A Restless Typesetter - Sam Clemens Leaves Home

Artist's illustration of young Sam Clemens in New York from THE BOYS' LIFE OF MARK TWAIN by Albert B. Paine, 1916.

B. Scott Holmes

Sometime, possibly in the first two weeks of June 1853, Samuel L. Clemens (aged seventeen) left his home and family in Hannibal, Missouri, stopping in St. Louis and then going on to New York City, supporting himself as a journeyman printer. Precisely when Sam boarded the regular evening packet for St. Louis is not known: in his autobiography he said simply that he "disappeared one night and fled to St. Louis". In a letter on 26 October 1853, he mentions that he departed Hannibal "more than four months ago".

May 25 -26 – Orion was looking for a replacement for his brother, he placed a notice in the Journal: "WANTED! AN APPRENTICE OF THE PRINTING BUSINESS. APPLY SOON." The ad ran for two weeks. Sam boarded a packet steamer bound for St. Louis, and began a life of travel. Packet steamers were vessels that transported both freight and passengers. Some packets were faster but not so reliable; some were larger but also slower; some were more luxurious, but carried less freight. With the grace of swans on a highway that cost nothing to build, such boats would figure large in Sam's life.

June, early – Sam likely stayed with his sister Pamela and found work as a typesetter with the *St. Louis Evening News*. He vowed never to let a place trap him again. Sam had also promised his mother that he would abstain from cards and liquor. St. Louis in the summer of 1853 was a burgeoning city of 100,000 souls, the largest city of the West. The city offered Western freedom together with many of the luxuries and affectations of the East. For a young man from Hannibal, such a city must have been dazzling, but not as dazzling as New York. Sam had kept plans secret from his family, to work in St. Louis long enough to make fare to New York City. Sam had read stories about the World's Fair and the Crystal Palace, and he'd included them in his Journal.

June 11 Saturday – Orion failed to get out the *Hannibal Daily Journal* for an entire month.

Sam's principal job was as a typesetter for the *St. Louis Evening News*, but he also worked on several other weekly journals published in the city. He may have tried to publish some sketches with the *St. Louis Missouri Republican* at this time, but his first months as a professional typesetter probably left him little time for literature. A fellow printer recalled that "while the rest of us were drawing our $12 a week, it was all Sam Clemens could do to make $8 or $9. He always had so many errors marked in his proofs that it took most of his time correcting them. He could not have set up an advertisement in acceptable form to save his life". This description is somewhat suspect, but Clemens probably did have a bit yet to learn about his craft.

His two-month stay in St. Louis ended on 19 August, when he departed for New York. He arrived 24 August, the date of his first surviving letter, which Orion published in the *Hannibal Journal*.

To Jane Lampton Clemens
24 August 1853 • New York, N.Y.
(Hannibal Journal, 5 Sept 53, UCCL 02711)
New York,
Wednesday, August 24th, 1853.

> My Dear Mother: you will doubtless be a little surprised, and somewhat angry when you receive this, and find me so far from home; but you must bear a little with me, for you know I was always the best boy you had, and perhaps you remember the people used to say to their children—"Now don't do like Orion and Henry Clemens but take Sam for your guide!"
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> Well, I was out of work in St. Louis, and didn't fancy loafing in such a dry place, where there is no pleasure to be seen without paying well for it, and so I thought I might as well go to New York. I packed up my "duds" and left for this village, where I arrived, all right, this morning.
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> It took a day, by steamboat and cars, to go from St. Louis to Bloomington, Ill; another day by railroad, from there to Chicago, where I laid over all day Sunday; from Chicago to Monroe, in Michigan, by railroad, another day; from Monroe, across Lake Erie, in the fine Lake palace, "Southern Michigan," to Buffalo, another day; from Buffalo to Albany, by railroad, another day; and from Albany to New York, by Hudson river steamboat, another day—an awful trip, taking five days, where it should have been only three. I shall wait a day or so for my insides to get settled, after the jolting they received, when I shall look out for a sit; for they say there is plenty of work to be had for sober compositors.
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> The trip, however, was a very pleasant one. Rochester, famous on account of the "Spirit Rappings" was of course interesting;

In 1848, Margaret and Kate Fox, sisters aged thirteen and twelve respectively, made Rochester famous by attributing to "spirits" the inexplicable knocking sounds, or "rappings," which they in fact created by cracking the joints of their toes. Forty years later, Margaret confessed the ruse, long after it had precipated the American spiritualist craze, which peaked in the 1850s and again in the 1870s.

> and when I saw the Court House in Syracuse, it called to mind the time when it was surrounded with chains and companies of soldiers, to prevent the rescue of McReynolds' nigger, by the infernal abolitionists. I reckon I had better black my face, for in these Eastern States niggers are considerably better than white people.

On 1 October 1851, Jerry McHenry (William Henry, a 40-year-old cooper from Missouri whose slave name was "Jerry."), owned by John McReynolds (a prosperous landowner just outside Hannibal), had

been arrested as a fugitive in Syracuse, New York, where he had been living for several years. An angry crowd twice stormed the courthouse, ultimately freeing the victim when the militia refused to cooperate further with the police.

Sam still carried with him the racist attitudes inherited from his "Southern" origins. He enjoyed the slaves he knew from Quarles's farm but was offended by what he found in the "free states".

> I saw a curiosity to-day, but I don't know what to call it. Two beings, about like common people, with the exception of their faces, which are more like the "phiz" of an orang-outang, than human. They are white, though, like other people. lmagine a person about the size of Harvel Jordan's oldest boy, with small lips and full breast, with a constant uneasy, fidgety motion, bright, intelligent eyes, that seems as if they would look through you, and you have these things. They were found in the island of Borneo (the only ones of the species ever discovered,) about twenty years ago. One of them is twenty three, and the other twenty five years of age. They possess amazing strength; the smallest one would shoulder three hundred pounds as easily as I would a plug of tobacco; they are supposed to be a cross between man and orang-outang; one is the best natured being in the world, while the other would tear a stranger to pieces, if he did but touch him; they wear their hair "Samson" fashion, down to their waists. They have no apple in their throats, whatever, and can therefore scarcely make a sound; no memory either; what transpires to-day, they have forgotten before to-morrow; they look like one mass of muscle, and can walk either on all fours or upright; when let alone, they will walk to and fro across the room, thirteen hours out of the twenty-four; not a day passes but they walk twenty-five or thirty miles, without resting thirty minutes; I watched them about an hour and they were "tramping" the whole time. The little one bent his arm with the elbow in front, and the hand pointing upward, and no two strapping six footers in the room could pull it out straight. Their faces and eyes are those of the beast, and when they fix their glittering orbs on you with a steady, unflinching gaze, you instinctively draw back a step, and a very unpleasant sensation steals through your veins. They are both males and brothers, and very small, though I do not know their exact hight. I have given you a very lengthy description of the animals, but I have nothing else to write about, and nothing from here would be interesting anyhow. The Crystal Palace is a beautiful building—so is the Marble Palace.

The Marble Palace was a grandiose dry-goods store built by multimillionaire Alexander T. Stewart in 1846, and enlarged in 1850, stood at Broadway and Chambers Street. Faced entirely with white marble, it was advertised as the most costly building ever occupied by an individual merchant.

> If I can find nothing better to write about, I will say something about these in my next.
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> closing and signature missing

The Journey to New York City:

August 19, 1853 Friday – Sam boarded the sidewheeler steamer *Cornelia* and traveled to Alton, Illinois. The *Cornelia* sunk just two years later, running into a rock at *Chain of Rocks*, a geological formation just below the confluence of the Missouri River and the Mississippi River.

Sam took the train from Alton to Springfield. The *Alton & Sangamon Railroad* was the first railroad built in Madison County, also known as the *Chicago & Alton* and *Alton & Springfield*. It was built to connect Alton to Springfield in Sangamon County. The railroad was spearheaded by Captain Benjamin Godfrey and other Alton businessmen. Planning began in December 1838 and the charter was issued February 27, 1847. Construction began in February 1850 and was completed in 1852. Benjamin Godfrey lived in a railcar, and followed the work as it progressed. He mortgaged all his property to ensure its success.. The railroad became part of the *St. Louis, Alton & Chicago* which then joined *Chicago & Alton Railroad*.

The *Chicago & Mississippi Railroad* extended to Bloomington in 1854 and Joliet in 1855 but was not available for Sam's journey. Sam took Frink's stage to Bloomington. Frink's was first established in 1840 as *Frink, Walker & Company*. The company dominated all stagecoach travel in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, and Missouri. They used Concord coaches for their routes. The name changed to *John Frink & Company* in 1849 and the business relationship between the two men was dissolved in 1856.

20 August, 1853 Saturday- Reportedly the Bloomington train station was near the law office of Abraham Lincoln. From Bloomington to Chicago via La Salle Sam took the *Illinois Central* line to LaSalle, then the *Chicago & Rock Island* to Joliet and the *St Louis, Alton & Chicago* the rest of the way. He arrived in Chicago at 7:00 p.m..

21 August, 1853 Sunday- Sam departed Chicago at 9 pm on the *Northern Indiana Road* and the *Michigan Southern Railroad*. In 1855 this would be the *Michigan Southern & Northern Indiana Railway*. He wrote that he'd had the whole day as a layover. Powers writes that he went first to Toledo and then to Monroe. I am dubious and suspect that he went straight through Adrian, did not veer to the southeast but went directly east to Monroe.

22 August, 1853 Monday-. 8:00 a.m., from Monroe across Lake Erie to Buffalo, New York, by the steamer *Southern Michigan*. A wooden sidewheel Great Lakes passenger and package freight vessel. Built at Buffalo NY by Bidwell & Banta. 1 deck, coal-fired boilers, vertical beam engine, belonging to the *Michigan Southern Rail Road Co*., In service with sister vessel *Northern Indiana* between Buffalo NY and Monroe MI. Laid up late in the 1857 season at Monroe MI because of the Panic of 1857. By the time the economy recovered, the railroad lines around Lake Erie had been completed and the large vessels of her type were no longer needed.
The *Michigan Southern Co*. operated six boats -- the *Baltic, Golden Gate, Southern Michigan, Northern Indiana, Empire* and *Empire State*.

On May 1, 1855, the *Michigan Southern Railway Co*. and the *Northern Indiana Railway Co*. were consolidated. In 1855 and 1856 this new company (the *M. S. & N. I.*) built two large and handsome steamers -- The *Western Metropolis* and the *City of Buffalo*. In the year 1856 they also built the propeller *Euphrates*. Monroe was the eastern terminus of the *Michigan Southern Company*. In 1855 they abandoned the line between Buffalo and Monroe and ran their boats between Buffalo and Toledo.

23 August, 1853 Tuesday – 7 AM from Buffalo to Albany via Rochester and Syracuse, on the *Lightning Express*. Dempsey gives this train trip as beginning at 8 A.M.. Erastus Corning had created the *New York Central Railroad Company*, from 10 individual railroad companies just three months previous to Sam's trip.

At 7:00 p.m., en route via the Hudson River to New York City on the Low Pressure Steamboat *Isaac Newton*. Built in 1846, the steamboat was larger than any previous river steamer. The vessel consumed four tons of coal per hour. The paddle wheels were 39 feet in diameter and the ship was 338 feet long. The steamer was rebuilt in 1855, extending the length to 405 feet. The *Isaac Newton* was unsurpassed in its size and the splendor of its interior furnishings. The ship's starboard boiler exploded on December 5, 1863, opposite Fort Lee, and burned to the water's edge, injuring seventeen people and killing nine.

24 August, 1853 Wednesday- 5:00 A.M., arrives in New York City with "two or three dollars in his pocket and a ten-dollar bill concealed in the lining of his coat"

In the City:
August 29 Monday – Sam got "a permanent situation…in a book and job office and went to work." He was paid 23 cents per 1000 ems, the lowest rate. He worked in the fifth floor office of John A. Gray, 95-97 Cliff Street. His earnings were four dollars a week; he managed to save as much as fifty cents a week.

To Jane Lampton Clemens
31 August 1853 • New York, N.Y.
(Hannibal Journal , 10 Sept 53, UCCL 02712)
New York, Aug. 31, 1853.

My dear Mother:

New York is at present overstocked with printers; and I suppose they are from the South, driven North by the yellow fever.

The disease had become epidemic in New Orleans, where it caused more than five thousand deaths in the next eighteen months. While Clemens was in New York, the city's printers raised money to assist sick and destitute printers in New Orleans.

I got a permanent situation on Monday morning, in a book and job office, and went to work. The printers here are badly organized, and therefore have to work for various prices.

These prices are 23, 25, 28, 30, 32, and 35 cents per 1,000 ems. The price I get is 23 cents; but I did very well to get a place at all, for there are thirty or forty—yes, fifty good printers in the city with no work at all; besides, my situation is permanent, and I shall keep it till I can get a better one. The office I work in is John A. Gray's, 97 Cliff street, and, next to Harper's, is the most extensive in the city. In the room in which I work I have forty compositors for company. Taking compositors, pressmen, stereotypers, and all, there are about two hundred persons employed in the concern.

John A. Gray's five-story book and job printing house was at 95—97 Cliff Street on the corner of Frankfort Street; Harper and Brothers was nearby, with five buildings fronting on Cliff Street and five more behind them on Pearl Street. Twenty-six of Gray's employees were members of the Printers' Co-operative Union (for book and job printers) in May 1853

The "Knickerbocker," "New York Recorder," "Choral Advocate," "Jewish Chronicle," "Littell's Living Age," "Irish ——," and half a dozen other papers and periodicals are printed here, besides an immense number of books.

The Irish-American, a New York political and religious weekly, published 1849-1916. The ellipsis here is presumed to be in the original manuscript, but it may have been imposed by Orion Clemens when he printed the letter in the Hannibal Journal. Since both Clemens brothers had strong nativist views at this time, either of them might have regarded the conjunction of "American" with "Irish" as a sort of blasphemy.

They are very particular about spacing, justification, proofs, etc., and even if I do not make much money, I will learn a great deal. I thought Ustick was particular enough, but acknowledge now that he was not old-maidish. Why, you must put exactly the same space between every two words, and every line must be spaced alike. They think it dreadful to space one line with three em spaces, and the next one with five ems. However, I expected this, and worked accordingly from the beginning; and out of all the proofs I saw, without boasting, I can say mine was by far the cleanest. In St. Louis, Mr. Baird said my proofs were the cleanest that were ever set in his office. The foreman of the Anzeiger told me the same—foreman of the Watchman the same; and with all this evidence, I believe I do set a clean proof.

My boarding house is more than a mile from the office;

"I found board in a sufficiently villainous mechanics' boarding-house in Duane Street," Clemens said in 1906 There were, in fact, numerous boardinghouses on Duane Street. Paine reported that Clemens "did not like the board. He had been accustomed to the Southern mode of cooking, and wrote home complaining that New Yorkers did not have 'hot-bread' or biscuits, but ate 'light-bread,' which they allowed to get stale, seeming to prefer it in that way". If Clemens made his complaint in a letter, as Paine asserts, it is not known to survive.

and I can hear the signal calling the hands to work before I start down; they use a steam whistle for that purpose. I work in the fifth story; and from one window I have a pretty good view of the city, while another commands a view of the shipping beyond the Battery; and the "forest of masts," with all sorts of flags flying, is no mean sight. You have everything in the shape of water craft, from a fishing smack to the steamships and men-of-war; but packed so closely together for miles, that when close to them you can scarcely distinguish one from another.

Of all the commodities, manufactures—or whatever you please to call it—in New York, trundle-bed trash—children I mean—take the lead. Why, from Cliff street, up Frankfort to Nassau street, six or seven squares—my road to dinner—I think I could count two hundred brats. Niggers, mulattoes, quadroons, Chinese, and some the Lord no doubt originally intended to be white, but the dirt on whose faces leaves one uncertain as to that fact, block up the little, narrow street; and to wade through this mass of human vermin, would raise the ire of the most patient person that ever lived. In going to and from my meals, I go by the way of Broadway—and to cross Broadway is the rub—but once across, it is the rub for two or three squares. My plan—and how could I choose another, when there is no other—is to get into the crowd; and when I get in, I am borne, and rubbed, and crowded along, and need scarcely trouble myself about using my own legs; and when I get out, it seems like I had been pulled to pieces and very badly put together again.

From John A. Gray's establishment on the East River side of lower Manhattan, it was about a ten-block walk across town to Duane Street near Broadway on the West Side, where Clemens lived and boarded. Broadway was notably wider than the typical "little, narrow street" of lower Manhattan; it was also packed with carts, hacks, coaches, and omnibuses, not to mention pedestrians.

Last night I was in what is known as one of the finest fruit saloons in the world. The whole length of the huge, glittering hall is filled with beautiful ornamented marble slab tables, covered with the finest fruit I ever saw in my life. I suppose the fruit could not be mentioned with which they could not supply you. It is a perfect palace. The gas lamps hang in clusters of half a dozen together—representing grapes, I suppose—all over the hall.

Possibly the Washington Market, on Washington Street between Vesey and Fulton streets on the Hudson River, which in 1852 grossed $28.4 million, including $2.8 million for the sale of fruit.

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P.S. The printers have two libraries in town, entirely free to the craft; and in these I can spend my evenings most pleasantly. If books are not good company, where will I find it?

The Printers' Free Library and Reading Room was founded by the New York Typographical Society, whose "members commenced making donations of books to establish a library in 1823. . . . Many valuable donations of books have been received from publishers and others". Sometime in 1853 the

society moved its headquarters from 300 Broadway to 3 Chambers Street, just a few blocks from Clemens's boardinghouse. Its library was open from 6:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. "for the use of Printers, Stereotypers, Bookbinders, Engravers, and all others connected with the book and newspaper business. All the principal papers are on file, and the Library contains 3,000 vols. There is no charge made, except where persons take books from the Library, for which privilege $1 a year only is charged" The second library Clemens mentions has not been identified.

To Pamela A. Moffett
3? September 1853 • New York, N.Y.
(Typed transcription by or for Albert Bigelow Paine, CU-MARK; transcript and MS facsimile, MTL , 1:21–22, 31: UCCL 02713)
[beginning of letter missing]

> them to glory again."
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> From the gallery (second floor) you have a glorious sight—the flags of the different countries represented, the lofty dome, glittering jewelry, gaudy tapestry, &c., with the busy crowd passing to and fro—tis a perfect fairy palace—beautiful beyond description.

The first page (or pages) of the manuscript were evidently missing when Paine published it in 1912; except for the fragment he reproduced in facsimile, the remainder has since been lost. Clemens, however, is clearly describing the main floor of the Crystal Palace.

> The Machinery department is on the main floor, but I cannot enumerate any of it on account of the lateness of the hour (past 1 o'clock.) It would take more than a week to examine everything on exhibition; and as I was only in a little over two hours to-night, I only glanced at about one-third of the articles; and having a poor memory, I have enumerated scarcely any of even the principal objects. The visitors to the Palace average 6,000 daily—double the population of Hannibal. The price of admission being 50 cents, they take in about $3,000.
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> The Latting Observatory (height about 280 feet) is near the Palace—from it you can obtain a grand view of the city and the country round.

The observatory built by Waring Latting, and opened to the public in July 1853, was actually 350 feet high. It stood between Forty-second and Forty-third streets, adjacent to the Crystal Palace. Telescopes on the upper levels, which one reached by steam-powered elevator, afforded a panoramic view of the city. In 1856 the tower was destroyed by fire, and two years later, the "indestructible" Crystal Palace likewise succumbed in a matter of minutes.

> The Croton Aqueduct, to supply the city with water, is the greatest wonder yet. Immense sewers are laid across the bed of the Hudson River, and pass through the country to Westchester county, where a whole river is turned from its course, and brought to New

York. From the reservoir in the city to the Westchester county reservoir, the distance is thirty-eight miles! and if necessary, they could supply every family in New York with one hundred barrels of water per day!

A distributing reservoir for the Croton Aqueduct was adjacent to the Crystal Palace on Forty-second Street. Completed in 1842, the Croton aqueduct system was an engineering feat that attracted tourists and that delivered abundant water to a growing city for rest of the century.

I am very sorry to learn that Henry has been sick. [*in margin*: Write, and let me know how Henry is.] He ought to go to the country and take exercise; for he is not half so healthy as Ma thinks he is. If he had my walking to do, he would be another boy entirely. Four times every day I walk a little over one mile; and working hard all day, and walking four miles, is exercise—I am used to it, now, though, and it is no trouble. Where is it Orion's going to? Tell Ma my promises are faithfully kept, and if I have my health I will take her to Ky. in the spring—I shall save money for this. Tell Jim and all the rest of them to write, and give me all the news. I am sorry to hear such bad news from Will and Captain Bowen. I shall write to Will soon.

The Chatham-square Post Office and the Broadway office too, are out of my way, and I always go to the General Post Office; so you must write the direction of my letters plain, "New York City, N. Y.," without giving the street or anything of the kind, or they may go to some of the other offices. (It has just struck 2 A. M. and I always get up at 6, and am at work at 7.) You ask me where I spend my evenings. Where would you suppose, with a free printers' library containing more than 4,000 volumes within a quarter of a mile of me, and nobody at home to talk to? I shall write to Ella soon. Write soon.

Truly your Brother

Sam

P. S I have written this by a light so dim that you nor Ma could not read by it.

September 22 Thursday – Orion sold the Hannibal Journal and moved the family to Muscatine, Iowa, where he soon started another paper, the Muscatine Journal with a partner, John Mahin.

To Pamela A. Moffett
8 October 1853 • New York, N.Y.
(MS, damage emended: CU-MARK, UCCL 00001)
New York, ix x, Oct., Saturday, 1853.

My Dear Sister:

I have not written to any of the family for some time, from the fact, firstly, that I didn't know where they were, and secondly, because I have been fooling myself with the idea that

I was going to leave New York, every day for the last two weeks. I have taken a liking to the abominable place, and every time I get ready to leave, I put it off a day or so, from some unaccountable cause. It is just as hard on my conscience to leave New York as it was easy to leave Hannibal. I think I shall get off Tuesday, though.

Edwin Forrest has been playing, for the last sixteen days, at the Broadway Theatre, but I never went to see him till last night. The play was the "Gladiator." I did not like parts of it much, but other portions were really splendid. In the latter part of the last act, where the "Gladiator" (Forrest) dies at his brother's feet, (in all the fierce pleasure of gratified revenge,) after working the latter's revenge, the man's whole soul seems absorbed in the part he is playing; and it is really startling to see him. I am sorry I did not see him play "Damon and Pythias"—the former character being his greatest. He appears in Philadelphia on Monday night.

I have not received a letter from home lately, but got a "Journal" the other day, in which I see the office has been sold. I suppose Ma, Orion and Henry are in St. Louis now. If Orion has no other project in his head, he ought to take the contract for getting out some weekly paper, if he cannot get a foremanship. Now, for such a paper as the "Presbyterian" (containing about 60,000,) he could get $20 or $25 per week, and he and Henry could easily do the work:—nothing to do but set the type and make up the forms. I mean they could easily do the work if $5.00 for 25,000 (per week) could beat a little work into (no offence to him) Henry's lazy bones! Orion must get Jim Wolfe a sit. in St. Louis. He can get 20 cents per 1,000. The foreman of Gray's office has taken a great fancy to go to St. Louis, and has got everything out of me that I know about the place, and I shouldn't be surprised if he should go there.

If my letters do not come often, you need not bother yourself about me; for if you have a brother nearly eighteen years of age, who is not able to take care of himself a few miles from home, such a brother is not worth one's thoughts: and if I don't manage to take care of No. 1., be assured you will never know it. I am not afraid, however: I shall ask favors from no one, and endeavor to be, (and shall be,) as "independent as a wood-sawyer's clerk."

I never saw such a place for military companies, as New York. Go on the street when you will, you are sure to meet a company in full uniform, with all the usual appendages of drums, fifes, &c. I saw a large company of the soldiers of the war of 1812, the other day, with a '76 veteran scattered here and there in the ranks. And when I passed through one of the parks lately, I came upon a company of boys on parade. Their uniforms were neat, and their muskets about half the common size. Some of them were not more than seven or eight years of age; but had evidently been well drilled.

Passage to Albany (160 miles) in the finest steamers that ply the Hudson, is now 25 cents—cheap enough, but is generally cheaper than that in the summer.

I want you to write as soon as I tell you where to direct your letter. I would let you know now, if I knew myself. I may perhaps be here a week longer; but I cannot tell. When you write tell me the whereabouts of the family. My love to Mr. Moffett and Ella. Tell Ella I intend to write to her soon, whether she wants me to or not.

Truly your Brother,

Saml. L. Clemens.

October 19–21 Friday – Sam left New York for Philadelphia. The trip lasted four and a half hours, by steamboat from New York to South Amboy, New Jersey and from there by train to Camden, ferry across the Delaware River. In several letters, Sam decided he liked Philadelphia much more than New York. Paine briefly mentions a boarding-house roommate, an Englishman named Sumner who now and then grilled herring, which was "regarded as a feast".

To Orion and Henry Clemens
26–?28 October 1853 • Philadelphia, Pa.
(MS and transcript: NPV and Muscatine Journal, 11 Nov 53, UCCL 00002)
Philadelphia, Pa. Oct. 26, 1853.

My Dear Brother:

It was at least two weeks before I left New York, that I left received my last letter from home: and since then, devil take the word have I heard from any of you. And now, since I think of it, it wasn't a letter, either, but the last number of the "Daily Journal," saying that that paper was sold, and I very naturally supposed from that, that the family had disbanded, and taken up winter quarters in St Louis. Therefore, I have been writing to Pamela, till I'm tired of it, and have received no answer. I have been wanting for the last two or the three weeks, to send Ma some money, but devil take me if I knew where she was, and so the money has slipped out of my pocket somehow or other, but I have a dollar left, and a good deal owing to me, which will be paid next Monday. I shall enclose the dollar in this letter, and you can hand it to her. I know it's a small amount, but then it will buy her a hankerchief, and at the same time serve as a specimen of the kind of stuff we are paid with in Philadelphia. You see it's against the law in Pennsylvania to keep or pass a bill of less denomination than $5. I have only seen two or three bank bills since I have been in the State. On Monday the hands are paid off in sparkling gold, fresh of the Mint; so your dreams are not troubled, with the fear of having doubtful money in your pocket.

Clemens presumably enclosed a "Liberty Head" gold dollar, the only such coin then in circulation. Between 1849 and 1854 the United States Treasury minted more than 12.6 million of these dollars, which each weighed about one- twentieth of an ounce and measured one-half inch in diameter .

I am subbing at the Inquirer office.

Jesper Harding's Pennsylvania Inquirer and National Gazette was the city's largest morning newspaper, located at 57 South Third Street in the heart of the newspaper district between Market and Chestnut streets. In contrast with Clemens's "permanent situation" in New York, his employment in Philadelphia consisted of substituting temporarily for one or another of the Inquirer's regular compositors ("subbing"). Under this system, which was used only on newspapers, he was paid on a piecework basis, although probably at somewhat higher rates than a compositor could earn in a book and job office.

> One man has engaged me to work for him every Sunday till the first of next April, (when I shall return home to take Ma to Ky;) and another has engaged my services for the 24th of next month; and if I want it, I can get subbing every night of the week. I go to work at 7 o'clock in the evening, and work till 3 o'clock the next morning. I can go to the theatre and stay till 12 o'clock, and then go to the office, and get work from that till 3 the next morning; when I go to bed, and sleep till 11 o'clock, then get up and loaf the rest of the day. The type is mostly agate and minion, with some bourgeois; and when one gets a good agate take, he is sure to make money. I made $2.50 last Sunday, and was laughed at by all the hands, the poorest of whom sets 11,000 on Sunday; and if I don't set 10,000, at least, next Sunday, I'll give them leave to laugh as much as they want to. Out of the 22 compositors in this office, 12 at least, set 15,000 on Sunday.
>
> Unlike New York, I like this Phila amazingly, and the people in it. There is only one thing that gets my "dander" up—and that is the hands are always encouraging me: telling me "it's no use to get discouraged—no use to be down-hearted, for there is more work here than you can do!" "Downhearted," the devil! I have not had a particle of such a feeling since I left Hannibal, more than four months ago. I fancy they'll have to wait some time till they see me downhearted or afraid of starving while I have strength to work and am in a city of 400,000 inhabitants. When I was in Hannibal; before I had scarcely stepped out of the town limits, nothing could have convinced me than I would starve as soon as I got a little way from home.
>
> The grave of Franklin is in Christ Church-yard, cor. of Fifth and Arch streets. They keep the gates locked, and one can only see the flat slab that lies over his remains and that of his wife; but you cannot see the inscription distinctly enough to read it. This inscription, I believe, reads thus:
>
> "Benjamin
> and
> Deborah
> Franklin."
>
> I counted 27 cannons (6 pounders) planted in the edge of the side walk on Water st. the other day. They are driven into the ground, about a foot, with the mouth end upwards. A ball is driven fast into the mouth of each, to exclude the water; they look like so many

posts. They were put there during the war. I have also seen them planted in this manner, round the old churches, in N.Y.

The Exchange is where the different omnibus lines have their starting or stopping place. That is it is the head-quarters; and from this they radiate to the different parts of the city.

Twenty-nine omnibus routes (utilizing 275 four- and six-horse coaches) radiated from the Merchants' Exchange and Post Office Building at Walnut, Dock, and Third streets, near the Camden and Amboy ferry slip.

Well, as I was going to say, I went to the Exchange, yesterday, and deposited myself in a Fairmount stage, paid my sixpence, or "fip," as these heathen call it, and started. We rolled along till we began to get towards the out-skirts of the city, where the prettiest part of a large city always is. We passed a large house, which looked like a public building. It was built entirely of great blocks of red granite. The pillars in front were all finished but one. These pillars were beautiful ornamented fluted columns, considerably larger than a hogshead at the base, and about as high as Caplinger's second story front windows.

The building under construction has not been identified. Clemens compares the height of its pillars to George W. Caplinger's Hannibal grocery store, on Main Street, between Bird and Centre streets. When Orion published this letter in the Muscatine Journal, he substituted the phrase "25 or 30 feet high" for "about as high as Caplinger's second story front windows."

No marble pillar is as pretty as this these sombre red granite ones; and then to see some of them finished and standing, and then the huge blocks lying about of which the other was to be built, it looks so massy; and carries one in imagination, to the ruined piles of ancient Babylon. I despise the infernal bogus brick columns, plastered over with mortar. Marble is the cheapest building stone about Phila. This marble is the most beautiful I ever saw. It takes a very high polish. Some of it is as black as Egypt,

Compare Exodus 10:21-22. "Egyptian darkness" or "Egyptian night," meaning unrelieved, impenetrable blackness, was one of Clemens's favorite metaphors.

with thin streaks of white running through it, and some is a beautiful snowy white; while the most of it is magnificent black, clouded with white.

But I must go on with my trip. We soon passed long rows of houses, (private dwellings) all the work about the doors, stoop, &c., of which, was composed of this pretty marble, glittering in the sun, lie like glass. We arrived at Fairmount,—got out of the stage, and prepared to look around. The hill, (Fairmount) is very high, and on top of it is the great reservoir. After leaving the stage, I passed up the road, till I came to the wire bridge which stretches across the Schuylkill (or Delaware, darned if I know which!—the former, I

believe,—but you, know, for you are a better scholar than I am). This is the first bridge of the kind I ever saw.

Fairmount Bridge, about three hundred and fifty feet long, spanned the Schuylkill, not the Delaware. It was the first cable suspension bridge in the United States. Designed and built by Col. Charles Ellet, Jr.

Here I saw, a little above, the fine dam, which holds back the water for the use of the Water Works. It forms quite a nice water-fall. Seeing a park at the foot of the hill, I entered—and found it one of the nicest little places about. Fat marble Cupids, in big marble vases, squirted water every upward incessantly. Here stands in a kind of mausoleum, (is that proper?) a well executed piece of sculpture, with the inscription—"Erected by the City Council of Philadelphia, to the memory of Peter Graff, the founder and inventor of the Fairmount Water Works." The bust looks toward the dam. It is all of the purest white marble. I passed along the pavement by the pump-house (I don't know what else to call it) and seeing a door left open by somebody, I went in. I saw immense water-wheels, &c., but if you will get a back-number of the Lady's Book, you will find a better description of the Works, than I can give you.

Philadelphia's famous waterworks at Fairmount had been constructed in 1812-15. By 1822 the Schuylkill had been dammed to provide the necessary power (replacing the original use of steam) to raise the river water to the reservoirs atop Fairmount, about one hundred feet. Clemens mentions this dam and the building which housed the waterwheels and pumps. At the foot of the hill was Fairmount Gardens, where the city had placed an elaborate cenotaph containing the white marble bust of Frederick Graff (1774-1847), superintendent and chief designer and engineer of the water-supply system.

I passed on further, and saw small steamboats, with their signs up—"For Wissahickon and Manayunk—25 cts." Geo. Lippard, in his "Legends of Washington and his Generals," has rendered the Wissahickon sacred in my eyes, and I shall make that trip,—as well as one to Germantown, soon.

Germantown was just north of the city proper, adjacent to Manayunk, a small manufacturing town on the east bank of the Schuylkill, a source of ample water power. Just below Manayunk, picturesque Wissahickon Creek flowed into the Schuylkill.

But to proceed, again. Here was a long flight of stairs, leading to the summit of the hill. I went up—of course. But I forgot to say, that at the foot of this hill a pretty white marble Naiad stands on a projecting rock, and this, I must say is the prettiest fountain I have seen lately. A nice half-inch jet of water is thrown straight up ten or twelve feet, and descends in a shower, all over the fair water spirit. Fountains also gush out of the rock at the her feet, in every direction. Well, arrived at the top of the hill, I see nothing but a respectable-sized lake, which looks rather out of place in its elevated situation. I can't say I saw nothing else, either:—for here I had a magnificent view of the city. Tired of this, I passed up Coates

streets, 5 or six squares from the hill, and came to the immense (distributin) branch of the Works. It is built of a kind of dirty yellow stone, and in the style of an ancient feudal Castle. Passing on, I took a squint at the “House of Refuge,” (of which we used to read at Sunday School),—then I took a look at the marble Girard College, with its long rows of marble pillars—then jumped into a ’bus, and posted back to the Exchange.

Clemens appears to have mistaken Eastern Penitentiary, on Coates Street between Schuylkill Front and Schuylkill Third streets, for the distributing branch of the waterworks. No such building is described in his own guidebook to Philadelphia, but (as its map shows) the penitentiary was just four or five blocks along Coates. This was a very large structure. “The front is in the castellated style of architecture, having heavy square towers sixty-five feet high, and a splendid arched gateway, with portcullis and central tower”, easily mistaken for “the style of an ancient feudal Castle.” The House of Refuge was just another six blocks along Coates, between Schuylkill Seventh and Eighth streets, near the intersection with Ridge Road. It was a reform school for white juveniles, which received its first inmate in December 1828. The school had recently expanded, building anew at the corner of Parrish and William streets, to accommodate blacks, but Clemens appears to have seen only the older building. If he then turned northwest on Ridge Road, he was within five blocks of Girard College. Founded by the American shipping magnate and financier Stephen Girard, who provided $3 million for construction and an endowment, the college had offered free education to white, male orphans since 1848.

There is one fine custom observed in Phila. A gentleman is always expected to hand up a lady’s money for her. Yesterday, I sat in the front end of the ’bus, directly under the driver’s box—a lady sat opposite me. She handed me her money, which was right. But, Lord! a St. Louis lady would think herself ruined, if she should be so familiar with a stranger. In St. Louis, a man will sit, in the front end of the stage, and see a lady stagger from the far end, to pay her fare. The Phila. ’bus drivers cannot cheat. In the front end of the stage is a thing like an office clock, with figures, from 0 to 40, marked on its face. When the stage starts, the hands of the clock is turned toward the 0. When you get in and pay your fare, the driver strikes a bell, and the hand moves to the fig. 1—that is, “one fare, and paid for,” and there is your receipt, as good as if you had it in your pocket. When a passenger pays his fare and the driver does not strike the bell immediately, he is greeted “Strike that bell,! will you?”

I must close now. I intend visiting the Navy Yard, Mint, &c. before I write again. You must write often. You see I have nothing to write interesting to you, while you can write nothing that will not interest me. Don’t say my letters are not long enough. Tell Jim to write. Tell all the boys where I am, and to write. Jim Robinson, particularly. I wrote to him from N.Y. Tell me all that is going on in H—l.

Truly your brother

Sam

Philadelphia is rich in Revolutionary associations. I stepped into the State House yesterday to see the sights. In one of the halls, on a pedestal, is the old cracked "Independence Bell," bearing the inscription "Proclaim liberty throughout the land," or something to that effect. It was cast 25 or 30 years before it made this proclamation. It was rung for the first time on "Independence Day," when it "proclaimed liberty" by calling the people together to hear the Declaration of Independence read.

The inscription is from Leviticus 25:10: "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants Thereof." Originally cast in 1752, and then recast twice in 1753, the bell hung for many years in the tower of the State House. It was rung on 8 July 1776 at the first reading of the Declaration of Independence in Independence Square. The bell cracked in 1835, and again in 1846,

It is an interesting relic. A small pine bench or pew in this Hall bears this inscription —"Washington, Franklin and Bishop White sat on this Bench." Of course, I "sot down" on it. I would have whittled off a chip, if I had got half a chance. On the pedestal of the statue of Washington, in the same Hall, is a small block of granite, with the inscription—"A piece of the step on which the Secretary's foot rested when he read the Declaration of Independence." Full length portraits of William Penn and Lafayette hang in this Hall. There is another thing which should have a place in this Hall. It is a flag which I saw in New York. It was the personal property of Washington, and was planted on the Battery when the British evacuated New York. After that, it was not used until the laying of the corner stone of the Washington Monument. Then this faded and tattered, though time-honored relic of "the days that tried men's souls," was taken to Washington and unfurled to the breeze at that ceremony. It is said that when the procession reached the Monumental ground in Washington, the flag was unfurled and the announcement made—"This flag belonged to Washington; it proudly waved defiance to the British from the Battery when they evacuated New York; it is here now to display the stars and stripes under which its illustrious owner so nobly fought"—the multitude gazed on it for a moment, and then a shout went up that would have sent the blood from the cheek of a tyrant.

I came here from New York by way of the Camden and Amboy railroad—the same on which the collision occurred some time since. I never thought of this till our train stopped, "all of a sudden," and then began to go backwards like blazes. Then ran back half a mile, and switched off on another track, and stopped; and the next moment a large passenger train came round a bend in the road, and whistled past us like lightning! Ugh! ejaculated, as I looked to see if Mr. Clemens's bones were all safe. If we had been three seconds later getting off that track, the two locomotives would have come together, and we should no doubt have been helped off. The conductors silenced all questions by not answering them.

Clemens presumably took the 2:00 P.M. Express Line (cost, three dollars) to Philadelphia. This trip lasted four and a half hours: by steamboat from New York to South Amboy, New Jersey, and from there by rail to Camden, and by ferry across the Delaware River to the wharf at Walnut Street. The collision Clemens recalls was one between two passenger trains on the Camden and Amboy line which occurred

on 9 August 1853. Four passengers were killed, and several others seriously injured, when the trains collided head on on a curve near Old Bridge, New Jersey.

S. C.

crosswise over the first paragraph: Please send this to Henry if he is not in St. Louis

Sam

To Orion Clemens
28 November 1853 • Philadelphia, Pa.
(MS, damage emended: NPV, UCCL 00003)
Philadelphia, Nov. 28th 1853.

My Dear Brother:

I received your letter to-day. I think Ma ought to spend the winter in St Louis. I don't believe in that climate—it's too cold for her.

The printer's' annual ball and supper came off the other night. The proceeds amounted to about $1.000. The printers, as well as other people are endeavoring to raise money to erect a monument to Franklin, but there are so many abominable foreigners here (and among printers, too,) who hate everything American, that I am very certain as much money for such a purpose could be raised in St Louis, as in Philadelphia. I was in Franklin's old office this morning,—the "North American" (formerly "Philadelphia Gazette"), and there were at least one foreighner for every American at work there.

Clemens's spelling ("foreighner'") was probably intended to represent an Irish accent. The Irish in Philadelphia at this time were the victims of widespread hostility.

How many subscribers has the Journal got? What does the job-work pay? and what does the whole concern pay? I have not seen a copy of the paper yet.

I intend to take Ma to Ky., anyhow, and if I possibly have the money, I will attend to the deeds too.

I will try to write for the paper occasionally, but I fear my letters will be very uninteresting, for this incessant night work dulls one's ideas amazingly.

From some cause, I cannot set type near so fast as when I was at home. Sunday is a long day, and while others set 12 and 15,000, yesterday, I only set 10,000. However, I will shake this laziness off, soon, I reckon.

I always thought the eastern people were patterns of uprightness.; but I never before saw so many whisky-swilling, God-despising heathens as I find in this part of the country. I believe

I am the only person in the Inquirer office that does not drink. One young fellow makes $18 for a few weeks, and gets on a grand “bender” and spends every cent of it.

How do you like “free-soil? I would like amazingly to see a good, old-fashioned negro.”

Clemens refers to Orion’s move from Missouri, a slave state, to Iowa, a free state.

My love to all

Truly your brother

S Sam.

To the Muscatine Journal
4 December 1853 • Philadelphia, Pa.
(Muscatine Journal, 16 Dec 53, UCCL 00004)
Philadelphia, Dec. 4, 1853.

There is very little news of consequence stirring just now. The steamer, due several days ago, has not yet arrived, and fears are entertained that something has befallen her. Mitchell, the Irish patriot, is the lion in New York at present. I suppose he will be here soon.

Philadelphia is one of the healthiest places in the Union. The air is pure and fresh—almost like the country. The deaths for the week are 147.

It was about 1682 that this city was laid out. The first settlers came over the year previously, in the “Sarah and John,” Capt. Smith. The city now extends from Southwark to Richmond—about five miles—and from the Delaware to the Schuylkill—something over two miles. The streets are wide and straight, and cross each other at right angles, running north and south and east and west. Penn’s original design was to leave Front street free, and allow no buildings to be erected upon it. This would have afforded a beautiful promenade, as well as a fine view of the Delaware. But this plan was not carried out. What is now the crooked Dock street was once a beautiful brook, running through the heart of the city. In old times vessels came up this creek as high as third street.

The old State House in Chesnut street, is an object of great interest to the stranger; and though it has often been repaired, the old model and appearance are still preserved. It is a substantial brick edifice, and its original cost was £5,600 ($28,000). In the east room of the first story the mighty Declaration of Independence was passed by Congress, July 4th, 1776.

When a stranger enters this room for the first time, an unaccountable feeling of awe and reverence comes over him, and every memento of the past his eye rests upon whispers that he is treading upon sacred ground. Yes, everything in that old hall reminds him that he stands where mighty men have stood; he gazes around him, almost expecting to see a

Franklin or an Adams rise before him. In this room is to be seen the old “Independence Bell,” which called the people together to hear the Declaration read, and also a rude bench, on which Washington, Franklin and Bishop White once sat.

It is hard to get tired of Philadelphia, for amusements are not scarce. We have what is called a “free-and-easy,” at the saloons on Saturday nights. At a free-and-easy, a chairman is appointed, who calls on any of the assembled company for a song or a recitation, and as there are plenty of singers and spouters, one may laugh himself to fits at a very small expense.

Ole Bull, Jullien, and Sontag have flourished and gone, and left the two fat women, one weighing 764, and the other 769 pounds, to “astonish the natives.” I stepped in to see one of these the other evening, and was disappointed. She is a pretty extensive piece of meat, but not much to brag about; however, I suppose she would bring a fair price in the Cannibal Islands. She is a married woman! If I were her husband, I think I could yield with becoming fortitude to the dispensations of Providence, if He, in his infinite goodness, should see fit to take her away! With this human being of the elephant species, there is also a “Swiss Warbler”—bah! I earnestly hope he may live to see his native land for the first time.

W.

December 5 Monday –
To Pamela A. Moffett
5 December 1853 • Philadelphia, Pa.
(MS, damage emended: NPV, UCCL 00005)
Philadelphia, Dec. 5

My Dear Sister:

I have already written two letters within the last two hours, and you will excuse me if this is not lengthy. If I had the money, I would come to St. Louis now, while the river is open; but in the last two or three weeks I have spent about thirty dollars for clothing, so I suppose I shall remain where I am. I only want to return to avoid night work, which is injuring my eyes. I have received one or two letters from home, but they are not written as they should be; and know no more about what is going on there, than the man in the moon. One only has to leave home to learn how to write an interesting letter to an absent friend when he gets back. I suppose you board at Mrs. Hunter’s yet—and that, I think, is somewhere in Olive street above Fifth.

Phila is one of the healthiest places in the Union. I wanted to spend this winter in a warm climate; but it is too late now. I don’t like our present prospect for cold weather at all.

Truly your brother

Sam.

To the Muscatine Journal
24 December 1853 • Philadelphia, Pa.
(Muscatine Journal, 6 Jan 54, UCCL 00006)
Philadelphia, Dec. 24, 1853.

The weather last night was intensely cold, and the wind blew almost a hurricane. During the week we have also had slight falls of snow.

On Thursday night last, there was an extensive fire in N. Third street, during the progress of which, the wall (only nine inches thick!) of a burning, four-story building came down with a terrible crash, burying several men who were engaged in extinguishing the fire. One of these unfortunates lay for some three hours, pressed down by the rubbish, and unable to extricate himself, in sight of his friends, who were alike unable to render him any assistance. He was at length, however, delivered from his perilous situation, and conveyed to his home, but at last accounts his injuries were such as to leave very little hope of his recovery. Another man, a policeman, was completely buried; and when found, he had long been dead. His feet were burned off, his face burnt to a crisp, and his head crushed in.

Clemens may have drawn on an account of the fire published in the Philadelphia Public Ledger of 23 December. On the night of Wednesday, 21 December, the blaze was first noted at 198 and 200 Third Street, shortly before it spread through a partition "only nine inches thick" to 196 Third Street. All three buildings were destroyed, and police officer Hiram Hammer was found dead in the rubble the next day ("The Third Street Fire," 1). Jacob Albright, the "delivered" officer, died on 25 December.

The markets, as well as shops of all kinds, are crowded to-day, with people making their Christmas purchases. Turkeys and fowls of all kinds, are vanishing from the markets as if by magic. I asked a lady what the best turkeys were selling at. She replied that she had priced several fine ones, which were seven dollars apiece! This seems a high figure, but everything else is in proportion. Couldn't you forward us a few hundred of the birds?

During the week I have visited several places of note near Philadelphia. The first of these places was Germantown, where the Americans made the terrible charge upon the British, quartered in the celebrated "Chew's House." This building is still standing, and is at present occupied as a dwelling-house. It does not appear near as old as others in its immediate vicinity. It is built in the real old English style, and still bears the cannon and musket ball marks received in the conflict which made it famous. Germantown is rich in old buildings, some bearing the dates of 1743, 1760, &c.

Cliveden, commonly known as "Chew House," was a handsome stone dwelling built in 1761 by Benjamin Chew, who had served colonial Pennsylvania as attorney general, and later chief justice of its supreme court. During the battle of Germantown on 4 October 1777, English troops barricaded themselves in Cliveden and successfully defended it against forces under George Washington.

> At the corner of Little Dock and Second streets, stands the queer looking old house occupied by the heroic Lydia Darrah. It was here, if I remember the story aright, that she left the British officer, and taking her flour bag, set off to inform Gen. Washington of the intended attack of the British upon his camp: and her heroic conduct defeated the plans of the red-coats, and saved the Americans. Well does she deserve a monument; but no such monument is hers. As one might almost guess, her old mansion is now occupied by a Jew, as a clothing store.

Modern historians have long regarded the story of Darragh's heroism as largely a myth.

> The next place of note is the old "Slate-Roof House," which was the first house in the city covered with that material. It is situated in Second street, at the corner of Norris's alley. It was erected about one hundred and sixty years ago, in the old English style of architecture. It was occupied by Wm. Penn, in the year 1700, and John Penn, "the American," who was born under its roof. In this house Gen. Forbes, second in command, and afterwards successor to Gen. Braddock, died, and from it was borne to the grave, with imposing military honors. In after years, it was the temporary abode of John Adams, John Hancock, and many other distinguished members of the first Congress, and also of Baron De Kalb, who fell, fighting for American independence, at the battle of Camden. The brave General Lee also breathed his last in this house, and was buried in Christ Churchyard. This noble old relic is also desecrated in the same manner as the Darrah House. Unless measures are shortly taken for its preservation, it will soon go to decay and be remembered as one of the things that were.

According to Clemens's source, "This house, once so honoured and renowned, now, alas! wears a sadly-neglected appearance »—the front rooms of the lower story being occupied as a huckster's shop, and those in the rear as a saw manufactory, while the upper stories are used by a cabinet-maker as a varnish-room".

> Carpenter's Hall, situated in Carpenter's Court, is a pile dear to every American, for within its walls, the first Congress of the United States assembled—a fact which should entitle it to a place in the heart of every true lover of his country. "The building is of brick, two stories high, and surmounted by a cupola. The facade is in the Roman style of architecture. The principal entrance leads to the Assembly Room, in which Congress first met. It is now occupied as an auction mart. By an auction mart—the old story. Alas! that these old buildings, so intimately connected with the principal scenes in the history of our country, should thus be profaned. Why do not those who make such magnificent donations to our colleges and other institutions, give a mite toward their preservation of these monuments of the past? Surely their liberality would be well bestowed. It is painful to look upon these time-honored edifices, and feel that they will soon fall into decay and be forgotten.
>
> This communication is already too long to be interesting, and I will stop.

W.

To the Muscatine Journal
3 February 1854 • Philadelphia, Pa.
(Muscatine Journal, 17 Feb 54, UCCL 09400)
Philadelphia, Feb. 3, 1854.

The Consolidation Bill, which has kept our citizens in such an excitement so long, has at length passed both houses of the Legislature, and when the Governor's signature is affixed to it, Southwark, the Northern Liberties, &c., will be among the things that were. This bill brings the various Districts, boroughs, &c., and also Philadelphia county under one municipal government.

Philadelphia as consolidated, is now the largest city in the United States. Although New York has much the larger population, Philadelphia has a far greater number of houses, and covers a much larger space than New York, or any other city in the Union. The police came out yesterday in their uniform. It is very neat, and gives them a kind of military appearance.

On 11 November 1853 the Philadelphia Board of Police had passed a resolution requiring all policemen to be in uniform by 1 February 1854. Improved police discipline, performance, and recognizability outweighed objections that uniforms were undemocratic and inappropriate to the American character. A number of the city's policemen, accustomed to wear only a star insignia, protested against the new uniform—a blue cloth cap, a navy-blue frock coat with standing collar and gilded buttons, and dark-gray trousers—particularly since they were obliged to pay the fourteen dollars it cost.

I went, with a few friends, yesterday, to the Exchange, to see the reception of the two lions, Captains Low and Crighton. The Reading Room, at 12 o'clock, was densely crowded. About five minutes past twelve the two heroes made their appearance, and were received with three times three by the assembled populace. After a few remarks by the President of the Testimonial Committee, the shaking of hands commenced, and the two Captains were borne through the crowd, to the great danger of their lives and limbs, and were thus squeezed and cheered into the street, where a carriage was in waiting to convey them to the State House. The crowd followed them on a run, yelling and huzzaing till they were out of sight. The money subscribed for each, I believe, was about $2,500, in addition to which they will receive several medals. Capt. Crighton is about thirty-three years of age, and is a native of New England.

The people here seem very fond of tacking a bit of poetry (?) to the notices of the death of friends, published in the Ledger. Here are a few lines of most villainous doggerel, and worse measure, which may be found in the "death" column of that paper three or four times every day. This will serve as a contrast with the pretty gems of your fair correspondents "Nannette" and "Virginia," &c.:

"Ah! dry your tears, and shed no more.
Because your child, husband, and brother has gone before;
In love he lived, in peace he died,
His life was asked, but was denied.

What do you think of that? Will not Byron lose some of his popularity now?

The great California tree, or rather part of it, has just arrived here, and is now lying in Front street. It was sawed off about seven feet above the roots, and is about 23 feet in diameter. It is quite a curiosity. Some of the sailors of the ship in which it came, are Chinese.

On 27 January the clipper Messenger out of San Francisco brought to Philadelphia a ten-foot, hollowed-out section of a giant redwood from California, a tree some three thousand years old and three hundred and twenty-five feet in height. Approximately ninety feet in circumference, the section could easily enclose one hundred standing men. From Philadelphia it was taken for exhibit to Boston and New York.

The Sabbath School children of the Methodist E. Churches, of Philadelphia, have contributed a block of marble for the Washington Monument. It bears an appropriate inscription.

The journeymen rope makers of Philadelphia, have demanded an advance of 25 cents a day on their wages. This demand has generally been complied with.

They have lately placed a new chime of bells in the tower of St. Stephen's Church, here, the largest one of which weighs 2800 pounds. This is a large bell.

W.

February 15 Wednesday – Clemens took a night train in Philadelphia, which would arrive in Washington the next morning.

February 16 Thursday – Sam arrived at the Baltimore and Ohio station in Washington, D.C. for a short vacation that he called "a flying trip." It is possible he stayed until Washington's Birthday.

To the Muscatine Journal
17 and 18 February 1854 • Washington, D.C.
(Muscatine Journal, 24 Mar 54, UCCL 00007)
Washington, Feb. 18, 1854.

When I came out on the street this morning to take a view of Washington, the ground was perfectly white, and it was snowing as though the heavens were to be emptied, and that, too, in as short a time as possible. The snow was falling so thickly that I could scarcely see

across the street. I started toward the capitol, but there being no sidewalk, I sank ankle deep in mud and snow at every step. When at last I reached the capitol, I found that Congress did not sit till 11 o'clock; so I thought I would stroll around the city for an hour or two.

The Treasury Building is a pretty edifice, with a long row of columns in front, and stands about a square from the President's house. Passing into the park in front of the White House, I amused myself with a gaze at Clark Mill's great equestrian statue of Jackson. It is a beautiful thing, and well worth a long walk on a stormy day to see.

The public buildings of Washington are all fine specimens of architecture, and would add greatly to the embellishment of such a city as New York—but here they are sadly out of place looking like so many palaces in a Hottentot village. The streets, indeed are fine—wide, straight, and level as a floor. But the buildings, almost invariably, are very poor—two and three story brick houses, and strewed about in clusters; you seldom see a compact square off Pennsylvania Avenue. They look as though they might have been emptied out of a sack by some Brobdignagian gentleman, and when falling, been scattered abroad by the winds. There are scarcely any pavements, and I might almost say no gas, off the thoroughfare, Pennsylvania Avenue. Then, if you should be seized with a desire to go to the Capitol, or somewhere else, you may stand in a puddle of water, with the snow driving in your face for fifteen minutes or more, before an omnibus rolls lazily by; and when one does come, ten to one there are nineteen passengers inside and fourteen outside, and while the driver casts on you a look of commiseration, you have the inexpressible satisfaction of knowing that you closely resemble a very moist dish-rag, (and feel so, too,) at the same time that you are unable to discover what benefit you have derived from your fifteen minutes' soaking; and so, driving your fists into the inmost recesses of your breeches pockets, you stride away in despair, with a step and a grimace that would make the fortune of a tragedy actor, while your "onery" appearance is greeted with "screems of laftur" from a pack of vagabond boys over the way. Such is life, and such is Washington!

The Capitol is a very fine building, but it has been so often described, that I will not attempt another portrait. The statuary with which it is adorned is most beautiful; but as I am no connoisseur in such matters, I will let that pass also. The large hall between the two Congressional Chambers is embellished with numerous large paintings, portraying some of the principal events in American history. One, the "Embarkation of the Pilgrims in the May Flower," struck me as very fine—so fresh and natural. The "Baptism of Pocahontus" is also a noble picture, and worthy the place it occupies.

I passed into the Senate Chamber to see the men who give the people the benefit of their wisdom and learning for a little glory and eight dollars a day. The Senate is now composed of a different material from what it once was. Its glory hath departed. Its halls no longer echo the words of a Clay, or Webster, or Calhoun. They have played their parts and retired from the stage; and though they are still occupied by others, the void is felt. The Senators dress very plainly as they should, and all avoid display, and do not speak unless they have

> something to say—and that cannot be said of the Representatives. Mr. Cass is a fine looking old man; Mr. Douglass, or "Young America," looks like a lawyer's clerk, and Mr. Seward is a slim, dark, bony individual, and looks like a respectable wind would blow him out of the country.

Clemens refers to: Lewis Cass (1782-1866), Democratic senator from Michigan; Stephen A. Douglas (1813-61), Democratic senator from Illinois, who in 1852 had been backed unsuccessfully for the Democratic presidential nomination by the party's "Young America" faction; and William H. Seward (1801-72), Whig senator from New York. At this time the Senate was heatedly debating Douglas's proposed Kansas-Nebraska Act, which, passed in May 1854, repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820-21, ending its limitation on the extension of slavery. On 17 February, the day Clemens was in the gallery, Seward spoke for three hours in support of the Missouri Compromise

> In the House nearly every man seemed to have something weighing on his mind on which the salvation of the Republic depended, and which he appeared very anxious to ease himself of; and so there were generally half a dozen of them on the floor, and "Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman!" was echoed from every part of the house. Mr. Benton sits silent and gloomy in the midst of the din, like a lion imprisoned in a cage of monkeys, who, feeling his superiority, disdains to notice their chattering.

House proceedings on 17 February were notable for the unusual amount of bickering and procedural wrangling that preceded and followed debate on the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Almost fourteen years later Clemens vividly recreated the scene he describes in this paragraph, recalling that most of the legislators seemed to be a mob of empty headed whipper-snappers that had only come to Congress to make incessant motions, propose eternal amendments, and rise to everlasting points of order. They glanced at the galleries oftener than they looked at the Speaker; they put their feet on their desks as if they were in a beer-mill; they made more racket than a rookery, and let on to know more than any body of men ever did know or ever could know by any possibility whatsoever.

> February 19.

> The Smithsonian Institute is a large, fine building, in the same style of architecture as the Trinity Church of New York. It is composed of the same kind of stone as that edifice, and looks like a half-church and half-castle. It has a fine library, and also an extensive gallery of paintings. Lectures are delivered in it almost every evening.

The red sandstone "Castle on the Mall," designed in Norman style, had been occupied since 1849 but was not completed until 1855, At the time of Clemens's visit the building contained a library of about thirty-two thousand volumes, an art gallery, and a lecture hall accommodating two thousand people

> Park Benjamin lectures there this evening.

If there is anything in Washington, worth a visit, it is the Museum of the Patent Office. It is free to visitors at all times of the day, and is by far the largest collection of curiosities in the United States. The first story of this magnificent building is occupied by the models of patents. The second story is occupied by the museum. I spent a very pleasant four hours in this part of the building, looking at the thousands upon thousands of wonders it contains.

The United States Patent Office Building was modeled on the Parthenon. At this time, in addition to the Patent Office, it housed the Department of the Interior and the National Museum (Oehser, 161-64),

In one department were several Peruvian mummies of great antiquity. The hair was perfect, and remained plaited just as it was perhaps centuries ago; but the bodies were black, dry, and crisp, and what the appearance of the faces were during life, it was impossible to determine, for nothing remained but a shapeless mass of skin and flesh. The printing press used by Franklin, in London, nearly one hundred and twenty years ago, was an object worthy of notice. The bed is of wood and is not unlike a very shallow box. The platen is only half the size of the bed, thus requiring two pulls of the lever to each full-size sheet. What vast progress has been made in the art of printing! This press is capable of printing about 125 sheets per hour; and after seeing it, I have watched Hoe's great machine throwing off its 20,000 sheets in the same space of time, with an interest I never before felt.

The rotary-style press invented by Richard M. Hoe was first put into use, in 1846, by the Philadelphia Public Ledger and then widely adopted by other metropolitan newspapers. The fact that Clemens observed a Hoe press at work in a Washington newspaper office may suggest that he had been looking for work.

In other cases are to be seen the suits of clothes worn by Washington when he resigned his commission as Commander-in-Chief of the American forces; the coat worn by Jackson at the battle of New Orleans; Washington's sword, war-tent, cooking utensils, knives and forks, &c., and camp equippage generally; the treaty of the United States with Turkey (a horrible specimen of Oriental chirography;)

The Turkish version of a treaty signed at Constantinople on 7 May 1830, establishing guidelines for commerce and navigation between the United States and the Ottoman Empire. The American negotiator had signed a French translation and exchanged it for the Turkish original signed by the representative of the Sublime Porte. This was the only treaty between the United States and the Ottoman Empire in force by 1854.

the original Declaration of Independence; autographs of Bonaparte and several kings of Europe; pagan idols; part of the costumes of Atahualpa and Cortes, and thousands of other things of equal interest.

The Washington Monument is as yet but a plain white marble obelisk 150 feet high. It will no doubt be very beautiful when finished. When completed, an iron staircase will run up within 25 feet of the top. It is to be 550 feet high. If Congress would appropriate $200,000

to the Monument fund, this sum, with the contributions of the people, would build it in four years.

In September 1833 the Washington National Monument Society was organized to raise funds by public subscription for a memorial to Washington, a project that Congress had been considering, inconclusively, since 1783. It was not until 4 July 1848, however, that the cornerstone of the monument was laid. Although by March 1854 the obelisk had been brought to a height of 153 feet at a cost of $230,000, work stopped a few months later when funds ran low. An appropriation of $200,000 was proposed in Congress, but for a variety of reasons—including dissension within the Society, doubts about the integrity of the construction already accomplished, and the Civil War—the money was not made available until 1876. Construction was finally completed on 6 December 1884, at a total cost of over $1 million. Dedicated on 21 February 1885, the monument was then the tallest structure in the world, rising to just over 555 feet.

Mr. Forrest played Othello at the National Theatre last night, to a good audience. This is a very large theatre, and the only one of consequence in Washington.

W.

February 23 Thursday – By this date, Sam had returned to Philadelphia. He worked for about two weeks on the *Ledger* and *North American*.

Clemens's return to New York likely occurred two weeks after his return to Philadelphia. On 10 March and again on 17 March there were unclaimed letters for him in Philadelphia, an indication that by then he had left the city. Paine reported, "His second experience in New York appears not to have been recorded, and in later years was only vaguely remembered". Perhaps Clemens erased this period from his memory because it was a time of financial distress and bruised pride. His former confidence in his ability to "take care of himself a few miles from home" must have been shaken in the spring of 1854. Unemployment among New York printers was high, at least in part the result of the destruction by fire of two major publishing houses, Harper and Brothers and George F. Cooledge and Brothers, in December 1853. Forty-five years later Clemens acknowledged that he had been "obliged by financial stress" to return home.

Sam may have returned home as early as April, as there is no mention of him working in New York.

In 1906 Sam recalled:
"I went back to the Mississippi Valley, sitting upright in the smoking-car two or three days and nights. When I reached St. Louis I was exhausted. I went to bed on board a steamboat that was bound for Muscatine. I fell asleep at once, with my clothes on, and didnt' wake again for thirty-six hours".

The problem here is that St. Louis did not have a railroad in 1854. He provides no details of the journey but in all fairness neither does he say he went all the way to St. Louis by train. See *From New York to the Mississippi Valley, 1854* for analysis of possible routes.

Paine wrote that Clemens stopped off in St. Louis "only a few hours to see Pamela. It was his mother [in Muscatine, Iowa] he was anxious for." Paine also believed that Clemens had been away in the East for a year, from August 1853 to August 1854, and that "it was late in the summer of 1854 when he finally set out on his return to the West".
Given the hard times in New York, it is reasonable to speculate that Clemens's return to the West came as early as April 1854. His appearance in Muscatine—a thriving town of about fifty-five hundred people located on the Mississippi River some three hundred and ten miles above St. Louis—occasioned a joyful reunion with his mother and brothers. Muscatine tradition contradicts Paine's contention that, unable to "afford the luxury of working for Orion" on the Muscatine Journal, Clemens quickly returned to St. Louis and his former job on the Evening News. Local opinion holds that Clemens "remained in Muscatine several months before going to St. Louis, and that he worked for a time at the Journal office".

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