

# ***Two Centuries of Dickens in Philadelphia***

***101<sup>st</sup> International Conference of the Dickens  
Fellowship  
July 19 – July 24, 2007***

***Joseph D. Rondinelli  
Philadelphia Branch***



# *Britannia*



Dickens and his wife sailed from  
Liverpool on the steamship  
Britannia on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1842

# *Why the Visit?—In January!!*

There is no single reason why Dickens came to America in 1842.

A few possible reasons:



## *Curiosity and Comparison*

The average educated Englishman had a profound realization of what was changed at the close of the American Revolution--and the suspicion that eventually America might possibly surpass Great Britain in democracy and wealth. “What was this nation really like?” Did this nation deliver on the promises of the Declaration and the Constitution?

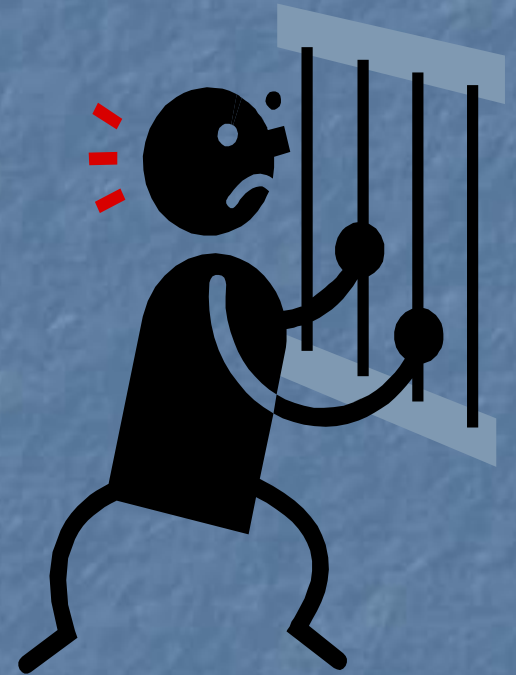
# *Content--New Material for Future Writings*



Charles always had an eye toward his future works and knew of the “curiosity” of his fellow Englishman.

## *Correctional Inquiry*

Dickens, ever conscious of social injustice, had an intense interest in prison systems and those within them. The memory of his father imprisoned at the Marshalsea Prison never left him.



# Copyright--Stump for International Copyright



Dickens was incensed at the lack of appreciation of the ownership of his works and believed he was due his reward.

# *Carey, Lea, and Blanchard*



Until the latter part of the 19th century *International Copyright* was non-existent. Dickens was not paid for his works published in America – with the exception of monies from the Philadelphia publishing firm Carey, Lea, and Blanchard.

Things began looking up for Dickens in the 1840's when he contracted with Harper Brothers Publishing in New York.

***Carey's  
Bookstore, 1837.  
Southeast  
Corner of Fourth  
and Chestnut  
Streets.***

***Published in the Public  
Ledger-Magazine  
Section, February 25,  
1912.***

***Extremely rare  
image***





*Boz, tell us what you really think of the  
American Press*



“Here's this morning's New York Sewer!' cried one.  
Here's this morning's New York Stabber! Here's the New  
York Family Spy! Here's the New York Private Listener!  
Here's the New York Peeper! Here's the New York  
Plunderer! Here's the New York Keyhole Reporter! Here's  
the New York Rowdy Journal! Here's all the New York  
papers”! Martin Chuzzlewit

“It is in such enlightened means”, said a voice almost in  
Martin's ear, “that the bubbling passions of my country  
find a vent.” Martin Chuzzlewit

# *Travel to Philadelphia*



Dickens and his wife left New York for the six-hour journey to Philadelphia on Sunday, March 6, 1842. They took a ferry across the Hudson River to Hoboken, New Jersey and a train ride south to Camden where he ferried across the Delaware River to Philadelphia, landing at the foot of Market Street.

# *Dickens Arrival in Philadelphia*

It was late and dark when Dickens arrived at the United States Hotel on Chestnut Street. Peering from his chamber window prior to retiring, he saw “a handsome building of white marble which had a ghost-like aspect, dreary to behold”. The following morning Dickens discovered that it was the “Tomb of many fortunes”, the notorious Second Bank of the United States.



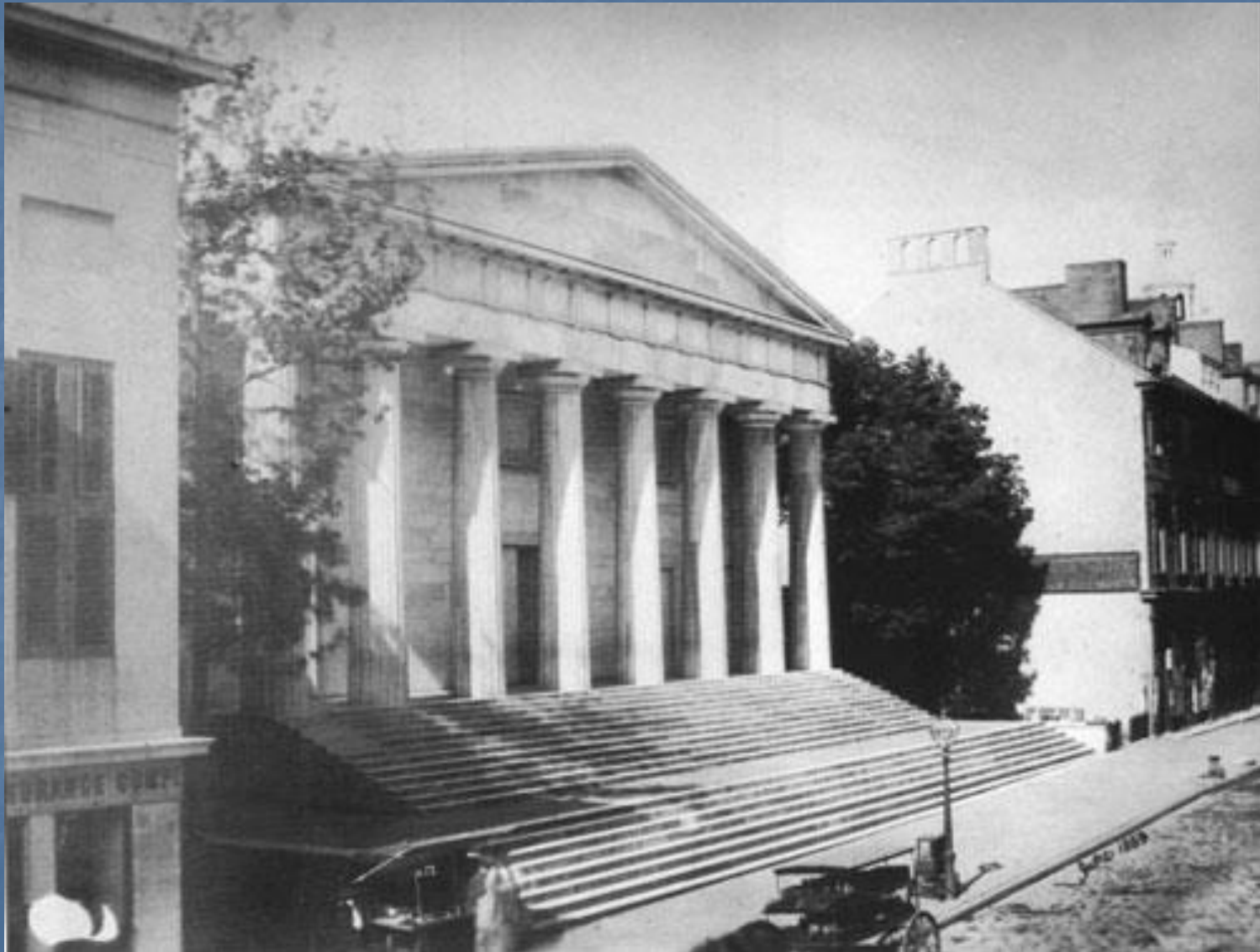
Dickens wrote:

“The stoppage of this bank, with all its ruinous consequences, had cast a gloom on Philadelphia, under the depressing effect of which it yet laboured.” *American Notes*

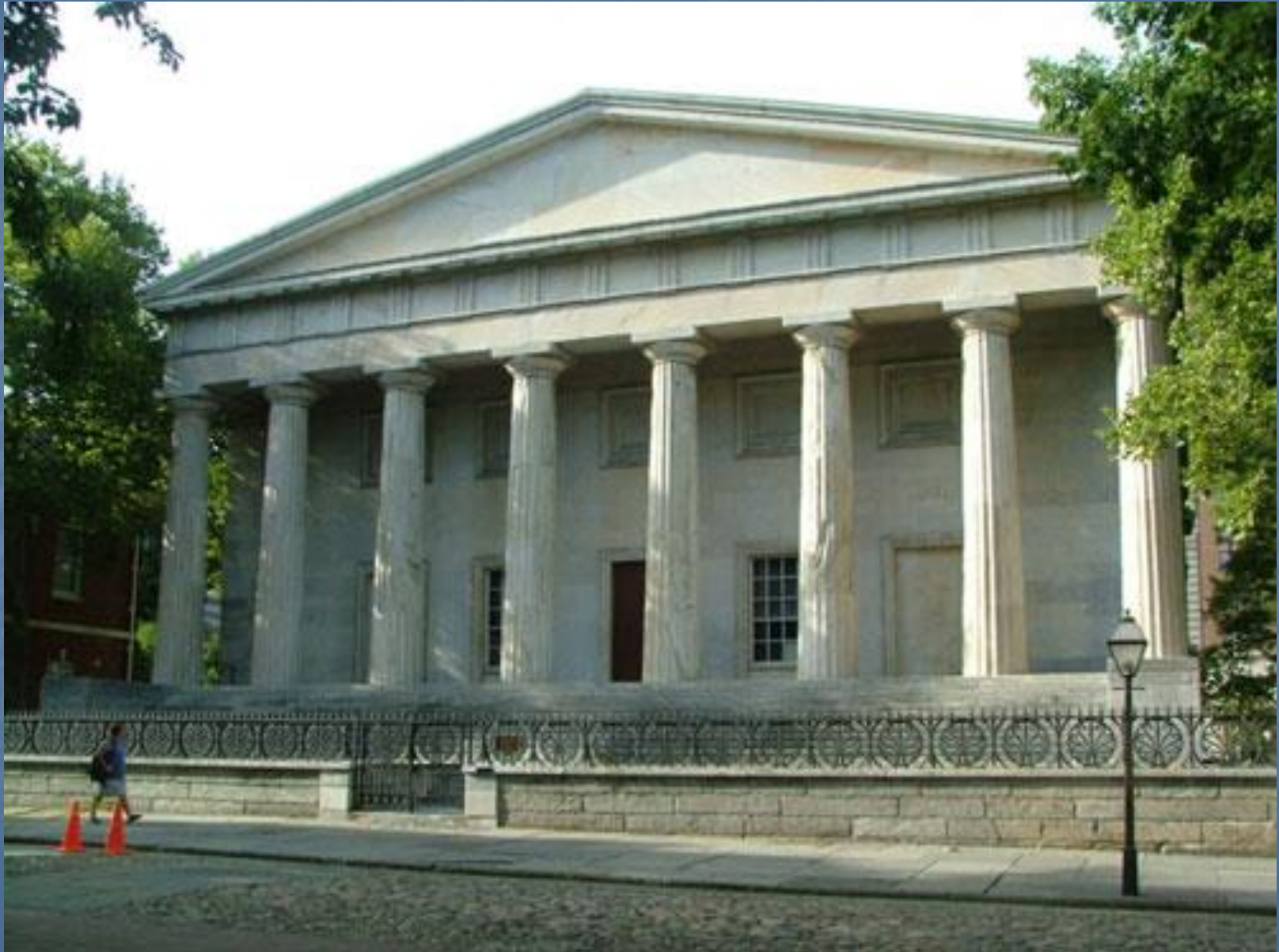
# *The United States Hotel*



*Second Bank of the United States much as it was during his visit*



# *Second Bank of the United States-Now*



# *Philadelphia Day One*

That first morning, Monday, March 7, Dickens spent a private day at the hotel. The press didn't know he had arrived. He sent two notes to announce his arrival. One to Harry Ingersoll to make plans for the following day's sightseeing and dining.

The other note was to Edgar Allen Poe inviting him to visit him there between 11:30 and noon that same day.



*Grip*

A stuffed Grip, housed within the case made by Dickens, is on display at the Free Library of Philadelphia.



# The Raven

The Raven, by Edgar Allen Poe, was inspired by Dickens, who had possessed a pet Raven named Grip. Dickens acquired the bird as he researched its nature in developing a character for Barnaby Rudge.

Poe, a poet and writer employed by the Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post, composed the poem in response to his impression that Dickens had somehow underwritten the prophetic potential of the bird.

# *Merchant's Exchange 3rd & Walnut Then*



*Merchant's Exchange*

*Now*



# *Athenaeum House*



# *Athenaeum House*

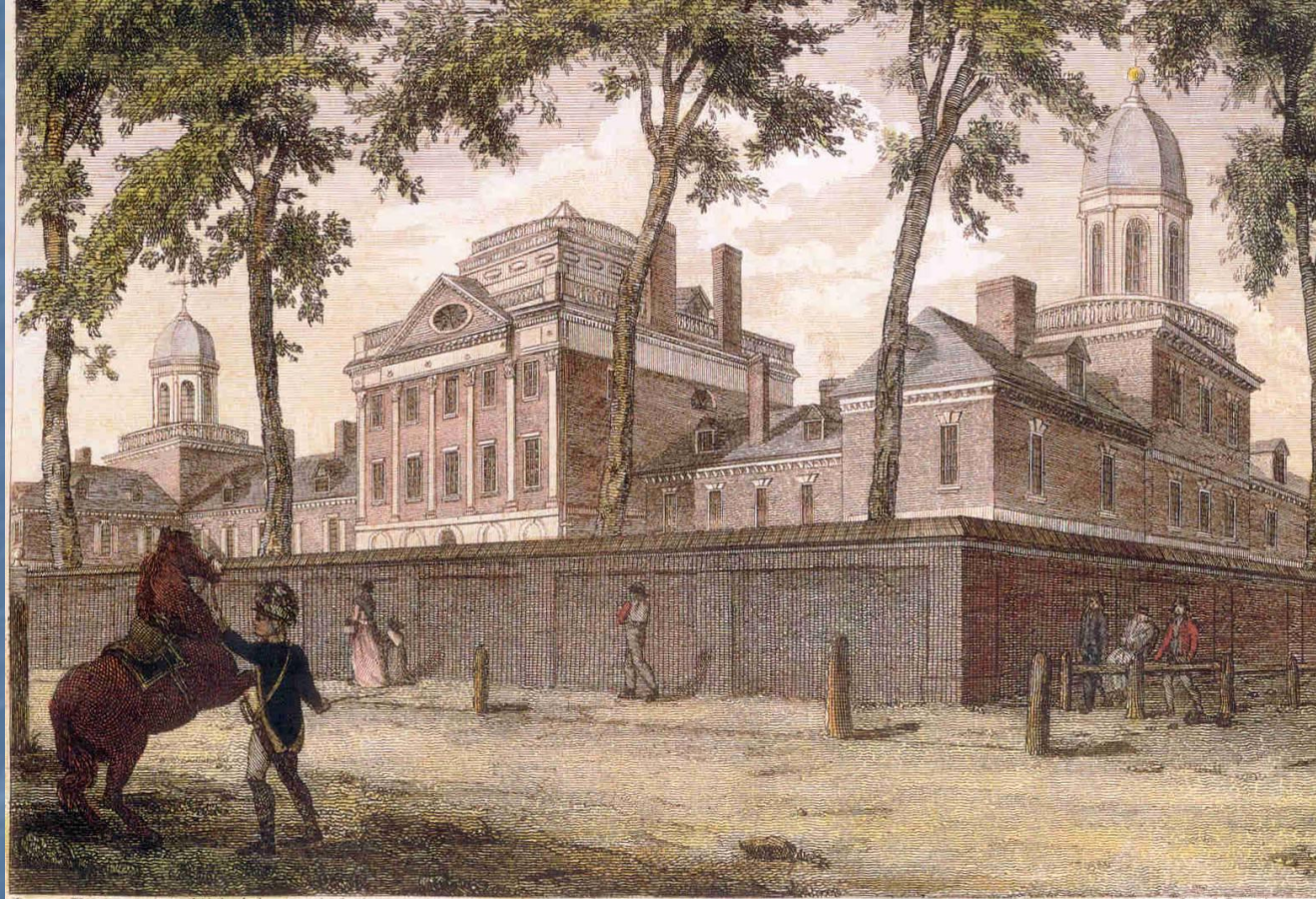
Originally designed in 1814 to follow the concept of Benjamin Franklin to praise the classics of literature. It now houses one of America's finest collection of architectural drawings.

The Athenaeum House register contains a Dickens signature.

*Benjamin Franklin Library – 5th St. burned down in 1880, rebuilt replica*



*Old  
Pennsylvania  
Hospital  
Then*



# *Old Pennsylvania Hospital Today*





## *Washington Square*



Washington Square was used as a burial ground for revolutionary war dead, we now know to include British soldiers. They remain buried there to this day.

## *Just a Quick Shaking of Hands and Philadelphia Political Style*

Dickens and his wife dined with Harry Ingersoll in the evening. Tuesday, March 8, was an exhausting day for Dickens; he met with his American publisher, Isaac Lea, at the hotel, and he was called upon by Lucretia Mott, the Quaker campaigner against slavery.



Dickens agreed to shake hands in the lobby of the hotel with a few friends of some local politicians. Much to his dismay, he ended up being introduced to and shaking hands with hundreds of people for hours on end. That afternoon he spent in what was then the outskirts of the city. He visited the following places:

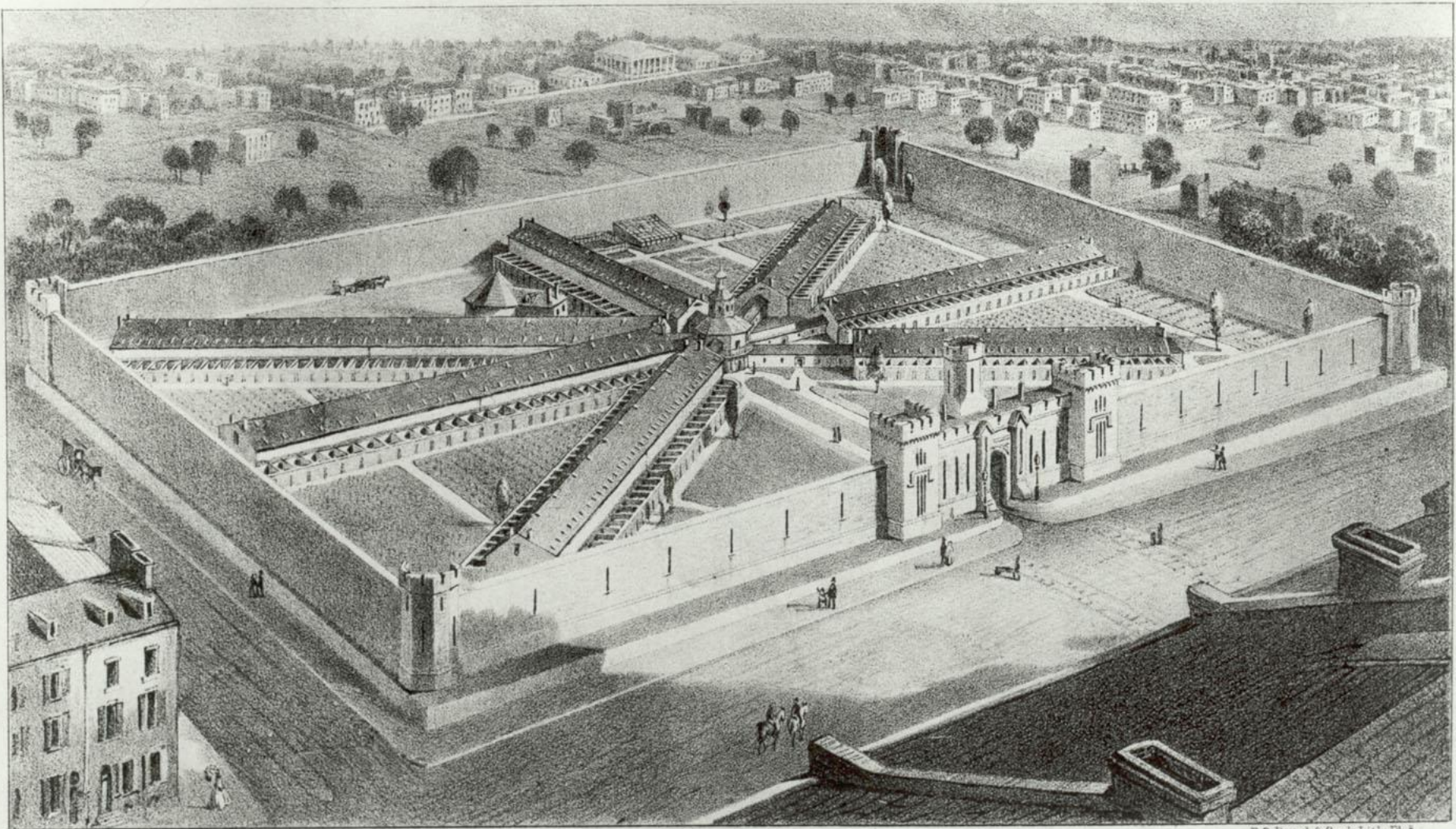
# *High on His List to See*

## **The Eastern State Penitentiary**



# *The State Penitentiary*

*" In the outskirts stands a great prison, called the Eastern Penitentiary: conducted on a plan peculiar to the State of Pennsylvania. The system here is rigid, strict, and hopeless solitary confinement. I believe it, in its effects, to be cruel and wrong".* *American Notes*



P. S. Duval & Son's Lith. Ph.

THE STATE PENITENTIARY  
For the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

## *A Prison Excursion*

True to form, Dickens, in *American Notes*, described his prison visit in graphic, imaginative ways to appeal to the senses of the reader. He describes sight, smell, and what prisoners must have heard – or not heard. He empathizes with the incarcerated and creates a mental image of the despairing inmate in his “stone coffin”.



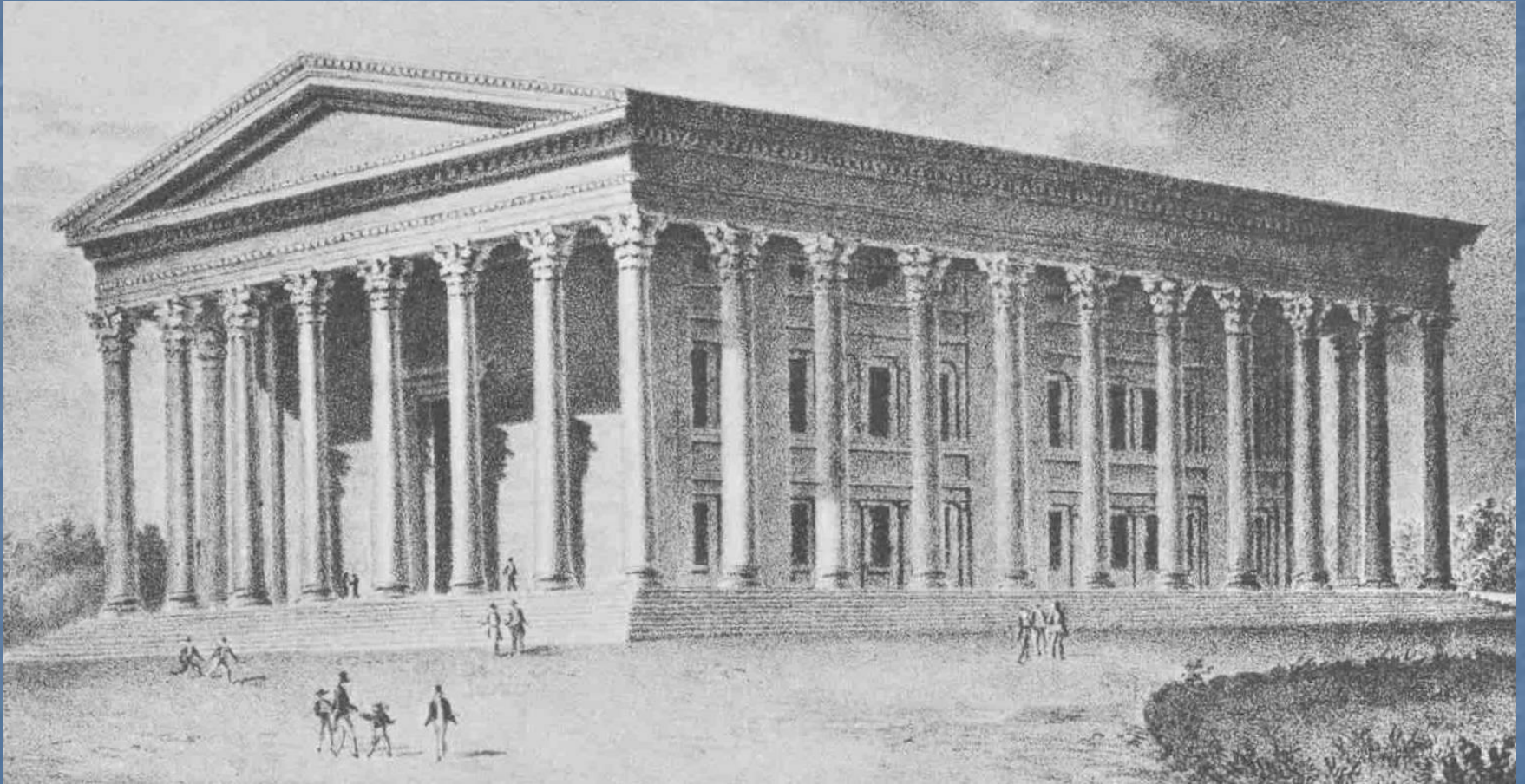


# *The State Penitentiary-Now*





# *Girard College-Then*



# *Girard College-Now*



## *The Water Works*

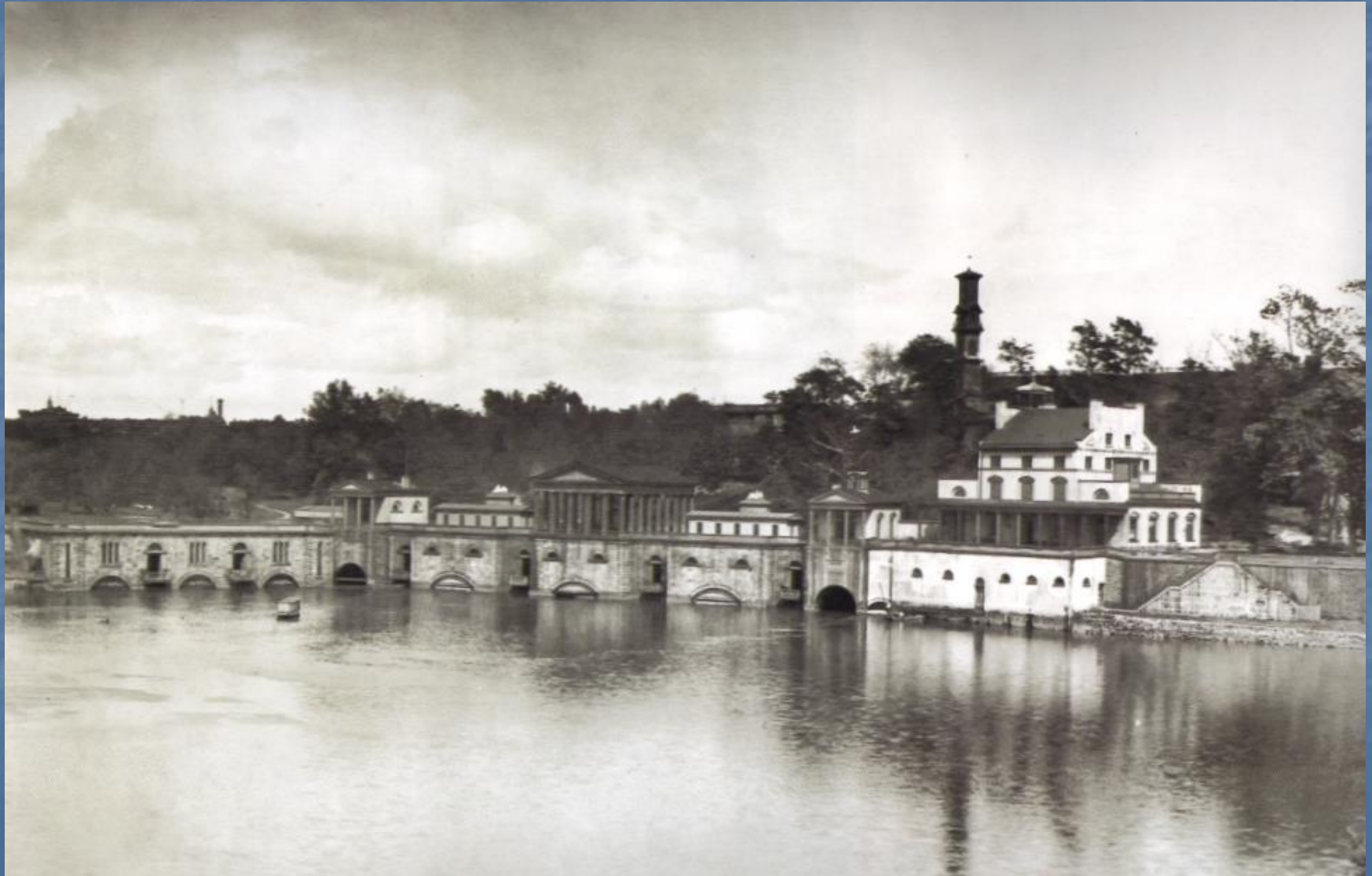
“Philadelphia is most bountifully provided with fresh water, which is showered and jerked about, and turned on, and poured off, everywhere. The Waterworks, which are on a height near the city, are no less ornamental than useful, being tastefully laid out as a public garden, and kept in the best and neatest order. The river is dammed at this point, and forced by its own power into certain high tanks or reservoirs, whence the whole city, to the top stories of the houses, is supplied at a very trifling expense.” *American Notes*

## *Water Works--Continued*

Located on the banks of the Schuylkill River near what is now the site of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Fairmount Water Works was once the sole source of Philadelphia's water. Its classic Greek and Roman architecture and cutting-edge engineering made it an international 19th century tourist attraction. Water pumped from the Schuylkill River was distributed through the city via wooden sewer pipes.

*Wikipedia*

# ***Waterworks in Fairmount Park--Then***



# ***Waterworks in Fairmount Park--Now***





Dickens missed Rocky on the other side of the Art Museum. He missed the Art Museum as well. He most certainly would have had something to say about it!

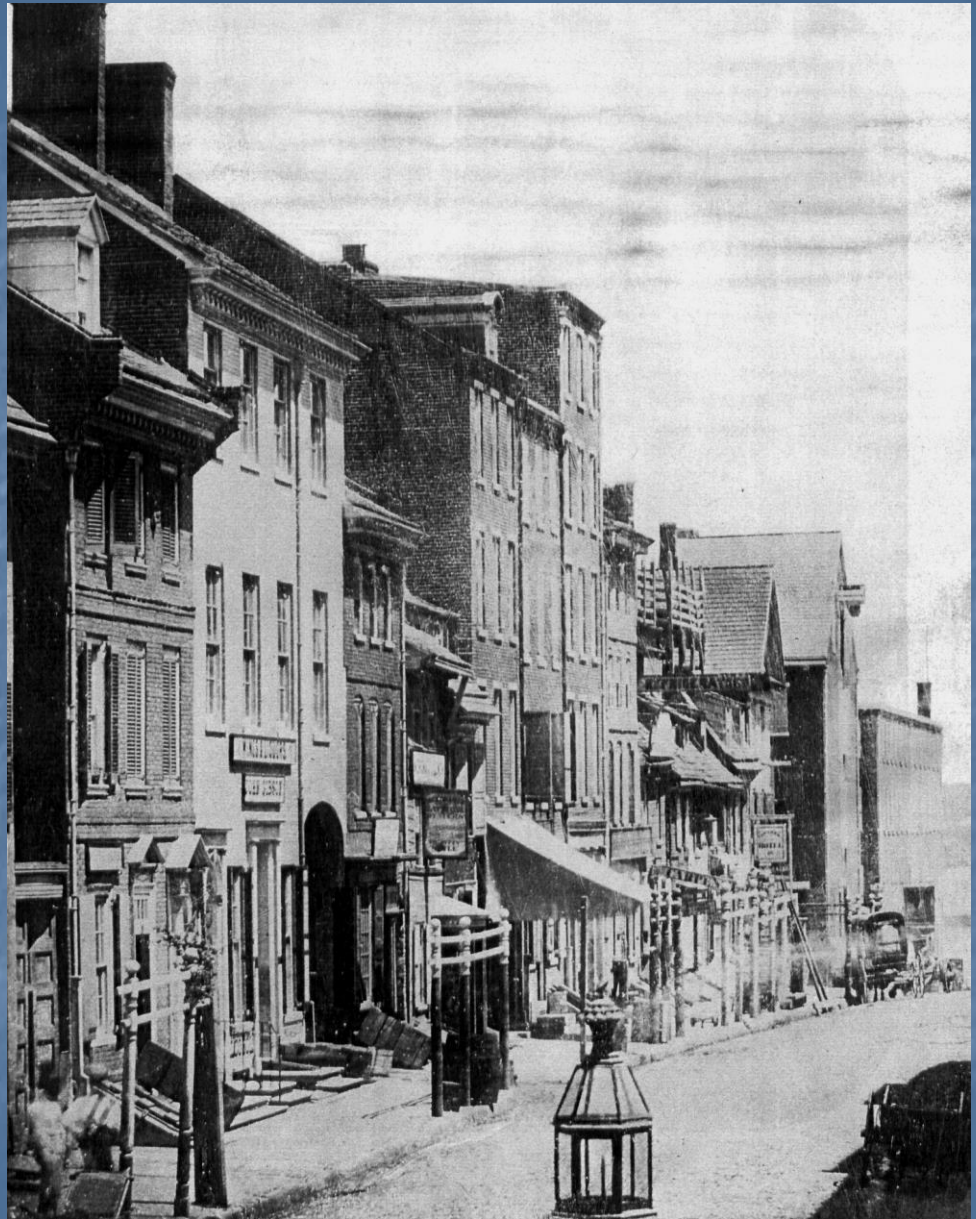
## *More Philadelphia*

That evening he and Catherine dined with Henry C. Carey at his brownstone mansion which was located at what would now be 1102 Walnut Street.



*Dickens  
departed  
Philadelphia  
via Chestnut  
Street.*

*Seen here is  
Chestnut Street,  
Front to Second,  
in an 1843 Photo*



*"My stay in Philadelphia was very short, but what I saw of its society, I greatly liked."*



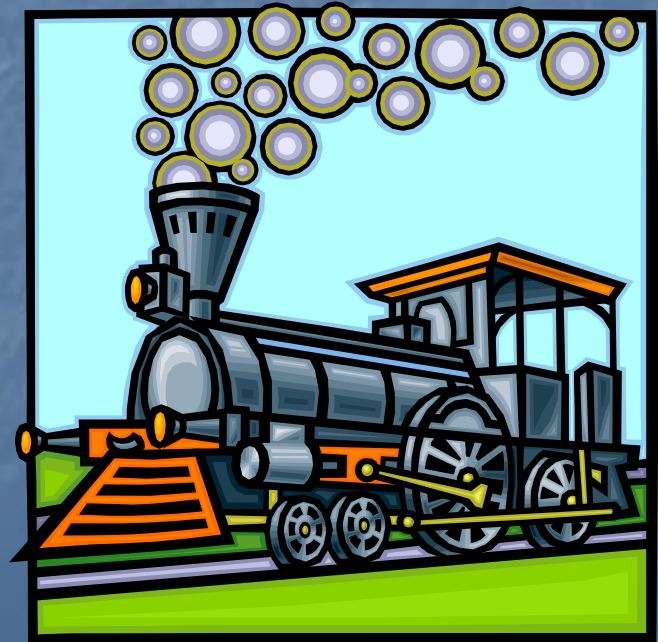
*American Notes*



## *On to Baltimore and Washington DC*

Dickens traveled by steamboat and train to Baltimore where he and Catherine dined and were waited on by slaves for the first time.

They then proceeded by rail to Washington, D.C.



“...that most hideous blot and  
Disgrace—Slavery”

*American Notes*



## *Washington DC Initial Observations*

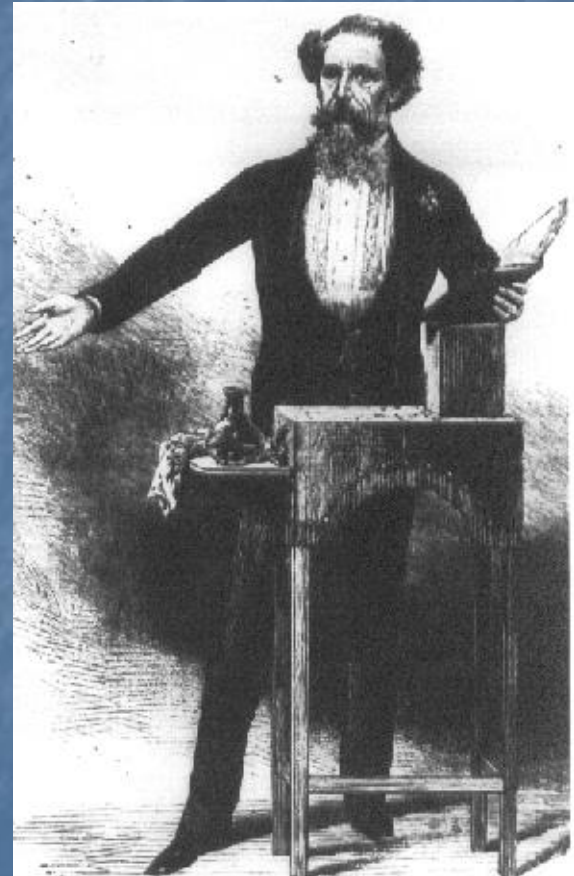


“Both Houses are handsomely carpeted; but the state to which these carpets are reduced by the universal disregard of the spittoon with which every honourable member is accommodated, and the extraordinary improvements on the pattern which are squirted and dabbled upon it in every direction, do not admit of being described. I will merely observe, that I strongly recommend all strangers not to look at the floor; and if they happen to drop anything, though it be their purse, not to pick it up with an ungloved hand on any account”.

*American Notes*

# *A Quarter Century has Passed*

Twenty-five years later, in November of 1867, Dickens returned to America. He arrived in time to have Thanksgiving Day dinner at Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's home in Cambridge and, as a special treat to Bostonians, Dickens read *A Christmas Carol* at Tremont Hall on Christmas Eve.



# *Dickens Second Visit*

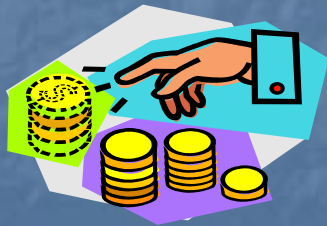
Two of many possible reasons:

## *Curiosity*

Over what progress America had made since his last visit.



## *Income and Marketing*



Charles unabashedly anticipated great income for his heirs from his incessant readings.



## *A Return to Philadelphia*

Christmas Day found him traveling by rail from Boston to New York in low spirits and homesick. After a run of readings in New York, Dickens traveled by train to Philadelphia on Sunday, January 12, 1868, arriving at midnight.

The following morning, Dickens wrote and told his daughter Mamie that he was staying at "one of those immense American hotels" which is "very quiet" and "everything good indeed." This was The Continental Hotel, 9th & Chestnut Streets, which was located on the site where the Benjamin Franklin Hotel building stands today



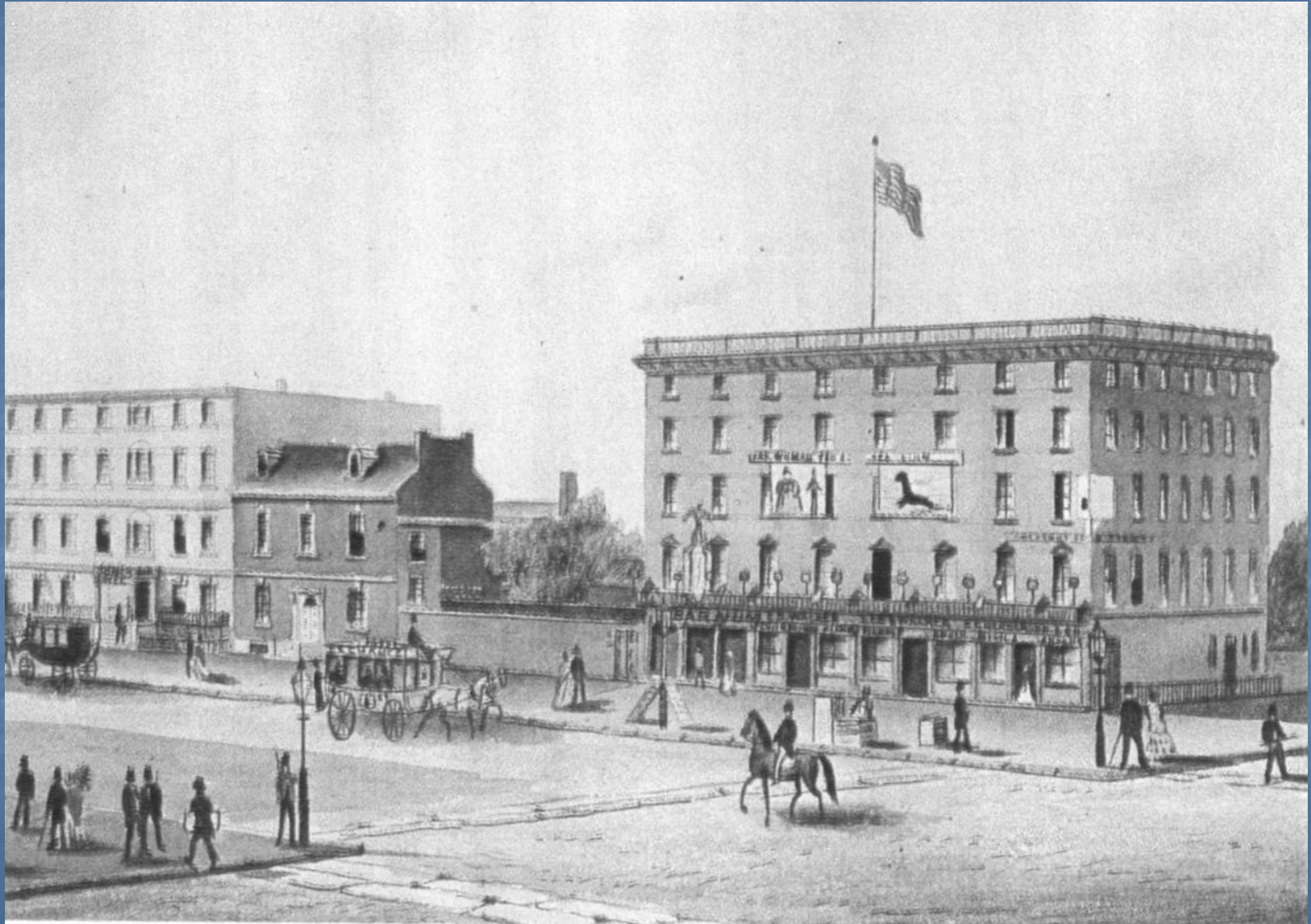
# *Continental Interior*



## *Penn's Second Campus, 9<sup>th</sup> Street*

Dickens's room may have looked out on the Barnum Museum which was located near the Continental Hotel at the time. He may also have looked out at the University of Pennsylvania - the same University where this conference is being held today.

# *Barnum Museum*





University of  
Pennsylvania  
in the mid-  
1800s

The Concert Hall where his readings would take place was located three blocks away at 12th & Chestnut, so there was no need for Dickens to travel far.



## *Illness*

Dickens arrived in Philadelphia with a horrible cold that he attributed to the hot, unventilated, railroad cars. As an antidote, he would stand outside on the brake where the frosty air was “biting indeed!” In a letter, Dickens remarked “If I could only get to the point of being able to hold my head up and dispense with my pocket handkerchief for five minutes, I would be all right!” Because of this cold, he was forced to turn down all social invitations.



Dickens mentions Philadelphia in a letter, saying that "The town is very clean, and the day is as blue and bright as a fine Italian day. But it freezes hard". Dolby later claimed that this visit to Philadelphia was amongst the pleasantest of their American experiences. While in America, Dickens would return to Philadelphia three more times to do series of readings. When he came back here to read on January 30th and January 31st, he found the weather fine but the streets "horrible" from a recent snowstorm.

On the 30th, the hotel sent around a “superb sledge and four horses” to take him for a ride but Dickens declined. The following morning he changed his mind and wrote to his daughter Mamie that “I am now going out in a sleigh and four with unconceivable dignity and grandeur”.

# *"Sleighting on Broad Street"*



# *Old Broad Street*



# *Opera House*



# *Today's Academy of Music*



# *Old Rittenhouse Square Then*

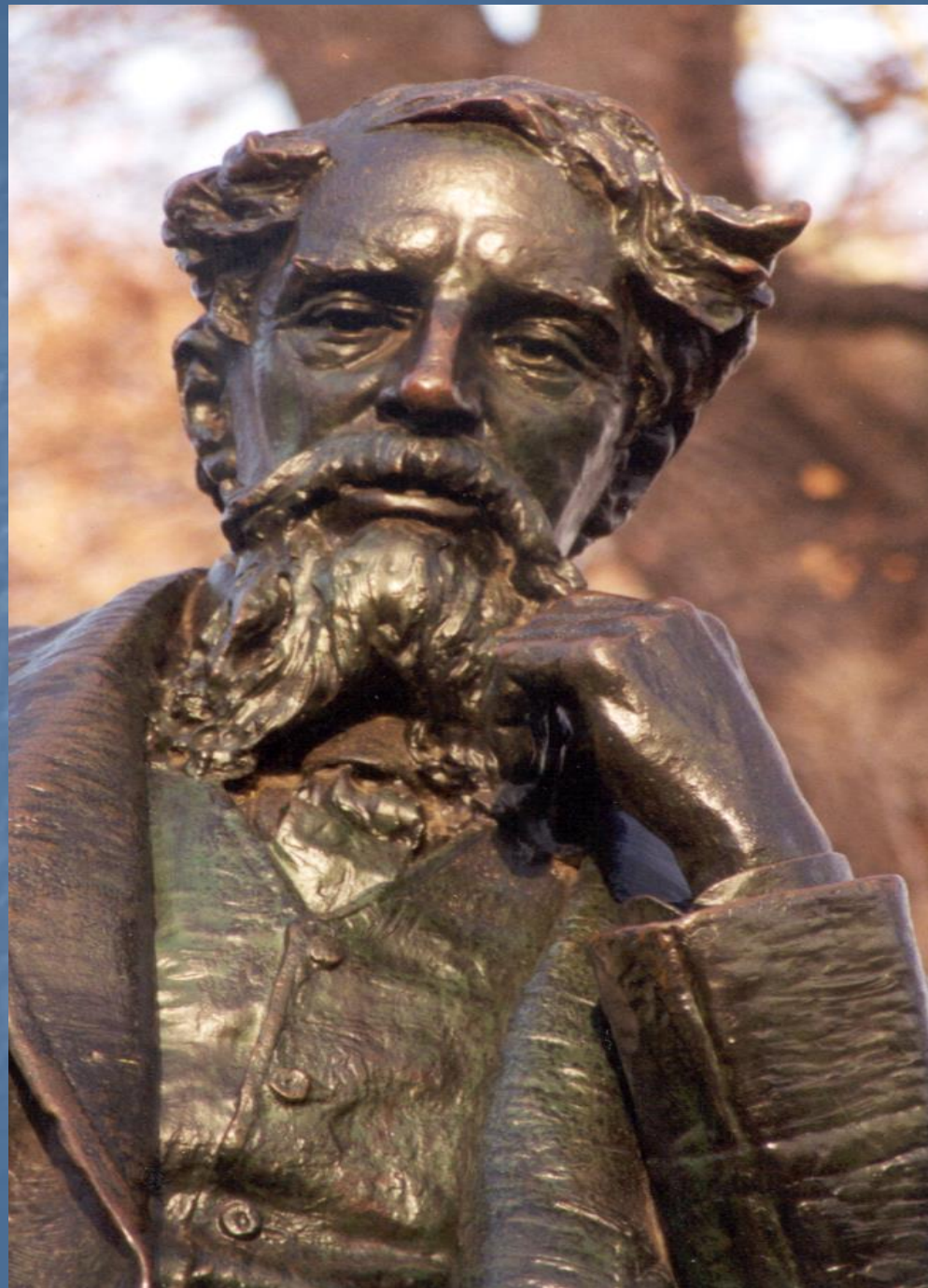


RESIDENTIAL RITTENHOUSE SQUARE

*Rittenhouse  
Square  
Now*







The statue, originally commissioned by the Washington Post, was sculpted in New York by Francis Edwin Elwell, bronzed in Philadelphia, and exhibited in 1893 at The World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, where it took a medal and was afforded a place of honor.

At some point in time, the statue was offered to England but was rejected by the Dickens family because of the stipulation in Dickens' Will that there be no monuments of his likeness. The statue was later purchased by the Fairmount Park Commission and placed in Clark Park in 1901, where it became, and remains to this day, a magnet for Dickens lovers from around world.

*Cedric at the  
Statue*

