

*Muscatine Journal*  
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*Original Correspondence*

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 L5,600 (\$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.