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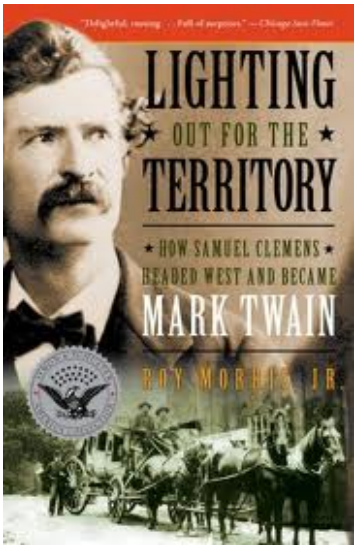
Lighting Out for the Territory: How Samuel Clemens Headed West and Became Mark Twain



The title of this book Lighting Out for the Territory [1]by Roy Morris, jr. refers to the last paragraph in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn [2]when Huck reckons that it's time "to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest", which is exactly what Clemens himself did in July 1861. Clemens had ridden as a guerilla maurader for the Missouri militia in a locally formed group in the very early days of the Civil War called the Marion Rangers. They never saw any real action, but his brief stint with them, plus the ever present chance he could be drafted by either side, Union or Confederate, to pilot a gun boat, made the mostly neutral West look inviting.
His brother Orion had been appointed as Secretary to the Territorial Governor of the newly created Nevada Territory. Orion invited Sam to go along to share expenses. From this happenstance beginning one of America's great writers was born.

The book covers the late 1850's to the time Clemens returned to the East to seriously pursue his writing career. He met and married the love of his life, Olivia Langdon, made and lost fortunes, fathered three girls whom he loved dearly and wrote his best work. But that is all in the future for this particular book.

Author Roy Morris is having fun covering Clemens' bachelor days in the wild and wooly West. He tried silver mining, but the work was too hard. He tried working as an assistant to his brother, but he was too bored. When he found he could earn a little money writing pieces for newspapers, he had found his ideal job, sleep in, stay up late, hang around saloons and police stations and write what you observed with a few exagerations thrown in to keep it interesting.

Readers will become reaquainted with Twain's particular type of wit and his life before he became "sivilized". within this book. An index, a bibliography and suggested other books are included.

Doors open at 7:00 the trouble will begin at 8.

For other books to learn more about Clemens' early life check out Roughing It [3], and Life on the Mississippi [4]. For a more complete biography try Mark Twain: a Life [5]by Ron Powers.

For the Love of Reading[6]Information, Answers & Reviews [7]Biography [8]Lighting out for the territory : how Samuel Clemens headed West and became Mark Twain [9]Nonfiction [10]

Posted by Luann D. on Feb 23, 2012

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