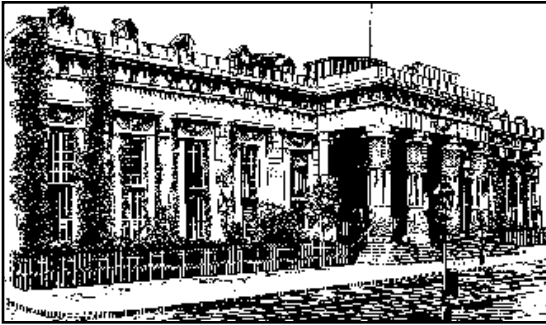


Monthly Letter

We Are Fun, Friendship and Learning

Our October Meeting: On Visiting Prisons and a President



Above left is an artist's rendering of the "New York Halls of Justice and House of Detention" designed by John Haviland who also built the Eastern State Penitentiary in Pennsylvania. Dickens visited both institutions. Because its design was based on a carving found on an Egyptian mausoleum it was nicknamed *the Tombs*. To the right is "the Hangyard" as described by Dickens in *American Notes*.

On October 4th Rob Clere took us on a tour of chapters 6 thru 8 *American Notes*. Those in attendance were: Louise Jonsson, Gela Kline, Vida Kossoff, David Lukomnik, Pat Maniccia, Mike Quinn, Jeannette Rosen, Adair Russell, Dorothy Smith and Ellen Spears.

Dickens spends considerable time describing his visits to various institutions in New York, including "the Tombs," pictured above and the City Penitentiary and Hospital for Insane Paupers on Blackwells Island (now called Roosevelt Island), in the East River. His description, as read by Dorothy Smith, of the free rein given to pigs on city streets caused much amusement.

Rob also asked whether Dickens, as opposed to his generally favorable description of New England, expressed hostility and annoyance towards New York's institutions and cultural life. The general consensus seemed to be he did express hostility towards New York and New Yorkers. (Continued on reverse side, column 1)

Monthly Quote



I never learned to distinguish between illusion and miracle.

I didn't need to.

I trusted in love's confusing joy.

Memento of an Amorist from *Packing Up for Paradise - Collected Poems 1946-1996*

by James Broughton, American Poet and Filmmaker (1913-1999)

The Friends of Dickens
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Editor: Mike J. Quinn

Production: Dorothy Smith

Visit Our Website

www.thefriendsofdickens.org

OUR NEXT MEETING

Saturday, Nov. 1st 2008 ~ 1:00PM - 4:00PM

Topic: *American Notes* Book Two, Chapters 1 to 5

Moderator: Rob Clere

Hospitality: Ellen Spears

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, 240 East 31st Street, New York, NY. 10016

Telephone (347) 427-3006

Email: Newsletter@thefriendsofdickens.org

The Friends of Dickens New York • Branch 197 • The Dickens Fellowship

October 4th Meeting (continued)

From New York we moved on to Philadelphia, with **Ellen Spears** reading Dickens's description of that city's streets. Here, we also questioned *the Inimitable's* seeming turn in mood, noting his warmer appreciation for the City of Brotherly Love. Was the great Boz warming to this city as he had *not* warmed to New York?

WASHINGTON

Time constraints did not permit us to delve much into Dickens's comments concerning Washington. He finds the climate there unsatisfactory. He describes President John Tyler's as "mild and pleasant" in appearance and "remarkably unaffected, gentlemanly and agreeable" of manner.



John Tyler

He condemns Slavery and vents his scorn against the hypocrisy of the U.S. House of Representatives, which had recently defeated a motion by John Quincy Adams to bring anti-slavery petitions before it, while paying lip service to the Declaration "that All Men are Created Equal; and are endowed by their Creator with the Inalienable Rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

Be sure to join us on November 1st as Rob Clere again helps us to rediscover *American Notes*.

IN MEMORIAM

We join our member **Ruthy Rosen** in mourning the death of her mother, **Miriam Bloom Moser**, on Sunday, October 5th of this year due to complications from uterine cancer at the NYU Medical Center in Manhattan. Miriam and her husband Fred had been living in Florida in recent years but after Fred's death in July of this year, Ruthy, in order to better care for her, brought Miriam to live with her at her home in Brooklyn. Miriam was buried through the Hebrew Free Burial Society on Staten Island on Wednesday, October 8th.

Did Dickens Ever Read Tocqueville?

"The United States has no metropolis, but it already contains several very large cities. Philadelphia reckoned 130,000 inhabitants, and New York 202,000, in the year 1830. The lower ranks which inhabit these cities constitute a rabble even more formidable than the populace of European towns. They consist of freed Blacks, in the first place, who are condemned by the laws and by public opinion to a hereditary state of misery and degradation. They also contain a multitude of Europeans who have been driven to the shores of the New World by their misfortunes or their misconduct; and they bring to the United States all our greatest vices, without any of those interests which counteract their baneful influence. As inhabitants of a country where they have no civil rights, they are ready to turn all the passions which agitate the community to their own advantage; ... I look upon the size of certain American cities, and especially on the nature of their population as a real danger which threatens the future security of the democratic republics of the New World . . ."

from *Democracy in America*, Volume 1 (first published in 1835)

by Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859)

The Friends Bulletin Board

~

Happy Birthday

Philomena Forde Nov. 11th

A Tale of Two Cities and Drinks

and Hors D'Oeuvres with **Lucinda Hawksley** and the show's creative team, Saturday, November 8th from 5:30 - 7:00PM at Planet Hollywood, 1540 Broadway (at 45th Street). Available only with full price tickets for \$120.00. 35 spaces available. **Also Q and A Sessions** with Lucinda and the show's team after the Nov. 8th 8:00PM Show or after the Nov. 9th show 3:00PM. Please reserve by October 17th through Dickens on Broadway@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendars



Thanks to the efforts of David Lukomnik and Carrie Lee we are happy to announce a **Christmas Party** on **Saturday, December 6th from 12:30 to 3:30PM** at **The Irish Rogue**, 356 West 44th Street in Manhattan. For \$20.00 per person you'll enjoy any of a delicious variety of brunch specialties, two (2) drinks - alcoholic or non-alcoholic, dessert and beverage. **The menu will be available at the November 1st meeting.** The party will be held in a private, second floor room, easily accessible via a stairwell with low steps and equipped with bannisters on both sides. Rest rooms are on the same level. **Come and enjoy the Fun, Friendship and Learning!**