain did the same when he was a boy. The list of parallels between Tom Sawyer's

boyhood and Mark Twain's boyhood is nearly endless. In fact, there are so many parallels between the two that it is easy to get Tom and Twain mixed up.

If you are interested in seeing the famous whitewashed fence, the crack in the floor or the window that Sam Clemens would climb out of at night to play with his friends, they are all at the Mark Twain Boyhood Home in Hannibal, Missouri.

Sam Clemens and his family moved to Hannibal in 1839, when Sam was four years old. After a childhood spent in Hannibal that would later inspire so much of *Tom Sawyer*, Clemens left in 1853. His years in Hannibal included swimming in the Mississippi River, which is only about a block from his house, exploring the cave he immortalized, which is only about two miles south of his house, and working as a typesetter for the local paper to help support his family after his father died

*Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. He surveyed the fence, and all gladness left him and a deep melancholy settled down upon his spirit. Thirty yards of board fence nine feet high.*



*...a single minute later he was dressed and out of the window and creeping along the roof of the "ell" on all fours.*

when Sam was only eleven years old. After the family left Hannibal, the house was used as a rental property. In 1911, it was scheduled for demolition, but George A. Mahan bought the house when the Hannibal Commercial Club failed in their attempt to purchase it. The Boyhood Home was opened to the public in 1912 and has been a tourist attraction ever since. It was completely restored in 1990-91, and preservation of the home and its corresponding buildings remains the mission of the Mark Twain Home Foundation.

Inside the Boyhood Home, visitors can view each room through a wall of plexiglass. Every room is fur-

nished with authentic 1800s furniture and accessories. A white, ghostlike statue of Mark Twain can be found in

every room along with quotes about boyhood, growing up, and other related topics. One quote in particular sums up



A white, ghostlike statue of Mark Twain can be found in every room...



*“What makes the candle blow so?” said Aunt Polly. Tom hurried up.*

“Nothing remains the same. When a man goes back to look at the house of his childhood, it has always shrunk: there is no instance of such a house being as big as the picture in memory and imagination call for.”

The Mark Twain Boyhood Home is an excellent place to go if you wish to experience for yourself the connections between Mark Twain and Tom Sawyer, see real artifacts from the book, or learn more about Mark Twain’s boyhood and history. Perhaps Mark Twain saw his boyhood home as quite small, but for the visitors who travel from all parts of the globe to see this important landmark, it is larger than life.

~M.S.



“Mary gave him a tin basin of water and a piece of soap, and he went outside the door and set the basin on a little bench there; then he dipped the soap in the water and laid it down; turned up his sleeves; poured out the water on the ground; and then entered the kitchen and began to wipe his face diligently...”



**He tried to steal sugar under his aunt’s very nose, and got his knuckles rapped for it.**

