

*Philadelphia American Courier*  
May 8, 1852

*Hannibal, Missouri*

DEAR COURIER—

The first house was built in this city about sixteen years ago. Then the wild war-whoop of the Indian resounded where now rise our stately buildings, and their bark canoes were moored where now land our noble steamers, here they traded their skins for guns, powder, &c. But where now are the children of the forest? Hushed is the war-cry—no more does the light canoe cut the crystal waters of the proud Mississippi; but the remnant of those once powerful tribes are torn asunder and scattered abroad, and they now wander far, far from the homes of their childhood and the graves of their fathers.

This town is situated on the Mississippi river, about one hundred and thirty miles above St. Louis, and contains a population of about three thousand. A charter has been granted by the State for a railroad, to commence at Hannibal, and terminate at St. Joseph, on the western border of Missouri. The State takes 51,500,000 of stock in the road; the counties along the route have also subscribed liberally, and already more than one-third the amount requisite for its construction has been subscribed. The manner in which the State takes stock is this: for every \$50,000 that the company spends in the construction of the road, the State gives her bonds for that amount, until the \$1,500,000 is paid.

Within this year a plank-road will be built from Hannibal to New London, a small town in the adjoining county of Ralls, and about twelve miles from here. Every dollar of stock in this improvement has already been subscribed.

Your Eastern people seem to think this country is a barren, uncultivated region, with a population consisting of heathens. A man came out here from your part of the world, and in writing home to his friends, made the following remark: "This is the queerest country I ever saw, a little cloud will come up, about as big as your hat, and directly a clap of thunder will knock the bottom out of it, and, Jerusalem! how it'll rain!"

Among the curiosities of this place we may mention the Cave, which is about three miles below the city. It is of unknown length; it has innumerable passages, which are not unlike the streets of a large city. The ceiling arches over, and from it hang beautiful stalactites, which sparkle in the light of the torches, and remind one of the fairy palaces spoken of in the Arabian Nights. There are several springs, rivers, and wells, some of which are of unknown depth. Directly over one of the narrow passages, and supported merely by two small pieces of stone, which jut out from the main walls on either side, hangs an immense rock, end down, which measures ten feet in length by three feet in diameter.

Yours, &c, S. L. C.

HANNIBAL, MO., March 25, 1852.