



EVENTS WE MAYBE SHOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTING¹

Let's do some thinking about Thoreau's accidents. Weren't there an unusual number of accidents in this particular person's life? As a toddler, in a backyard incident, he had chopped off his own right big toe with the help of the kindling hatchet. As a young man, he had helped a buddy set a fire in a stump to cook their fish, and the conflagration that resulted burned over an entire section of Concord's woodlots. While living in his shanty on the pond, he badly strained his torso muscles in avoiding the kick of a horse. Then he waded out toward Clark's Island in Boston Harbor and was almost caught and carried away as the tide came in; had he not been rescued by a passing fisherman in a rowboat, our guy would surely have drowned. Are there other occasions I haven't taken into consideration?

Over and above what was happening to him personally, there was what was going on around him. During his lifetime there was the wreck of an Irish immigrant vessel on the rocks off Cape Cod, described in CAPE COD, and there was the wreck of the vessel carrying Margaret Fuller in the surf of Fire Island, and there was the shattering explosion of a powder mill near Concord with blackened human body parts being pulled down from the branches of the surrounding trees, and there were the people riding near Concord, backwards atop the train, who got their brains batted out against a low bridge beam, and there was a fire aboard an excursion boat that destroyed the lives of several people he knew – and so on and so forth.

We're using here a very inclusive sense of the term "accident." For our purposes, anything is an accident that is 1.) unexpected plus 2.) has disproportionate undesirable consequences. For instance, when a slave fills some glasses a bit too full and he stumbles and gets the tray messy, and his master gives him a note and a dollar and instructs him to go downtown to a particular person, who reads the note and accepts the dollar and gets out a horsewhip and ties the slave down and chastises him –this being something that actually happened– the event qualifies as an accident since the stumbling and getting the tray messy was not expected by the slave and since the consequences were from the slave's standpoint both undesirable and disproportionate. (This perspective requires us to regard the white slavemaster, and his toitsy disciplines, as being in the same moral category as the draft horse that got spooked by an umbrella and lashed out with its hooves.)

1. Among Thoreau's notes from his visit to the locomotive works in Lawrence, Massachusetts, we find they informed him that they maintained: "a record of casualties which is examined every fortnight by a special committee of directors."



SURPRISE!

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406 BCE

In a tragic accident in Macedonia, [Euripides](#), who had always lived low, almost like a hermit, was torn to pieces by the hound-dogs of King Archelaus. –Oops, sorry about that.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

27 CE

It would be quite a while yet, before the masonry Colosseum would be erected in the center of [Rome](#). In this period, in the collapse of the immense wooden amphitheater that had been erected by Titus Statilius in 29 CE, some 20,000-50,000 spectators were crushed.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

1515

The 1st accidental discharge of a firearm. Laux Pfister was “in a little room” in Constance, Germany and “took up a loaded gun in his hand.” While playing with his gun he accidentally shot a prostitute he was with in this little room, in the chin. A court would order him to pay the medical expenses and then maintain her with a fixed income for the remainder of her life.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

1609

There was a particularly dramatic shipwreck en route to the region known as “Virginia” of the New World in this year. An account of this shipwreck would come to the attention of [William Shakespeare](#) of the Globe Theatre company in London (or to somebody using his name), and would get recycled into a play, *The Tempest*.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

October: [John Smith](#) was accidentally injured by a gunpowder burn and had to return to England for treatment, never to return to Virginia again. In London, he would actively promote the further colonization of Virginia but would be unpopular with the Virginia Company.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

READ ABOUT VIRGINIA



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1653

During this year the Erie (the Cat Nation) sent 30 ambassadors to the Seneca of New York to renew peace. During a lacrosse game, however, an Erie accidentally killed a Seneca. The Senecas killed 25 of the 30 ambassadors, only 5 managing to escape. The Erie then burned a Seneca village. They ambushed the rear guard of a Iroquois war party, killing 80. Erie scouts captured the Iroquois leader Annencraos, and executed him. The Iroquois would raise 1,800 warriors, and would overcome the 3,000-4,000 defenders of the Erie fortress of Rique (Rigue).

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1657

August 20: According to Joseph Dow’s HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE. FROM ITS SETTLEMENT IN 1638, TO THE AUTUMN OF 1892, this was the actual 1st report of a shipwreck — one which eventually would inspire a poem by Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) (included below):

The: 20th of the 8 mo 1657

The sad Hand of God upon Eight p[er]sons
goeing in a small vessell by Sea from Hampton to boston
Who wear all swallowed up i[n] the ocian
sone after they ware out of the Harbour
the p[er]sons wear by name as Followeth

Robert Read
Sargent: Will Swaine
Manewell: Hilyard
John: Philbrick
& Ann: Philbrick His wife
Sarah: Philbrick their daught
Alice the wife of moses Cocks:
and John Cocks their sonn:
who ware all Drowned the: 20th of the 8 mo: 1657

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THE WRECK OF RIVERMOUTH

IVERMOUTH ROCKS are fair to see,
By dawn or sunset shone across,
When the ebb of the sea has left them free,
To dry their fringes of gold-green moss:
For there the river comes winding down
From salt sea-meadows and uplands brown,
And waves on the outer rocks afoam
Shout to its waters, "Welcome home!"
And fair are the sunny isles in view
East of the grisly Head of the Boar,
And Agamenticus lifts its blue
Disk of a cloud the woodlands o'er;
And, southerly, when the tide is down,
"Twixt white sea-waves and sand-hills brown,
The beach-birds dance and the gray gulls wheel
Over a floor of burnished steel.
Once, in the old Colonial days,
Two hundred years ago and more,
A boat sailed down through the winding ways
Of Hampton River to that low shore,
Full of goodly company
Sailing out on the summer sea,
Veering to catch the land-breeze light,
With the Boar to left and the Rocks to right.
In Hampton meadows, where mowers laid
Their scythes to the swaths of salted grass,
"Ah, well-a-day! our hay must be made!"
A young man sighed, who saw them pass,
Loud laughed his fellows to see him stand
Whetting his scythe with a listless hand,
Hearing a voice in a far-off song,
Watching a white hand beckoning long.
"Fie on the witch!" cried a merry girl,
As they rounded the point where Goody Cole
Sat by her door with her wheel atwirl,
A bent and blear-eyed poor old soul.
"Oho!" she muttered, "ye're brave to-day!
But I hear the little waves laugh and say,
'The broth will be cold that waits at home;
For it's one to go, but another to come!'"
"She's cursed," said the skipper; "speak her fair:
I'm scary always to see her shake
Her wicked head, with its wild gray hair,
And nose like a hawk, and eyes like a snake."
But merrily still, with laugh and shout,
From Hampton River the boat sailed out,
Till the huts and the flakes on Star seemed nigh,
And they lost the scent of the pines of Rye.
They dropped their lines in the lazy tide,
Drawing up haddock and mottled cod;
They saw not the Shadow that walked beside,
They heard not the feet with silence shod.
But thicker and thicker a hot mist grew,
Shot by the lightnings through and through:
And muffled growls, like the growl of a beast,
Ran along the sky from west to east.
Then the skipper looked from the darkening sea
Up to the dimmed and wading sun;
But he spake like a brave man cheerily,
"Yet there is time for our homeward run."
Veering and tacking, they backward wore;
And just as a breath from the woods ashore
Blew out to whisper of danger past,
The wrath of the storm came down at last!



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The skipper hauled at the heavy sail:
“God be our help! he only cried,
As the roaring gale, like the stroke of a flail,
Smote the boat on its starboard side.
The Shoalsmen looked, but saw alone
Dark films of rain-cloud slantwise blown,
Wild rocks lit up by the lightning’s glare,
The strife and torment of sea and air.
Goody Cole looked out from her door:
The Isles of Shoals were drowned and gone,
Scarcely she saw the Head of the Boar
Toss the foam from tusks of stone.
She clasped her hands with a grip of pain,
The tear on her cheek was not of rain:
“They are lost,” she muttered, “boat and crew!
Lord, forgive me! my words were true!”
Suddenly seaward swept the squall;
The low sun smote through cloudy rack;
The Shoals stood clear in the light, and all
The trend of the coast lay hard and black.
But far and wide as eye could reach,
No life was seen upon wave or beach;
The boat that went out at morning never
Sailed back again into Hampton River.
O mower, lean on thy bended snath,
Look from the meadows green and low:
The wind of the sea is a waft of death,
The waves are singing a song of woe!
By silent river, by moaning sea,
Long and vain shall thy watching be:
Never again shall the sweet voice call,
Never the white hand rise and fall!
O Rivermouth Rocks, how sad a sight
Ye saw in the light of breaking day!
Dead faces looking up cold and white
From sand and sea-weed where they lay.
The mad old witch-wife wailed and wept,
And cursed the tide as it backward crept:
Crawl back, crawl back, blue water-snake!
Leave your dead for the hearts that break!”
Solemn it was in that old day
In Hampton town and its log-built church,
Where side by side the coffins lay
And the mourners stood in aisle and porch.
In the singing-seats young eyes were dim,
The voices faltered that raised the hymn,
And Father Dalton, grave and stern,
Sobbed through his prayer and wept in turn.
But his ancient colleague did not pray,
Because of his sin at fourscore years:
He stood apart, with the iron-gray
Of his strong brows knitted to hide his tears.
And a wretched woman, holding her breath
In the awful presence of sin and death,
Cowered and shrank, while her neighbors thronged
To look on the dead her shame had wronged.
Apart with them, like them forbid,
Old Goody Cole looked drearily round,
As, two by two, with their faces hid,
The mourners walked to the burying-ground.
She let the staff from her clasped hands fall:
“Lord, forgive us! we’re sinners all!”
And the voice of the old man answered her:
“Amen!” said Father Bachiler.
So, as I sat upon Appledore
In the calm of a closing summer day,
And the broken lines of Hampton shore
In purple mist of cloud-land lay,



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The Rivermouth Rocks their story told;
And waves aglow with sunset gold,
Rising and breaking in steady chime,
Beat the rhythm and kept the time.
And the sunset paled, and warmed once more
With a softer, tenderer after-glow;
In the east was moon-rise, with boats off shore
And sails in the distance drifting slow.
The beacon glimmered from Portsmouth bar,
The White Isle kindled its great red star;
And life and death in my old-time lay
Mingled in peace like the night and day!

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1672

September 7, day: Friend [George Fox](#) returned from Rhode Island and Providence Plantations to Oyster Bay on Long Island:

PROVIDENCE

RHODE ISLAND

We got safe to Oyster Bay, in Long Island, which, they say, is about two hundred miles from Rhode Island, the seventh of the Sixth month, very early in the morning.

At Oyster Bay we had a very large meeting. The same day James Lancaster and Christopher Holder went over the bay to Rye, on the continent, in Governor Winthrop's government [Although Rye is now in New York, the boundary between New York and Connecticut was in dispute and at this time Rye seems to have been within Governor Winthrop's jurisdiction.], and had a meeting there.

From Oyster Bay, we passed about thirty miles to Flushing, where we had a very large meeting, many hundreds of people being there; some of whom came about thirty miles to it. A glorious and heavenly meeting it was (praised be the Lord God!), and the people were much satisfied.

Meanwhile Christopher Holder and some other Friends went to a town in Long Island, called Jamaica, and had a meeting there.

We passed from Flushing to Gravesend, about twenty miles, and there had three precious meetings; to which many would have come from New York, but that the weather hindered them.

Being clear of this place, we hired a sloop, and, the wind serving, set out for the new country now called Jersey. Passing down the bay by Coney [Rabbit] Island, Natton [Governor's] Island, and Staten Island, we came to Richard Hartshorn's at Middletown harbour [in New Jersey], about break of day, the twenty-seventh of the Sixth month.

Next day we rode about thirty miles into that country, through the woods, and over very bad bogs, one worse than all the rest; the descent into which was so steep that we were fain to slide down with our horses, and then let them lie and breathe themselves before they could go on. This place the people of the country called Purgatory.

We got at length to Shrewsbury, in East Jersey, and on First-day had a precious meeting there, to which Friends and other people came from afar, and the blessed presence of the Lord was with us. The same week we had a men's and women's meeting out of most parts of New Jersey.

They are building a meeting place in the midst of them and there is a monthly and general meeting set up which will be of great service in those parts in keeping up the gospel order and government of Christ Jesus, of the increase of which there is no end, that they who are faithful may see that all who profess the holy Truth live in the pure religion, and walk as becometh the gospel.

FOX'S JOURNAL



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The following was not in any sense a faith healing, but merely what for an isolated setting would reflect sound and sensible emergency medical practice:

While we were at Shrewsbury, an accident befell, which for the time was a great exercise to us. John Jay, a Friend of Barbadoes, who had come with us from Rhode Island, and intended to accompany us through the woods to Maryland, being to try a horse, got upon his back, and the horse fell a-running, cast him down upon his head, and broke his neck, as the people said. Those that were near him took him up as dead, carried him a good way, and laid him on a tree.

I got to him as soon as I could; and, feeling him, concluded he was dead. As I stood pitying him and his family, I took hold of his hair, and his head turned any way, his neck was so limber. Whereupon I took his head in both my hands, and, setting my knees against the tree, I raised his head, and perceived there was nothing out or broken that way.

Then I put one hand under his chin, and the other behind his head, and raised his head two or three times with all my strength, and brought it in. I soon perceived his neck began to grow stiff again, and then he began to rattle in his throat, and quickly after to breathe.

The people were amazed; but I bade them have a good heart, be of good faith, and carry him into the house. They did so, and set him by the fire. I bade them get him something warm to drink, and put him to bed. After he had been in the house a while he began to speak; but did not know where he had been.

The next day we passed away (and he with us, pretty well) about sixteen miles to a meeting at Middletown, through woods and bogs, and over a river; where we swam our horses, and got over ourselves upon a hollow tree. Many hundred miles did he travel with us after this.

To this meeting came most of the people of the town. A glorious meeting we had, and the Truth was over all; blessed be the great Lord God for ever! After the meeting we went to Middletown Harbor, about five miles, in order to take our long journey next morning, through the woods towards Maryland; having hired Indians for our guides.

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1692

In France, so many physicians were opposed to the drinking of [coffee](#) that at first there was only limited use of the bean among the upper classes and at court. King Louis XIV attempted to create a coffee monopoly for purposes of state revenue, but at first this would be unsuccessful as he had set the price too high. He would try again, but his monopoly would always be unpopular.

The Reverend John Banister was accidentally shot by one of his companions while on an excursion into Virginia (he died either of the gunshot or of his consequent fall from a rock before being able to write a natural history of Virginia).²

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A member of the Temple [Coffee](#) House Botany Club in London, Leonard Plukenet, prepared a *PHYTOGRAPHIA* which described many of the Reverend Banister's Virginia plant specimens.

BOTANIZING

1707

October 22, day: Sir Cloudesley Shovel died. He did not die alone, and he and the men with him died in such manner as to remind us of how very difficult it was to calculate longitude at sea — during the era before the availability of adequate chronometers, with the now-famous [John Harrison](#) still merely a teenager.

CHRONOMETRY

As the commander of a fleet of British warships he ran them aground, killing a great number of his seamen. Of course the British royal apparatus promptly put a “loyalty” spin on this lamentable navigation error, by digging his body up from the sand of that remote beach and re-interring him beneath a fulsomely laudatory monument in Westminster Abbey:

Sir Cloudesley Shovel, Knt. rear-admiral of Great Britain; admiral and commander-in-chief of the fleet; the just rewards of long and faithful services: he was deservedly beloved of his country, and esteemed, though dreaded, by the enemy who had often experienced his conduct and courage. Being shipwrecked on the rocks of Scilly, in his voyage from Toulon, the 22d of October, 1707, at night, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. His fate was lamented by all; but especially the seafaring part of the nation, to whom he was a worthy example. His body was flung on the shore, and buried with others in the sands; but being soon after taken up, was placed under this monument, which his royal mistress has caused to be erected, to commemorate his steady loyalty, and extraordinary

2. The Reverend John Banister's works have been compiled by Joseph and Nesta Ewan in JOHN BANISTER AND HIS NATURAL HISTORY OF VIRGINIA 1678-1692 (U of Illinois P, 1970).

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virtues.

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"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

— A.J.P. Taylor



Per a biographical memoir that would appear in the March 1815 issue of The Naval Chronicle.

A braver chief, to distant lands
 Ne'er guided his victorious bands;
 Ne'er beheld a chief more brave
 His ships of battle plough the wave,
 His heart impell'd by conscious might,
 With eager transport sought the fight.

The lapse of a century and more since the reigns of Charles the Second, James the Second, William and Anne, has so reduced the prominency of the transactions of their respective reigns, that, as matters of interest to the reader of the present day, some doubt may be reasonably entertained of their eligibility. Yet, as necessary links in the concatenation of our Naval History (which, though not historically digested, the Biography of the NAVAL CHRONICLE is intended to supply materials for), they will be found consistent with our plan, although we shall always give a preference to communications of more recent date.

The period of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's birth is not precisely ascertained, Campbell says about the year 1650; that his parents were but in middling circumstances, and that the name of Cloudesley was given him with a view to conciliate the notice of a relation, who had the ability to befriend him: it does not appear, however, that he derived from it any more than a nominal advantage; he was destined to be the fabricator of his own fortune, and to be enriched by means more honourable to himself.

Campbell also says that he was apprenticed to a mean trade, he thinks that of a shoe-maker, and to which he applied himself for some years; but afterwards betook himself to sea, as a cabin-boy, under the protection of Sir John Narborough. If we may be allowed to suppose that he was of the usual age of fourteen when he entered his apprenticeship, and was attached to his trade some years, he must have been most rapidly advanced in the naval service, or we must place some years back the period of his birth, for we find him, in 1675, lieutenant in the Henrietta, flag-ship of Sir John Narborough. That he merited such promotion there is every reason to believe, as he applied himself with such diligence and success to the studies of his profession, as soon to become an accomplished seaman.

The service that first distinguished him, was in an expedition to Tripoli, the corsairs of which had very much annoyed our traders in the Mediterranean. The squadron appeared before Tripoli on the 14th January, in the year 1676. The enemy were, however, fully prepared; and Sir John Narborough, who had the command, determined to try, previously, the effect of negotiation, confining his demands on the Dey to satisfaction for the past, and security for the future, and appointed Mr. Shovel to negotiate the terms. But though he delivered his message with great spirit and propriety, his youth was despised, and he was sent hack with an indefinite answer.

The answer was not the sole result of his embassy; Mr. Shovel had made some important observations, and reported them also to Sir John Narborough, who sent him with a second message, and with directions for farther inquiry and observation. Mr. Shovel only experienced fresh insolence on the part of the Dey; and on his return to the Admiral, assured him, that, notwithstanding their lines and forts, they might burn the ships in the harbour: he was of course appointed to make good his assertion; and in the night of the 4th of March, with all the boats of the squadron, filled with combustible matter, he entered the harbour. The night was extremely dark, and Lieutenant Shovel, having first seized the guard-boat, proceeded to the destruction of the ships, viz. The White Eagle Crowned, of 50 guns; the Looking-Glass, of 36 guns; the Santa Clara, of 34 guns, and a French vessel, of 20; the object was completely effected, and he returned to the squadron without the loss of a



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single man.

The Tripolines, amazed by the boldness and success of this enterprise, immediately sued for peace; but still refusing to make good the losses sustained by the English, they brought on themselves an increased degree of punishment — the town was cannonaded — but they were still obstinate — a body of men was landed in a distant part, who burned a large magazine of timber, stored for the building of ships; they were still inflexible, and Sir John Narborough sailed to Malta; thence having suddenly returned, he distressed them to that degree, that they were glad to submit to the terms enjoined. This peace was of short duration — some Corsairs returning into port, flushed with the profits of their piracy, deposed the Dey for making it, and resumed their depredations on the English trade. Sir John Narborough, who had not quitted the Mediterranean, having notice of these events, suddenly appeared with eight frigates before Tripoli, and began to batter the place with a violence so evident of intended destruction, that the inhabitants were again compelled to peace, and to deliver up to condign punishment the men who had caused the violation of it. The official reports of Sir John Narborough relative to the proceedings of the squadron, had contained such an honourable representation of Lieutenant Shovel's zeal and exertions, that he was the next year appointed to command the *Sapphire*, a fifth rate, and soon after removed into the *James*, a fourth rate, in which he remained till the death of King Charles II. who had always looked upon him with kindness. On the accession of James, though there was but little friendship between them, he continued to be employed, and was removed to the command of the *Dover*, of equal rate. He was thus employed when the revolution was effected in favour of William, who in Captain Shovel had a zealous partizan, and he rewarded his zeal by a rapid and distinguished promotion.

On the 12th of December, 1688, King James II abdicated the throne, and withdrew to France. On the 7th of March in the following year, having obtained the assistance of Louis XIV he embarked at Brest to oppose William in Ireland; but was detained by contrary winds till the 17th, when he set sail, escorted by a fleet of twenty-four ships of the line, and on the 22d landed at Kinsale.

On the 22d of February, in consequence of James's proceedings, thirty ships of war were put in commission, under the command of Admiral Herbert, to intercept him in his passage; but, as is too commonly the case, the disputes in council, and other impediments, retarded the final preparation of the armament till the beginning of April, and then it was so incomplete, that the Admiral was obliged to sail with but a part of his force, consisting of twelve ships of war, one fire-ship, two yachts, and two smacks: of this fleet Captain Shovel commanded the *Edgar*, a third rate. The admiral first sailed for Corke, where he was informed that King James had landed at Kinsale about two months before. His thoughts were then directed to the best means of cutting off the convoy that had sailed with him from France, and he sailed for Brest, off which port he cruised for some time; but hearing nothing from the advice-boats, of the French men of war, he again steered his course for the Irish coast, having increased his force to nineteen sail, and appeared off Kinsale the latter end of April.

On the 29th of that month he perceived a fleet of forty-four sail, which he supposed going into Kinsale, and endeavoured to prevent it. The next day he was informed that the enemy were gone into Baltimore, but arriving there, he found his information false. He then stood for Cape Clear, and in the evening discovered them standing into Bantry Bay.

Admiral Herbert was prepared to attack them next morning. The French had in the meantime shipped on board six fire-ships a considerable sum of money from on board the men of war, which, with four merchant ships laden with arms, bridles, saddles, powder and ball, for the use of King James's army, they sent away, with orders to land their supplies at a distant part of the bay, while they engaged the English fleet. At ten in the morning of the 1st of May, the French fleet, of twenty-four sail of the line, bore down upon the English, in three divisions the foremost consisted of eight ships, under the command of M. Caheret; the second, of the like force, commanded by Admiral Chateau Renault; the third consisted of the remaining eight ships, commanded by M. Forant. For the first two hours the action was maintained with equal valour on both sides, but the English fleet was considerably damaged by the superior fire of the enemy. The endeavours of the English Admiral were strenuously exerted to obtain the weather-gage, but the French Admiral, Chateau Renault, with equal skill and perseverance, kept his wind. Admiral Herbert perceiving it useless to contend against a force so superior, stood off to sea, maintaining a running fight till five in the afternoon, when the French Admiral tacked about, and returned into the bay.

In the expectation of a reinforcement, Admiral Herbert retired to the Isles of Scilly. His expectations were



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disappointed, and he returned to Portsmouth — himself greatly chagrined, and such a general spirit of dissatisfaction pervading the fleet, that King William, in order to appease their discontent, made an excursion to Portsmouth, where he dined with the Admiral on board the Elizabeth, declared his intention of creating him an Earl, conferred the honour of Knighthood on the Captains Ashby and Shovel, and bestowed a donation of ten shillings on every private sailor. The loss on the part of the English in this action was one captain (Ailmer), one lieutenant, and ninety-four men, the wounded were about three hundred. The King made a provision for Mrs. Ailmer, and the other widows of those who had been killed in the action. King William having resolved to prosecute the war in person, on the 11th of June he embarked his forces on board two hundred and eighty transports, escorted by a squadron of six men of war, the command of which was given to Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and so satisfied was the King with his diligence and dexterity, that he not only appointed him rear-admiral of the blue, but with his own hands delivered him his commission.

Information having been received, that the enemy intended to send upwards of twenty small frigates into St. George's Channel, for the purpose of burning the transport ships, Sir Cloudesley was ordered to cruise off Scilly, or such other station as might appear to him most eligible for preventing the enemy's design, and to despatch frigates to the eastward and westward, to watch for the appearance of the body of the French fleet, that he might secure his own safety, and on meeting with Vice admiral Killigrew on his return from the Straits, to apprise him of the state of things, in order to prevent his being intercepted. In pursuance of these directions, Sir Cloudesley cruised on the appointed station, and on the 21st of July, the Dover and Experiment joined him from the coast of Ireland, with a ketch, having on board several gentlemen following King James to France, for the purpose of joining him in his intended expedition to England. From these gentlemen Sir Cloudesley learned that King James had embarked at Duncannon for Kinsale, where, having remained for about two hours, he sailed for France with two Spanish frigates, that had awaited him there some time.

This cruise of observation, though diligently performed, had not effected much; but in the attack of Waterford by General Kirke, Sir Cloudesley's zeal and diligence were more effectively beneficial. — General Kirke presented himself before the strong town of Waterford with a small body of troops, and no cannon; the besieged general, Bourke, supported by a numerous garrison in Duncannon Castle, and conscious of the weakness of his enemy magnanimously declared his resolution to defend the town and fort, while one stone remained on another. Sir Cloudesley rightly guessing the basis of this boast, sent word to General Kirke that he was ready to assist him with guns, boats, and men; the general accepted the proposal — the prudence of General Bourke took place of his valour, and before one stone was dislodged from another, the place was surrendered.

In the month of January, 1691, Sir Cloudesley was ordered to join Sir George Rook's squadron, to escort the King to Holland. On the 13th of April the King returned to England, when having transacted some business relative to the fleet and other affairs of importance, he embarked again for Holland on the 1st of May, and on the 18th of October following, returned in the Mary yacht to England, attended by a squadron of men of war under command of Sir Cloudesley. He had now obtained the full confidence, both of the King and people, and previously to the King's departure for Holland, in the spring of the year 1692, his Majesty declared Sir Cloudesley Rear-admiral of the red, and at the same time commander of the squadron that was to convoy him thither. On his return, he joined the grand fleet under Admiral Russel, who had succeeded the Earl of Torrington in that command, and was cruising in the Soundings for the protection of the trade, and in search of the fleet of France, which had sailed from Brest, under the command of the Count de Tourville.

The partizans of King James had been sufficiently industrious in procuring and transmitting intelligence to him, of the strength both of his friends and enemies. They had sent him a list of the ships composing the English fleet, and urged him to obtain the French King's order to the Count de Tourville to attack it before it should be joined by the Dutch squadron. Tourville had accordingly received orders to engage the English fleet, without waiting even for the junction of the Toulon squadron, commanded by the Marquis D'Etres. The activity and vigilance of William were, however, of that constant nature, and the fidelity of his friends so steady in its principle, and zealous in its co-operation, to detect and frustrate the plots and plans of his enemies, that King James was almost invariably either prevented in his designs, or ultimately baffled in the execution of them: William in this instance so urged the equipment of the Dutch squadron, that the junction was effected before Tourville could make his attack. On the 11th of May, Admiral Russel sailed from Rye to St. Helens,



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Admiral Carter having been previously ordered to cruise along the French coast, with eighteen sail, to watch the motions of the enemy. At St. Helen's he was joined by the squadrons of Delaval and Carter. And there he received a letter from the Earl of Nottingham, intimating, that a report having been spread that the Queen suspected the fidelity of the sea-officers, her Majesty had ordered a declaration to be made in her name, that she reposed in them the utmost confidence, and believed the report to have been raised by the enemies of the government. In answer to this declaration, a respectful and loyal address was drawn up by the flag-officers and captains, and was graciously received by the Queen, and published for the satisfaction of the nation. Much certainly depended on the event of the action, and a solemn and formal profession of the attachment of the fleet to the cause of William, might be desirable, as a means of fixing the less steady among his partizans. The Dutch squadrons, commanded by Allemonde, Callemberg, and Vandergoes, having joined, Admiral Russel sailed for the coast of France on the 18th of May, with a fleet of ninety-nine ships of the line, besides frigates and fire-ships.

About three o'clock in the morning of the next day, the enemy was discovered — the signal for the line-of-battle was made, and by eight o'clock the whole was formed in good order, the Dutch in the van, the blue squadron in the rear, and the red in the centre. The French force was considerably inferior, not consisting of more than sixty-three ships of the line — they were to windward, and Tourville might have avoided the engagement; but the positive orders he had received, and his ignorance, till too late, of the junction of the Dutch with the English fleet, may account for his commencing an action, otherwise of inexcusable temerity, it appeared the French King had been apprised of the junction, and had despatched, by two several vessels, a countermanding order; but one of these vessels was captured by the English, and the other did not arrive till the day after the action. At 10 o'clock, Tourville bore down upon Russel's own ship, and at eleven this memorable battle commenced. The action between the ships of the Admirals Russel and Tourville was maintained with great fury, and at short distance, till one o'clock, when the rigging and sails of the French Admiral's ship, the Royal Sun, carrying one hundred and four guns, were so damaged, that she was towed out of the line. The general engagement was continued till three, when the fleets were parted by a thick fog. On the fog clearing up, the enemy was discerned steering to the northward, in a disordered and scattered state. Admiral Russel then made the signal for a general chase, but the fog coming on still thicker, he was obliged to anchor. The chase was again renewed on the weather clearing up, and about eight in the evening the fleet got up with the enemy, and renewed the action for about half an hour, when having lost four of their ships in this day's action, they bore away for Conquet Road. In this part of the engagement Admiral Carter was killed. About eight in the morning of the next day, they were discovered crowding away to the westward, and were chased by the combined fleets with all the sail they could carry, until Russel's fore-top-mast came by the board. The Admiral was retarded by the accident, but the fleet continued the chase till near Cape La Hogue, where they anchored. On the 22d, about seven in the morning, part of the French fleet was perceived near the Race of Alderney. Admiral Russel and the ships near him, slipped their cables and chased. The Royal Sun ran ashore near Cherbourg, having lost her masts, where she was burned by Sir Ralph Delaval, together with the Admirable, another first rate, and the Conquerant, of eighty guns. Sir George Rooke pursued eighteen other ships of the fleet into La Hogue, attacked and destroyed them, with a great number of transports, laden with ammunition, in the midst of an incessant fire from the enemy. The rest of the French fleet were pursued by Sir John Ashby, and some Dutch ships, but they escaped through the Race of Alderney by such a dangerous passage, that the English, without the most imminent hazard, could not venture to follow them. During the action between the two admirals in the commencement of the engagement, the brave Sir Cloudesley had, with extraordinary exertion, weathered the French admiral's own squadron, and got between it and their admiral of the blue, but after firing upon them a considerable time, the two French admirals came to an anchor



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with some of the ships of their division, the fog being so dense that they could not discern each other. It was about this time that Captain Hastings, in the Sandwich, driving through the enemy's ships, his anchors not being clear, was killed.

The result of this battle occasioned infinite mortification to the French King, and the utmost degree of despondency to King James. But though James and his ally were thus sensible of the consequences of their defeat, there were some among the writers of that day who were not equally sensible of, or satisfied with, the advantages of our victory; the destruction of the enemy's force had not, in their opinion, been followed up to its possible extent. The following letters of Sir Ralph Delaval, and Admiral Russel, to the Earl of Nottingham, may be sufficient to show that there was no want of zeal and exertion in the officers of the fleet to perform their duty to the utmost of their power.

**SIR RALPH DELEVAL'S LETTER TO THE EARL OF NOTTINGHAM,
[From on board the Royal Sovereign]**

"I believe it my duty to acquaint you, that, on the 21st instant Admiral Russel having made the signal for the fleet to cut their cables, I observed the French to be forced from the Race of Alderney, were they anchored, to the eastward; and, finding that some of them endeavoured for the bay of Cherburgh, I stood in for that place, where I found three three-decked ships of the enemy, but so close to the shore, and within some rocks, that it was not safe for me to attempt them till I had informed myself of the road, they being hauled into shoal water. I immediately took my boats, and sounded within gun-shot of them, which they endeavoured to prevent by firing at us. And, that no time might be lost, I went immediately on board the St. Alban's, where, for the encouragement of the seamen, I hoisted my flag, and, having ordered the Ruby, with two fire-ships, to attend me, I stood in with them, leaving the great ships without, as drawing too much water. But, coming very near, they galled so extremely, and finding time five ships could not get in, that I judged it best to retreat without shot, and there anchored, and immediately called all the captains, when it was resolved to attack them in the morning with all the third and fourth rates, and fire-ships. But, after having drawn them into four fathoms and a half of water, I found we could not do our business, the water being shoal, Upon which I ordered three fire-ships to prepare themselves to attempt the burning of them, going myself with all the barges and tenders to take them up, if by the enemy's shot they should miscarry.

Indeed, I may say, and I hope without vanity, the service was warm, yet, God be praised, so effectually performed, that, notwithstanding all their shot both from their ships and fort, two of our fire-ships had good success by burning two of them; the other, by an unfortunate shot, was set on fire, being just going on board the enemy. Indeed, so brave was the attempt, that I think they can hardly be sufficiently rewarded, and doubt not but their Majesties will do them right. The third French ship being run a-shore, and observing the people on hoard to go a-shore by boats-full, I ordered the St. Alban's, the Reserve, and others, to fire upon her, judging it might cause them to quit her. And, after having battered her some time, I observed she made no resistance, I took all the boats armed, and went on board her.

I found abundance of men on board, and several wounded, but no



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officers; and having caused all the people, as well those that were wounded, as others, to be taken out, I set her on fire, and had I not had notice by my scouts, that thirty ships were standing with me, had sent all the French on shore, who are now very troublesome to me. The ships we saw proved to be Sir John Ashby and the Dutch, coming from the westward. We are proceeding together to the eastward to La Hogue, where I am informed three or four of the enemy's ships are; and, if so, I hope God will give us good success. I expect to find the admiral to-morrow, where I hope to hear he has destroyed some of time enemy's ships, having left him in chase of them last night, standing to the eastward, and pretty near them, as I judged. My Lord, I hope you will excuse me, if I presume to pray you will use your interest with the Queen, that a reward may be given to the three captains of the fire-ships, and several of the others; for greater zeal and greater bravery I never saw. I pray you, excuse for being thus tedious, and thus particular. Pray God preserve their Majesties; and that their arms may be ever crowned with success by sea and land, shall be the prayers and endeavours of, &c.
"Cherburgh, May, 22, 1692."

P.S. Captain Heath burnt Tourville's ship, the Royal Sun, which was the most difficult; Captain Greenway burnt the other, called the Conquerant. The Admirable was burnt by our boats. Captain Fowlis attempted the Royal Sun, but was set on fire by the enemy's shot, yet deserves as well as the others.

ADMIRAL RUSSEL'S LETTER.

"MY LORD, Portsmouth, June 2, 1692.

Since your Lordship seems to think, that an account in general of the fleet's good success, is not so satisfactory as one setting forth the particulars, I here send it with as much brevity as the matter will admit of. I must confess I was not much inclined to trouble you in this nature, not being ambitious to see my name in print on any occasion; but since it is your Lordship's command, I am the more inclined to give you the best information I am able of the action, having seem several printed relations not very sincere,

Wednesday in the evening, being the 18th of May, standing over for Cape La Hogue, I ordered Captain Gillam, in the Chester, and the Charles Galley, to lie at such a distance to the westward of the fleet, that they might discover any signals made from me. Thursday the 19th, standing with a small gale S.S.W. the wind at W. and W. by S. hazy weather, Cape Barfleur bearing then S.W. and by S. from me, distant about seven leagues. Between three and four in the morning, we heard several guns to the westward, and in a short time I saw the two frigates making the signal of seeing the enemy, with their heads lying to the northward, which gave me reason to think that the enemy lay with their heads that way. Upon which, I ordered the signal to be made for the fleet's drawing into a line of battle; after which, I made the signal for the rear of the fleet to tack, that, if the enemy stood to the northward, we might the sooner come to engage. But soon after four o'clock, the sun had a little cleared the weather, and I saw the French fleet standing to the southward, forming their line on the same tack that I was upon. I then ordered the signal



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for the rear to tack, to be taken in, and at time same time bore away with my own ship so far to leeward, as I judged each ship in the fleet might fetch my wake or grain; then brought-to again, lying by with my fore-top-sail to the mast, to give time ships in the fleet the better opportunity of placing themselves as they had been before directed. By eight o'clock we had formed an indifferent line, stretching from the S.S.W to the N.N.E. the Dutch in the van, the red in the centre, and the blue in the rear.

By nine o'clock the enemy's van-guard had stretched almost as far to the southward as ours, their admiral and rear-admiral of the blue, that were in the rear, closing the line, and their vice-admiral of the same division stretching to the rear of our fleet, but never coming within gun-shot of them. About ten they bore down upon us, I still lying with my fore-top-sail to the mast. I then observed Monsieur Tourville, the French admiral, put out his signal for battle. I gave orders that mine should not be hoisted till the fleets began to engage, that he might have the first opportunity of coming as near me as he thought convenient; and, at the same time, I sent orders to Admiral Allemonde, that, as soon as any of his squadron could weather the enemy's fleet, they should tack and get to the westward of them, as also to the blue to make sail and close the line, they being at some distance a-stern; but, as soon as the fleet began to engage, it fell calm, which prevented their so doing. About half an hour after eleven, Monsieur Tourville, in the Royal Sun, being within three quarters musket-shot, brought-to, lying by me at that distance about an hour and a half, plying his guns very warmly, though I must observe to you, that our men fired their guns faster. After which time I did not find his guns were fired with that vigour as before, and I could see him in great disorder, his rigging, sails, and top-sail yards being shot, and nobody endeavouring to make them serviceable, and his boats towing of him to windward, gave me reason to think he was much galled. About two the wind shifted to the N.W., and by W. and some little time after that, five fresh ships of the enemy's blue squadron came and posted themselves three ahead of Monsieur Tourville, and two a-stern of him, and fired with great fury, which continued till after three. About four in the evening there came so thick a fog, that we could not see a ship of the enemy's, which occasioned our leaving off firing for a long time; and then it cleared up, and we could see Monsieur Tourville towing away with his boats to the northward from us. Upon which I did the same, and ordered all my division to do the like; and, about half an hour after five, we had a small breeze of wind easterly. I then made the signal for the fleet to chase, sending notice to all the ships about me that the enemy were running. About this time I heard several broadsides to the westward; and, though I could not see the ships that fired, I concluded them to be our blue, that, by the shift of the wind, had weathered the enemy; but it proved to be the rear-admiral of the red, who had weathered Tourville's squadron, and got between them and their admiral of the blue, where they lay firing some time; and then Tourville anchored with some ships of his own division, as also the rear admiral of the red, with some of his. This was the



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time that Captain Hastings, in the Sandwich, was killed, he driving through those ships, by reason of his anchors not being clear. I could not see this part, because of the great smoke and fog, but have received this information from Sir Cloudesley Shovel since.

I sent to all the ships that I could think were near me, to chase to the westward all night, telling them I designed to follow the enemy to Brest, and sometimes we could see a French ship, two or three, standing away with all the sail they could make to the westward. About eight I heard firing to the westward, which lasted about half an hour, it being some of our blue fallen in with some of the enemy in the fog. It was foggy, and very little wind all night.

Friday the 20th, it was so thick in the morning that I could see none of the enemy's ships, and but very few of our own. About eight it began to clear up: the Dutch, who were to the southward of me, made the signal of seeing the enemy; and, as it cleared, I saw about thirty-two or thirty-four sail, distant from us between two and three leagues, the wind at E.N.E. and they bearing from us W.S.W. our fleet chasing with all the sail they could make, having taking in the signal for the line of battle, that each ship might make the best of her way after the enemy. Between eleven and twelve the wind came to the S.W. The French plied to the westward with all the sail they could, and we after them. About four, the tide of ebb being done, the French anchored, as also we in forty-three fathom water, Cape Barfleure bearing S. and by W. About ten in the evening we weighed with the tide of ebb, the wind at S. W. and plied to the westward. About twelve my fore-top-mast came by the board, having received several shot.

Saturday the 21st, we continued still plying after the enemy till four in the morning. The tide of ebb being done, I anchored in forty-six fathom water, Cape La Hogue bearing S. and by W. and the island of Alderney S.S.W. By my top-mast's going away, the Dutch squadron, and the admiral of the blue, with several of his squadron, had got a great way to windward of me. About seven in the morning, several of the enemy's ships being far advanced towards the race, I perceived them driving to the eastward with the tide of flood. Between eight and nine, when they were driven so far to the eastward that I could fetch them, I made the signal for the fleet to cut and follow the enemy, which they all did, except the afore-mentioned weathermost ships, which rid fast to observe the motion of the rest of the enemy's ships that continued in the race of Alderney. About eleven, I saw three great ships fair under the shore, tack and stand to the westward; but, after making two or three short boards, the biggest of them ran ashore, who presently cut his masts away; the other two, betting to leeward of him, plied up to him. The reason, as I judge, of their doing this, was, that they could not weather our sternmost ships to the westward, nor get out ahead of us to the eastward.

Observing that many of our ships hovered about those, I sent to Sir Ralph Delaval, vice-admiral of the red, who was in the rear of our fleet, to keep such a number of ships and fire-ships with him, as might be sufficient to destroy those of the enemy, and



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to order the others to follow me, I being then in pursuit of the rest of the enemy: an account of the performing that service I do not trouble your Lordship with, he having given it you already. About four in time afternoon, eighteen sail of time enemy's ships got to the eastward of Cape Barfleur, after which I observed they hauled in for La Hogue: the rear-admiral of the red, vice-admiral of the blue, and some other ships, went a-head of me. About ten at night I anchored in the bay of La Hogue, and lay till four the next morning, being Sunday the 22d and then I weighed and stood in near the land of La Hogue; but, when we found the flood came, we anchored in a good sandy ground. At two in the afternoon we weighed again, and plied close in with La Hogue, where we saw thirteen sail of the enemy's men of war hauled chose in with the shore. The rear-admiral of the red tells me, that, the night before, he saw the other five, a which made up the eighteen I first chased, stand to the eastward.

Monday the 22d, I sent in Vice-admiral Rooke, with several men of war and fire-ships, and also the boats of the fleet, to destroy those ships but the enemy had gotten them so near the shore, that not any of our men of war, except the small frigates, could do any service; but that night Vice-admiral Rooke, with the boats, burnt six of them.

Tuesday the 24th, about eight in the morning, he went in again with the boats, and burnt the other seven, together with several transport ships, and some vessels with ammunition, the names of which ships I am not yet able to give your Lordship any other account of than what I formerly sent you, which are as follow:-

Ships.	Guns	Commanders.
Soleil Royal	104	Count De Tourville.
L`Ambitieux	104	Chevalier De La Villette, vice-admiral of the blue.
L`Admirable	90	Monsieur Beaujeau
La Magnifique	76	Monsieur Cottologon, rear-admiral of the blue.
Le St. Philip	76	Monsieur Infreville.
Le Conquerant	76	Du Magnon.
Le Triumphant	74	Monsieur Bellemont.
L`Etonant	80	Monsieur de Septime.
Le Terrible	80	Monsieur Septvilla.
L`Aimable	68	Monsieur de Raal.
Le Fier	68	Monsieur Larsethoir.
Le Glorieux	60	Le C. Chateamoorant.
Le Serieux	60	Monsieur Bernier.
Le Trident	56	Monsieur Monteaud.

All the prisoners report a three-deck ship burnt by accident, and the following sunk, how true I do not know

Le Prince	60	Monsieur Bagneuz.
Le Sanspareil	60	Monsieur Ferille.

Though these be all the names that I have been able to learn, yet I am sure there are sixteen ships of consequence burnt.

Wednesday the 25th, I sailed from La Hogue, ordering the admiral of the blue, with a squadron of English and Dutch ships under



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his command, to run along the enemy's coast, as far as Havre de Grace, in hopes that some of the before-mentioned five ships, that stood to the eastward, might have been got thither, but he informs me that, upon his appearing before that place, he could perceive but one or two small vessels. The number of the enemy's ships did not exceed fifty men of war, by the best information, from fifty-six to one hundred and four guns; and, though it must be confessed, that our number was superior to theirs, which probably, at first, might startle them, yet, by their coming down with that resolution, I cannot think it had any great effect upon them: and this I may affirm for a truth, not with any intention to value our own action, or to lessen the bravery of the enemy, that they were beaten by a number considerably less than theirs, the calmness and thickness of the weather giving very few of the Dutch or the Blue the opportunity of engaging, which I am sure they look upon as a great misfortune; and, had the weather proved otherwise do not see how it was possible for any of them to have escaped us,

This is the exactest account that I am able to give you, which I hope will prove to your Lordship's satisfaction. Vice-admiral Rooke has given me a very good character of several men employed in the boats, and I have ordered him to give me a list of the names of such persons whose behaviour was remarkable, in order to their reward. I am, my Lord, Your Lordship's most faithful, humble servant,
E. RUSSEL"

Yet, whatever credit may be given to the honourable conduct of the officers of the fleet, in the action above related, the distinctions of Whig and Tory did certainly exist among them, and no doubt their respective principles occasionally operated in a degree more or less favourable to the cause of William, as either partizan had command. In the following year the fleet was put under the joint command of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and Admirals Killigrew and Delaval, the two latter of which were Tories — Sir Cloudesley a staunch Whig. To repair the loss sustained by the defeat at La Hogue, Tourville was despatched to the Mediterranean, with a fleet of seventy-one ships of war, besides smaller vessels, to intercept our Smyrna fleet: this fleet had been left to the care of Sir George Rooke, with the Strait's squadron, to protect it. In the meanwhile, the Lords of the Admiralty having been apprized of Tourville's arrival in Lagos bay, the government was alarmed, and notice was immediately sent to the fleet, consisting of sixty-nine ships of the line. A council of war was held at Torbay, and it was resolved to sail for Lisbon directly, if they could be properly victualled. Despatches were, however, sent to Sir George Rooke, and on the 1st of July, in another council of war, notwithstanding the Queen's order was produced for executing the resolutions they had made, they resolved, on the contrary, to submit it to her Majesty, whether, if the French fleet should sail north about, the coasts of England might not be in danger of insult in their absence. The result was, the capture and destruction of a part of the Smyrna fleet, to the amount in value of a million sterling.

The affair was brought before Parliament, and Sir Cloudesley defended himself and his colleagues; but whether correctly or not, the Dutch had a different idea of the matter; for, in a picture, they represented the capture of the Smyrna fleet at a distance, and Sir Cloudesley Shovel on board his own ship, with his hands tied behind him, one end of the cord being held by each of his colleagues; intimating, that he would have prevented the misfortune, if the Admirals Killigrew and Delaval had not hindered him.

In the year 1694, Sir Cloudesley commanded as vice admiral of the red, under Lord Berkeley, admiral of the blue, in the expedition to Camaret bay; in which expedition, though not of a nature to call into action any extraordinary powers, he acquitted himself with his usual credit. He was afterwards sent with the fleet for the bombardment of Dieppe and other places of the French coast.

Lord Berkeley having quitted the fleet and returned to London, Sir Cloudesley assumed the command, and received his Majesty's orders to bombard Dunkirk, Accordingly, on the 7th of September, he set sail, and was



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joined in the Downs by M. Meesters, inventor of certain machines, called infernals,³ intended as the chief implements of the destined bombardment. Several Dutch pilots, well acquainted with the coast, were engaged, and on the 12th the fleet, consisting of thirteen English and six Dutch frigates, two bomb-vessels, and seventeen infernals, &c. appeared before Dunkirk.

The bombardment commenced under the directions of Captain Benbow, and M. Meesters. Two of the infernals were sent in, but they were set on fire without taking effect. And on Sir Cloudesley proceeding with a boat within the enemy's works, he found that the French had secured themselves from that kind of attack, by driving piles, and sinking vessels before and at the back of the Mole Head. The failure of this attempt did but increase the ardour of Sir Cloudesley, to effect whatever might be possible for the service of his country; he sailed directly for Calais, and on his way demolished the town of Gravelines. On the 7th, he begun the bombardment of Calais, and destroyed several houses; but the wind blowing hard, with a great swell, he was induced to return to the Downs.

On the 1st of August, 1695, a second attempt was made on Dunkirk with the infernals, but with similar success. Calais was again bombarded with considerable effect; and in April, 1696, Sir Cloudesley destroyed a great part of the town of Calais, and most of the shipping.

The public services of Sir Cloudesley during the remainder of the war (which was terminated by the Treaty of Ryswich, 10th September, 1797,) were chiefly those of observation and blockade, but in which he invariably gave satisfaction to his King and Country, and was promoted to the rank of admiral of the white.

On the 8th of March, 1702, King William died; and on the 4th of May, Queen Anne declared war against France. The first Instance of public service performed by Sir Cloudesley under the Queen (with whom, or her Court, he was not in equal favour), was his presiding at a court martial held on the conduct of Sir John Munden, whose character had been aspersed, as it appeared, unjustly.

The command of the grand fleet was given to Sir George Rooke, with directions to carry into effect an expedition planned previously to the death of the late King, to get possession of Cadiz for the Archduke Charles.

On the 30th of May, the admiral hoisted the union flag on board the Royal Sovereign, the Dutch fleet joined, and on the 10th of June the armament sailed from St. Helen's, consisting of thirty English and twenty Dutch ships of the line, with 13,800 troops. On the 12th of August they anchored before the harbour of Cadiz. The governor was, the next day, summoned by the Duke of Ormond to surrender. The governor, consistently with his loyalty, refused; and on the 15th the Duke of Ormond landed with the troops, and in a short time got possession of the forts of St. Katherine and St. Mary; but here their progress was stopped, and the troops were re-embarked to return home.

In the meanwhile Captain Hardy, in the Pembroke, having been sent to Lagos bay to water, received intelligence from Mr. Methuen, at Lisbon, that the galleons from the West Indies had put into Vigo, under convoy of a French squadron. Captain Hardy (knighted for this service) lost no time in communicating this intelligence to the admiral, and Sir George Rooke called a council of war, in which it was determined to attack the enemy in the port of Vigo. On the 11th of October they reached the part, the condition of which presented many difficulties. The passage into the harbour was extremely narrow—both sides well defended by batteries—a strong boom, composed of ship's yards and top-masts, fastened together with 3-inch rope, and underneath with hawsers and cables, laid across the entrance, at each end of which was moored, with chains, a seventy-four gun ship, and within it five ships from seventy to sixty guns, with their broadsides to the sea. The depth of water not admitting the ships of first and second rates, Sir George and the other admirals shifted their flags into smaller ones. Fifteen sail of English, and ten Dutch ships of war with all the frigates, bomb-vessels, and fire-ships, were ordered in readiness to force the passage into the harbour, as soon as the troops landed under

3. Fire-ships contrived to operate when moored close to the walls of a town. At the bottom of the hold were a hundred barrels of powder; these were covered with pitch, sulphur, rosin, tow, straw, and faggots, over which lay beams bored through, to give air to the fire, and upon these lay three hundred carcasses filled with granadoes, chain-shot, iron bullets, pistols loaded, and wrapt in linen pitched, broken iron bars, amid the bottoms of glass bottles. There were six holes or mouths, to let out the flames, which were so vehement, as to consume the hardest substances, and could be checked by nothing, but the pouring in of hot water. The French report, that the engineer who contrived this vessel, was blown up in her, because they found the body of a man well dressed upon the shore, and in his pocket-book a journal of the expedition, alluding to the destruction of the bridge over the Scheldt, when the Prince of Parma besieged Antwerp in the year 1585 when it was supposed these machines were first used.



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the Duke of Ormond and Lord Shannon should be in possession of the batteries, which was effected much sooner than the means of the enemy to prevent it gave them any reason to expect; for Lord Shannon having, at the head of five hundred men, possessed himself of a platform of 40 pieces of cannon, the French governor, Mon. Sozel, ordered the gates to be thrown open for the purpose of forcing his way through the English troops, and the English grenadiers entered and made the whole garrison prisoners of war.

No sooner was the English flag seen flying, than the ships advanced, and Vice-admiral Hopson, in the Torbay, crowding all the sail he could, broke the boom, and the Kent and the rest of the squadron entered the harbour. The enemy fought bravely. One of their fire-ships laid the Torbay on board, and would have destroyed her, but for a quantity of snuff which she had on board, and which extinguished the flames when she came to blow up. The fore-top-mast was shot by the board, most of the sails scorched or burnt, the fore-yard consumed to a coal, the larboard shrouds fore and aft burnt at the dead eyes, several ports blown off the hinges, her larboard side entirely scorched, and one hundred and fifteen men killed and wounded. The vice-admiral shifted his flag to the Monmouth. The result of the enterprise will appear in the following statement

French Ships taken, burnt and run ashore

Ships burnt	No. of guns.
Le Fort	76
L'Enflame	64
Le Prudent	62
Le Solide	56
La Dauphine	46
L'Entreprenant	22
La Chuquante	8
Le Favori, a fire-ship.	
Eight advice boats.	

Taken by the English, and brought home.

Le Prompt	76
Le Firme	72
L'Esperance	70
L'Assure	66
—	
	284

Taken by the Dutch.

Le Bourbon	68
Le Superbe	70
La Sirene	60
Le Modere	56
Le Volontaire	46
Le Triton	42
—	
	342

Total, Ships, 21. guns, 960.



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Of the galleons, the English took six, and the Dutch five, who likewise sunk six. They had on board when they arrived, twenty millions of pieces of eight, and merchandise estimated of equal value, the greater part of which had been landed previous to the arrival of our force. Four millions of plate were destroyed, with ten millions of merchandise; about two millions in silver, and five in goods were brought away. The capture of these galleons had been contemplated by the cabinet some time before, and a squadron was fitted out, the command of which was assigned to Sir Cloudesley Shovel, though it would certainly have been of insufficient force to effect its object, With this squadron, Sir Cloudesley arrived at Vigo on the 16th of October, and was left by Sir George Rooke to bring away what he could, and to burn the rest. In the course of a week, he put the French men of war into the best condition possible, brought off sixty guns from the forts and batteries, took out fifty brass guns from the French ships that had been run on shore; and on the 24th of October set fire to the ships that could not be brought away, and left Vigo to return home, having anchored in the channel between that port and Bayonne, where he sent in some prisoners, with a flag of truce, in exchange for some English.

In his passage thence to England, the weather was so boisterous, that one of the galleons struck on a rock and foundered. The Nassau took a rich prize coming from Morlaix, which also foundered, and ultimately every ship of the squadron was separated, though all in a shattered condition afterwards reached home. The Court were so satisfied with the conduct of Sir Cloudesley, that it was determined to employ him henceforth in affairs of the greatest consequence. Whether this determination was formed in the spirit of friendship toward that gentleman or not, it is sufficiently evident, that in the first instance of their good will, they left him ample room to evince his skill and capacity.

On the temporary resignation of Sir George Rooke the following year, he was appointed in command the grand fleet up the Straits, with instructions to annoy the enemy, assist the allies, and protect the trade; and his time was limited to the end of September. His force consisted of twenty-seven ships of the line, having under him Rear-admiral Byng and Sir Stafford Fairborne; he was afterwards reinforced by Vice-admiral Leake with eight ships more; and was then to wait the junction of the Dutch with twelve ships of the line; these joined him by the middle of June, when, had the equipment of the fleet been sufficient, the time was evidently too short to execute the business assigned him. This he respectfully represented, but was ordered to obey; he had under convoy a fleet of upwards of two hundred and thirty merchantmen, and it was the middle of July before he could get clear of the land.

Sir Cloudesley arrived off the rock of Lisbon on the twenty. fourth, and held a council of war in Altea bay; he secured the Turkey fleet, and wishing to pursue his instructions to the utmost of his power, had intended to remain some time on the coast of Italy, but was informed by the Dutch admiral, that the state of his victualling required that he should think of home, and could scarcely be prevailed on by Sir Cloudesley to go to Leghorn. his instructions to succour the Cevennois, in arms against the French King, were found utterly impracticable with a fleet, and all that he could do was to send the Tartar and Pembroke upon that coast, who also found it impossible to effect any thing in their favour. Thus embarrassed by instructions, without the means of executing them, he detached Captain Swanton to Tunis and Tripoli and sent Rear-admiral Byng to Algiers, to renew the peace with them, and on the twenty-second of September reached Altea, and proceeded, after a short stay, direct for England.

As an instance of his zeal for the interests of his country (never so apparent as in acts that may be omitted without any direct impeachment of duty), on the twenty-seventh, in the mouth of the Straits, he fell in with an Algerine man of war becalmed, and immediately took her under his protection, till the Dutch ships were passed, thereby maintaining the reputation of the English flag, and counteracting the insidious influence of the French on those piratical states, exerted to the disadvantage of his country.

Intelligence being received that a fleet of merchantmen waited for convoy at Lisbon, he sent Sir Andrew Leake with a small squadron, by which they were escorted home. The combined fleets arrived off the Isle of Wight on the 16th of November, when the Dutch bore away to their own ports, and Sir Cloudesley steered for the Downs.

The fleet had effected little in this expedition, and the murmurs of the nation were general, but the circumstances under which Sir Cloudesley had executed his orders, divested him of all blame in the eyes of the people. Bishop Barnet gives the following account of it:— “It was resolved to send a strong fleet into the Mediterranean: it was near the end of June before they were ready to sail; and they had orders to come out of



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the Straits by the end of September. Everything was so ill-laid in this expedition, as if it had been intended, that nothing should be done by it, besides the convoying our merchant ships, which did not require the fourth part of such a force. Shovel was sent to command; when he saw his instructions, he represented to the ministry, that nothing could be expected from this voyage: he was ordered to go, and he obeyed his orders. He got to Leghorn by the beginning of September. His arrival seemed to be of great consequence, and the allies began to take courage from it; but they were soon disappointed of their hopes, when they understood that, by his orders, he could only stay a few days there. Nor was it easy to imagine what the design of so great an expedition could be, or why so much money was thrown away on such a project, which, made us despised by our enemies, while it provoked our friends, who might justly think they could not depend upon such an ally, who managed so great a force with so poor a conduct, as neither to hurt their enemies, nor protect their friends by it” In the month of October, of the same year, Sir George Rooke had been sent to Holland to escort Charles, Duke of Austria, to Lisbon, who had been declared by his father King of Spain, and who had been acknowledged such by the allies. On the 26th of December, his Catholic Majesty arrived at Spithead.

This year is memorable for the destructive storm that began on the 26th of November, about eleven in the evening, the wind being W.S.W and continued, with dreadful flashes of lightning, till about seven the next morning. The water flowed to a great height in Westminster Hall and London Bridge was, in a manner, stopt up with wrecks. The mischief done in London was computed at not less than a million, and the city of Bristol suffered damage to upwards of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. But the greatest loss fell upon our navy, of which there perished no less than thirteen ships and upwards of fifteen hundred seamen were drowned; as will appear by the following statement:—

- The Reserve, a fourth rate, Captain John Anderson, commander, lost at Yarmouth. The captain, the surgeon, the clerk, and 44 men saved; the rest of the crew drowned, being 175.
- The Vanguard, a second rate, sunk in Chatham harbour, with neither, men nor guns in her.
- The Northumberland, a third rate, Captain Greenway, lost on the Goodwin Sands; all her company was lost, being 220 men, including twenty-four marines.
- The Sterling Castle, a third rate, Captain Johnson, on the Goodwin sands, 70 men, of which four marine officers were saved, the rest were drowned, being 206.
- The Mary, a fourth rate, Rear-admiral Beaumont, Captain Edward Hopson, on the Goodwin Sands, the captain and purser ashore; one man, whose name was Thomas Atkins, saved; the rest, to the number of 269 with the rear-admiral, drowned. The escape of this Atkins was very remarkable — He saw the rear-admiral, when the ship was breaking, get upon a piece of her quarter-deck, from which he was soon washed off; and about the same time, Atkins was tossed by a wave into the Sterling Castle, which sinking soon after, he was thrown the third man into her boat, by a wave that washed him from the wreck.
- The York, a fourth rate, Captain Smith, lost at Harwich; all her men saved except four.
- The Mortar-bomb, a fifth rate, Captain Raymond, on the Goodwin Sands; all her company lost, being 65.
- The Eagle advice boat, a sixth rate, Captain Bostock, lost on the Coast of Sussex; all her company, being 45, saved.
- The Resolution, a third rate, Captain Lisle, on the coast of Sussex; all her company, being 221, saved.
- The Litchfield prize, a fifth rate, Captain Chamberlain, on time coast of Sussex; all her company, being 108, saved.
- The Newcastle, a fourth rate, Captain Carter, lost at Spithead. the carpenter and 39 men were saved, and the rest, being 193, drowned.
- The Vesuvius fire-ship, a fifth rate, Captain Paddon, at Spithead; all her company, being 48, saved.
- The Restoration, a third rate, Captain Emms, 387 men, on the Goodwin Sands; not one saved.



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Sir Cloudesley Shovel was then in the Downs with several great ships, which were all in the utmost danger; he cut his main-mast by the board, which saved the ship from running upon the Galloper of the beach of which she was then in view. Sir Stafford Fairborne had his flag, as vice-admiral of the red, flying in the Association, in which he was driven first to Gottenburgh, and then to Copenhagen, from whence he did not get home till the next year. The Revenge was forced from her anchors, and with much ado, after driving some time on the coast of Holland, got into the river Medway; the Russel, Captain Townsend, was forced over to Holland; and the Dorset, Captain Edward Whitaker, after striking thrice on the Galloper. drove a fortnight at sea, and then got safe to the Nore.

On the 12th of February, 1704, every thing being prepared for the expedition, Sir George sailed, and arrived at Lisbon on the 15th, where his Catholic Majesty was received by the King of Portugal and the royal family. After the departure of Sir George Rooke, intelligence was received by the Court, that the French were equipping with all possible haste a squadron at Brest. The design was unknown but it was determined to fit out a fleet, the command of which should be given to Sir Cloudesley Shovel. This was accordingly done, and the admiral was instructed to look into Brest, and if he found the enemy still there, to send off the trade, store-ships, victuallers, &c. under proper convoy to Lisbon, and to block up the enemy's ships, or to burn and destroy them. If they had sailed; to hold a council to determine on the strength necessary to be sent to Sir George Rooke, and if it amounted to twenty-two ships, to sail with them himself. Sir Cloudesley followed these directions and the result was, his sailing to the Mediterranean about the latter end of May.

On the 16th of June, Sir Cloudesley joined Sir George Rooke, and a council of war was called to determine what service they should proceed on. A second attack on Cadiz was proposed, but there was too great a deficiency of land forces; and it was at the same time declared by Sir George, that his instructions forbade him to attempt anything without the consent of the Kings of Spain and Portugal; and as these princes seldom thought one way, there was little effected.

The English admiral, however, sensible of the great force he had with him, and that the nation would naturally expect something for the money expended in its equipment, called another council on the 17th of July, in which, after long debate, it was resolved to attack Gibraltar. The garrison was weak, and it was thought the possession of it might be important during the war. It has been since held in much higher estimation.

The fleet arrived in the bay, on the 21st of July, and eighteen hundred marines, English and Dutch, were landed, under the command of the Prince of Hesse, on the Isthmus, to cut off the communication between the town and the continent. On the governor's refusal to surrender, the town was, at day-break of the 22d, cannonaded, with such vigour, that fifteen thousand shot were spent in five hours; when the enemy being driven from their fortifications at the South Mole Head, the pinnaces were manned, and the fortifications soon seized, by Captains Hicks and Jumper. A mine was sprung by the Spaniards, and two lieutenants and forty men were killed, and about sixty wounded; they, however, held possession of the great platform, till supported by Captain Whitaker and the seamen under his command, who, having made himself master of a redoubt between the mole and the town, the governor, in answer to a letter from the admiral, on the 24th capitulated, and the Prince of Hesse took possession of the place.

Having secured this important capture, by leaving a sufficient garrison with the Prince, the fleet returned to Tetuan to take in wood and water. On the 9th of August, the French fleet was seen, but they endeavoured to avoid an action. All sail was immediately made in chase, and on the thirteenth they were within three leagues of them. The French, perceiving an action unavoidable, brought to with their heads to the southward, the wind easterly, and forming a line, awaited the attack off Malaga. Their fleet consisted of fifty-two ships, and twenty-four galleys, the greater part of which was attached to the van and rear, as being comparatively weak to the centre, in which was Count Thoulouse, high admiral of France, with the white squadron, in the van the white and blue flag, and in the rear the blue. Our fleet was in number fifty-three ships, four of which, with two fire-ships, were ordered to windward, to afford a diversion, in case the van of the enemy should push through our



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line.

The action commenced about ten in the morning, when within half-gun shot of the enemy, which was maintained with equal vigour till two in the afternoon, when the van of the enemy gave way. The contest continued, notwithstanding, till night, and then, by the help of their gallies, they bore away to leeward. The wind shifting in the night to the northward, and in the morning to the westward, gave the enemy the weather-gage, and consequently the power of renewing the action, hut for two successive days they continued to decline it, and ultimately disappeared.

This defeat, by a force considerably inferior, was rendered doubly disgraceful by the means resorted to by the French Court to hide it. Te Deum was ordered to be sung as for a victory, and the following account published, replete with the most impudent falsehoods:—

“That, before the fight, the admiral ordered all the ships to make ready; but the sea being calm, he gave directions for the gallies. to prepare to tow the men of war off to sea. But at day-break the whole fleet weighed, by favour of a breeze that blew gently from the land, and made towards the enemy, whom the currents had carried out to sea. The twenty-fourth, their fleet, in a line of battle, came up with the enemy the Marquis De Vilette, lieutenant-general, commanded the vanguard, having behind him in a second line the Duke of Tursis, with his own squadron of seven gallies, and five of Spain. the Count De Thoulouse commanded the centre, having behind him the Marquis De Royes, with four gallies, and the Marquis De Langeron had the command of the rear-guard, with eight French gallies, under command of the Count De Tourville. The enemy’s van-guard was commanded by Sir Cloudesley Shovel; the centre by Sir George Rooke; and the rear-guard were the Dutch ships, commanded by Vice-admiral Callemberg. They had sixty ships of the line, many frigates almost as large, and bomb-vessels that did them good service. Sir Cloudesley Shovel advanced before the wind, separating himself from the centre; but observing that the Marquis de Vilette endeavoured to surround him, he kept to the wind, and Sir George Rooke, seeing the danger he was in, bore upon the king’s fleet. The fight began about ten o’clock, north and south off Malaga, ten or eleven leagues from shore, and lasted till night. The fire was extraordinary on both sides, and notwithstanding the enemy had the advantage of the wind, which blew the smoke upon the French fleet, they always kept as near the wind as they could, while the Count de Thoulouse made all possible efforts to approach them. The Marquis De Vilette had so roughly used the van of the enemy, having obliged five of their ships to quit their line, that he would have entirely put the same into disorder, had not a bomb fallen upon his stern, and set it on fire; which obliged him to quit the line, and extinguish the fire. Another bomb fell on the ship of the Sieurs De Belleisle, who quitted the line to refit, as did likewise the Sieur De Grancy, Osmont, Rouvroy, Pontac, amid Roche Allard. The latter fought the ship of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, of ninety guns, though. he had but sixty. The Sieur Chammeslin boarded three times a ship of the enemy, but quitted the same, seeing she was on fire in several places, but because of the smoke, could not see whether sunk. The bailiff of Lorraine was killed with a cannon-shot, and the Sieur De Relingue had a leg shot off. They were the Count De Thoulouse’s two seconds, and distinguished themselves very much, following the example of their general.



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The enemy continuing to sheer off, the fight with the van ended about five, with the centre about seven, and with the rear towards night. The French fleet pursued with all their lights out; whereas the enemy, their flag-ships excepted, had none. The 25th, the wind blowing again from the west, the enemy sailed towards the coast of Barbary, so that they lost sight of them at night. The twenty-sixth, in the morning, they were seen again about four leagues distance, the wind having again shifted to the east, which gave them a fair opportunity to renew the fight, but they did not think fit to approach. They were not heard of afterwards; whereupon it was judged they had re-passed the Straits, and this obliged the Count De Thoulouse to return the twenty-seventh to Malaga, with the gallies. We had about fifteen hundred men killed or wounded. But we do not know true loss of the enemy, which must be very great; and several persons said, that two of their ships sunk."

In addition to this, the French Academy caused a medal to be struck, of the following description Spain is represented sitting, and her arm leaning on a pillar, with victory over her head; the legend thus: *Ora Hispanica Securitas*; i.e. The security of the Spanish coasts. To show how this was attained, we read in the *exergue*, *Anglorum et Batavorum classe fugata ad Malagum, xxiv Augusti, M, DDC, IV* i.e. The English and Dutch fleet beat at Malaga, 24th of August, 1704. —Gerard Vanloom, *Histoire Mtalique des bays, tome iv.*"

In this action, Sir Cloudesley Shovel and Sir John Leake led the van. The division commanded by Sir Cloudesley consisted of the *Barfleur*, *Eagle*, *Orford*, *Assurance*, *Warspite*, *Swiftsure*, *Nottingham*, *Tilbury*, and *Lenox*. He had but one officer killed; viz, the first lieutenant of the *Lenox*, and seven wounded; one hundred and five private men killed, and three hundred and three wounded. At the beginning of the battle, Sir Cloudesley was indebted to Sir George Rooke for assistance which prevented his being surrounded by the enemy, and which assistance he as handsomely returned in the latter part of the action, when several ships being forced out of the line for want of ammunition, Sir Cloudesley came instantly to his aid, and drew the enemy from the centre, who very soon sheered off from the heat of his fire. The loss of the English was 691 men killed, including 2 captains and 2 lieutenants; 5 captains, 13 lieutenants, and 1,618 men wounded. The Dutch had 400 killed and wounded. The French lost 1 rear-admiral, 5 captains, 6 lieutenants, 5 ensigns, and 3,048 men. Count Thoulouse was wounded in the forehead, shoulder, and thigh, and many of his officers. Sir Cloudesley, on his return to England, was presented to the Queen, by Prince George, and had the honour of kissing her Majesty's hand.

Sir George Rooke was unfortunately of Tory principles — the Whigs were in power and there were among them a party who meanly endeavoured to blast the laurels on his brow; but they had been nobly won, under circumstances too evident to be easily discredited by the nation, the House of Lords, at the meeting of Parliament, in their address to the Queen, on the success of her arms, never mentioned either the capture of Gibraltar, or the victory of Malaga. An attempt was made to induce in the public mind a confidence in the French account of the battle, but there was one part of it too glaringly false not to render the whole unworthy of belief. They asserted the annoyance by which they were prevented from rendering their success more complete from the bombs of the English, when in fact there was not a bomb-vessel in the whole fleet. The rage of party at that time was so violent, that it has been said to have shortened the Queen's days. Sir George received the honours paid him, but declined any further command, wishing rather that the Queen should be made easy, and the nation satisfied, than that opportunities might be afforded him of adding either to his reputation or estate.

On the resignation of Sir George Rooke, Sir Cloudesley was made Rear-admiral of England, and appointed admiral and commander of the fleet. Sir Cloudesley was a Whig, but he had never omitted on all occasions to assert the high merit of Sir George Rooke, and to assist in maintaining against his adversaries the reputation he had so honourably and deservedly acquired.

The recapture of Gibraltar was ineffectually attempted by Philip King of Spain; and in the meanwhile the interests of Charles Duke of Austria, was promoted, by an expedition to the Mediterranean. The grand fleet,



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under the joint command of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and the Earl of Peterborough, was ordered thither. its force amounted to twenty-nine sail of line-of-battle ships, besides frigates, fire-ships, bombs, &c. They arrived in the river of Lisbon on the 11th of June, and there found Sir John Leake, in great need of supplies, which were afforded him by Sir Cloudesley; and on the 15th a council of war was held, to determine their future proceedings, in which it was resolved to put to sea, their force now amounting to forty-eight ships of the line, English and Dutch, and to place them in station between Cape Spartel and the bay of Cadiz, as was most likely to promote a junction between the Toulon and Brest squadrons. This arrangement being effected, Sir Cloudesley returned to Lisbon.

The Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, having successfully repulsed the operations of Philip King of Spain, for the recapture of Gibraltar, arrived in Portugal, and informed Charles, that the whole province of Catalonia, and the kingdom of Valencia, were attached to his interest. In consequence of this information, he urged the Earl of Peterborough to make another attempt on the city of Barcelona. The proposal was acceded to, but under very unfavourable auspices. The land officers were divided in their opinions; the troops were little more than equal to the garrison within the town; and the two chiefs, the Prince of Hesse, and the Earl of Peterborough, were not even on speaking terms; in short, Sir Cloudesley may be said to have been the sole foundation of whatever hopes could be entertained; his diligence in contriving from scanty sources the necessary supplies, and his sagacity and address in reconciling the differences of the chiefs, and advising the best measures for the prosecution of the siege, the promptitude of his assistance, and the confidence induced by the punctual performance of all his promises, tended most immediately to the successful result of the enterprise. Charles embarked on board the Ranelagh, amid the fleet sailed on the twenty-eighth of July.

A body of five thousand troops had embarked in the fleet at St. Helen's; these were now reinforced by two regiments of English dragoons. At Gibraltar, they embarked the English guards, and three old regiments, leaving in lieu two new-raised battalions. On the 11th of August, the fleet anchored in Altea bay, and a manifesto was published by the Earl of Peterborough, in the Spanish language, the effect of which on the inhabitants of the towns and surrounding country, produced a general acknowledgement of Charles as their lawful Sovereign. The town of Denia was seized and garrisoned by four hundred men, under the command of Major-general Ramos.

On the 22d the fleet arrived in the bay of Barcelona. and troops were disembarked to the eastward of the city, and Charles landed, amidst the acclamations of multitudes, who threw themselves at his feet, and exclaimed, "Long live the King!" But though the dispositions of the inhabitants was thus favourable to the cause of Charles, there still remained a material obstacle to his progress, in a garrison of five thousand men, under the Duke de Popoli, Vilasco, and other officers in the interest of Philip. After much difference of opinion, however, the siege was resolved on, and the gallant Prince of Hesse evinced himself, both in name and action, a volunteer in the service. The city was invested on one side by two thousand men from the fleet, exclusive of the marines, having been landed in addition to the regular land force, as also were six hundred Dutch, conditionally, that on the best intelligence of the French fleet being at sea, both seamen and marines should be re-embarked.

The fort at Montjuic being strongly situated on a hill that commanded the city, was necessarily the first object of attack. The outworks were taken by storm, in which the ardour and impetuosity of advance on the part of the Prince of Hesse cost him his life — he was shot through the body, and expired shortly after. The attack was renewed by the Earl of Peterborough — the fort was bombarded; and a shell falling into the magazine of powder, the whole was blown up, with the governor and chief officers. The garrison was panic-struck, and the surrender of the fort followed. The removal of this impediment left the way to the city clear and on the 9th of September, 1705, the trenches were opened, and batteries raised for fifty guns and twenty mortars; and after some reluctance evinced by King Charles, four hundred and twelve shells were thrown into the town by our bomb vessels — eight English and Dutch ships, commanded by Sir Stafford Fairborne, cannonaded it by sea — while the cannon from the fort and batteries did the like on shore. On the 23d, the viceroy desired to capitulate — the capitulation was signed on the twenty-eighth — the gate and bastion of St. Angelo were delivered up the same day, and the whole city in a few days after; and this was followed by the submission of the whole principality of Catalonia to King Charles. The following extract from a letter written by Sir Cloudesley to Prince George of Denmark, lord high admiral, will show how much the success of this expedition depended



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on the exertions of the fleet:-

“The 17th, our battery of thirty guns was opened, and fourteen of them began to play, with very great execution, upon that part of the wall where the breach was designed; the Earl of Peterborough came aboard, and represented to us the great necessity he laboured under for want of money for subsisting the army, and carrying on the siege of Barcelona, and the services in Catalonia, and, in very pressing circumstances, desired the assistance of the fleet; upon which our flag-officers came to the enclosed resolution: To lend the Earl of Peterborough forty thousand dollars, out of the contingent and short allowance-money of the fleet. The 19th, we came to these resolutions; viz. To remain longer before Barcelona than was agreed on at first; to give all the assistance in our power, and to lay a fire-ship a-shore with two hundred barrels of powder; and a further demand being made for guns for the batteries, we lauded fourteen more, which made up in all seventy-two guns, whereof thirty were twenty-four-pounders that we landed here, with their utensils and ammunition. We continue to bombard the town from the sea, as our small store of shells and the weather will permit. The 20th, a demand was made for more shot, and we called together the English flag-officers, and came to a resolution to supply all the batteries with all the twenty-four and twenty-eight pound shot, except a very small quality. which was accordingly done.

The 22d, the Prince of Lichtenstein and the Earl of Peterborough having desired, at the request of his Catholic Majesty, that the town of Lerida might, for Its security, be furnished with about fifty barrels of powder, and a further supply of shot being demanded for the batteries a-shore, it was considered at a council of war, and we came to the enclosed resolutions; viz, to furnish fifty barrels of powder for Lerida, and to send so many more twenty-four and eighteen-pound shot a-shore, as would reduce the English to thirty rounds, as likewise to be farther assistant upon timely notice.

The 23d, at night, our breach being made, and all things prepared for an attack, the town was again summoned, and they desired to capitulate, and hostages were exchanged; on our side, Brigadier Stanhope, and on the enemy's, the Marquis de Rivera; and all hostilities ceased.”

It having been resolved in a council of war, that Sir Cloudesley should proceed to England, he, on the 16th of October, passed the Straits with nineteen sail of the line, and arrived at Spithead on the 26th of November.

In the middle of the year 1706, a descent on the French coast was projected, in consequence of a representation made by the Marquis de Guiscard, a disgusted Frenchman; and a land force of ten thousand men was embarked on board the fleet commanded by Sir Cloudesley, and sailed from St. Helen's on the 10th of August; but the project failed, owing to the delay of the Dutch, as it is said, though it was sufficiently evident, when immediate operations were concerted, that the plan of the Marquis was too chimerical to proceed on. Information to that effect was accordingly transmitted home. In the meantime, letters had been received from the Earl of Galway, who, with twenty thousand men, had undertaken with success the siege of Alcantara, and had prosecuted the interests of Charles with such promptitude and ability, that he had gotten possession of Madrid; but the inactivity of Charles, and disgust among the chiefs, prevented his holding it, and he was now soliciting succours from home with the most earnest importunity. Thus, though the year was so far advanced, Sir Cloudesley was ordered to postpone his operations upon the coast of France, and immediately to proceed with his force to Lisbon, and there to regulate his proceedings by the urgency of affairs in Spain.

Sir Cloudesley, having set Guiscard and his officers on shore, sailed with the first fair wind, and towards the latter end of October reached Lisbon, after encountering much bad weather, with only four men of war and fifty transports, the rest of his fleet having been scattered, though fortunately recollected and at their place of destination before him.

On his arrival, Sir Cloudesley found the affairs of King Charles in such imminent jeopardy, from the want of concert among the chiefs who had the conduct of them, that he was at a loss how to proceed. The Portuguese ministry had given sufficient ground to doubt the sincerity of their friendship, and he resolved to send to King himself, to know in what manner he could best serve him. In the absence of this envoy, the King of Portugal died, and his successor, only eighteen years of age, was still more open to the influence of a ministry known to be privately in connection with the Court of Versailles. The English fleet was insulted in the Tagus, and Sir Cloudesley was induced to assure the ministry, who had made a flimsy excuse, that if the insult should be repeated, he would not wait orders from home, but take satisfaction from the mouth of his cannon.

Colonel Worsley, who had been sent by Sir Cloudesley to the King, returned with letters, by which the admiral



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was informed, that unless he could bring the land forces to the assistance of the King and the Earl of Galway, every thing must fall into confusion, and the advantages gained at the expense of so much blood and treasure, must inevitably be lost.

The shattered state of the fleet required time for repair, and the land forces were reduced from ten to scarcely six thousand effective men; the admiral, however, immediately took measures to afford the assistance required, and on the 28th of January, 1707, he arrived off Alicant. The Earl of Rivers, under whose command the land forces had embarked, proceeded immediately to Valencia, to assist at a general council of war, in which the opening rations of the ensuing campaign having been resolved on, and the army joined by the troops from England, Earl Rivers, disliking the country, returned with the admiral to Lisbon.

Sir Cloudesley arrived off Lisbon the 11th of March, and there received orders to prepare for an expedition against Toulon. Pursuant to his instructions, Sir Cloudesley sailed on the 10th of May for Alicant, where he joined Sir George Byng, who had been sent thither by Sir Cloudesley to aid the retreat of the English army under Lord Galway, the proceedings of that force having totally failed of success. He then sailed to the coast of Italy, and in the latter end of the month of June came to anchor between Nice and Antibes.

On the 29th he received the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene on board the Association, where he sumptuously entertained them. Sir Cloudesley Shovel, though he was not one of the politest officers we ever had, showed a great deal of prudence and addressing the magnificent entertainment he made upon this occasion. The duke, when he came on board the Association, found a guard of halberdiers, in new liveries, at the great cabin door. At the upper end of the table was set an armed chair, with a crimson velvet canopy. The table consisted of sixty covers, and everything was so well managed, that his royal highness could not forbear saying to the admiral at dinner, "If your excellency had paid me a visit at Turin, I could scarcely have treated you so well."

The enemy were strongly entrenched on the River Var, and their entrenchments were defended by eight hundred horse, and six battalions of foot; but Sir Cloudesley having observed it practicable to cannonade a part of the French lines, obtained the Duke's consent to undertake that service.

On the 1st of July, Sir Cloudesley ordered four English, and one Dutch man of war to enter the mouth of the Var, and commence the cannonade, while six hundred seamen were landed in open boats, under Sir John Norris, followed by the admiral himself. This unexpected attack put the enemy to flight, their arms were thrown down and the works abandoned.

The story is told in the London Gazette, No. 4352, dated Confederate Camp, July 14, N.S.

"The admiral himself followed Sir John Norris to the place of action, and observing the disorder of the enemy, commanded him to put to land, and flank them in their entrenchments. His men advanced in so undaunted a manner, that the enemy, fearing to be surrounded, marched out of their works, and retired with great precipitation. his royal Highness having received from the admiral an account, that we were in possession of the enemy's works, ordered his troops to pass the river, which they did with so great eagerness, that above a hundred men were driven down by the violence of the stream, and ten of them drowned; which was all the loss we sustained, in forcing a pass, where we expected the most vigorous opposition."



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Thus we see this whole affair was effected by English sailors.

On the 14th a council of war was held on board the Association, when it was resolved to proceed direct to Toulon. The Duke engaged to reach that place in six days, and the admiral having left ten or twelve frigates to interrupt the correspondence of the enemy with Italy, sailed with the fleet to the islands of Hieres.

But as in most instances of confederate war, so in this, the allies had separate interests to prosecute. The Duke of Savoy was full twelve days, instead of six, before the place was attacked, the blame he attributed to Prince Eugene, who commanded the Emperor's forces, and being directed by the Duke to possess himself of Mount St. Ann, refused, asserting that he was ordered not to expose them. Even the conduct of Sir Cloudesley did not escape the slur of his enemies (and what public character is without them?) but he had only to appeal to facts for his justification. It is said, that when Sir Cloudesley went first to compliment the Duke upon his safe arrival, and to receive his commands respecting the landing of artillery and ammunition, his royal Highness told him he was glad to see him at last, for the maritime powers had made him wait a long while; to which, Sir Cloudesley answered, that he had not delayed a moment since it was in his power to wait upon his royal highness. "I did not say you," he replied, smiling, "but the maritime powers have made me wait; for this expedition I concerted so long ago as 1693, and fourteen years is a long time to wait, Sir Cloudesley."

On the 15th of July the siege was formed, and in a council of war held on the 17th, Sir Cloudesley engaged to produce whatever assistance the fleet could afford. In pursuance of this engagement, Sir Cloudesley landed one hundred pieces of cannon from the fleet for the batteries, seamen to serve as gunners on shore, and every other requisite to the full extent of his power. The siege was carried on with the most flattering prospect of success, till the 4th of August, when a sally by the enemy forced the confederate troops from their works, and killed and wounded above eight hundred men. The enemy increased in numbers, and the superiority was found too great to be opposed with any chance of success.

On the 6th of August, the admiral was desired to embark the sick and wounded, and withdraw the cannon. On the 13th the Duke decamped; and in the meanwhile the town and harbour were bombarded, eight ships of the line were burnt and destroyed, several magazines blown up, and one hundred and sixty houses burned, in Toulon.

Such was the damage done the enemy; the allies were, however, compelled to raise the siege, and various reasons have been assigned as the cause; among which the following are stated as the most probable — the delay of its commencement, occasioned Bishop Burnet says, by an apprehension in the Duke of arriving at Toulon before the fleet, and thus suffering a want of provisions, though the gazettes of that time say, that had he arrived in time, he must have taken the place, and all the French magazines: the want of twelve thousand Imperialists, who had been sent to Naples; the disagreement between the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene: and the treacherous correspondence held by the Countess of Soissons, sister-in-law to the Prince, and a near relation of the Duke.

The failure of this expedition was a source of great mortification to Sir Cloudesley, who had entertained the most sanguine hopes of success, and had made the most strenuous exertions to insure it. But the period was now fast approaching, that was to relieve him from this and all his other cares. Finding that he could do no farther service, he left Sir Thomas Dukes, with thirteen sail of the line, and with the remainder of the fleet sailed from Gibraltar. On the 23d of October, he brought the fleet to in ninety fathom water. At six in the evening he sailed again, and soon after, with several other ships, made signals of distress; Sir George Byng, in the Royal Anne, was within less than half a mile to windward of him, and saw the breaches of the sea, and soon after the rocks called the Bishop and his Clerks, off Scilly, upon which the admiral struck, and in two minutes there was nothing seen of him or the ship. There were with him on board the Association, his sons-in-law, Sir John Narborough and James, his brother, Mr. Trelawney, eldest son to the Bishop of Winchester, and several other young gentlemen of quality.

The next day the body of Sir Cloudesley was thrown ashore upon the island of Scilly, and was found by some fishermen, who having taken a valuable emerald ring from his finger, stripped him and buried him in the sand. The ring being handed about, and becoming a subject of conversation on the island, was heard of by Mr. Paxton, purser of the Arundel, who having sought out the men, and desired a sight of the ring, declared it to be Sir Cloudesley Shovel's, and obliged them to show where they had deposited the body. The place having been pointed out, the body was taken up and conveyed on board the Arundel, in which it was brought to



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Plymouth, and from thence to the admiral's house in Soho. square. It was afterwards buried with great solemnity in Westminster Abbey.

At the time of his death, he was rear-admiral of England, admiral of the white, and commander-in-chief of her Majesty's fleet, one of the council to Prince George of Denmark, as Lord High Admiral of England, Elder Brother of the Trinity House, and one of the Governors of Greenwich Hospital.

In his public character he was zealous for the honour of his Sovereign, and the good of his country. As a private gentleman, his demeanour was affable to all; in his family he was affectionate, as the husband and the parent; as the master, mild and benevolent. And when Sir John Leake was made Rear-admiral of England as his successor, the Queen told him, she knew no man so fit to repair the loss of the ablest seaman in her service. Sir Cloudesley married the widow of his friend and patron, Sir John Narborough, who was the daughter of Captain Hill, by whom he left two daughters, co-heiresses: Elizabeth, the eldest, who was espoused to Robert Lord Romney, and afterwards to John Lord Carmichael, Earl of Hyndeford, and died at the Hague, in 1750; and Anne, who became the wife of the Honourable Robert Mansel, and after his death, married Robert Blackwood, Esq. of London, merchant. Lady Shovel had by her first husband, John, created a baronet while a child, and James Narborough, Esq. who, as we have already stated, were lost with Sir Cloudesley in the Association. She had also a daughter married to Sir Thomas D'Aeth, of Knowlton, in the county of Kent, baronet, who died in 1721. Lady Shovel survived Sir Cloudesley twenty-five years, and died at her house in Frith-street, Soho, the 15th of March, 1732, at a very advanced age.

A marble monument was erected in Westminster Abbey, by order of Queen Anne, to the memory of this distinguished commander, with the following inscription:—

"Sir Cloudesley Shovel, Knt. rear-admiral of Great Britain; admiral and commander-in-chief of the fleet; the just rewards of long and faithful services: he was deservedly beloved of his country, and esteemed, though dreaded, by the enemy who had often experienced his conduct and courage. Being shipwrecked on the rocks of Scilly, in his voyage from Toulon, the 22d of October, 1707, at night, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. His fate was lamented by all; but especially the seafaring part of the nation, to whom he was a worthy example. His body was flung on the shore, and buried with others in the sands; but being soon after taken up, was placed under this monument, which his royal mistress has caused to be erected, to commemorate his steady loyalty, and extraordinary virtues."



"A victory described in detail is indistinguishable from a defeat."

— Jean-Paul Sartre





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1717

April 26, night: It was a dark and stormy night. Shipwreck of the pirate [Samuel Bellamy](#)'s prize ships *Whydah* and *Mary Anne* on Cape Cod.

CAPE COD: In the year 1717, a noted pirate named Bellamy was led on to the bar off Wellfleet by the captain of a *snow* which he had taken, to whom he had offered his vessel again if he would pilot him into Provincetown Harbor. Tradition says that the latter threw over a burning tar-barrel in the night, which drifted ashore, and the pirates followed it. A storm coming on, their whole fleet was wrecked, and more than a hundred dead bodies lay along the shore. Six who escaped shipwreck were executed. "At times to this day" (1793), says the historian of Wellfleet, "there are King William and Queen Mary's coppers picked up, and pieces of silver called cob-money. The violence of the seas moves the sands on the outer bar, so that at times the iron caboose of the ship [that is, Bellamy's] at low ebbs has been seen." Another tells us that, "For many years after this shipwreck, a man of a very singular and frightful aspect used every spring and autumn to be seen travelling on the Cape, who was supposed to have been one of Bellamy's crew. The presumption is that he went to some place where money had been secreted by the pirates, to get such a supply as his exigencies required. When he died, many pieces of gold were found in a girdle which he constantly wore."

As I was walking on the beach here in my last visit, looking for shells and pebbles, just after that storm which I have mentioned as moving the sand to a great depth, not knowing but I might find some cob-money, I did actually pick up a French crown piece, worth about a dollar and six cents, near high-water mark, on the still moist sand, just under the abrupt, caving base of the bank. It was of a dark slate color, and looked like a flat pebble, but still bore a very distinct and handsome head of Louis XV., and the usual legend on the reverse, *Sit Nomen Domini Benedictum* (Blessed be the Name of the Lord), a pleasing sentiment to read in the sands of the sea-shore, whatever it might be stamped on, and I also made out the date, 1741. Of course, I thought at first that it was that same old button which I have found so many times, but my knife soon showed the silver. Afterward, rambling on the bars at low tide, I cheated my companion by holding up round shells (*Scutellæ*) between my fingers, whereupon he quickly stripped and came off to me.

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The family of Cape Cod's [Samuel Bellamy](#) probably had originated in the Devonshire region of south-western England and may have been one of those families of peasants displaced by the enclosure of common lands. Possibly his family had been involved in Monmouth's failed rebellion of 1685 or had held sympathies for James II (VII of Scotland), overthrown in 1689. Whatever Bellamy's antecedents, he had been on Cape Cod in the summer of 1715 when a hurricane had sunk a dozen Spanish treasure galleons off the coast of Florida.



There had been a rush of adventurers headed for Florida to search out the remains and Bellamy had persuaded a local goldsmith, Palgrave Williams, to bear the cost of fitting out a vessel. Having failed to recover anything from any of the sunken treasure ships, Bellamy and Williams had gone “on the account” –had recourse to straightforward piracy– and in the course of 15 months had captured more than 50 ships including the recently commissioned *Whydah*, a 100-foot, 3-masted galley. The vessel's name, after a harbor on the Guinea coast of Africa, bespoke her involvement in the slave trade. Bellamy and Williams had taken the ship after it had disposed of its black cargo in the Caribbean, as it was heading out for England with a payload of ivory, indigo, sugar, and coins. Late April 1717 had found Bellamy and Williams back in northern waters with a fleet of five ships. Palgrave Williams, in one of the vessels, had put into port at [Block Island](#) to visit relatives,



while Bellamy aboard the *Whydah* continued towards Cape Cod with the other four. We have no idea what



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drew Bellamy back to the Cape of his origin but folklore tells us there was an attractive local maid, Maria Hallet, to be impressed by the dashing pirate and his new pelf. The pirate flotilla was struck by a ferocious storm, complete with blinding rain, 70-mph winds, and crashing waves rising as high as 40 feet, during which the *Whydah* rammed a sandbar and broke her back. Of the other ships, the *Mary Anne* was run aground while the *Fisher* and the *Anne* survived but were severely damaged. Only nine men of the *Whydah* and *Mary Anne* would be still alive by the next morning, two of those being from the crew of 146 that had served on the *Whydah*. Eight would be brought to trial on charges of piracy and six would [hang](#) in chains on the admiralty mudflats of Boston Harbor (these mudflats were on Charlestown side, since on Boston side the depth of the water was 17 feet even at the lowest of the low tides, ergo no convenient mudflats at all). The 7th, *Mary Anne* survivor Thomas South, and *Whydah* survivor Thomas Davis, a Welsh carpenter, were allowed to have been pressed — they were sailors with special skills whom the pirates had forced into service. John Julian, an American native boy survivor who had been impressed to pilot the *Whydah* through the local shoals, we suspect would have been sold into slavery. Almost immediately the Governor sent Captain Cyprian Southack to the wreck site to report on the potential for a salvage operation, “mooncussers,” the wreck scavengers of Cape Cod, had already been working around the clock and within a couple of weeks the constantly moving sands had buried the *Whydah*.

PIRACY

The more than 100,000 artifacts recovered from the rediscovered wreck of the *Whydah* since 1984 constitute the world’s only authenticated pirate treasure. This trove includes more than 2,000 coins, the majority of them Spanish silver Reales “pieces of eight.” The hoard includes denominations which date from the 1670s to 1715. There are nine Spanish gold Escudos, better known as “Dobloons,” which date from 1688 to 1712 and include denominations of 1, 2 and 8 Escudos. Some of the gold coins were minted in Mexico, others perhaps in Lima. A smattering of British and Scottish coins indicate capture of English and Scottish vessels. The British coins include a Charles II crown dated 1667 and a couple of William III half crowns dated 1697. There is a solitary Scottish bawbee coin but none of the coins recovered were French. Other precious materials include fine examples of Akan gold jewelry and a number of gold bars and ingots. The pieces of African jewelry recovered from the *Whydah* amount to the earliest known collection of this art but much of it had been broken up, and the gold bars and ingots bear score marks testifying to the manner in which the plunder had been apportioned among the members of the pirate band. The weapons recovered include elegant pistols. There are nautical instruments which probably had been seized from law-abiding master mariners. Leather goods also survived in the sands of the seabed and include a pouch, and a shoe and stocking last worn almost 300 years ago. The discovery of a teapot with a human shoulder bone wedged into it testifies to the terror of the storm.

While walking the sand cliffs of Wellfleet on or about October 11, 1849, Henry Thoreau would find a silver French coin in the sand and then, impishly, exercise his walking companion Ellery Channing with delusions of pirate treasure. The date on Thoreau’s coin was, however, 1741, indicating that it had not even been minted until a generation after this pirate was already drowned.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

April 29, day: Learning of the wreck of Captain [Samuel Bellamy](#)’s *Whydah* on the shoals off Cape Cod, Captain [Palsgrave Williams](#) sailed from [Block Island](#) to the Cape Cod waters to see whether he could be of any assistance to his fellow [pirates](#). He could not, as those of Bellamy’s crew who had not drowned during the storm had been captured at Eastham Tavern by Deputy Sheriff Doane and a posse, and would be [hanged](#) in Boston.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

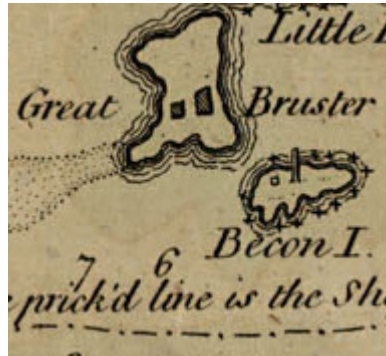
SURPRISE!

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1718

November 3, Monday: Five people drowned near Great Brewster Island.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



George Worthylake (or Worthilake), who had been brought up on George’s Island in Boston Harbor, lived in the lighthouse on Little Brewster Island with his wife Ann and their daughters Ruth and Ann. They had a black slave there named Shadwell. On this day George Worthylake sailed to Boston to collect his pay, and on his way back sailed to Lovell’s Island, where he and his wife Ann and their daughter Ruth boarded a sloop heading for Boston Light. A friend, John Edge, and a servant, George Cutler, were accompanying them. Just after noon, this sloop came to anchor and Worthylake’s black slave Shadwell paddled out in a canoe to fetch them from the sloop to their island home. The daughter Ann Worthylake and a friend of hers, Mary Thompson, watched from shore as all six of them seated themselves in this canoe. Suddenly, the two girls on shore saw them “swimming or floating on the water, with their boat Oversett.” The body of George Cutler would not be recovered. The bodies of the Worthylakes would be buried beneath a triple headstone in Copp’s Hill Burying Ground in Boston’s North End while the body of John Edge would be placed elsewhere. Perhaps the body of the slave Shadwell was buried also –somewhere or other– since it was in fact recovered from the water of the harbor, although of course nothing has been said of this.



It would be reported in the Boston News Letter that “On Monday last the 3d Currant an awful and Lamentable Providence fell out here, Mr. George Worthylake, (Master of the Light-House upon the Great Brewster [called Beacon-Island] at the Entrance of the Harbour of Boston) Anne his Wife, Ruth their Daughter, George Cutler, a Servant, Shadwell their Negro Slave, and Mr. John Edge a Passenger; being on the Lord’s Day here at Sermon, and going home in a Sloop, dropt Anchor near the Landing place, and all got into a little Boat or Cannoo, designing to go on Shoar, but by Accident it overwhelmed, so that they were Drowned, and all found



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and Interred except George Cutler.”

[Benjamin Franklin](#), 12 at the time and newly apprenticed by his father Josiah to his elder brother [James Franklin](#) in the printing business in Boston, wrote a broadside ballad “A Lighthouse Tragedy” which was duly published.⁴ Franklin’s father’s response to his younger son’s printed ballad would be a caution: “...verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet...” The poem sometimes attributed to young Franklin on the drowning, however, the one beginning, “Oh! George, This wild November” is nothing more than a 19th-Century forgery, or perhaps charitably we might offer that it is someone’s belated imitation of what young Franklin might have dashed off in the 18th Century.

The “very solemn” funeral sermon was delivered by the Reverend Cotton Mather before the father, wife, and daughter were “carried all together to the grave.” (“I entertain the flock with as pungent and useful a discourse as I can.”)

1729

January 19, day: William Congreve was involved in a London carriage accident and died of injuries. The remains would be interred at Westminster Abby.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1737

A maid-servant accidentally struck Erasmus Darwin on the middle of his head. Ever afterward a white lock of hair would mark this spot. (Another undated boyhood incident: while fishing with his brothers, he was put into a bag with only his feet out and as a result almost drowned.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

4. The gazette of Boston, known as the [News Letter](#), was being put out of course by its postmaster, John Campbell, for only the postmaster could read all the mail, and thus know what the news was(!), but in this year Campbell had lost his postmastership to William Brooker and yet had refused to turn over the gazette to this successor — who had thus been forced to begin a separate publication. Brooker had titled this new 2d paper the Boston [Gazette](#) and had arranged for it to be issued through the printshop of [James Franklin](#).



SURPRISE!

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1764

November 5, day: “Pope’s Day” in [Boston](#). As usual, gangs of toughs from Boston’s North End were battling it out with gangs of toughs from Boston’s South End, for possession of each other’s offensive effigies of the Catholic Pontiff. However, on this Pope’s Day, in the struggle in the streets, the carriage containing one of the Pope effigies rolled over the head of a boy. Here is an excerpt from the diary of John Rowe (1715-1787):⁵

A sorrowful accident happened this forenoon at the North End. the wheel of the carriage that the Pope was fixed on run over a Boy’s head & he died instantly. The Sheriff, Justices, Officers of the Militia were ordered to destroy both S^o & North End Popes. In the afternoon they got the North End Pope pulled to pieces. they went to the S^o End but could not Conquer upon which the South End people brought out their pope & went in Triumph to the Northward and at the Mill Bridge a Battle begun between the people of Both Parts of the Town. The North End people having repaired their pope, but the South End people got the Battle (many were hurt & bruised on both sides) & Brought away the North End pope & burnt Both of them at the Gallows on the Neck. Several thousand people following them, hallowing &c.

Hey, these good Protestant Bostonians hadn’t mean to hurt anyone, they had merely wanted to ridicule and offend Boston’s Catholics and defend the honor and reputation of their own neighborhoods, was all. Perhaps, we may assume, the dead five-year-old child had himself been a Protestant, an acolyte caught in the act of assimilating the imperatives of cultural chauvinism and religious prejudice.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Elisha Reynolds Potter (Senior) was born in [Little Rest](#) (now [Kingston](#)), [Rhode Island](#). He would learn the blacksmith’s trade and engage in agricultural pursuits, serve as a private on the side of the insurgents in the Revolutionary War, attend Plainfield Academy, study law, be admitted to the bar about 1789, and commence practice in South Kingstown Township. He would be elected in 1793 to the Rhode Island House of Representatives, and would serve as speaker in 1795 and 1796. He would be elected in 1796 as a Federalist to the 4th federal Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Benjamin Bourn, and would serve during the 5th federal Congress until his resignation in 1797. He would go again to the Rhode Island House of Representatives in 1798 and would serve as speaker in 1802 and from 1806 to 1808. He would be elected to the 11th, 12th, and 13th federal Congresses (March 4, 1809-March 3, 1815). He would go again to the Rhode Island House of Representatives in 1816 and would serve until 1835, except for the year 1818 during which he would make an unsuccessful bid to become the state governor.

5. It was from this sort of hearty warfare between arbitrary groups, I would suggest, that the American system of political parties has evolved. The concept that one ought to belong to the political party which espoused the attitudes with which one agreed, and ought to change parties if one’s attitudes happened to change, seems to be a later finesse on the spirit of faction, which originated in an attitude of “Let’s see who pushes, and who gets pushed.”



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1771

In the neighborhood of Paris where the Madeleine now stands, an artilleryman tried to turn a corner at top speed of 2 or 3 mph with the 2d version of Nicholas Cugnot's 1769 tricycle steam contraption for hauling a 9-ton artillery piece, on which no arrangement whatever had been made for a braking system. The monster flopped onto its side — design flaw in the French steering mechanism! For the next almost 30 years this massive device would stand unused.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1786

September: Dr. Zuriel Waterman, 30 years of age, and his brother George Waterman, attempted to rescue two men who had passed out in a cistern in [Cranston, Rhode Island](#). The result was that the doctor also was overcome by the noxious fumes, and died.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1792

November 20, day: The Widow Wells was disconsolate because "her son just falling into a Cistern of boiling dregs in the Still-House & taken out dead."

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1795

André Michaux set off on his final American journey. He traveled up the Catawba River, passing through the territory now occupied by Knoxville, Nashville, and Danville, Kentucky. He was injured in a fall from his horse.

BOTANIZING

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1796

André Michaux was shipwrecked during his return from his American journeys to France and lost all his personal property. Nearly all his collections, however, were salvaged. He would be received with honor and distinction but no considerable sum of money, although they did pay him a small proportion of his 7 years' arrears of salary. He found that many of his American trees had been sent by Marie Antoinette to her father's gardens at Schonbrunn.

BOTANIZING
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1800

➡ August 8, Friday: The USS *Insurgente*, a 36-gun frigate with approximately 340 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

LOST AT SEA



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

➡ August 20, Wednesday: The USS *Pickering*, a 14-gun brig with approximately 105 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1805

February 5, Tuesday: William Wordsworth's brother John drowned in the shipwreck of the Earl of Abergavenny, which he captained. As attested in Wordsworth's grieving letters at the time ("Our loss is one which never can be made up," "my loss is great, and irreparable," "there is something cut out of my life which cannot be restored," "the set is now broken") and "Elegiac Stanzas" (composed summer 1806), this was one of the defining moments in his personal and poetic life.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1807

When a ferry sank in New-York harbor, 30 passengers drowned.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

- A.J.P. Taylor



1813

The Spanish ship Sagunto was shipwrecked near Smuttynose Island in the Isles of Shoals.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1814

→ October 10, Monday: The USS *Wasp*, an 18-gun sloop of war with approximately 140 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

LOST AT SEA



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1815

→ James Riley and other sailors were shipwrecked on the African coast at what is now Mauritania, and were made prisoners by a band of Bedouin. A Moroccan trader, Sidi Hamet (Ahmed), would ransom them.⁶

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

6. Later on, when Abraham Lincoln would be asked in 1860 what books had influenced him, he would mention the narrative to be written by James Riley, and Riley's appreciation of this generous unexpected gesture by Sidi Hamet.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

→ July 14, Friday: The USS *Epervier*, an 18-gun sloop of war with approximately 128 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

LOST AT SEA



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

6 day 14 of 7 M / The people speak much in favor of our Meeting Yesterday, & from the feeling manner in which some who may be denominated the World people speak of it - I am ready [to] hope it was a season wherein Truth was Triumphant & that some lasting benefit may result to some minds, which however may not be seen in many Days

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1818

→ November 23, Monday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

2nd day 23rd of 11th M 1818 / I Watched last night with Isaac Mitchell who the 14th inst was caught by the spindle of his Wind Mill, by the Sertout [a "surtout" was a man's long overcoat] which twisted him round many times & tore all his cloaths from his body except his stockings & the wristbands of his shirt & left him naked, so great were his bruises, that his life has been dispaired of till within two days, he rested as comfortable as a person in his brused condition could last night, & there is now hopes that he may again be restored to usefulness.- John Comly had a meeting on Connanicut today which I understand was large & very satisfactory

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1821



There at Chelmsford MA [David Henry Thoreau](#) learned to walk before he chopped off his right big toe (presumably with the sort of thick-bladed hatchet used for splitting kindling):



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Per a later journal entry: “Chelmsford, till March, 1821. (Last charge in Chelmsford about middle of March, 1821.) Aunt Sarah taught me to walk there when fourteen months old. Lived next the meeting-house, where they kept the powder in the garret. Father kept shop and painted signs, etc.” That house next door to the meeting-house was the house bought in 1799 by David Henry’s grandfather, which is now the east wing of the Colonial Inn. “Aunt Sarah” was Sarah Thoreau, John’s sister who was working in [Concord](#) as a seamstress. It was of course utterly dangerous for the family to be living so near to the town’s stored explosives.

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU
JOHN THOREAU

Here is some more of what Thoreau recorded, on January 7, 1856, that he had been told about that early period:

[January 7, 1856] They tell how I swung on a gown [?] on the stair way when I was at Chelmsford – the gown [?] gave way; I fell & fainted & it took 2 pails of water to bring me to – for I was remarkable for holding my breath – in those cases – [Aunt L. tells how (a 4th of July?) I stood at the window there & exclaimed – the bells ring, & the guns fire, & the pee-pe you”] Mother tried to milk the cow which father took on trial – but she kicked at her & spilt the milk (They say a dog had bitten her teats) Proctor laughed at her as a city girl & then he tried but the cow kicked him over – & he finished by beating her with his cow-hide shoe – Capt. Richardson milked her warily – standing up. Father came home – & thought he would “brustle right up to her” for she needed much to be milked but suddenly she lifted her leg & “struck him fair & square right in the muns” – knocked him flat & broke the bridge of his nose – which shows it yet. He distinctly heard her hoof rattle on his nose. This “started the claret” & without staunching the blood he at once drove her home to the man he had her of – She ran at some young women by the way – who saved themselves by getting over the wall in haste. Father complained of the powder in the M.H. garret at Town meeting but it did not get moved while we lived there. Here he painted over his old signs for guide-boards – & got a fall when painting Hale’s (?) factory. Here the bladder John was



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

playing with burst on the hearth – The cow came into the entry after pumpkins – I cut my toe – & was knocked over by a hen with chickens &c &c. Mother tells how at the Brick House we each had a little garden a few feet square – & I came in one day having found a potatoe just sprouted which by her advice I planted in my garden – Ere long John came in with a potatoe which he had found & had it planted in his garden – “O mother I have found a potatoe all sprouted. I mean to put it in my garden.” &c Even Helen is said to have found one – But next I came crying – that some body had got my potatoe – &c &c – but it was restored to me as the youngest & original discoverer if not inventor of the potatoe – & it grew in *my* garden – & finally its crop was dug by myself & yielded a dinner for the family. I was kicked down by a passing ox – had a chicken given me by Lidy – Hannah – & peeped through the key hole at it – Caught an eel with John – Went to bed with new boots on – and after with cap – “Rasselas” given me. &c &c – Asked P. Wheeler – “Who owns all the land?” Asked mother having got the medal for geography, “Is Boston in Concord” – If I had gone to Miss Wheeler a little longer should have received the chief prize book – “Henry Lord Mayor” – &c &c



November 1, Thursday: [George Gordon, Lord Byron](#) arrived in [Pisa](#). (The Gambas had preceded him during August.)

When the Lake Erie Steamboat Company’s Great Lakes steamer *Walk-in-the-Water*, 1st steamship to have plied the Great Lakes waterways on a regular schedule, ran aground during a storm in Lake Erie off Buffalo, there were no injuries. Judge Samuel Wilkinson made a deal with a representative of the steamboat company: he would see to it that the boat was freed by May 1st of the following year or forfeit \$150 for each day that deadline was missed, whereas if that deadline was met, the company would commission the building of a new boat in Buffalo.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day 11th M 1st 1821 / Our meeting was very small owing to its being a Stormy day & the Quarterly Meeting that is now Sitting at Swansey. – to me it was a season of wading but by keeping under the exercise & a pretty close watch (for me) I thought the meeting was favord in closing solidly. – It would have been greatful to have been able to go to the Quarterly meeting & from thence to [Providence](#) to meet with the School committee, but So is my way hedged about, in such away that much travelling is not proper for me – may, I however cultivate in my mind a spirit of gratitude for favors vouchsafed & humbly hope for more.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1823

February 11, Tuesday: During the hours of darkness [disowned Friend George Pollard, Jr.](#) had kept his whaling vessel moving along despite the fact that no stars were visible — and despite the fact that the [Two Brothers](#) was being sailed through a poorly charted quadrant of the Pacific Ocean some 600 miles northwest of the Hawaiian chain known to contain shoals. Due to this extremely poor judgment, off French Frigate Shoals his vessel ripped its bottom on a reef. The captain did not want to abandon ship but was brought along by his crew into their small boats, and the following morning all lives would be saved by another [Nantucket](#) whaler. (Captain Pollard had been in charge during the shipwreck of the *Essex*. This would be, therefore, the final time he would be entrusted with a vessel — he would finish out his life as a night watchman. [Herman Melvill\(e\)](#) would seek him out in Nantucket for a sympathetic interview, and in 2011 the wreck of the [Two Brothers](#) would be explored by skindivers: its anchors, its trying vessels for whale blubber, etc.)

LOST AT SEA



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1824

March 22, Monday: Following the munitions explosion during the previous sunset, much of the city of Cairo, [Egypt](#) burned. It would be estimated that some 5,000 humans and 4,000 horses lost their lives in the massive detonation and subsequent general conflagration.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1825



William Wells Brown would have been about eleven years of age during this year, so I am taking the liberty of introducing the following undated material about an unfortunate accident and its severe consequences, from his NARRATIVE, at this point, for lack of any more precise guidelines:

My master had family worship, night and morning. At night the slaves were called in to attend; but in the mornings they had to be at their work, and master did all the praying. My master and mistress were great lovers of mint julep, and every morning, a pitcher-full was made, of which they all partook freely, not excepting little master William. After drinking freely all round, they would have family worship, and then breakfast. I cannot say but I loved the julep as well as any of them, and during prayer was always careful to seat myself close to the table where it stood, so as to help myself when they were all busily engaged in their devotions. By the time prayer was over, I was about as happy as any of them. A sad accident happened one morning. In helping myself, and at the same time keeping an eye on my old mistress, I accidentally let the pitcher fall upon the floor, breaking it in pieces, and spilling the contents. This was a bad affair for me; for as soon as prayer was over, I was taken and severely chastised.

My master's family consisted of himself, his wife, and their nephew, William Moore. He was taken into the family when only a few weeks of age. His name being that of my own, mine was changed for the purpose of giving precedence to his, though I was his senior by ten or twelve years. The plantation being four miles from the city, I had to drive the family to church. I always dreaded the approach of the Sabbath; for, during service, I was obliged to stand by the horses in the hot, broiling sun, or in the rain, just as it happened.

One Sabbath, as we were driving past the house of D.D. Page, a gentleman who owned a large baking establishment, as I was sitting upon the box of the carriage, which was very much elevated, I saw Mr. Page pursuing a slave around the yard with a long whip, cutting him at every jump. The man soon escaped from the yard, and was followed by Mr. Page. They came running past us, and the slave, perceiving that he would be overtaken, stopped suddenly, and Page stumbled over him, and falling on the stone pavement, fractured one of his legs, which crippled him for life. The same gentleman, but a short time previous, tied up a woman of his, by the name of Delphia, and whipped her nearly to death; yet he was a deacon in the Baptist church, in good and regular standing. Poor Delphia! I was well acquainted with her, and called to see her while upon her sick bed; and I shall never forget her appearance. She was a member of the same church with her master.

Soon after this, I was hired out to Mr. Walker, the same man whom I have mentioned as having carried a gang of slaves down the river on the steamboat *Enterprise*. Seeing me in the capacity of a steward on the boat, and thinking that I would make a good hand to take care of slaves, he determined to have me for that



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purpose; and finding that my master would not sell me, he hired me for the term of one year.

When I learned the fact of my having been hired to a negro speculator, or a "soul driver," as they are generally called among slaves, no one can tell my emotions. Mr. Walker had offered a high price for me, as I afterwards learned, but I suppose my master was restrained from selling me by the fact that I was a near relative of his. On entering the service of Mr. Walker, I found that my opportunity of getting to a land of liberty was gone, at least for the time being. He had a gang of slaves in readiness to start for New Orleans, and in a few days we were on our journey. I am at a loss for language to express my feelings on that occasion. Although my master had told me that he had not sold me, and Mr. Walker had told me that he had not purchased me, I did not believe them; and not until I had been to New Orleans, and was on my return, did I believe that I was not sold.

There was on the boat a large room on the lower deck, in which the slaves were kept, men and women, promiscuously – all chained two and two, and a strict watch kept that they did not get loose; for cases have occurred in which slaves have got off their chains, and made their escape at landing-places, while the boats were taking in wood;– and with all our care, we lost one woman who had been taken from her husband and children, and having no desire to live without them, in the agony of her soul jumped overboard, and drowned herself. She was not chained.

It was almost impossible to keep that part of the boat clean. On landing at Natchez, the slaves were all carried to the slave-pen, and there kept one week, during which time several of them were sold. Mr. Walker fed his slaves well. We took on board at St. Louis several hundred pounds of bacon (smoked meat) and corn-meal, and his slaves were better fed than slaves generally were in Natchez, so far as my observation extended.

At the end of a week, we left for New Orleans, the place of our final destination, which we reached in two days. Here the slaves were placed in a negro-pen, where those who wished to purchase could call and examine them. The negro-pen is a small yard, surrounded by buildings, from fifteen to twenty feet wide, with the exception of a large gate with iron bars. The slaves are kept in the buildings during the night, and turned out into the yard during the day. After the best of the stock was sold at private sale at the pen, the balance were taken to the Exchange Coffee-House Auction Rooms, kept by Isaac L. McCoy, and sold at public auction. After the sale of this lot of slaves, we left New Orleans for St. Louis.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

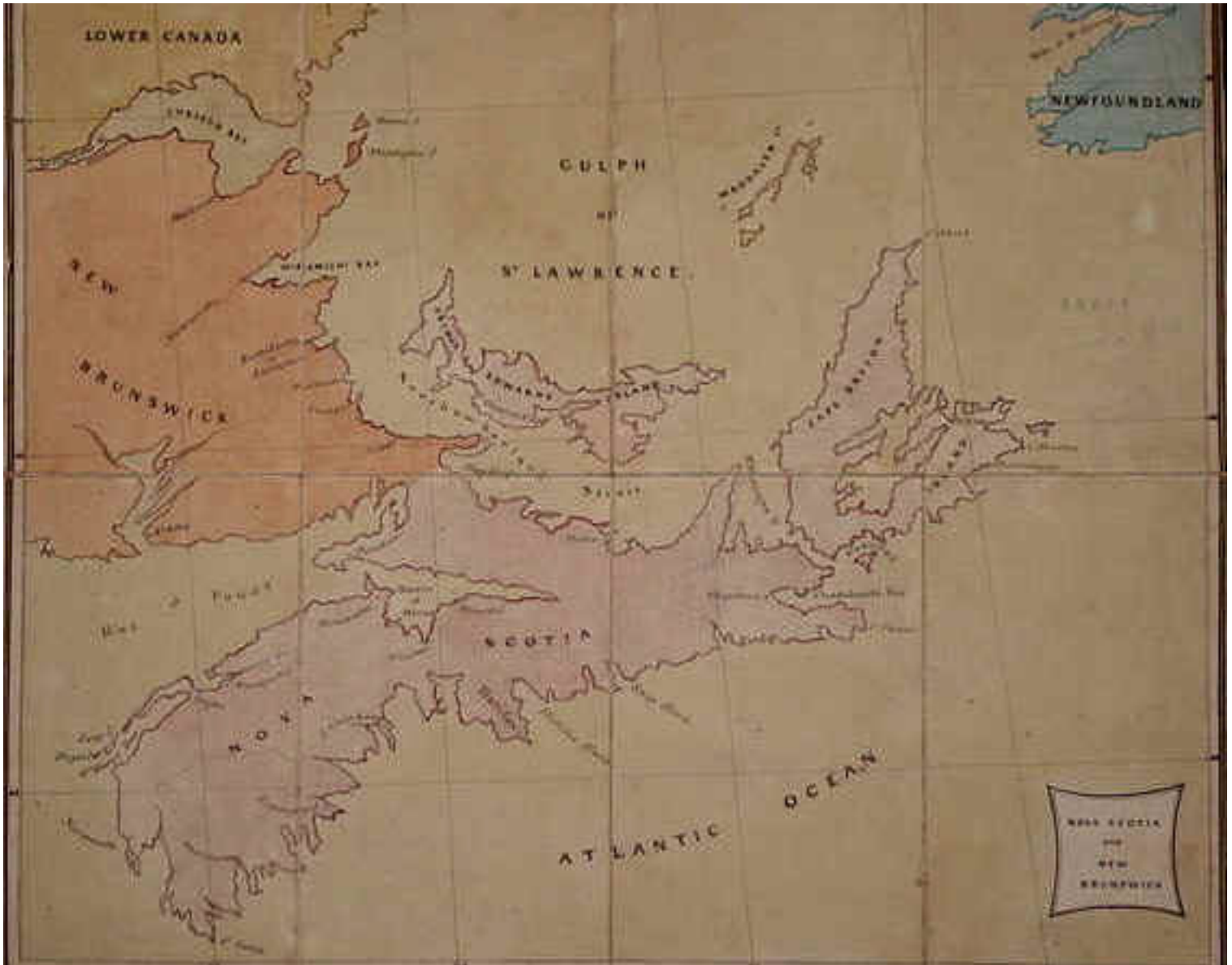
SURPRISE!

November 7, Monday: Feierlichster Tag, for chorus by [Johann Nepomuk Hummel](#) to words of Riemer was performed for the initial time, in Weimar as part of celebrations for the 50th anniversary of [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#)'s service to the Weimar court.

There was an enormous forest fire in New Brunswick, Canada.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

This was Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as of 1820:



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1826

March: Prior to the successful leap of the Genesee Falls in Rochester, New York by Sam Patch during November 1829, three persons had been accidentally swept over the brink, one during this month, one during January 1827, and one during November 1827. (Of those three unfortunates, only one would live to tell the tale.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

- A.J.P. Taylor



Spring: Both legs of a relative of Samuel Ringgold Ward were broken, when a tree he was chopping fell on him.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

[M]y father had a cousin, in New Jersey, who had escaped from slavery. In the spring of 1826 he was cutting down a tree, which accidentally fell upon him, breaking both thighs. While suffering from this accident his master came and took him back into Maryland. He continued lame a very great while, without any apparent signs of amendment, until one fine morning he was gone! They never took him again.



Our national birthday, the 4th of July, Tuesday: Construction was initiated at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on the Main Line Canal.

The cornerstone was laid for the first lock of the Oswego Canal.

About noon, Stephen Collins Foster was born in Lawrenceville (Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania, the 9th child of William Barclay Foster, a businessman, and Eliza Clayland Tomlinson, daughter of a fairly well-off farmer.

Giacomo Meyerbeer and Eugene Scribe met in Paris to discuss Robert le diable for perhaps the 1st time.

English newspapers picked up and translated, word for word, the hoax or invention that had appeared in the Journal du Commerce de Lyon about an Englishman, one Roger Dodsworth, who had apparently been frozen in a Mount Saint Gothard glacier since an avalanche in 1654, and had on July 4th been recovered and reanimated "by the usual remedies" by a Dr. Hotham of Northumberland. Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft

SURPRISE!

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[Shelley](#) read this newspaper account and by October would produce her THE REANIMATED MAN.



Isabella (Sojourner Truth), who would have been approximately 29 years old, had in this year borne another daughter, whom she had named Sophia, who would need to grow up laboring as an indentured servant, by the husband Thomas to whom she had been assigned by her master who would not admit that he was a husband. She had once again increasing the prosperity of the master race! The remaining slaves of New York State were to be freed one year from this date, and John Dumont had solemnly promised Isabella in some earlier period that he would free her and her husband “a year early” and set them up in a nearby log cabin. So it had come time for the white race to be true to its word. However, since the master had made that commitment to this enslaved woman, she had carelessly lost a finger while working for him — so he figured she still owed him

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

some work. Fair's fair, right? No freedom, no log cabin, not yet, work some more. (But maybe later I'll be able to keep my promise.)



The newspapers of 1826 abounded with descriptions of solemn odes, processions, orations, toasts, and other such commemoratives of July 4th, the 50th anniversary of the [Declaration of Independence](#). One reflection of the public conception of the Declaration was Royall Tyler's "Country Song for the Fourth of July," a poem that describes a New England celebration of the [Brother Jonathan](#) type, where neighbors gather for food, fun, and festivities. A clear view of just how the political ideals of the Declaration were received by the masses shines through Tyler's rhymed directions for the country dance. Here is how his dance appeared in an 1841 publication (although Tyler, who would die on August 26, 1826 from cancer of the face, could only have composed this in a considerably earlier timeframe).

Squeak the fife and beat the drum,
 Independence day is come!!
 Let the roasting pig be bled,
 Quick twist off the cockerel's head.
 Quickly rub the pewter platter.
 Heap the nutcakes, fried in butter.
 Set the cups, and beaker glass,
 The Pumpkin and the apple sauce.

Send the keg to shop for brandy;
 Maple sugar we have handy,
 Independent, staggering Dick,
 A noggin mix of swingeing thick,
 Sal, put on your russet skirt,
 Jotham, get your **boughten** shirt,
 To-day we dance to tiddle diddle.
 —Here comes Sambo with his fiddle;

Sambo, take a dram of whiskey,
 And play up Yankee doodle frisky.
 Moll, come leave your witched tricks,
 And let us have a reel of six;
 Father and mother shall make two;
 Sal, Moll, and I, stand all a-row,
 Sambo, play and dance with quality;
 This is the day of blest equality,

Father and **mother** are but **men**,
 And Sambo — is a citizen.
 Come foot it, Sal, — Moll, figure in.
 And, mother, you dance up to him;



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Now saw fast as e'er you can do
And father, you cross o'er to Sambo,
—Thus we dance, and thus we play,
On glorious Independence Day. —

[2 more verses in like manner]

In Salem, Massachusetts, 4th-of-July orator the Reverend [Henry Root Colman](#) delivered the necessary holiday oration. This would be printed by the town as AN ORATION DELIVERED IN SALEM, JULY 4, 1826, AT THE REQUEST OF THE TOWN, ON THE COMPLETION OF A HALF CENTURY SINCE THE DECLARATION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. Meanwhile, elsewhere, 4th-of-July orator [George Bancroft](#) was alerting an audience to the fact that his attitudes about government were coming to tend toward the democratic.

On this 50th anniversary of our American independence, which at the time we were referring to as our “Jubilee of Freedom” event, on the 22d birthday of [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), both former President [Thomas Jefferson](#) and former President John Adams died.⁷ This was taken at the time to constitute a sign of national favor from Heaven, although why death ought to be regarded as a sign of favor remains untheorized — perhaps once again we Americans were “pushing the envelope” of what it is to be a human being. At any rate, this coincidence would become quite the topic for conversation in our American republic.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS: [Jefferson](#): “Is it the 4th?” —Ah.” John Adams: “Thomas Jefferson still survives” (actually Jefferson had died at 12:50PM and then Adams died at 5:30PM.)

Even before news of Jefferson’s demise had reached Washington DC, Mayor Roger C. Weightman was having his final letter read aloud at that city’s Independence Day national-birthday festivities. The most stirring words in that former president’s missive –his assertion that the mass of mankind had not been born “with saddles on their backs” nor a favored few “booted and spurred” to “ride” them– had of course originated in the speech delivered by the leveler Colonel Richard Rumbold on the scaffold moments before his execution for treason against the English monarchy, at the conclusion of the English Civil War, in the Year of Our Lord 1685.⁸ Those who noticed that the former President had intentionally or unknowingly been borrowing sentiments did

7. At any rate, this coincidence would become quite the topic for conversation in our American republic. Refer to L. H. Butterfield, "The Jubilee of Independence, July 4, 1826," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXI (1953), pages 135-38; Joseph J. Ellis, *Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adams* (NY, 1993), pages 210-16; Robert P. Hay, "The Glorious Departure of the American Patriarchs: Contemporary Reactions to the Deaths of Jefferson and Adams," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXV (1969), pages 543-55; Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, 1960, pages 3-14.
8. Macaulay’s HISTORY OF ENGLAND, Chapter V; Adair, Douglass. “Rumbold’s Dying Speech, 1685, and Jefferson’s Last Words on Democracy, 1826,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, IX (1952): pages 526, 530:

I never could believe that Providence had sent a few men into the world, ready booted and spurred to ride, and millions ready saddled and bridled to be ridden.

Rumbold was not merely being [hanged](#) but being hanged, drawn, and quartered — the penalty for an attempt upon the monarch. This trope about horses, saddles, boots, and spurs was taken at the time to have been originated by Jefferson, in John A. Shaw’s EULOGY, PRONOUNCED AT BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS, AUGUST 2D, 1826 and in Henry Potter’s EULOGY, PRONOUNCED IN FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH-CAROLINA, JULY 20TH, 1826 and in John Tyler’s EULOGY, PRONOUNCED AT RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, JULY 11, 1826 in A SELECTION OF EULOGIES, PRONOUNCED IN THE SEVERAL STATES, IN HONOR OF THOSE ILLUSTRIOUS PATRIOTS AND STATESMEN, JOHN ADAMS AND THOMAS JEFFERSON (Hartford CT: 1826). See also THE LAST LETTER OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS STATESMAN, THOMAS JEFFERSON, ESQ. AUTHOR OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: BEING HIS ANSWER TO AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON IN CELEBRATING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: MONTICELLO, JUNE 24, 1826 (Washington DC: 1826).

That 17th-Century incident was not the first one in our history to conform to the dictum “there must be none higher than us, though of course there must always be some lower than us,” for in the 14th Century the Reverend John Ball had been [hanged](#) for preaching against public toleration of privileged classes:

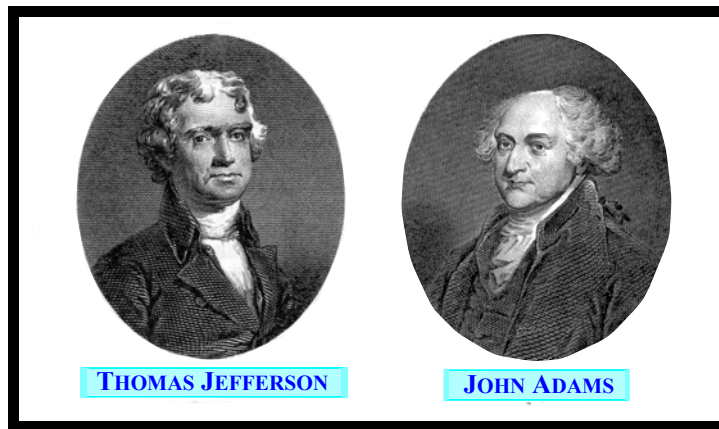
*"When Adam dalf [digged] and Eve span,
Who was then a gentleman?"*

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

not see fit to record that fact in writing.⁹

Former president Jefferson’s death at [Monticello](#) (“All my wishes and where I hope my days will end — at Monticello.”) would be followed shortly by the auction of his 90 black slaves over 12 years of age –along with his 12 black slaves between 9-12 years of age, his 73 cows of unknown coloration, and his 27 horses also of unknown coloration– for he had been living quite beyond his means, bringing back with him for instance from France no fewer than 86 large crates of civilized goodies. Jefferson did, however, set free his mulatto blood relatives. Jefferson, one might say, in allowing that after a certain number of crosses with white daddys, an infant ought to be considered to be white, had “pushed the envelope” of what it meant to be a human being. Yeah, right.



[Mary Moody Emerson](#) entered into her Almanack a comment that this was the day on which her Country had thrown the gage (thrown down the gauntlet, issued a challenge to a duel of honor):

*tho’ the revolution gave me to slavery of poverty
& ignorance & long orphanship, – yet it gave my*

9. Note that we have here an American author who is establishing his claim to fame upon his being the author of the memorable phrases of our foundational document, and who is attempting incautiously to do so by appropriating phrases originated by someone else. Also, we have here an American public so stupid or so patriotic that it lets him get away with it. Witness John A. Shaw, EULOGY, PRONOUNCED AT BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS, AUGUST 2D, 1826 in [A Selection of Eulogies, Pronounced in the Several States, in Honor of Those Illustrious Patriots and Statesmen, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson](#) (Hartford, Conn., 1826), 163; Henry Potter, “Eulogy, Pronounced in Fayetteville, North-Carolina, July 20th, 1826,” [A Selection of Eulogies.....](#), 130; John Tyler, “Eulogy, Pronounced at Richmond, Virginia, July 11, 1826,” [A Selection of Eulogies.....](#), 7-8; [National Intelligencer](#), July 4, 1826; [Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot](#), July 12, 1826; [Philadelphia Gazette](#), July 5, 1826; [Commercial Chronicle and Baltimore Advertiser](#), July 11, 1826; [The last letter of the illustrious statesman, Thomas Jefferson, Esq. author of the Declaration of Independence: Being his answer to an invitation to join the citizens of Washington in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of American independence: Monticello, June 24, 1826](#) (Washington, D.C., 1826).

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

fellow men liberty



Isabella (Sojourner Truth), who would have been approximately 29 years old, had in this year borne another daughter, whom she had named Sophia, who would need to grow up laboring as an indentured servant, by the husband Thomas to whom she had been assigned by her master who would not admit that he was a husband. She had once again increasing the prosperity of the master race! The remaining slaves of New York State were to be freed one year from this date, and John Dumont had solemnly promised Isabella in some earlier period that he would free her and her husband “a year early” and set them up in a nearby log cabin. So it had come time for the white race to be true to its word. However, since the master had made that commitment to this enslaved woman, she had carelessly chopped off one of her fingers while working for him –so he figured she couldn’t work as productively with only nine fingers as she had with ten, and so –he figured she must still owe him some work. Fair’s fair, right? No freedom, no cabin, not yet, instead work some more for nothing. (But don’t lose heart, as maybe later I’ll be able to keep my solemn promise.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

In New Harmony, Indiana, Robert Dale Owen gave a speech he called his “Declaration of Mental Independence.”

In [Providence, Rhode Island](#), four of those who had participated in the capture of the British armed schooner *Gaspe* during the Revolutionary War rode in a parade.

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Major John Handy read the [Declaration of Independence](#) “on the identical spot which he did 50 years ago,” in the presence of Isaac Barker of [Middletown](#), “who was at his side in the same place fifty years before.” Patriotic fun and games! Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) protested to his journal:

3rd day 4th of 7th M 1826 / This is what is called Independence Day - & an exceeding troublesome one it is to all sober Minded people - The expence of this day given to the poor or appropriated to public school would school all the poor children in town for some time. - Last night, we were the whole night greatly troubled & kept Awake, by the firing of squibs & crackers, great Bonfire in the middle of the Parade & tar Barrells, with various noises which were kept up all night & consequently kept us & many others awake, to our great discomfiture - in addition to which is the bitter reflection of the discipation & corruption of habits & morals to which our



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

*youth are exposed. – & today we have had numerous scenes of
drunkness both among the Aged & Youth, & many act of wickedness
-besides the pomp & vain show apparant in all parts of the Town
-This evening again we are troubled with noise & tumult & what
kind of a night we are to have cannot be told. -*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

In New-York, 4 gold medals had been ordered to be struck by the Common Council: 3 were for surviving signers of the [Declaration of Independence](#), and the 4th was given to the son of Robert Fulton as a memorial of “genius in the application of steam.”

In a celebration at Lynchburg, Virginia, among the “aged patriots of ’76” were General John Smith and Captain George Blakenmore.

At the South Meeting House of Worcester, Massachusetts, Isaiah Thomas stood on the spot from which he had read the [Declaration of Independence](#) in 1776.

The [Frederick-Town Herald](#) of Frederick, [Maryland](#) announced that it would no longer be publishing the usual round of “generally dull, insipid” dinner toasts, “about which few feel any interest.”

In Salem, [North Carolina](#), the Moravian Male Academy was dedicated.

In Quincy, Massachusetts, Miss Caroline Whitney delivered an address on the occasion of the presentation of a flag to the Quincy Light Infantry.

In Arlington, Virginia, General Washington’s tent, the very same tent that the General had been using at the heights of Dorchester in 1775, was re-erected near the banks of the Potomac River for purposes of celebration.

1827



William Wells Brown would have been about 13 years of age during this year, so I am taking the liberty of introducing the following undated material from his NARRATIVE, at this point, having to do with an accident and its unfortunate consequences (for lack of any more precise guidelines):

ON our arrival at St. Louis I went to Dr. Young, and told him that I did not wish to live with Mr. Walker any longer. I was heart-sick at seeing my fellow-creatures bought and sold. But the Dr. had hired me for the year, and stay I must. Mr. Walker again commenced purchasing another gang of slaves. He bought a man of Colonel John O’Fallon, who resided in the suburbs of the city. This man had a wife and three children. As soon the purchase was made, he was put in jail for safe keeping, until we should be ready to start for New Orleans. His wife visited him while there, several times, and several times when she went for that purpose was refused admittance.

In the course of eight or nine weeks Mr. Walker had his cargo of human flesh made up. There was in this lot a number of old men and women, some of them with gray locks. We left St. Louis in the steamboat Carlton, Captain Swan, bound for New Orleans.



SURPRISE!

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On our way down, and before we reached Rodney, the place where we made our first stop, I had to prepare the old slaves for market. I was ordered to have the old men's whiskers shaved off, and the grey hairs plucked out where they were not too numerous, in which case he had a preparation of blacking to color it, and with a blacking brush we would put it on. This was new business to me, and was performed in a room where the passengers could not see us. These slaves were also taught how old they were by Mr. Walker, and after going through the blacking process they looked ten or fifteen years younger; and I am sure that some of those who purchased slaves of Mr. Walker were dreadfully cheated, especially in the ages of the slaves which they bought. We landed at Rodney, and the slaves were driven to the pen in the back part of the village. Several were sold at this place, during our stay of four or five days, when we proceeded to Natchez. There we landed at night, and the gang were put in the warehouse until morning, when they were driven to the pen. As soon as the slaves are put in these pens, swarms of planters may be seen in and about them. They knew when Walker was expected, as he always had the time advertised beforehand when he would be in Rodney, Natchez, and New Orleans. These were the principal places where he offered his slaves for sale.

When at Natchez the second time, I saw a slave very cruelly whipped. He belonged to a Mr. Broadwell, a merchant who kept a store on the wharf. The slave's name was Lewis. I had known him several years, as he was formerly from St. Louis. We were expecting a steamboat down the river, in which we were to take passage for New Orleans. Mr. Walker sent me to the landing to watch for the boat, ordering me to inform him on its arrival. While there I went into the store to see Lewis. I saw a slave in the store, and asked him where Lewis was. Said he, "They have got Lewis hanging between the heavens and the earth." I asked him what he meant by that. He told me to go into the warehouse and see. I went in, and found Lewis there. He was tied up to a beam, with his toes just touching the floor. As there was no one in the warehouse but himself, I inquired the reason of his being in that situation. He said Mr. Broadwell had sold his wife to a planter six miles from the city, and that he had been to visit her — that he went in the night, expecting to return before daylight, and went without his master's permission. The patrol had taken him up before he reached his wife. He was put in jail, and his master had to pay for his catching and keeping, and that was what he was tied up for.

Just as he finished his story, Mr. Broadwell came in, and inquired what I was doing there. I knew not what to say, and while I was thinking what reply to make he struck me over the head with the cowhide, the end of which struck me over my right eye, sinking deep into the flesh, leaving a scar which I carry to this day. Before I visited Lewis he had received fifty lashes. Mr. Broadwell gave him fifty lashes more after I came out, as I was afterwards informed by Lewis himself.

The next day we proceeded to New Orleans, and put the gang in the same negro-pen which we occupied before. In a short time the planters came flocking to the pen to purchase slaves. Before the slaves were exhibited for sale, they were dressed and driven out



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into the yard. Some were set to dancing, some to jumping, some to singing, and some to playing cards. This was done to make them appear cheerful and happy. My business was to see that they were placed in those situations before the arrival of the purchasers, and I have often set them to dancing when their cheeks were wet with tears. As slaves were in good demand at that time, they were all soon disposed of, and we again set out for St. Louis.

On our arrival, Mr. Walker purchased a farm five or six miles from the city. He had no family, but made a housekeeper of one of his female slaves. Poor Cynthia! I knew her well. She was a quadroon, and one of the most beautiful women I ever saw. She was a native of St. Lewis, and bore an irreproachable character for virtue and propriety of conduct. Mr. Walker bought her for the New Orleans market, and took her down with him on one of the trips that I made with him. Never shall I forget the circumstances of that voyage! On the first night that we were on board the steamboat, he directed me to put her into a state-room he had provided for her, apart from the other slaves. I had seen too much of the workings of slavery not to know what this meant. I accordingly watched him into the state-room, and listened to hear what passed between them. I heard him make his base offers, and her reject them. He told her that if she would accept his vile proposals, he would take her back with him to St. Louis, and establish her as his housekeeper on his farm. But if she persisted in rejecting them, he would sell her as a field hand on the worst plantation on the river. Neither threats nor bribes prevailed, however, and he retired, disappointed of his prey.

The next morning poor Cynthia told me what had passed, and bewailed her sad fate with floods of tears. I comforted and encouraged her all I could; but I foresaw but too well what the result must be. Without entering into any further particulars, suffice it to say that Walker performed his part of the contract at that time. He took her back to St. Louis, established her as his mistress and housekeeper at his farm, and before I left, he had two children by her. But, mark the end! Since I have been at the North, I have been credibly informed that Walker has been married, and, as a previous measure, sold poor Cynthia and her four children (she having had two more since I came away) into hopeless bondage!

He soon commenced purchasing to make up the third gang. We took steamboat, and went to Jefferson City, a town on the Missouri river. Here we landed, and took stage for the interior of the state. He bought a number of slaves as he passed the different farms and villages. After getting twenty-two or twenty-three men and women, we arrived at St. Charles, a village on the banks of the Missouri. Here he purchased a woman who had a child in her arms, appearing to be four or five weeks old.

We had been travelling by land for some days, and were in hopes to have found a boat at this place for St. Louis, but were disappointed. As no boat was expected for some days, we started for St. Louis by land. Mr. Walker had purchased two horses. He rode one, and I the other. The slaves were chained together, and we took up our line of march, Mr. Walker taking the lead, and I



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bringing up the rear. Though the distance was not more than twenty miles, we did not reach it the first day. The road was worse than any that I have ever travelled.

Soon after we left St. Charles the young child grew very cross, and kept up a noise during the greater part of the day. Mr. Walker complained of its crying several times, and told the mother to stop the child's d—d noise, or he would. The woman tried to keep the child from crying, but could not. We put up at night with an acquaintance of Mr. Walker, and in the morning, just as we were about to start, the child again commenced crying. Walker stepped up to her, and told her to give the child to him. The mother tremblingly obeyed. He took the child by one arm, as you would a cat by the leg, walked into the house, and said to the lady,

"Madam, I will make you a present of this little nigger; it keeps such a noise that I can't bear it."

"Thank you, sir," said the lady.

The mother, as soon as she saw that her child was to be left, ran up to Mr. Walker, and falling upon her knees, begged him to let her have her child; she clung around his legs, and cried, "Oh, my child! my child! master, do let me have my child! oh, do, do, do! I will stop its crying if you will only let me have it again." When I saw this woman crying for her child so piteously, a shudder—a feeling akin to horror—shot through my frame. I have often since in imagination heard her crying for her child:—None but those who have been in a slave state, and who have seen the American slave-trader engaged in his nefarious traffic, can estimate the sufferings their victims undergo. If there is one feature of American slavery more abominable than another; it is that which sanctions the buying and selling of human beings. The African slave-trade was abolished by the American Congress some twenty years since; and now, by the laws of the country, if an American is found engaged in the African slave-trade, he is considered a pirate; and if found guilty of such, the penalty would be death.

Although the African slave-trader has been branded as a pirate, men are engaged in the traffic in slaves in this country, who occupy high positions in society, and hold offices of honor in the councils of the nation; and not a few have made their fortunes by this business.

After the woman's child had been given away, Mr. Walker commanded her to return into the ranks with the other slaves. Women who had children were not chained, but those that had none were. As soon as her child was disposed of she was chained in the gang.

The following song I have often heard the slaves sing, when about to be carried to the far south. It is said to have been composed



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by a slave.

“See these poor souls from Africa
Transported to America;
We are stolen, and sold to Georgia—
Will you go along with me?
We are stolen, and sold to Georgia—
Come sound the jubilee!

See wives and husbands sold apart,
Their children’s screams will break my heart;—
There ’s a better day a coming—
Will you go along with me?
There ’s a better day a coming,
Go sound the jubilee!

O, gracious Lord! when shall it be,
That we poor souls shall all be free?
Lord, break them slavery powers—
Will you go along with me?
Lord, break them slavery powers,
Go sound the jubilee!

Dear Lord, dear Lord, when slavery ’ll cease,
Then we poor souls will have our peace;—
There ’s a better day a coming—
Will you go along with me?
There ’s a better day a coming,
Go sound the jubilee!”

We finally arrived at Mr. Walker’s farm. He had a house built during our absence to put slaves in. It was a kind of domestic jail. The slaves were put in the jail at night, and worked on the farm during the day. They were kept here until the gang was completed, when we again started for New Orleans, on board the steamboat North America, Capt. Alexander Scott. We had a large number of slaves in this gang. One, by the name of Joe, Mr. Walker was training up to take my place, as my time was nearly out, and glad was I. We made our first stop at Vicksburg, where we remained one week and sold several slaves.

Mr. Walker, though not a good master, had not flogged a slave since I had been with him, though he had threatened me. The slaves were kept in the pen, and he always put up at the best hotel, and kept his wines in his room, for the accommodation of those who called to negotiate with him for the purchase of slaves. One day, while we were at Vicksburg, several gentlemen came to see him for that purpose, and as usual the wine was called for. I took the tray and started around with it, and having accidentally filled some of the glasses too full, the gentlemen spilled the wine on their clothes as they went to drink. Mr. Walker apologized to them for my carelessness, but looked at me as though he would see me again on this subject. After the gentlemen had left the room, he asked me what I meant by my carelessness, and said that he would attend to me. The next morning he gave me a note to carry to the jailer, and a dollar in money to give to him. I suspected that all was not right; so I went down near the landing, where I met with a sailor, and, walking up to him, asked him if he would be so kind as to read the note for me. He read it over, and then looked at me. I asked him to tell me what was in it. Said he, “They are going to give you hell.”



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"Why?" said I.

He said, "This is a note to have you whipped, and says that you have a dollar to pay for it."

He handed me back the note, and off I started. I knew not what to do, but was determined not to be whipped. I went up to the jail – took a look at it, and walked off again. As Mr. Walker was acquainted with the jailer, I feared that I should be found out if I did not go, and be treated in consequence of it still worse.

While I was meditating on the subject, I saw a colored man about my size walk up, and the thought struck me in a moment to send him with my note. I walked up to him, and asked him who he belonged to. He said he was a free man, and had been in the city but a short time. I told him I had a note to go into the jail, and get a trunk to carry to one of the steamboats; but was so busily engaged that I could not do it, although I had a dollar to pay for it. He asked me if I would not give him the job. I handed him the note and the dollar, and off he started for the jail.

I watched to see that he went in, and as soon as I saw the door close behind him, I walked around the corner, and took my station, intending to see how my friend looked when he came out. I had been there but a short time, when a colored man came around the corner, and said to another colored man with whom he was acquainted –

"They are giving a nigger scissors in the jail."

"What for?" said the other. The man continued,

"A nigger came into the jail, and asked for the jailer. The jailer came out, and he handed him a note, and said he wanted to get a trunk. The jailer told him to go with him, and he would give him the trunk. So he took him into the room, and told the nigger to give up the dollar. He said a man had given him the dollar to pay for getting the trunk. But that lie would not answer. So they made him strip himself, and then they tied him down, and are now whipping him."

I stood by all the while listening to their talk, and soon found out that the person alluded to was my customer. I went into the street opposite the jail, and concealed myself in such a manner that I could not be seen by any one coming out. I had been there but a short time; when the young man made his appearance, and looked around for me. I, unobserved, came forth from my hiding-place, behind a pile of brick, and he pretty soon saw me, and came up to me complaining bitterly, saying that I had played a trick upon him. I denied any knowledge of what the note contained, and asked him what they had done to him. He told me in substance what I heard the man tell who had come out of the jail.

"Yes," said he, "they whipped me and took my dollar, and gave me this note."

He showed me the note which the jailer had given him, telling him to give it to his master. I told him I would give him fifty cents for it – that being all the money I had. He gave it to me and took his money. He had received twenty lashes on his bare back, with the negro-whip. I took the note and started for the hotel where I had left Mr. Walker. Upon reaching the hotel, I



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handed it to a stranger whom I had not seen before, and requested him to read it to me. As near as I can recollect, it was as follows:


DEAR SIR: – By your direction, I have given your boy twenty lashes. He is a very saucy boy, and tried to make me believe that he did not belong to you, and I put it on to him well for lying to me.

*I remain
Your obedient servant.*


It is true that in most of the slave-holding cities, when a gentleman wishes his servants whipped, he can send him to the jail and have it done. Before I went in where Mr. Walker was, I wet my cheeks a little, as though I had been crying. He looked at me, and inquired what was the matter. I told him that I had never had such a whipping in my life, and handed him the note. He looked at it and laughed; – “And so you told him that you did not belong to me?” “Yes, sir;” said I. “I did not know that there was any harm in that.” He told me I must behave myself, if I did not want to be whipped again.

This incident shows how it is that slavery makes its victims lying and mean; for which vices it afterwards reproaches them, and uses them as arguments to prove that they deserve no better fate. Had I entertained the same views of right and wrong which I now do, I am sure I should never have practised the deception upon that poor fellow which I did. I know of no act committed by me while in slavery which I have regretted more than that; and I heartily desire that it may be at some time or other in my power to make him amends for his vicarious sufferings in my behalf.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

 January: Prior to the successful leap of the Genesee Falls in Rochester, New York by [Sam Patch](#) during November 1829, three persons had been accidentally swept over the brink, one during March 1826, one during this month, and one during November 1827. (Of those three unfortunates, only one would live to tell the tale.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

 November: Prior to the successful leap of the Genesee Falls in Rochester, New York by [Sam Patch](#) during November 1829, three persons had been accidentally swept over the brink, one during March 1826, one during this January 1827, and one during this month. (Of those three unfortunates, only one would live to tell the tale.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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December: A total of 37 Africans of the negrero *Antelope* were delivered into slavery. Two had died since the July ruling. The purchase price was between \$10,000 and \$11,500 and was paid by US Representative Richard Henry Wilde of Augusta.



A negrero flying the Spanish flag (as shown below), the *Indagadora*, master unknown, on one of its six known Middle Passage voyages, was delivering an unknown number of **enslaved** Africans out of an unknown area of Africa to a port of Cuba.



INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

Have you ever wondered what happened to people who got freed from slave ships? During this month the British warship HMS *Nimble* accidentally ran another slaver flying the Spanish flag, the *Guerrero*, master unknown, on its only known Middle Passage with 561 enslaved Africans out of an unknown area of Africa, onto the Carysfort Reef off Key Largo in the Florida Keys. The warship hit the reef only minutes after the slaver did, but merely went aground and was unable to move, rather than wrecked. Of the people in chains in the hold of the negrero, 41 were killed in the impact.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



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The other enslaved Africans of the cargo, and the 90-man Spanish crew, were rescued the next morning by some American “wreckers” who were moored at land about 6 miles away, and by a passing American fishing smack, but then the Spaniards rallied and hijacked 2 of the 3 American ships to Cuba (the British managed to prevent capture of one of the American ships), taking with them about 400 people from their cargo. The 121 black Africans remaining were taken to Key West, Florida, where they would be kept for about 3 months while the British and the Americans argued over the fee that was due for getting the HMS *Nimble* back off the reef. Alarmed by a rumor that the Cubans were going to attack to obtain the rest of their “property,” the Americans would then take these Africans for their own safety to north Florida. They would be forced to pay for their keep by laboring alongside the regular slaves of the Kingsley and Hernandez plantations.¹⁰ Freedom’s Journal published an article that included the following notice:

RUNAWAY SLAVE. - A trial has lately been had in New York State, in the case of a female slave belonging to a southern gentleman, and accompanying him and his family on a journey to [Niagara Falls](#). Having left her master she was apprehended, and, after a long and able argument before Judge [Moses?] Chapin, she has been given up to her master.

Most of the Spanish crew of the *Guerrero* got to Cuba by hijacking two vessels that came to the assistance of those aboard the wreck. However, per the following piece of correspondence from Waters Smith, US Marshal for the Eastern District of Florida headquartered in St. Augustine to Secretary of the Navy Samuel L. Southard dated July 16, 1828 (National Archives RG 45, M124, Roll 115, page 79), not all the Spanish crew had managed thus to make it to safety:

I understand that the Africans now in my custody, which were taken from the wreck of the Spanish Brig *Guerrero*, are under the control of the Department over which you preside. I beg leave respectfully to state this situation of one of these Africans named Lewis, and his son a lad of about twelve years of age.

This man is the son of an African residing on that part of the coast resorted to by slave vessels; he speaks French and Spanish very well, and can make himself understood in English; he has been over to Havana in a slave vessel as Interpreter, and was hired in the same situation by the master of the Brig *Guerrero* at thirty dollars per month. This information is obtained from Lewis, and also from the captain of the slave brig: he took his son with him on board the Brig; they were not a part of the slave cargo. Lewis is desirous of going to Havana to receive the wages due him; from whence he states that he can get a passage to Africa. He applied to me at Key West for permission to go to Havana.

Lewis is a smart, intelligent negro, but void of principal, is dissatisfied at being retained here, and having great influence over the other Negroes, is constantly exciting [them] in a way that gives me much trouble: I have once been compelled to confine him in irons.

It would relieve me from considerable anxiety if I could be authorized to allow him to go to Havana either with or without his son, but I do not feel myself justified in doing so without permission from the Government.

Will you be pleased Sir, to favor me with instructions on this subject.

10. You will find the whole story in Gaid Swanson’s *SLAVE SHIP GUERRERO*, 2005, available for purchase on the internet.

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1829

➡ June 1, Monday: [Alexander Dallas Bache](#) resigned from the US Army.

[Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington](#), was riding his horse (horse name not of record) in a review with a huge wind-catching Grenadier hat on his head, when a sudden gust knocked our guy right off said mount.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



Wow, talk about embarrassing!

➡ June 4, Thursday: The USS *Fulton*, a 2,455-ton (1,450 ton displacement) center-wheel steam battery, was destroyed by a gunpowder explosion in the New-York Brooklyn Navy Yard, killing 25.¹¹

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS


11. Robert Fulton had in late October 1814 in New-York harbor launched a steamboat he called *Demologos*. This craft had been purposed as a heavily armed and stout mobile fort for the defense of the harbor during the War of 1812. Fulton died during February 1815 and so when the ship was complete it was re-christened as *Fulton*. It ran trials under steam power, and was delivered to the US Navy during June 1816. The ship cruised for but one day, taking President James Monroe on a tour of the harbor. Except for that it had remained at dock and, after 1825, was used as a floating barracks of the Brooklyn Navy Yard.




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1830

 The 19th Century would be the age of the cigar. England was in this year beginning to import all of 250,000 pounds of [cigars](#) per year. Since [tobacco](#) use was known to dry out the mouth, “creating a morbid or diseased thirst,” the first organized anti-tobacco movement in the US would begin during this decade as an adjunct to [the temperance movement](#).

Evidently as the result of some horrible accident, the Prussian Government ordered that in the future [cigars](#), to be smoked in public, would need to be enclosed in a sort of wire-mesh contraption. The wire mesh was designed to prevent sparks from setting fire to the “crinolines” and hoop skirts of ladies.

 September 15, Wednesday: Various US commissioners, including General Coffee and John Eaton, met with various Choctaw chiefs and headmen at Dancing Rabbit Creek (Mississippi?), to pressure them to sign over their territory and begone across the Mississippi River.

On an experimental railroad ride from London to Brighton, which would succeed in replacing what had been six arduous hours by stagecoach with what would be two pleasant hours by steam coach “at the rate of five and thirty miles per hour,” the young and impressionable [Fanny Kemble](#) had been seated beside engineer George Stephenson, he of the “dark and deeply marked countenance,” aboard one of the cars drawn along after the locomotive *Rocket*.

The most intense curiosity and excitement prevailed, and though the weather was uncertain, enormous masses of densely packed people lined the road, shouting and waving hats and handkerchiefs as we flew by them. We travelled at 35 miles an hour (swifter than a bird flies). When I closed my eyes this sensation of flying was quite delightful.

I had been unluckily separated from my mother in the first distribution of places, but by an exchange of seats which she was enabled to make she rejoined me when I was at the height of my ecstasy, which was considerably damped by finding that she was frightened to death, and intent upon nothing but devising means of escaping from a situation which appeared to her to threaten with instant annihilation herself and all her travelling companions.

When we neared Manchester the sky grew cloudy and dark, and it began to rain. The vast concourse of people who had assembled to witness the triumphant arrival of the successful travellers was of the lowest orders of mechanics and artisans, among whom great distress and a dangerous spirit of discontent with the government at that time prevailed. Groans and hisses greeted the carriage, full of influential personages, in which the Duke of Wellington sat.

High above the grim and grimy crowd of scowling faces a loom had been erected, at which sat a tattered, starved-looking weaver, evidently set there as a representative man, to protest against the triumph of machinery and the

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gain and glory which the wealthy Liverpool and Manchester men were likely to derive from it.

With such experiments completed, the grand opening ceremonies for the initial long-distance passenger railway for which high-speed locomotives were designed, the Liverpool to Manchester Railway, was marred on this day by the accidental death of William Huskisson, a prominent politician. The directors of the company had been unsure whether to use locomotives or stationary engines on their line, and had offered a competition in October 1829 in which the best locomotive had win a prize of £500, their concept being that the winning design might be good enough to be used on their new railway. The Stockton & Darlington line, which had opened in 1825, had been reported as having reduced the cost of transporting coal from 18s. to 8s. 6d. the ton [would that be the long ton or the short ton?]. The investors in the Bridgewater Canal had been making a killing in the transporting of raw materials and finished goods between the textile industry centered in Manchester and the prime port of Liverpool. Shares in the canal company, originally purchased at £70, were selling by 1825 at £1,250 and paying an annual dividend of £35! A group of businessmen led by James Sandars had therefore recruited Stephenson to build them a 31-mile Liverpool & Manchester Railway the main objective of which would be to let the water out of this investment pool.



Since the Marquis of Stafford, who had become the principal shareholder in the canal venture upon the death of the Duke of Bridgewater, was realizing an annual profit of £100,000 from his shares, it was obvious that he would lead in a struggle against this railway plan. After Stephenson's proposed route had been nixed in the House of Commons, James Sandars recruited a company run by George Rennie to do another survey and perhaps build it. However, the officials of this company refused to deal with Stephenson (they did not consider him a bona fide engineer) and for this reason lost the contract. In 1826 Parliament had finally granted permission for the Manchester & Liverpool Railway project to be begun. George Stephenson needed to figure out a way to pass over the unstable peat bog of Chat Moss, create a 9-arch viaduct across the Sankey Valley, and cut through solid rock for two full miles at Olive Mount. The Liverpool & Manchester railway was to

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consist of a double line of rails of the fish-bellied type laid on stone or timber sleepers. Passenger trains were to start at the Crown Street Station in Liverpool and, after passing Moorish Arch at Edge Hill, arrive at Water Street in Manchester.

The [Duke of Wellington](#) was traveling toward the ceremonial cite despite his declaration of to the economic unviability of these new schemes to build rail roads:

Depend upon it, Sir, nothing will come of them!



There were eight trainloads of dignitaries coming out of Manchester that morning. On the south one of the two tracks, a trainload of the grandest dignitaries of all, the Duke representing the aristocracy of England and Sir Robert Peel representing the people of England, was being pulled by the locomotive *Northumbrian* manned by none other than its inventor Stephenson.



"[The railroad will] only encourage the common people to move about needlessly."

– [Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington](#)



On the north one of the two tracks, the seven trainloads of lesser dignitaries were to pass along at close interval. Alfred, Lord Tennyson was one of the passengers on the initial train from Liverpool to Manchester. The whole apparatus had been so unfamiliar –it was such a black night, and there had been so many people standing around the train in the station– that he presumed at first that the wheels of the train were running in a groove rather than atop a rail. He created this line which would appear in 1842 in "Locksley Hall":

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Seventeen miles out of Manchester, 56 minutes out, the routine was to be that all the trains would stop to take on water at the Parkside station, and then the one train of extreme unctious on the south track would remain while the other seven trainloads of unctious passed by and saluted them. The opening ceremony included a procession of eight locomotives, including the *Northumbrian*, the *Rocket*, the *North Star*, and the *Phoenix*. After the group of special visitors were given a ride on the *Northumbrian*, a key MP in the governmental reorganization then going on, a gent by the name of William Huskisson, got out to stretch his legs and the Duke saw him and waved, and the man started toward the state carriage in response to this hail from the chief just as the *Rocket* came thundering in. Warnings were shouted when people realized that the *Rocket*, driven by Joseph Locke, was about to pass the *Northumbrian*. The Duke opened his door and held out his hand but Huskisson, who had acute rheumatism, fell and the locomotive badly mangled one of his legs. Lady Wilton was so positioned as to witness everything, and later reported the event to Fanny Kemble:

We started on Wednesday last, to the number of about eight hundred people, in carriages. The most intense curiosity and excitement prevailed, and, though the weather was uncertain, enormous masses of densely packed people lined the road, shouting and waving hats and handkerchiefs as we flew by them. What with the sight and sound of these cheering multitudes and the tremendous velocity with which we were borne past them, my spirits rose to the true champagne height, and I never enjoyed anything so much as the first hour of our progress. I had been unluckily separated from my mother in the first distribution of places, but by an exchange of seats which she was enabled to make she rejoined me when I was at the height of my ecstasy, which we considerably damped by finding that she was frightened to death, and intent upon nothing but devising means of escaping from a situation which appeared to her to threaten with instant annihilation herself and all her travelling companions. While I was chewing the cud of this disappointment, which was rather bitter, as I had expected her to be as delighted as myself with our excursion, a man flew by us, calling out through a speaking-trumpet to stop the engine, for that somebody in the directors' carriage had sustained an injury. We were all stopped accordingly, and presently a hundred voices were heard exclaiming that Mr Huskisson was killed; the confusion that ensued is indescribable; the calling out from carriage to



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

carriage to ascertain the truth, the contrary reports which were sent back to us, the hundred questions eagerly uttered at once, and the repeated and urgent demands for surgical assistance, created a sudden turmoil that was quite sickening. At last we distinctly ascertained that the unfortunate man's thigh was broken. From Lady Wilton, who was in the Duke's carriage, and within three yards of the spot where the accident happened, I had the following details, the horror of witnessing which we were spared through out situation behind the great carriage. The engine had stopped to take in a supply of water, and several of the gentlemen in the directors' carriage had jumped out to look about them. Lord Wilton, Count Batthyany, Count Matuscenitz, and Mr Huskisson among the rest were standing talking in the middle of the road, when an engine on the other line, which was parading up and down merely to show its speed, was seen coming down upon them like lightning. The most active of those in peril sprang back into their seats; Lord Wilton saved his life only by rushing behind the Duke's carriage, and Count Matuscenitz had but just leaped into it, with the engine all but touching his heels as he did so; while poor Mr Huskisson, less active from the effects of age and ill-health, bewildered, too, by the frantic cries of "Stop the engine! Clear the track!" that resounded on all sides, completely lost his head, looked helplessly to the left and right, and was instantaneously prostrated by the fatal machine, which dashed down like a thunderbolt upon him, and passed over his leg, smashing and mangling it in the most horrible way. (Lady Wilton said she distinctly heard the crushing of the bone.) So terrible was the effect of the appalling accident that, except that ghastly "crushing" and poor Mrs Huskisson's piercing shriek, not a sound was heard or a word uttered among the immediate spectators of the catastrophe. Lord Wilton was the first to raise the poor sufferer, and calling to aid his surgical skill, which is considerable, he tied up the severed artery, and, for a time at least, prevented death by loss of blood. Mr Huskisson was then placed in a carriage with his wife and Lord Wilton, and the engine, having been detached from the directors' carriage, conveyed them to Manchester. So great was the shock produced upon the whole party by this event, that the Duke of Wellington declared his intention not to proceed, but to return immediately to Liverpool. However, upon its being represented to him that the whole population of Manchester had turned out to witness the procession, and that a disappointment might give rise to riots and disturbances, he consented to go on, and gloomily enough the rest of the journey was accomplished.... After this disastrous event the day became overcast, and as we neared Manchester the sky grew cloudy and dark, and it began to rain. The vast concourse of people who had assembled to witness the triumphant arrival of the successful travellers was of the lowest order of mechanics and artisans, among whom great distress and a dangerous spirit of discontent with the government at that time prevailed. Groans and hisses greeted the carriage, full of influential personages, in which the Duke of Wellington sat. High above the grim and grimy crowd of scowling faces a loom had been erected, at which sat a tattered, starved-looking weaver, evidently set there as a representative man, to



SURPRISE!

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protest against the triumph of machinery and the gain and glory which the wealthy Liverpool and Manchester men were likely to derive from it. The contrast between our departure from Liverpool and our arrival in Manchester was one of the most striking things I ever witnessed. The news of Mr Huskisson's fatal accident spread immediately, and his death, which did not occur till the evening, was anticipated by rumour.

The *Observer* would report the incident slightly differently in its issue of the 19th:

The great national work was opened to the public on Wednesday last, with all the ceremonies befitting such an important occasion. The Duke of Wellington, Mr. Huskisson, Sir R. Peel, Prince Esterhazy, and Mr. Holmes were guests of the Committee, together with almost every person of consideration in the neighbouring counties. The project of establishing a correspondence by railway between two of the most populous and important towns in the kingdom, was not started till 1824, when a Mr. James proposed it. The rate of travelling is spoken of as being likely to average about sixteen or eighteen miles an hour. Several of the passengers of the Northumbrian got out to walk on the railway, and among them was Mr. Huskisson. He was discoursing with Mr. J. Sanders, one of the principal originators and promoters of the railroad, when the Rocket engine came slowly up, and as the engineer had been for some time checking its velocity, so silently that it was almost upon the group before they observed it. In the hurry of the moment all attempted to get out of the way. Mr Huskisson hesitated, staggered a little, as if not knowing what to do, then attempted again to get into the carriage. As he took hold of the door to do this, but the motion threw him off balance, and before he could recover he was thrown down directly in the path of the Rocket. Mrs. Huskisson, who, along with several other ladies, witnessed the accident, uttered a shriek of agony, which none who heard will ever forget.

There was no surgeon present and although a physician attempted to stem the bleeding and although Stephenson used the *Northumbrian* to get the injured man to the nearest medical attention at the vicarage in Eccles at the rate of 36 miles an hour, Huskisson would die later that day. And this, the first rail fatality, would not be the last — but who among us can stand in the way of progress without getting run over?¹²

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

Such large crowds had assembled along the line between Liverpool and Manchester that it was considered prudent to continue with the procession. Fanny Kemble would report that:

The most intense curiosity and excitement prevailed, and though the weather was uncertain, enormous masses of densely packed people lined the road, shouting and waving hats and handkerchiefs as we flew by them. We travelled at 35 miles an hour (swifter than a bird flies). When I closed my eyes this sensation of flying was quite delightful.

I had been unluckily separated from my mother in the first distribution of places, but by an exchange of seats which she was enabled to make she rejoined me when I was at the height of my ecstasy, which was considerably damped by finding that she was frightened to death, and intent upon nothing but devising means of escaping from a situation which appeared to her to



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

threaten with instant annihilation herself and all her travelling companions.

When we neared Manchester the sky grew cloudy and dark, and it began to rain. The vast concourse of people who had assembled to witness the triumphant arrival of the successful travellers was of the lowest orders of mechanics and artisans, among whom great distress and a dangerous spirit of discontent with the government at that time prevailed. Groans and hisses greeted the carriage, full of influential personages, in which the Duke of Wellington sat.

High above the grim and grimy crowd of scowling faces a loom had been erected, at which sat a tattered, starved-looking weaver, evidently set there as a representative man, to protest against the triumph of machinery and the gain and glory which the wealthy Liverpool and Manchester men were likely to derive from it.

As the *Northumbrian* entered Manchester its passenger carriages were pelted by the weavers with stones—these laborers still resented the Duke of Wellington’s involvement in the Peterloo Massacre and his strong opposition to the proposed Reform Act of 1832.

The Liverpool & Manchester railway would be a great success. In 1831 the company would transport 445,047 passengers for receipts amounting to £155,702 and annual profits amounting to £71,098. By 1844 receipts would reach £258,892 and annual profits would reach £136,688. During this period shareholders would regularly receive an annual dividend of £10 for each £100 they had invested.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

4 day 15 of 9 M / Silent Meeting at the Institution but not so dull as sometimes. –

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

12. Have you heard the story, that our railroad rails are the distance apart that they are simply because that was the distance between the wheels of a Roman chariot? There has been this delightful story being passed around because it can be made to serve certain concepts of path-dependence. This story has been passed around particularly by those people within and outside the Department of Defense who love to bemoan our outdated or bureaucratically oppressive “MilSpecs” – of which the standard railroad gauge is cited as an antique and perhaps ridiculous example.

The story that is being told, albeit interesting and scandalous, seems to be a story without much historic merit.

The distance 4’8.5” (1435 millimeter) is the standard gauge in North America, most of Europe (not in Iberia or former Russian and Soviet empires), and parts of South America, Asia, and Australia. that comprises nearly 60 percent of world route length. The L&MRR had a strong demonstration effect in Continental Europe as well as the US, and engineers trained by mine-works engineer Stephenson also aided the gauge’s diffusion in Britain and the Continent – but not in North America.

The standard width has been characterized as exceedingly odd. However, for one thing, American railways were not built by expatriate Brit engineers, but almost exclusively by Americans copying British engineering practice. This practice our local engineers happened to copy was that of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway that had been opened in 1830. Stephenson indeed had copied for this new railroad the gauge with which he had previous experience in the mines, but this was originally the not quite so “exceedingly odd” measure of 4’8” rather than 4’8.5” — He had added an extra half inch during construction of the L&MRR in order to allow a little more leeway between rails and wheel flanges. There is some evidence that the original rails were often 2” wide, indicating a width of track including the rails of an even 5’0” – still less an “exceedingly odd” measure.


Mining tramways actually differed in width, ranging mostly between 3’0” and 4’6” in southern England and Wales. It could be regarded as a mere accident of history that the gauge with which Stephenson happened to have experience was the 4’8” gauge of northern England. It appears true that mining ore carts were approximately the same width as road wagons, but the width of road wagons actually varied by region. It is plausible that the width of wagons was fitted to road ruts, although ruts at narrow city gates might have mattered more than ruts on open roads. The main “evidence” for carrying the story back to Roman chariots comes not from any study of the history of road ruts but from consideration of ancient “groove-ways” (which were essentially permanent stone “ruts,” a practical form of improved road surface at the time). It is true that one or two of these (but these one or two were not in Britain) happen to have roughly the same “gauge” as modern railways – within a broad band of wheel widths that would fit the grooves. However, others had other widths.

Some American engineers copied Stephenson’s practice only approximately, introducing nonstandard gauges of 4’9” and 4’10” and 5’0”. The latter two choices would lead to some difficulties later on, when we would go about integrating our continental railway network.




SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

 November 2, Tuesday: [Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin](#) left Warsaw for Vienna intending to find performances outside Poland (it would turn out that he would never return).

The *Best Friend of Charleston* went on a trial run, pulling a car with some passengers. Going around a curve, it left the rails and traveled some 20 feet before coming to a stop. The two crewmen were only bruised and the passengers in the car were uninjured. This was an accident.¹³

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)
[RAILROAD](#)
[CHARLESTON](#)

 December: On the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in [Maryland](#), the driver of a crowded horse-drawn coach fell from his seat and was crushed beneath the wheels — the 1st fatal accident on a railroad in the United States.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

13. You might wonder what this file is attempting to do. Here is my (Austin Meredith's) answer. Frequently, in preparing materials for this database, I have noticed that standard histories have made an implicit Platonic distinction between essence and accident, and have recorded only the way things are intended to work or the way things are supposed to be. Thus in the published histories of railroading one finds that data about accidents is shunned, or at best sequestered into one sensationalistic ghetto chapter at the back. Yet, I would offer, such a distinction between intention and accomplishment is utterly un-Thoreauvian, and would have called forth from him the most biting mockery. (We may see this in action, in the way he remarks upon the railroad bridge near Concord which was constantly braining riders who were seated backward atop the cars.) Two definitions of "accident" which might have been more Thoreauvian:

any event which is not going to happen — because it shouldn't
any event which happens — before it happens

What I have attempted to do here, taking reasonable advantage of the modular structure of reusable text elements in a hypertext system, is present the material for the 1st time in both ways, as an important ingredient in the main-line story of the impact of technology and in addition as a topic which can be given separate treatment.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1831

June 17: [possibly, June 1st] The slave who was being used that summer for throwing sticky chunks of pitch pine into the firebox of the Best Friend of Charleston, the "fireman" so called, in an attempt to improve the conditions of his labor, tied down the safety valve of the steam boiler which was hissing and spurting off live steam right next to where he had to stand on the rocking car. (Was he willfully ignoring what they had tried to teach him in the company's safety classes? Or was he, as the talk of the period would have it, just another of these annoyingly stupid, ridiculously uninformed, and woefully lazy niggers with whom we have to put up?) To prevent white folks from being scalded, the SCC&RR had been placing a barrier car, loaded with a pyramid of bales of cotton, in between the working machines and their black crews, and the paying pale passengers of the coaches. Hence, it was planned, when these boilers exploded, the railroad's only losses would be material losses. As a result the engineer, Nicholas Darrell, a white man, was only standing by the tracks rather than being present next to the boiler, and was only scalded. But the company's beautiful Best Friend was totaled. The fireman, unnamed in histories of railroading because merely "a negro," died in agony. The histories do not indicate how much medical attention it was worth his owner's while to pay to him after his having railroaded himself in this manner — presumably, had he survived, the man would have been next to useless anyway. The steam escape was relocated to a position where it would not be constantly in the black man's face as he labored, so that he wouldn't be tempted to return to his folly.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS CHARLESTON RAILROAD

1832

November 24, Saturday: The South Carolina Ordinance of Nullification, nullifying federal tariff enactments.

READ THE FULL TEXT

The Philadelphia Chronicle reported that "The locomotive engine build by our townsman, M.W. Baldwin, has proved highly successful." It appears, however, that the truth is not that simple. The previous day's successful run was not the first time Old Ironsides had been on the rails. It was merely the first time it had been on the rails, when it had not given up and needed to be pushed along by it crew, and when its crew had not needed to steal wood from farm fences to keep it going. It had managed to cover 3 miles, all the way out to the Union Tavern, and then back 3 miles to town, without once breaking down, and without even a halt except to reverse direction. The railroad announced a regular passenger schedule, and indicated that the steam engine would be used on the days that were likely to be fair, and to avoid getting the engine wet, horses would still be employed during periods of rain or snow.¹⁴



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Desiring to complete long runs on its 135-mile track after the fall of night, the South Carolina Canal & Railroad Company began to push two small flatcars in front of the locomotive, with the floor of the leading car covered with sand, and with a bonfire of pitch pine burning on top of this sand. I'm not sure whether the intent was for the engineer to see ahead along the tracks, or to make the train more visible to people walking along the tracks, or both.¹⁵

After a bad crossing accident in England on the Leicester & Swannington railroad line, engineers began piecemeal to add what was known as a "steam trumpet" to their locomotives. Such a whistle had first been used on stationary engines in England. It did not produce a sound anything like the tones to which we are now accustomed, but a sound that was high, pure, shrill, and harsh. This hostile warning caused no nostalgia and possessing no overtones of wanderlust. Thus [Henry Thoreau](#) would note at Walden Pond, that the whistle of the locomotive penetrated his woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard as the engine shouted its warning to get off the track.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

The first locomotive to provide shelter for the engine crew was the *Samuel P. Ingraham* bought by the Beaver Meadow Railroad. Cabs would not become standard equipment for several years, and were initially unpopular with passengers as the cab structure prevented the passengers from being able to watch the water gauge on the boiler. The mythos of this was that, so long as the passengers could observe the meniscus inside the glass tube, the boiler was not going to explode and scald them to death or cut them to pieces with its cast iron shrapnel. However unpopular engine cabs were with the customers, and however late they came to be incorporated into the engine design, we know that in New England winters it was common for members of the crew to lose fingers, toes, noses, ears to frostbite despite the intense radiant heat coming back from the firebox and boiler, and that it was common for these men to knock together various kinds of wind-shielding structures to make their winter ride endurable.

14. And then *Old Ironsides* proceeded to work for the next two decades and more. In 1833 *Old Ironsides* would be officially clocked, on a measured one mile stretch of good solid track, at 58 seconds. I don't know whether that track was "level" meaning horizontal, or downhill "level" meaning without bumps and curves. The directors of the railroad voted to award the builder, Mathias W. Baldwin, \$3,500.⁰⁰ of the \$4,000.⁰⁰ they had pledged, on grounds that they weren't completely satisfied. They had asked for a five-ton locomotive and he had built them a seven-ton locomotive. Mr. E.L. Miller of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company journeyed to Philadelphia PA and contracted with this M.W. Baldwin whose locomotives weren't good enough, to construct a new locomotive that was better, even better than the British ones – and it was to be named the *E.L. Miller*.

15. We don't know when the first headlight was added to a locomotive. We only know that night travel was at first uncommon, and that the first headlight was used prior to 1837 because the *Alert* was constructed in that year with an approximation of a headlight as original equipment.

SURPRISE!

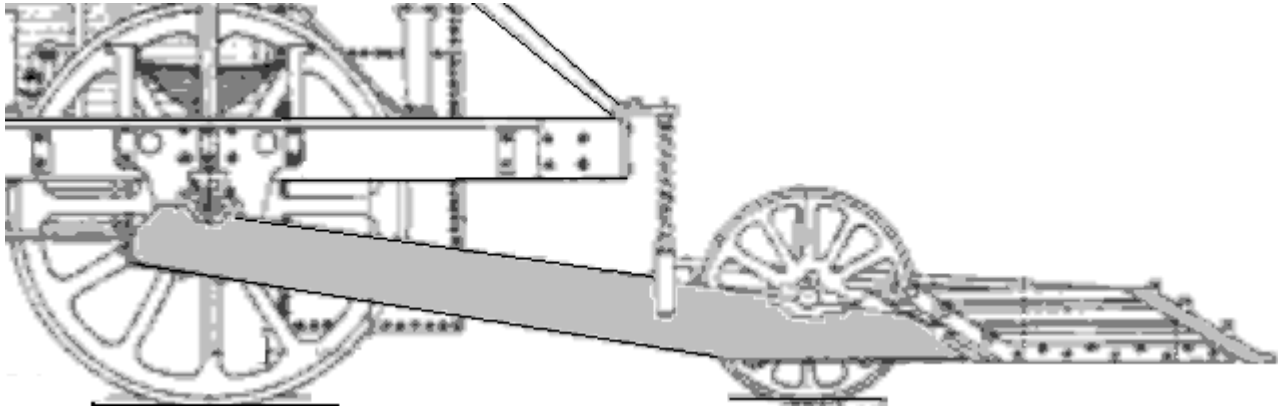
SURPRISE!

1833

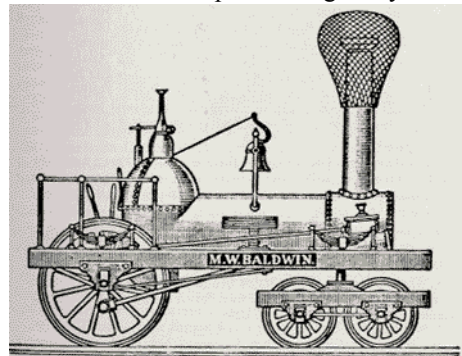
Fanny Kemble was continuing her American tour with her father when in Boston she rode out to Quincy, ten miles, to view the technology of the first commercial railroad in the United States, and witnessed a terrible accident.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

It was in about this year that Engineer Isaac Dripps of the Camden and Amboy Railroad retrofitted his locomotive John Bull, which had been created in England with a cowcatching device designed by Charles Babbage, with an additional front-riding deflector riding upon its own set of wheels.




Old Ironsides was officially clocked, on a measured one mile stretch of good solid track, at 58 seconds. I don't know whether that track was "level" meaning horizontal, or downhill "level" meaning without bumps and curves. The directors of the railroad voted to award the builder \$3,500.00 of the \$4,000.00 they had pledged, on grounds that they weren't completely satisfied. They had asked for a 5-ton locomotive and he had built them a 7-ton locomotive. This is not Old Ironsides, built in 1832, but Ironsides, which was constructed the company of Mathias W. Baldwin in Philadelphia during this year:




They would keep Old Ironsides in constant service for the next two decades and more. Mr. E.L. Miller of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company journeyed to Philadelphia and contracted with this clockmaker Baldwin whose locomotives weren't good enough for full payment, to construct a new locomotive that was to be even better than the British ones – and it was of course to be named the E.L. Miller.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

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 In the period from 1833 to 1849, out of some 660 fires per year in London, about 170 would be attributed to accidents involving candles. This would be in fact the primary category of home fire. The 1st professional brigade, the London Fire Establishment, was formed, with this being paid for by insurance companies.


[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)




"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

— A.J.P. Taylor



 Desiring to complete long runs on its 135-mile track after the fall of night, the South Carolina Canal & Railroad Company began to push two small flatcars in front of the locomotive, with the floor of the leading car covered with sand, and with a bonfire of pitch pine burning on top of this sand. I'm not sure whether the intent was for the engineer to see ahead along the tracks, or to make the train more visible to people walking along the tracks, or possibly both.¹⁶

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[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

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[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

➡ May 11, Saturday: Commander [George Back](#) reached the Sault de Ste. Marie at the head of the lake, “the extreme point to which civilisation has yet extended.”

When the *Lady of the Lake* struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic while on its way from England to Québec, 215 passengers and crewmen perished in the chilling waters.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



➡ November 11, Monday: A totally unanticipatable event occurred on the railroad tracks near Hightstown, New Jersey. A train traveling at the high speed of 25 miles per hour broke an axle and derailed. Although ex-President John Quincy Adams was uninjured, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt was thrown down a steep embankment and one of his broken ribs punctured his lung.¹⁷ Several other passengers were injured who did not happen to be rich or famous and whose names have therefore of course been forgotten and one of them died. This was the first passenger railroad wreck in the history of the United States and the first passenger fatality.¹⁸

HISTORY OF RR

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

The Reverend Joshua Barrett was dismissed by the Second Congregational Church in Plymouth. He would relocate to Westford.

17. For a number of years after this Commodore Vanderbilt would overlook the investment possibilities of and earnings potential of both preferred and common railroad stocks. :-)

18. Who knew but that they would also be the last?



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1834



August: *HOMÉROU ILLIAS*. THE ILIAD OF [HOMER](#), FROM THE TEXT OF WOLF. GR. WITH ENGLISH NOTES AND FLAXMAN'S ILLUSTRATIVE DESIGNS. EDITED BY [C.C. FELTON](#) (2d edition. Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Co.). This would be a required text at Harvard College and would be found in the personal library of [Henry Thoreau](#).

When a plank on a [Concord](#) bridge gave way, two girls drowned.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

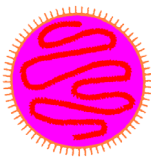
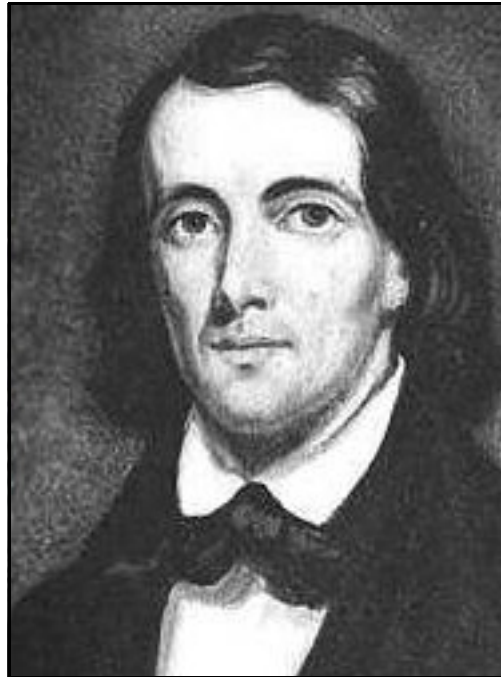
One or two incidents of these schools are fresh to my memory. Sitting at the north window of the school room one summers afternoon, I was curious to know the cause of the rapid driving & running up the main road, and impatiently waited to find out after school, that two girls of about half my age had fallen through a loose plank in the south bridge and were drowned clinging to each other and the piles under water – I knew one of them very well, Esq Joseph Barretts daughter. It was a great shock, and the whole town turned out the funeral of the victims I with other boys of my age was asked to be one of the bearers, and attended first at Dea. Elijah Woods house, the services of the Orthodox minister over one child, and then in the old Lee house where Squire Joe lived the two were placed side by side, and another service was performed by the Unitarian preacher It was an awfully hot day, and while this service was proceeding a fearful thunder shower came up, the worst I can recall. The roomy old mansion was full of people men women and children for the schools were dismissed for the occasion, and the rain poured the wind howled and the thunder rattled till women fainted, children screamed and men were panic stricken, while the lightning struck several times on the farm one setting into a blaze and burning up a large pine tree in plain sight of the door where I stood. I recall the remark of the old stage driver Stuart at the sight, that they burned the Charlestown convent last night so that was safe from the lighting, and that news that was whispered about did not allay the excitement or the strain After a long long hour of waiting the rain stopped, and in the muddy washed out and badly gullied streets under the broken clouds and muttering thunder we bore the bodies on the bier to the graveyard & were dismissed after sunset worn out, exhausted and in a frightened state. This was August 16 1834– After this experience I had a great fear of thunder showers that lasted till a boy came to stay at our house and got to school whom I did not like and who was even more of a coward about lightning. Laughing and plaguing him on the matter cured me so entirely that I hardly remember any more showers till recent years.

J.S. KEYES AUTOBIOGRAPHY

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Previously [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) had for some reason turned down an offer to become “companion to the supercargo” aboard the sailing ship *Japan*, which would have meant an all-expenses-paid visit to Calcutta. While [Ellery Channing II](#) waited in the Dana home on Ellery Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts, his distant



cousin Dick Dana, eyesight temporarily damaged by [measles](#), asked his father Richard Henry Dana, Sr. for permission to leave [Harvard College](#) and signed on the *Pilgrim*, a ship bound to pick up a cargo of cowhides in the Los Angeles area¹⁹, for use in the manufacturing of shoes in the [Boston](#) area. That is, to take up for a period the life of a common seaman.²⁰



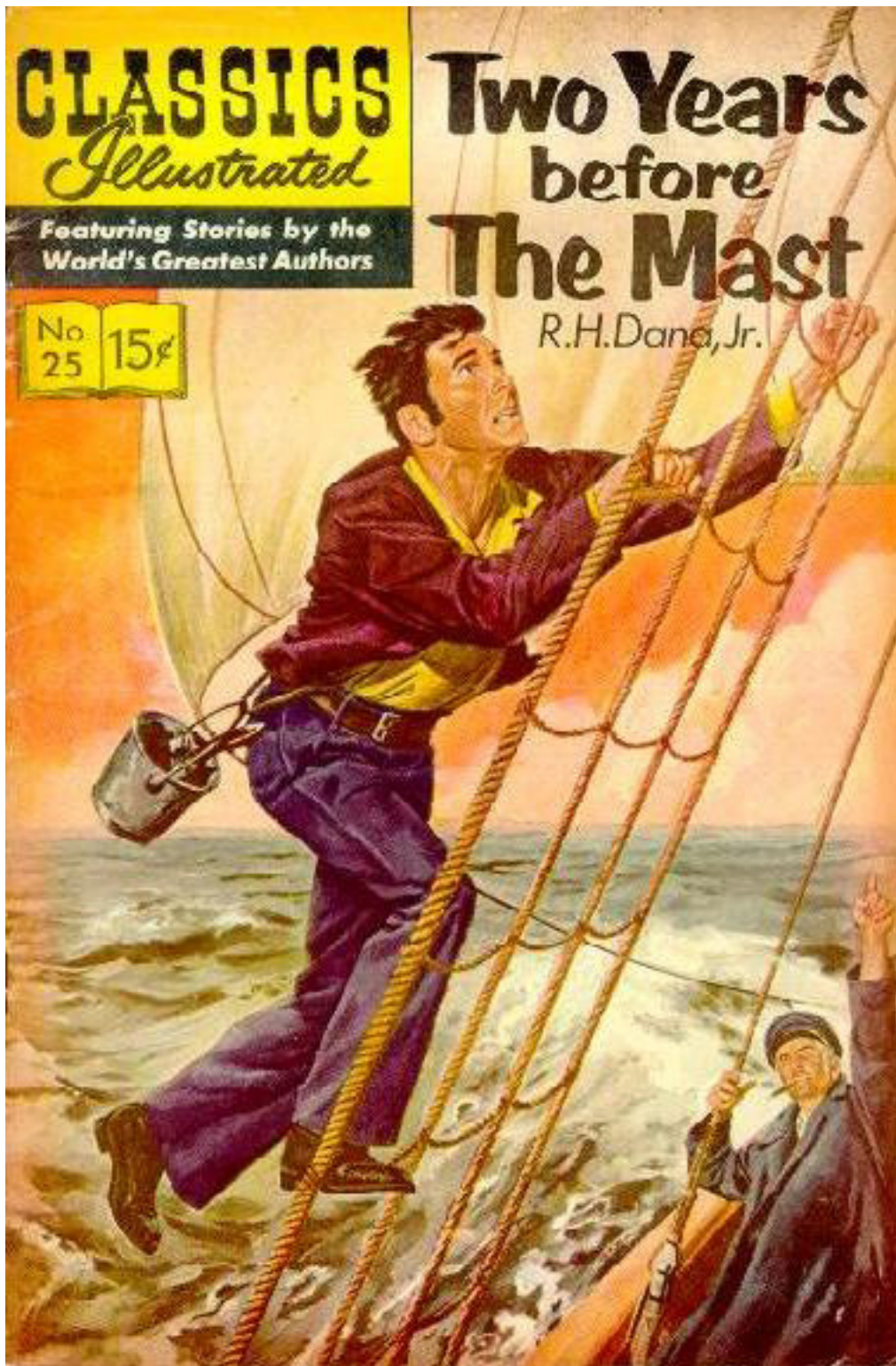
September: By this date Boston Common was completely ringed in with elms. The toddler [Louisa May Alcott](#) almost drowned in the frog pond.²¹

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

19. Visit a replica of the *Pilgrim* at moorings next to the Orange County Marine Institute in Dana Point Harbor, south of Disneyland.
 20. The narrative he would write would take no notice of the common homosexuality of sailor life during this period. It would be made to appear as if this were something with which this particular attractive young man never had to deal.
 21. Or did this happen in the summer of 1835?

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1835

Investors in the US were beginning to become aware that the economics of rail travel involved not only an improvement in the margin of profit for the haulage of existing business, but also the generation of a huge new market. For instance, it became known that before the installation of a steam railroad between Charleston, South Carolina and Hamburg, South Carolina, there had been only about 50 persons a month willing to pay the fare and get aboard the stage. One coach and horses, making only three trips per week and carrying only



six passenger on each trip, was able to handle all the business that was being generated and make the only profit there was to be had out of that situation. After the railroad went operational, however, the conditions of travel became so much more pleasant that the number of paying coach passengers between these towns increased from 50 a month to 2,500 a month. And, it goes without saying, none of these 2,500 were any more willing to climb into the confines of a stagecoach and wedge themselves into a seat with five other stinky passengers, behind four stinky horses, and subject themselves to hours of rocking and rolling. Also, this was the grace period of American railroading: with little travel at night, and with average speeds in the range of 18mph, and with little or no pressure on the engineer to meet a published timetable, there were few accidents. It would not be until the 1850s that railroad accidents —caused by excessive speed, worn-out equipment, trains traveling in both directions on single tracks, and employees under intense pressure to do whatever it required “make the trains run on time”— would create a national scandal, and would create a national pastime of the selling of tickets to witness spectacular steam-engine to steam-engine head on collisions at county fairs.


TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

For the time being, the battle of the railroads was a struggle “between man and machine” to overcome mechanical breakdowns and failures of coordination, rather than a struggle between an employee with a job and a family and a supervisor with a stopwatch and an attitude. Even the ecology of steam travel was right for the times, for locomotive filth was less burdensome than filth from horses.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1837

 The Stephens cup whistle was installed on a locomotive being constructed in Paterson NJ, the *Sandusky*. And the development of a railroad whistle code began, which would eventually result in the following signals (here “o” will be used to indicate a brief scream, “-” a longer one):

- o Apply brakes. Stop.**
- Release brakes. Proceed.**
- ooo. Flagman protect rear of train.**
- Flagman may return from west or south.**
- Flagman may return from east or north.**
- ooo. When standing, back. Answer to signal to back.
When running, answer to signal to stop at next passenger station.**
- oooo Call for signals.**
- oo When the train is on a single track, to call attention of engine and train crews of trains of the same class, inferior trains and yard engines and of trains at train order meeting points, to signals displayed for a following section. If not answered by a train, the train displaying the signals must stop and ascertain the cause. When the train is on two or more tracks, to call attention of engine and train crews of trains of the same class, inferior trains moving in the same direction, and yard engines to signals displayed for a following section.**
- oo Answer to “-oo” or any signal not otherwise provided for.**
- o- Approaching public crossings at grade. To be prolonged or repeated until the crossing is reached.**
- Approaching station, junctions, railroad crossings at grade, etc., as may be required.**
- o Approaching meeting or waiting points.**
- o- Inspect train line for leak or for brakes sticking.**
- oooooo To alert persons on the track, or frighten livestock off the track, a succession of short blasts were used.**

The locomotive *Alert* was the first constructed with an approximation of a headlight as original equipment, so it could pull trains at night as well as during the day. The locomotive *Sandusky* was the first constructed with a “steam trumpet” (whistle) as original equipment, and this novelty so enthralled one of the purchasing company’s executives, a Mr. J.H. James, that during its initial trials he tooted the poor engine repeatedly out



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of steam and caused it to appear deficient in pulling power. “Hey, so I’m sorry, alright?” Bear in mind that this whistle on the *Sandusky*, and the ones which had since 1833 been installed piecemeal on existing engines by various individual engineers, did not sound anything like the ones to which we are now accustomed. The early steam trumpet produced a sound that was high, pure, shrill, and harsh. Its hostile scream caused no nostalgia and possessing no overtones of wanderlust. Henry David Thoreau would say that at Walden Pond, the whistle of the locomotive penetrated his woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer’s yard as the engine shouted its warning to get off the track. Such a whistle had first been used on stationary engines in England, and had then started to be added to English locomotives after a bad crossing accident in 1833 on the Leicester & Swannington line. The echoing locomotive blast we now know would not come into use in the 1880s, and thus the sound which we now think of as characteristic of trains was not at all associated with the trains of Thoreau’s period. The later whistles would, by combining several tones, produce a mellower sound, and would thus cause the nomenclature to change from “steam trumpet” to “chime whistle.”

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Just as for many years automobiles were manufactured with windshields of ordinary glass, ready to shatter into slashing shards and cut the passengers’ faces in the slightest accident, because auto manufacturers had no incentive to install safety glass at a somewhat greater but invisible expense, so also in the early days of railroading, locomotives were built entirely without braking systems. Wasting forward momentum was simply something which was not to be contemplated. In a panic situation the crew would simply leap from the train down the embankments and allow the train to go on its way to whatever obstruction they had glimpsed ahead. Braking first came into existence in a haphazard manner, by crew members thrusting chunks of wood into the spokes of a slowly rolling wheel to lock it at a train station, making it grate and screech against the track and bringing the train ever so slowly to a standstill. Then, when it became clear that there were sound financial reasons why trains needed to back up, reverse gears were incorporated into engine design, and the engineers quickly learned that they could gradually slow down their train by throwing the engine into reverse. Then, in 1837, the *Alert* was built with a wagon-type wheel brake installed on its engine tender, for use by the fireman. In really desperate situations, when the engineer threw the engine into reverse, his fireman would not merely push on this lever—which caused blocks of wood to rub against the outside of the tender wheels—but stand upon the lever and bounce upon it in order to apply maximum stopping pressure.

This locomotive, manufactured in 1837, weighed over 12 tons and was over 13 feet long with its smokestack standing more than 11 feet above the rails. Its piston was fully a foot across and it was capable of pulling as much as a team of 18 draught horses:

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➡ March 23, Thursday: [David Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), [William Hazlitt](#)'s LECTURES ON THE ENGLISH POETS. DELIVERED AT THE SURREY INSTITUTION (London: Printed for Taylor and Hessey, 93, Fleet Street; Philadelphia: Published by Thomas Dobson and Son, at the Stone House, No. 41, South Second Street. William Fry, Printer).



ON THE ENGLISH POETS

(He had already been looking at this in the Institute of 1770 collection. His notes are in his Literary Notebook.)

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[Thoreau](#) also checked out [Edmund Burke](#)'s A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS OF [THE SUBLIME](#) AND BEAUTIFUL. ... WITH FEWERAL OTHER ADDITIONS (London, Printed for J. Dodsley, in Pall-mall. 1770, 6th edition) (electronically here, courtesy of Google Books, is not this 6th edition but the 7th edition of 1773, which has a slightly different title).



7TH EDITION, OF 1773

Patrick Morgan has suggested that, although Thoreau seems not to have read William Hogarth directly on the analysis of beauty, he did encounter Hogarth's concept of the "line of beauty" early on, here in the writings of Burke on the sublime and beautiful:

Obferve that part of a beautiful woman where fhe is perhaps the moft beautiful, about the neck and breafts; the fmoothnefs; the foftnefs; the easy and infenfible fwel ; the variety of the furface, which is never for the fmalleft fpace the fame; the deceitful maze, through which the unfteady eye flides giddily, without knowing where to fix or whither it is carried. Is not this a demonftration of that change of furface, continual, and yet hardly perceptible at any point, which forms one of the great conftituents of beauty? It give me no fmall pleafure to find that I can ftrengthen my theory in this point, by the opinion of the very ingenious Mr. Hogarth ; whofe idea of the line of beauty I take in general to be extremely juft.

[Thoreau](#) supplemented his borrowings from the college library by checking out, from the library of the ["Institute of 1770."](#) THE BOOK OF SHIPWRECKS, AND NARRATIVES OF MARITIME DISCOVERIES AND THE MOST POPULAR VOYAGES, FROM THE TIME OF COLUMBUS TO THE PRESENT DAY (Boston, 1836).

[TIMELINE OF SHIPWRECKS](#)

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

*5th day 22 [sic] of 3 M / Avery hard N East storm Meeting small,
but a comfortable solid silent Meeting
We had no buisness in the preparative Meeting & both were short.—*



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1839

At the age of 33, [Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury](#)'s seagoing days came to an abrupt end when his hip and knee were shattered in a stagecoach accident. Thereafter, he would devote himself to the study of naval meteorology, navigation, charting the winds and currents, seeking out the "Paths of the Seas" that had been mentioned in THE BOOK OF PSALMS 8.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

REFER TO PSALMS 8:8

1840

In Worcester, Massachusetts, Southworth Allen Howland's STEAMBOAT ACCIDENTS AND RAILWAY DISASTERS IN THE UNITED STATES went to press. ("If it bleeds, it leads.")

On August 29, 1782, the flagship of a British fleet, the Royal George, one of the largest ships of its time, about a generation old (it had been built in 1756), had been anchored off Spithead (Portsmouth) in about 20 meters of water, for repairs to a minor but persistent leak below the waterline on the vessel's starboard side. The crew was shoving all 54 of the starboard cannon over to the port side in order to heel the vessel and raise these leaking planks above the waterline, so they could be replaced. During this procedure the crew heard this loud crack — the ship went under almost instantly, with the loss of between 800 and 1400 lives, including that of Admiral Kempenfelt.²²

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

During the following month, [William Cowper](#) had written a LAMENT FOR THE *ROYAL GEORGE* at the request of Lady Austen, who had asked him to put the words to the tune of the march in *SCIPIO*. Cowper had noted that this obliged him to write in Alexandrines, "which I suppose would suit no ear but a French one":

Toll for the brave
The Brave that are no more,
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore.
Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage was well tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land breeze shook the shroud,
And she was overset,²³
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

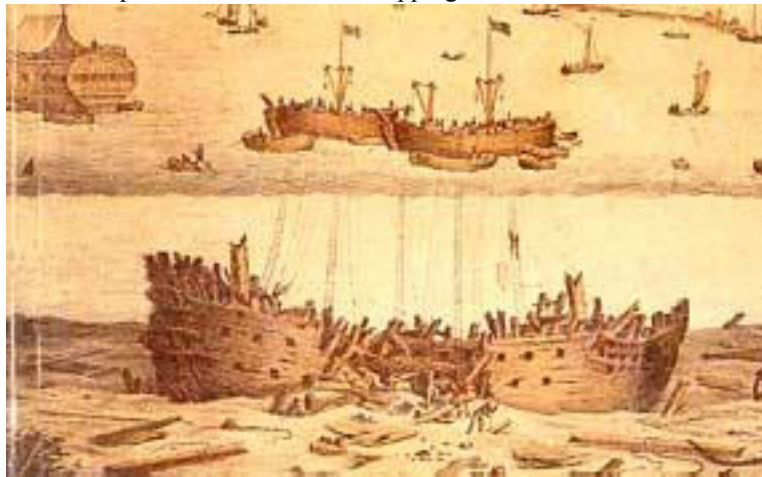
22. We don't know exactly how many people drowned because there were just a whole lot of civilians aboard, including a large consignment of some 300 women who were busy tending to the sexual needs of the crewmen. Officials were in that era going to great lengths to avoid a perilous crew condition known euphemistically as "Buggery Island." It was considered of the utmost importance, in the endeavor to make war properly, that a crew be able to make love properly.

23. Cowper suggested that the loss had been due to over-heeling and the breeze because the court-martial finding, that the loss had been the result of the breakage of excessively decayed timbers in the hull, had been suppressed by the Admiralty.

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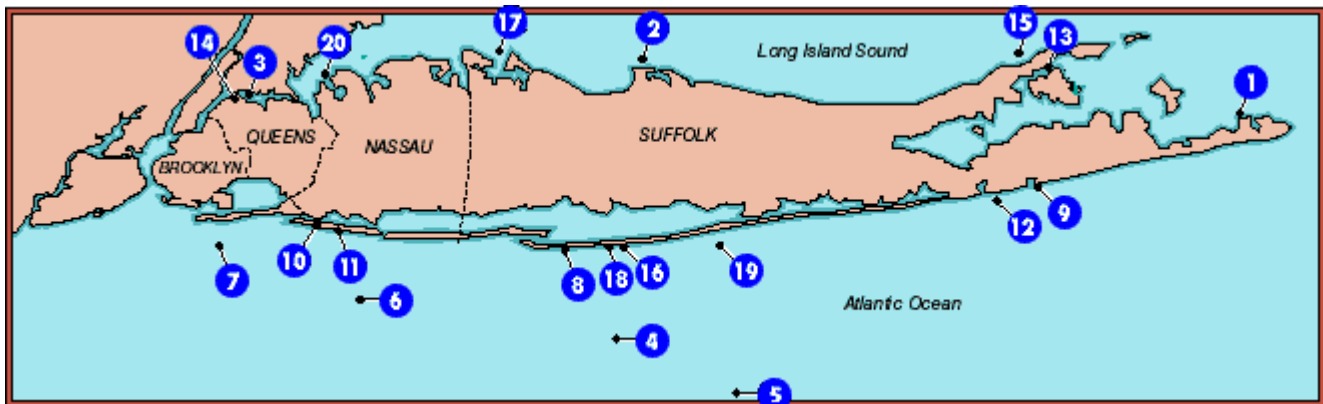
SURPRISE!

By this point enough advances had been made in the technology of helmet diving that salvagers were able to descend 20 meters and recover some of the materials. This would be made into mementos (for instance, some of the watersoaked wood would be rendered into souvenir butter knives), after which the wreck would be removed by the use of explosives as a hazard to shipping:²⁴



1840 Salvage Operations

January 13/14, Midnight: The steamer *Lexington* was running up Long Island Sound from the harbor of New-York to Stonington, Connecticut, where passengers would be able to catch a train to Boston. The fire crew stoked the firepot under the boiler so hot that some wood they had stacked against the metal of the smokestack ignited. When the captain attempted to steer toward the Long Island shoreline, the tiller ropes charred through and the ship became unmanageable. The engines failed while the steamer was still a couple of miles out into the icy waters (wreck #2 on the map below). 123 persons burned or drowned at their election, by one account, or 139 by another account, although the reports do agree that 4 people would survive to tell the tale by such means as straddling bales of cotton that had been in the cargo.



The Reverend [Charles Follen](#) had broken off a lecture tour in New York in order to attend the dedication of his new octagonal [Unitarian](#) church structure in East Lexington, and was aboard this steamer. The lay directors of the Reverend [William Ellery Channing](#)'s church would refuse to permit a memorial service for their minister's

24. Refer to Kenneth Hudson's THE BOOK OF SHIPWRECKS (Macmillan, 1979).



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close friend, and this would provoke Channing to terminate the stipend which, in semiretirement and poor health, he had been receiving.²⁵ The fact that the anti-slavery activist Follen died young, in this accident, and that then his friends would be unable to find any church in Boston willing to hold a memorial service on his behalf,²⁶ would enable the creation of a useful legend, that he had been one of the “abolitionist martyrs.”

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

The inquest into the tragedy would be promptly published by H.H. Brown and A.H. Stillwell as A FULL AND PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE LOSS OF THE STEAMBOAT LEXINGTON, IN LONG ISLAND SOUND, ON THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 13, 1840. According to this document, the inquiry concluded as follows, with a censure of one of the four survivors, the vessel’s pilot, Captain Stephen Manchester:

From the testimony adduced before the Court of inquiry by the Coroner’s inquest to investigate the causes which led to the destruction by fire of the steamboat Lexington, the inquest are of opinion, that the fire was communicated to the promenade deck by the intense heat of the smoke pipe, or from sparks from the space between the smoke pipe and steam chimney, as the fire was first seen near the casing of the steam chimney, on the promenade deck. They are further of opinion, that the Lexington was a first rate boat, with an excellent steam engine and a boiler suitable for burning wood, but not coal, with the blowers attached. Furthermore, it is our opinion, that had the buckets been manned at the commencement of the fire, it would have been immediately extinguished. Also, that inasmuch as the engine could not be stopped, from the rapid progress of the fire, – with presence of mind of the officers and a strict discipline of the crew, the boats could have been launched, and a large portion of the passengers and crew if not the whole, might have been saved. It is the opinion of this Jury that the present Inspectors of Steamboats, either from ignorance or neglect, have suffered the Steamboat Lexington to navigate the Sound at the imminent risk of the lives and property of the passengers, giving a certificate stating a full compliance with the laws of the United States, while in our opinion such was not the case. That the system as adapted on board of the Lexington of using blowers on board of boats, is dangerous, which has been proved to this Jury by competent witnesses. And that the conduct of the officers of the Steamboat Lexington on the night of the 13th of January, when said steamboat was on fire, deserves the severest censure of this community; from the facts proved before this Jury that the Captain and Pilot, in the greatest hour of danger, left the steamboat to her own guidance, and sought their own safety, regardless of the fate of the passengers. Instead of the Captain or Pilot retreating to the tiller, aft, when there being at that time a communication to the same tiller, there appeared to be no other thought but self preservation. And it further appears to this Jury that the odious practice of carrying cotton, in any quantities, on board

25. With great inherited wealth, the reverend had no need for such a stipend.

26. It is entirely unclear, and an astounding detail, why they failed to simply hold this memorial service in the octagonal church in East Lexington that he had designed, since that venue was now standing complete, and since he is now held there in such high honor; the Reverend Samuel Joseph May would, during March, stage this memorial service at the Marlborough Chapel. (I am personally of the suspicion that there must be portions of this incomplete tale –portions dissonant with the chosen “abolitionist martyr” spin–that persons unknown have deliberately declined to make available to the historical record.)



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of passenger boats, in a manner in which it shall be liable to take fire, from sparks, or heat, from any smoke pipe or other means, deserves public censure.

One of the four survivors, Captain Chester Hillard, testified that:

I went on board the Lexington at 3 o'clock, P.M. I don't know the number of passengers she had on board; I estimated from the number at the table, that there were 150 passengers; but I have since been induced to believe, that the estimate was too large. I paid no particular attention to the landing of the freight consisted of cotton; it was stowed under the promenade deck. There might have been boxes of goods on board, but I did not notice. Between the wheel-house and engine, there was sufficient space for a person to pass; whether more than sufficient for one person or not, I cannot say. There was a tier of cotton bales stowed in the passage – I think on the side next to the wheel-house. I went into the forecabin. I think there were over the forecabin three or four baggage cars. The life-boat was on the starboard side of the promenade deck, forward of the wheel-house. I took no notice of the boat, until I saw persons endeavoring to clear her away. She was covered with canvass. I also saw the two quarter boats lowered away, after the fire broke out, but did not notice them before.

We took supper about 6 o'clock. There were two tables set, I should think more than one half the length of the cabin. These tables were filled, and some of the passengers were compelled to wait for the second table. The boat ran perhaps 12 to 14 knots per hour. I think that we must have taken supper somewhat before 6 o'clock. I think that the supper occupied from half to three quarters of an hour. I don't know Captain Child, and cannot say whether he was at the table or not.

It was about an hour after supper that I heard the alarm of fire. I was then on the point of turning in. I had my coat and boots off. I think my berth was No. 45 or 49, the third length aft from the companion way and very near it on the starboard side. I did not at the time apprehend any thing serious. I slipped on my coat and boots and went on deck. I put on my hat and took my overcoat on my arm. When I got on deck I discovered the casing of the smoke pipe on fire, and I think a part of the promenade deck was also on fire. There was a great rush of the passengers, and much confusion, so that I could not notice particularly. The after part of the casing was burning, and the fire was making aft. I thought at the time that the fire might be subdued. I saw the fire below the promenade deck. I did not notice whether there was any fire below the main deck. I was aft at the time, and could not, therefore, see distinctly. I was never before on board the Lexington, and know nothing of the construction of the smoke pipe.

I saw nothing of the commander, but from what I could hear of the crew forward, I supposed they were at work trying to rig the fire engine; I saw no buckets used, and think they were not made use of; I saw fire buckets on board, but can't say how many; I think the fire engine was not got to work, as I saw nothing of it. I shortly after went on the promenade deck; previously my attention had been directed to the passengers who were rushing



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into the quarter boats, and when I went on the quarter deck the boats were both filled. They seemed to be stupidly determined to destroy themselves, as well as the boats which were their only means of safety. I went to the starboard boat, which they were lowering away; they lowered it until she took the water, and then I saw some one cut away the forward tackle fall; it was at all events disengaged, and no one at the time could have unhooked the fall; the boat instantly filled with water, there being at the time some twenty persons in her; the boat passed immediately astern, entirely clear. I then went to the other side; the other boat was cleared away and lowered in the same manner as the other, full of passengers. This boat fell astern entirely disengaged, as the other had done; she fell away before she had entirely filled with water.

By this time the fire had got to going so that I pretty much made my mind up "it was a case." I thought that the best thing that could be done was to run the boat ashore, and for this purpose went to the wheel-house to look for Capt. Child, expecting to find him there. I found Capt. Child there. I advised him to run for the shore. The Captain replied that she was already headed for the land. The fire by this time began to come up around the promenade deck, and the wheel-house was completely filled with smoke. There were two or three on the promenade deck near the wheel-house, and their attention was turned to the life boat. I was at this time apprehensive that the promenade deck would fall through. The life boat was cleared away. I assisted stripping off the canvass, but I had no notion of going in her, as I made my mind up that if they got her down on to the main deck, they would serve her as they had done the others. The steamer was then under head way. They cleared her away and I think launched her over the side. Before I left the promenade deck I thought it was time for us to leave; however, as the fire was bursting up through the deck, I then went aft and down on to the main deck. They were then at work with the hose, but whether by the aid of the engine, or not, I cannot say. I did not know at the time that there was a force pump on board.

The smoke was so dense that I could not see distinctly what they were about. I think that the communication with the fore part of the boat was by that time cut off. Up to this time, from the first hearing of the alarm, perhaps 20 minutes had elapsed. The engine had now been stopped about 6 minutes. I then recommended to the few deck hands and passengers who remained, to throw the cotton overboard. This was done, myself lending my aid. I told the passengers that they must do something for themselves, and the best thing they could do was to take to the cotton. - There were perhaps ten or a dozen bales thrown overboard, which was pretty much all there was on the larboard side which had not taken fire. I then cut off a piece of line, perhaps four or five fathoms, and with it spanned a bale of cotton, which I believe was the last one not on fire. It was a very snug square bale. It was about four feet long and three feet wide, and a foot and a half thick. Aided by one of the firemen, I put the bale up on the rail, round which we took a turn, slipped the bale down below the guard, when we both got on to it. We got on to the bale before we lowered it. The boat then lay broad side to the wind



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and we were under the lee of the boat, on the larboard side. We placed ourselves one on each end of the bale, facing each other. With our weight on the bale it remained about one third out of the water. The wind was pretty fresh, and we drifted at the rate of about a knot and a half. We did not lash ourselves to the bale, but coiled the rope up and laid it on the bale. My companion did not like the idea of leaving the boat immediately, but wished to hold on to the guards. I determined to get out of the way, believing that to remain there much longer it would become pretty hot quarters. We accordingly shoved the bale round the stern. The moment we had reached the stern, we left the boat and drifted away about a knot and a half. This was just 8 o'clock by my watch, which I took out and looked at.

As we left the wreck I picked up a piece of board, which I used as a paddle or rudder, with which to keep the bale "end to the sea."

At the time we left the boat there were but few persons remaining on board. I saw one lady. The ladies' cabin was then all on fire. The reason why I noticed the lady was, that her child had got overboard and was then about two rods from her. We passed by the child so near that I could put my hand on to it as it lay on its back. The lady saw us approaching the child and cried out for us to save it. We then drifted away from the boat, and in ten minutes more we could see no persons on board except those on the forecastle. I should think the child was a female from its dress. I think it had on a bonnet. The child was dead when we passed it. I don't recollect how the lady was dressed, or what she said. I did not see any other child with the lady; I could not notice particulars, as it was at the time pretty rough, I had as much as I could do to manage my bale of cotton, we were sitting astride of the bale with our feet in the water; I was wet up to my middle from the water which at times washed over the bale; we were in sight of the boat all the time till she went down, when we were about a mile distant; when we left the wreck it was cloudy, but about nine o'clock it cleared off, and we had a fine night of it until the moon went down; I looked at my watch as often as every half hour, through the night, the boat went down at three o'clock; it was so cold as to make it necessary for me to exert myself to keep warm, which I did by whipping my hands and arms around my body; about 4 o'clock the bale capsized with us; a heavy sea came and carried the bale over end ways; my companion was at this time with me, and we managed to get to the bale on its opposite side; we at this time lost our piece of board, afterwards the bale was ungovernable and went as it liked; my companion had complained a good deal of the cold from our first setting out; he didn't seem to have that spirit about him that he ought to have had; he was continually fretting himself about things which he had no business to. He said his name was Cox, and that his wife lived in this city, at No. 11 Cherry street. He appeared to have given up all hope of our being saved. On our first starting from the boat, I gave him my vest as he had on his chest only a flannel shirt. He had on pantaloons, boots and cap. He said he was a fireman on board the boat.

Cox remained on the bale after it had upset about 2 or 2 1/2



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hours, until it was about day light. For the last half hour that he remained on the bale, he had been speechless and seemed to have lost all use of his hands as he did not try to hold on. I rubbed him and beat his flesh, and used otherwise every effort I could to keep his blood in circulation. It was still very rough, and I was obliged to exert myself to hold on. The bale coming broad side to the sea it gave a lurch and Cox slipped off and I saw him no more. He went down without a struggle. I then got more into the middle of the bale, to make it ride as it should, and in that way continued until at least for about an hour. I got my feet on the bale and so remained until the sloop picked me up. The sea had by this time become quite smooth. On seeing the sloop I waved my hat, to attract the attention of those on board; I was not frozen in any part.

The name of the sloop was the "Merchant," Capt. Meeker, of Southport. I think Captain M. and those on board the sloop are entitled to a great deal of credit, as they did more on the occasion than any one else. It appears that they tried during the night to get out to the aid of those on board the Lexington, but in coming out the sloop grounded on the bar, and they were compelled before they could get her off to lighten her of part of her cargo. It was 11 o'clock when I was picked up. The sloop had, previous to reaching me, spoken the light boat to make enquiries relative to the direction of the fire. On going on board of the sloop, I had every possible attention paid me; they took me into the cabin and then cruised in search of others. They picked up two other living men and the bodies of two others. The living men were Captain Manchester, pilot of the Lexington, and the other Charles Smith, a hand on board.

One of the persons was picked up on a bale of cotton, and the other on the wheel-house. I supposed Captain Manchester was on the bale, but from what Captain Comstock said yesterday, it could not be the case. Captain Manchester was picked up, but I was in the cabin at the time – was below when the other was picked up. They were both picked up within half an hour. When they were brought on board, Captain Manchester was pretty much exhausted; Smith seemed better. They put them both in bed. Smith was a fireman and belongs to Norwich, Connecticut.

According to this document, the surviving pilot, Captain Stephen Manchester, who was censured for seeking his own safety rather than attempting to save the vessel, testified as follows:

The main deck now fell in as far as the capstan; the people had by this time got overboard, some of them drowned, and others hurrying on to the baggage cars, the raft and other things. What was left of the main deck was now on fire, and got us cornered up in so small a space that we could do nothing more by throwing water. There were then only eight or ten persons astern on the steamboat, and about 30 on the forecastle. They were asking me what they should do, and I told them I saw no chance for any of us; that if we stayed there, we should be burned to death, and if we went overboard we should probably perish. Among those who were there was Mr. Hoyt and Van Cott, another person named Harnden, who had charge of the express line. I did not know any one else. I then took a piece of spun yarn and made it fast to my coat, and also to the rail, and so eased myself down upon the



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raft. There were two or three others on it already and my weight sank it. I held on to the rope until it came up again – and when it did, I sprang up and caught a piece of railing which was in the water, and from thence got on a bale of cotton where there was a man sitting; found the bale was made fast to the railing; I took out my knife and cut it off. About the time I cut this rope off, I saw some person standing on the piece of railing – asked me if there was room for another; I made no answer, and he jumped and knocked off the man that was with me; and I hauled him on again. I caught a piece of board which was floating past me and shoved the bale clean off from the raft; and used the board to endeavor to get in shore at Crane Neck Point, but I could not succeed; but I used the board as long as I could, for exercise. When I left the wreck, I looked at my watch and it was just twelve o'clock. I think the man who was on the bale with me said his name was McKenny, and lived at New York; he died about three o'clock. – When I hauled him on the bale I encouraged him and told him to thrash his hands, which he did for a spell, but soon gave up pretty much. When he died he fell back on the bale and the first sea that came pushed him off it: My hands were then so frozen that I could not use them at all; while I was on the cotton I looked at my watch; two o'clock and three miles from the wreck when she sunk; the last thing I recollect was seeing the sloop, and I raised my handkerchief between my fingers, hoping they would see me; I believe they did. I was then sitting on the cotton, with my feet in the water. The cotton never rolled at all, although there were some heavy seas; the man who was on the bale spoke of his wife and children, that he had kissed them the morning he left home, that he was never before through the Sound, and said he feared he would die of the cold.

1841

At approximately this period, although records are inadequate because of the nature of such events, the property known as [Harriet Tubman](#) was seriously damaged by an overseer, accidentally, while he was in the process of correcting another nearby property. Well, how would you describe this, and avoid terms that would presuppose that she had medical benefits and a health plan? For the rest of her life Harriet would suffer unanticipated periods of unconsciousness, and would feel the need to wear a turban to conceal the ugly indentation of her skull.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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April 19, Monday: The *William Brown*, a cargo vessel that was also carrying Irish (and some Scottish) steerage passengers from Liverpool, England, had sailed on March 13th toward a port in the United States, presumably Boston, and was off the Newfoundland Banks at latitude 43.30 N and longitude 49.39 W in the evening under full sail toward the southwest through a light haze at a speed of ten knots in waters known to be seeded with icebergs. At about 8:45PM the vessel scraped an ice pan, which in and of itself was not considered very alarming, but then some ten or fifteen minutes later the vessel's larboard side was impacted by an iceberg.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Of the 64 passengers, 31, of whom 18 were children, immediately perished in the frigid waves. However, 33 passengers had managed to clamber into the vessel's jollyboat and its longboat—the two small boats being lashed together—along with the vessel's 15 seamen, and her 1st mate, Frances Rhodes, and her captain, George L. Harris. At about 5AM the next morning, the 1st Mate, 9 crewmen, and 33 passengers were listed by name in the longboat, and the captain and 7 others, one of them a woman passenger, were listed by name in the jollyboat. The two boats then separated in order to row their way to the northwest toward the Newfoundland shore. The 1st Mate, in the longboat, was heard to say "We cannot all live — some of us must die, the boat is so leaky," and the Captain, in the jollyboat, was heard to respond that he would not hear such talk. At about 10PM the sailors of the longboat (1st Mate Frances Rhodes, Joseph Stratton, John Messer, Alexander William Holmes, Charles Smith, James Northon, Isaac Freeman, William Miller, the vessel's cook H. Murray, and the vessel's steward Lemarchal) would be heaving 14 of the male passengers and 2 of the female passengers (Misses Anderson and Bradley) overboard. An old Irishman who tried to offer sovereignty to the sailors had his



purse knocked away as they pitched him over the side. One of the crewmen, John Messer, attempted to interfere with this series of killings and found himself needing to protect himself from the other members of the crew for the remainder of the night with his sailor's sheath-knife. When the sailors came for a young man of about 18, he persuaded them to allow him to say his prayers and then he lowered himself into the water rather than be heaved away. (A boy of 12, one of those forced overboard, would be able to cling under the lifeboat's bow. A man who pleaded from the waves that he not be separated from his wife was allowed to clamber back into the longboat.)

John Messer, the seaman who had been protecting himself during the night with his sheath-knife after having protested the killings, sighted a sail, whereupon the 1st Mate remarked "By God, Jack, you're a lucky fellow; you have saved your life." The ship they had sighted was the *Crescent*, an American vessel heading toward Le Havre. Her Captain, S.J. Ball, who was in his ship's rigging while commanding her way through the ice field, immediately directed the vessel toward the longboat. 1st Mate Rhodes, the 15 women passengers who had

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survived the previous night's selection, the adult male passenger who had been allowed to clamber back aboard to be with his wife, the boy of 23 who had clung in the water under the lifeboat's bow, and the 7 crewmen were rescued. When they landed in Le Havre, American consul A.G. Beasley and British consul G. Gordon, conducted an examination without discovering "any fact capable of drawing down blame upon any one whatever."

The jollyboat with Captain Harris and the other seven survivors was picked up by a French lugger on the fishing grounds and taken to the hospital in the port of St. Pierre. In sum, of the passengers, 48 would not make it to America, while every member of the crew, the Captain and the 1st Mate and their every sailor and their cook and their steward, would live to refuse to tell their tale. The mother of a Scottish family named Edgar from Lochmaben, with her five daughters and a servant girl, were among the survivors. Also among the surviving passengers were James Patrick and Matilda Patrick and the infant at her breast. Also among the survivors were James Black and his wife from Dublin, Bridget MacGee from Drogheda, Bridget Nugent from Westmeath, Ann Bradley, Sarah Corr, Mary Corr, and Anthony Corr from Coleraine, and Julia M'Adam from Dublin. One of the seamen, Alexander William Holmes, would serve the ship's owners as scapegoat in the manslaughter case "United States v. Holmes" in their attempt to evade their responsibility for having neglected to provide their vessel with enough lifeboats during such a passenger-laden voyage.

The event is reconstructed on the basis of notices in the Journal de Havre, Galigmani's Messenger, and the Glasgow Courier as copied in the Boston Post. While transcribing materials, I have noted that there are inconsistencies in the tale being told but have refrained from attempting to resolve these inconsistencies. There is now a trade press book, Tom Koch's THE WRECK OF THE WILLIAM BROWN, THE LIFEBOAT MURDERS AND THE TRIAL (Canada: Douglas & McIntyre, Ltd., 2003), which is available for your delectation.

October: A fire broke out in the Bowyer Tower of the Tower of London, which, if I mistake not, was housing a museum of medieval long bows.²⁷ Hand operated fire engines were almost useless due to the lack of a large water supply. The Bowyer Tower was lost and sparks started fires on the roof of the Grand Storehouse. For half an hour or more soldiers carried valuable pieces to safety, until the roof collapsed.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

27. The offensive gesture of the raised first and second fingers, with the back of the hand forward, allegedly came from the French practice that whenever they captured an English Bowman they would sever the two fingers with which he would pull back a bow string. (During WWII, [Winston Churchill](#) would modify this gesture by making it with palm forward and fingers separate.)



"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project



SURPRISE!

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1842

January 1, Saturday: The Athenæum Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts (London) contained a “Review of [Paul Émile Botta](#)’s Travels in Arabia [*RELATION D’UN VOYAGE DANS L’YÉMEN, ENTREPRIS ON 1837, POUR LE MUSÉUM D’HISTOIRE NATURELLE DE PARIS*].”

[refer to following screen for Thoreau’s comment in [A WEEK](#)]



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A WEEK: The ready writer seizes the pen, and shouts, Forward! Alamo and Fanning! and after rolls the tide of war. The very walls and fences seem to travel. But the most rapid trot is no flow after all; and thither, reader, you and I, at least, will not follow. A perfectly healthy sentence, it is true, is extremely rare. For the most part we miss the hue and fragrance of the thought; as if we could be satisfied with the dews of the morning or evening without their colors, or the heavens without their azure. The most attractive sentences are, perhaps, not the wisest, but the surest and roundest. They are spoken firmly and conclusively, as if the speaker had a right to know what he says, and if not wise, they have at least been well learned. Sir Walter Raleigh might well be studied if only for the excellence of his style, for he is remarkable in the midst of so many masters. There is a natural emphasis in his style, like a man's tread, and a breathing space between the sentences, which the best of modern writing does not furnish. His chapters are like English parks, or say rather like a Western forest, where the larger growth keeps down the underwood, and one may ride on horseback through the openings. All the distinguished writers of that period possess a greater vigor and naturalness than the more modern, – for it is allowed to slander our own time, – and when we read a quotation from one of them in the midst of a modern author, we seem to have come suddenly upon a greener ground, a greater depth and strength of soil. It is as if a green bough were laid across the page, and we are refreshed as by the sight of fresh grass in midwinter or early spring. You have constantly the warrant of life and experience in what you read. The little that is said is eked out by implication of the much that was done. The sentences are verdurous and blooming as evergreen and flowers, because they are rooted in fact and experience, but our false and florid sentences have only the tints of flowers without their sap or roots. All men are really most attracted by the beauty of plain speech, and they even write in a florid style in imitation of this. They prefer to be misunderstood rather than to come short of its exuberance. Hussein Effendi praised the epistolary style of Ibrahim Pasha to the French traveller Botta, because of "the difficulty of understanding it; there was," he said, "but one person at Jidda, who was capable of understanding and explaining the Pasha's correspondence." A man's whole life is taxed for the least thing well done. It is its net result. Every sentence is the result of a long probation. Where shall we look for standard English, but to the words of a standard man? The word which is best said came nearest to not being spoken at all, for it is cousin to a deed which the speaker could have better done. Nay, almost it must have taken the place of a deed by some urgent necessity, even by some misfortune, so that the truest writer will be some captive knight, after all. And perhaps the fates had such a design, when, having stored Raleigh so richly with the substance of life and experience, they made him a fast prisoner, and compelled him to make his words his deeds, and transfer to his expression the emphasis and sincerity of his action.

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Although no-one thought anything of it at the time, Henry's brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), age 27, while hurrying to strop his straight razor and shave before going off to a party, nicked the end of the ring finger of his left hand.

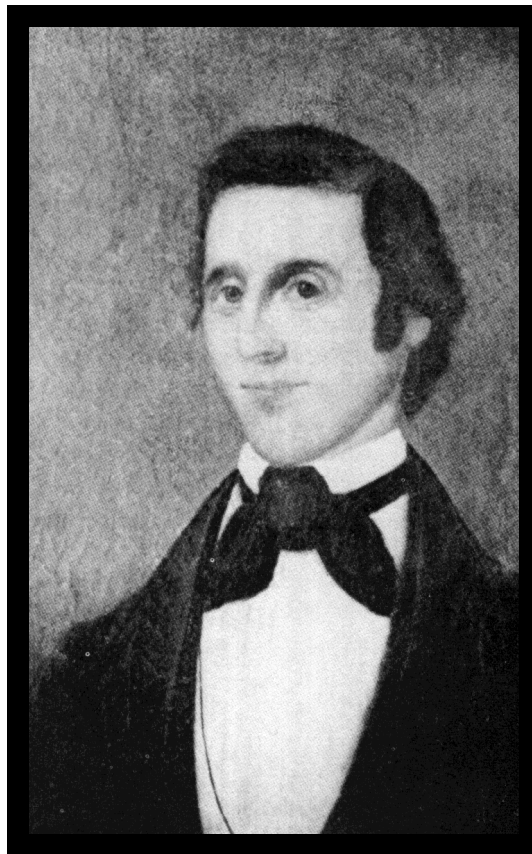


January 8: One music seems to differ from another chiefly in its more perfect time— In the steadiness and equanimity of music lies its divinity. It is the only assured tone When men attain to speak with as settled a faith—and as firm assurance their voices will sing and march as do the feet of the soldier. Because of the perfect time of this music box —its harmony with itself— is its greater dignity and stateliness. This music is more nobly related for its more exact measure — so simple a difference as this more even pace raises it to the higher dignity.



Man's progress in nature should have an accompaniment of music It relieves the scenery — which is seen through it as a subtler element— like a very clear morning air in autumn. Music wafts me through the clear sultry valleys — with only a light grey vapor against the hills. Of what manner of stuff is the web of time wove — when these consecutive sounds called a strain of music can be wafted down through the centuries from Homer to me— And Homer have been conversant with that same unfathomable mystery and charm, which so newly tingles my ears.— These single strains —these melodious cadences which plainly proceed out of a very deep meaning— and a sustained soul are the interjections of God.

Am I so like thee my brother that the cadences of two notes affects us alike?



Shall I not sometime have an opportunity to thank him who made music? I feel very when I hear these lofty strains because there must be something in me as lofty that hears— Does it not rather hear me? If my blood were clogged in my veins I am sure it would run more freely— God must be very rich who for the turning of a pivot can pour out such melody on me.— It is a little prophet — it tells me the secrets of futurity where are its secrets wound up but in this box? So much hope has slumbered.— There are in music such strains as far surpass any faith in the loftiness of man's destiny— He must be very sad before he can comprehend them— The clear liquid note, from the morning fields beyond seems to come through a vale of sadness to man which gives all music a plaintive air— It hath caught a higher pace than any virtue I know.



It is the arch reformer. It hastens the sun to his setting It invites him to his rising. It is the sweetest reproach, a measured satire. I know there is a people somewhere this heroism has place Or else things are to be learned which it will be sweet to learn. This cannot be all rumor. When I hear this I think of that everlasting and stable something which is not sound but to be a thrilling reality and can consent to go about the meanest work for as many years of time as it pleases even the Hindo penance — for a year of the gods were as nothing to that which shall come after What then can I do to hasten that other time or that space where there shall be no time and these things be a more living part of my life. Where there will be no discords in my life?

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



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January 9, Sunday morning: Lieutenant Vincent Eyre would report²⁸ from the border of [Afghanistan](#) that “Another morning dawned, awakening thousands to increased misery; and many a wretched survivor cast looks of envy at his comrades, who lay stretched beside him in the quiet sleep of death. Daylight was the signal for a renewal of that confusion which attended every movement of the force.” At 8AM, many of the troops and followers began to move forward without orders, but were recalled by the General [General Shelton? General Sale? General Elphinstone?], in consequence of an arrangement with Akber Khan. “This delay, and prolongation of their sufferings in the snow, of which one more march would have carried them clear, made a very unfavourable impression on the minds of the native soldiery, who now, for the first time, began very generally to entertain the idea of deserting.” Akber Khan then proposed that the ladies and children should be made over to his care; and, anxious to save them further suffering, the General gave his consent to the arrangement, permitting their husbands and the wounded officers to accompany them. “Up to this time scarcely one of the ladies had tasted a meal since leaving Cabul. Some had infants a few days old at the breast, and were unable to stand without assistance. Others were so far advanced in pregnancy, that, under ordinary circumstances, a walk across a drawing-room would have been an exertion; yet these helpless women, with their young families, had already been obliged to rough it on the backs of camels, and on the tops of the baggage yaboos: those who had a horse to ride, or were capable of sitting on one, were considered fortunate indeed. Most had been without shelter since quitting the cantonment –their servants had nearly all deserted or been killed– and, with the exception of Lady Macnaghten and Mrs Trevor, they had lost all their baggage, having nothing in the world left but the clothes on their backs; *those*, in the case of some of the invalids, consisted of *night dresses* in which they had started from Cabul in their litters. Under such circumstances, a few more hours would probably have seen some of them stiffening corpses. The offer of Mahomed Akber was consequently their only chance of preservation. Anticipating an attack, the troops paraded to repel it, and it was now found that Her Majesty’s 44th foot regiment mustered only 100 files, and the native infantry regiments about 60 each. “The promises of Mahomed Akber to provide food and fuel were unfulfilled, and another night of starvation and cold consigned more victims to a miserable death.”

In Concord, Massachusetts, [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) began to have symptoms of lockjaw. The local doctor came and cleaned and bandaged John’s finger but his condition worsened.

28. Lieut. V. Eyre (Sir Vincent Eyre, 1811-1881). THE MILITARY OPERATIONS AT CABUL: WHICH ENDED IN THE RETREAT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE BRITISH ARMY, JANUARY 1842, WITH A JOURNAL OF IMPRISONMENT IN [AFFGHANISTAN](#). Philadelphia PA: Carey and Hart, 1843; London: J. Murray, 1843 (three editions); Lieut. V. Eyre (Sir Vincent Eyre, 1811-1881). PRISON SKETCHES: COMPRISING PORTRAITS OF THE CABUL PRISONERS AND OTHER SUBJECTS; ADAPTED FOR BINDING UP WITH THE JOURNALS OF LIEUT. V. EYRE, AND LADY SALE; LITHOGRAPHED BY LOWES DICKINSON. London: Dickinson and Son, [1843?]



SURPRISE!

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January 9, Sunday evening: In American farming communities, the danger of receiving a fatal infection through an open wound was a danger which was ever present. This was due to the intimate presence of farm animals. Any accident which produced an open skin cut would be alarming. There was [tetanus](#), there was gangrene (known as “mortification”), there was septicemia (known as “blood poisoning”), and if one of these started — there was no hope and nothing which might be attempted. Most vulnerable were males, from their midteens onward. Lewis Miller, in his *SKETCHES AND CHRONICLES*,²⁹ described how a young lady tossed an apple at his brother David, 18 years of age, while David was running a cider mill, and how David glanced around and caught his hand in the apple-crushing mechanism and got it “dreadful ground up.” (David would die on the 8th day, of infection.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

On this evening a doctor came out to Concord from Boston, but said only that there was nothing that could be done. [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) asked:

“The cup that my Father gives me, shall I not drink it?”³⁰

January 9-February 20: [Henry Thoreau](#) would be making no entries in his journal.

29. Miller, Louis. *SKETCHES AND CHRONICLES: THE REFLECTIONS OF A NINETEENTH CENTURY PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN FOLK ARTIST*. York PA: York County Historical Society, 1966.

30. Henry never referred to this in his writing, directly, but surely he never could have forgotten his brother, in extremis, making such a remark! The poet W.H. Auden has in 1962 brought forward a snippet from [A WEEK](#), that Thoreau may well have intended as a reminiscence of those days during which he had held his dying brother in his arms:

**THE VIKING BOOK OF APHORISMS, A PERSONAL SELECTION
BY W.H. AUDEN...**

Pg	Topic	Aphorism Selected by Auden out of Thoreau
216	The Professions	It often happens that the sicker man is the nurse to the sounder.

[A WEEK](#): The unwise are accustomed to speak as if some were not sick; but methinks the difference between men in respect to health is not great enough to lay much stress upon. Some are reputed sick and some are not. It often happens that the sicker man is the nurse to the sounder.

SURPRISE!

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April 29, Friday: [Frederick Douglass](#) spoke during the day at Hopkinton, Massachusetts and then in the evening at Woburn, Massachusetts.



Per the Boston [Morning Post](#) and [The Daily Advertiser](#) for April 30, 1842, a group of 27 of the “farm boys” of the Boston Farm and Trade School on Thompson Island ranging in age from 8 to 16 headed out to Boston on a fishing trip — a reward for their good behavior at school. They were accompanied by a boatman and by



a teacher, Thomas Peabody, who just a month earlier had come from Boxford to work at the school. The group headed back toward Thompson in the early afternoon. Sailing into the wind after passing Fort Independence, it was necessary for the boatman to turn the bow through the wind in order to line the boat up for landing. The boys on the boat and the boys on the shore were hallooing back and forth when a sudden burst of wind caused the boat to tip to the leeward side. As the boat righted itself somewhat the boatman called for the boys to run forward but a number of them lingered on the leeward side calling back to their friends on shore. The boat tipped again, a bait box rolled into the water as water poured over the gunwale, and the boat filled with water and quickly sank. Four of the boys managed to cling to the bait box that had fallen out of the boat and the schooner H.B. Foster, coming up the harbor, was able to stop and pick up those four, but all others were drowned. At the inquest following the accident, held by directors of the farm school and a coroner, and attended by the parents of some of the boys, the conclusion would be reached that the boat had been “naturally upset at about 2:00 on the afternoon of April 29th 1842.” George F. Gould, one of the four survivors, would become a ship captain and the harbor master of Boston Harbor. The drowned boys are buried on

SURPRISE!

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Thompson Island.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

May 8, Sunday: [Frederick Douglass](#) spoke in Webster, Massachusetts.



The ship carrying Bronson Alcott, the *Rosalind*, sailed from Boston.

Two large excursion trains were taking crowds of celebrants back to Paris after King Louis Philippe's birthday party at Versailles. Each train was being pulled by two locomotives. One train was following close behind the other. One of the lead locomotives, a massive moving object, suddenly broke an axle or something, nose-dived into the trackbed, and transformed itself into a massive stationary object. The train in the rear plowed into the train in the front. In the crash and the fire that followed, admittedly, 54 celebrants were killed. Unofficially, the body count came to more than 100. It was the worst railroad crash ever. To that date.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



"[The railroad will] only encourage the common people to move about needlessly."

— [Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington](#)





SURPRISE!

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1843

March 14, Tuesday: The USS *Grampus*, a 12-gun schooner with approximately 64 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

LOST AT SEA



SURPRISE!

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1844

February 28, Wednesday: President John Tyler, his Cabinet, the diplomatic corps, members of Congress and their families, all told about 400 souls, took a pleasant trip down the Potomac on the US steam frigate *Princeton*, which was our 1st propeller-driven man-of-war. Unfortunately, they were playing around with new toys and just as the some 200 ladies aboard were going below to dine with their President, they playfully determined to



fire off yet one more of their 225-pound cannonballs out of their warship's new 10-ton cannon, 15 feet long with a 12-inch bore, known as the "Peacemaker." An objection was raised, someone pointing out that the cannon had already been fired a number of times and that the metal of the breech had become quite heated, but

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in all the fun and games this urging of caution was disregarded:



They had inserted only 25 pounds of powder and the new cannon had previously been tested with 49 pounds of powder; nevertheless, unaccountably, this time a big hunk of cast iron popped off the butt of the cannon as it discharged itself upon some object ashore — and there was instant carnage on that scrubbed foredeck.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)



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In sequence by first letter of family name:

- Seaman **Peter Boreas**, a Swede, was badly injured.
- Seaman **William H. Canning** of Burlington NJ had one leg very badly burned, the other not so severe.
- Seaman **James H. Dunn** of Maine had a severe contusion on the left side — very dangerous.
- Colonel **David Gardiner**, Esq., a former state senator of New York, was killed instantly with both legs blown off.
- Mr. **Thomas Walker Gilmer**, our Secretary of the Navy, was killed instantly by a fragment striking him on the forehead.
- Seaman **James M. Green** of New York city had received a contusion on the leg.
- Seaman **Daniel Harington** was slightly wounded.
- Seaman **Hugh Kelly** was slightly wounded.
- Commodore **Kennon**, commanding officer of the USS *Princeton*, gave one sigh and died with leg and arm blown off.
- Mr. **Robert King**, gunner, was severely wounded.
- Seaman **John Kissick** of Philadelphia was lacerated, wounded, and very badly burned.
- Seaman **Charles Lewis** of Pennsylvania had received an incised wound, bad.
- Mr. **Virgil Maxcy**, a former US *chargé d'affaires* in Belgium, was killed instantly with one arm blown off clean by the shoulder.
- Seaman **John Potter** of Lichfield ME had a contusion on the leg.
- Seaman **Charles H. Robinson** of Philadelphia had a slight wound in the head.
- Seaman **William H. Taylor** of Boston had both his legs badly fractured.
- Seaman **Joseph Traiso** of Boston was wounded on the hip.
- Mr. **Abel Parker Upshur**, our Secretary of State, was killed instantly with his legs and arms broken and his bowels torn out.
- Seaman **Joseph Wells**, an Englishman, was slightly wounded.
- President John Tyler's "colored boy" **Henry** (evidently lacking in the way of a family name) lived about 10 minutes but never spoke, with injuries that none of the published accounts attempted in any way to characterize.

Mrs. Wethered and Miss Somerville, the only ladies of the delegation still present on deck, were, it was noted, providentially, disheveled but uninjured. A history published as recently as 1989 informs us that



Thomas Walker Gilmer, Secretary of the Navy; Abel Parker Upshur, Secretary of State; Commodore Kennon of the Princeton; David Gardiner, a former state senator of New York; Virgil Maxcy, a former United States *chargé d'affaires* in Belgium; and Tyler's Negro servant were killed... The bodies were brought to the Executive Mansion and the coffins were placed in the East Room.

If you're as good at arithmetic as I am, you'll count 6 corpses. However, [Henry Thoreau](#) noticed, and others such as Nathaniel Peabody Rogers noticed, that only 5 coffins were placed in the East Room, 1 corpse per coffin. The gun-burst had been democratic in its sympathies, the nation not. We may also notice now, that this 1989 book from which I am quoting above is still eliding the fact that the body of the President's personal slave Henry, here entirely unnamed and referred to as "Negro servant" rather than "personal slave" or, at the time, "colored boy," was not taken to lie in state in the East Room of the White House. We know that President John Tyler buried his horse, and we know the name of his horse off this horse's tombstone in Sherwood, Charles



SURPRISE!

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City County VA. Wouldn't it be nice if we could be as sure of this suddenly useless slave Henry's family name,

My Good Horse "The General"

or that he was buried, and that he received the dignity of a stray piece of concrete as a tombstone, and wouldn't it be nice, also, if like the president's horse he could receive a mention in a book of history? –It is not a whole lot of progress, in over a century, to go from being listed generically as “personal slave” to being listed generically as “Negro servant”! (But see below, under the date of March 15.)

Here, for your information, is a general list of American politicians who have died as a result of accidents involving guns, revealing that this accident aboard the USS *Princeton* was by far the worst, and that it is relatively quite safe to serve your country by engaging in high political office as long as you never attempt to clean your own piece:

- March 14, 1839: **William Harris Wharton** shot self while getting off a horse near Hempstead TX
- February 28, 1844: **Thomas Walker Gilmer**, Secretary of the Navy, **Abel Parker Upshur**, Secretary of the Navy 1841-1843; Secretary of State, **Virgil Maxcy**, *chargé d'affaires* to Belgium 1837-1842, **David Gardiner**, New York state senator 1824-1827, killed as above by the cannon burst on the USS *Princeton*
- September 11, 1861: **George Nixon Briggs**, born in Adams MA on April 12, 1796. Whig. Lawyer; US Representative from Massachusetts 1831-1843; Governor of Massachusetts 1844-1851; common pleas court judge 1851-1856; delegate to state constitutional convention, 1853, met with “the accidental discharge of a fowling piece”
- April 9, 1862: **Richardson A. Scurry**, general in the Confederate Army, shot self in foot while hunting in August 1854; though it was later amputated the leg never healed and he eventually died
- May 17, 1863: **George M. Carhart**, Member of California state assembly 1853-1854, accidentally shot while asleep at Skinner's Saloon in Bannock, Montana
- November 1, 1864: **Williamson Robert Winfield Cobb**, US Representative from Alabama 1847-1861, his pistol accidental discharged while putting up fence on his Alabama plantation
- June 17, 1871: **Clement Laird Vallandigham**, leader of the pro-Southern “Copperheads”; arrested by Union military authorities in 1863 for treasonable utterances and banished to the Confederate States; returned to the North by way of Canada, shot self while demonstrating something for the benefit of a jury
- January 14, 1874: **Thomas Neel Stilwell**, Minister to Venezuela 1867-1868, shot in Anderson, Indiana
- September 23, 1907: **Athelston Gaston**, Representative from Pennsylvania 1899-1901, accidentally shot at Lake Edward in Canada during a hunting trip
- July 9, 1931: **Robert Lee Henry**, great-great-great-grandson of Patrick Henry, Representative from Texas 1897-1917, accidentally shot near Houston TX
- November 11, 1931: **Edward Coke Mann**, representative from South Carolina 1919-1921, accidentally shot near Rowesville SC
- April 29, 1935: **Melville Clyde Kelly**, Representative from Pennsylvania 1913-1915, 1917-1935, shot while cleaning rifle
- February 16, 1943: **Paul Ranous Greever**, Representative from Wyoming 1935-1939, shot self while cleaning shotgun

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 30, Tuesday: In a letter of this date from [Waldo Emerson](#) to Samuel Gray Ward of Lenox, Massachusetts, we learn that “Mr Thoreau is building himself a solitary house by Walden Pond.”

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)



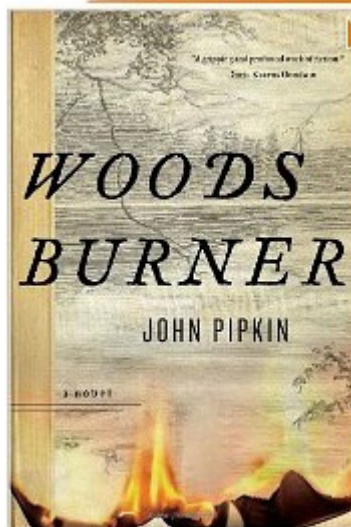
At approximately 1PM on this day, however, cooking their noon meal of freshly caught fish during one of the most serious droughts that Concord had experienced, [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Edward Sherman Hoar](#), Harvard senior and scion of Concord’s “royal family,” set a cooking fire in a stump on the bank of a stream that set fire to dry grass that caused a forest fire to go roaring up into Walden Woods. Over a hundred acres would be burnt over on this day, including the totality of Fair Haven Hill. The Hoars would eventually reimburse the owners of the wood for their share of the damages that had been done, the Thoreaus would not.

SURPRISE!

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Click to **LOOK INSIDE!**






SURPRISE!

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The loss Thoreau had helped cause was on the order of \$2,000.⁰⁰, which at that time was approximately the value of two really fine new houses facing Concord common. And the Hoar family seems to have made a cash payment to the financially injured parties –the Hubbard brothers Cyrus and Darius, and A.H. Wheeler– while we know that the Thoreaus instead elected to conspicuously, promptly, and locally spend their surplus money by embarking on the construction of a new home. The “Texas” house cost the family \$25.⁰⁰ for the lot, \$475.⁰⁰ for construction materials, and \$600.⁰⁰ for labor.



FIRE

It would not be until June 1850  that Thoreau would be able to deal with his responsibility for this forest

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

fire.³¹



SETTING FIRE TO THE WOODS (WRITTEN IN 1850)

I once set fire to the woods. Having set out, one April day, to go to the sources of Concord River in a boat with a single



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!


companion, meaning to camp on the bank at night or seek a lodging in some neighboring country inn or farmhouse, we took fishing tackle with us that we might fitly procure our food from the stream, Indian-like. At the shoemaker's near the river, we obtained a match, which we had forgotten. Though it was thus early in the spring, the river was low, for there had not been much rain, and we succeeded in catching a mess of fish sufficient for our dinner before we had left the town, and by the shores of Fair Haven Pond we proceeded to cook them. The earth was uncommonly dry, and our fire, kindled far from the woods in a sunny recess in the hillside on the east of the pond, suddenly caught the dry grass of the previous year which grew about the stump on which it was kindled. We sprang to extinguish it at first with our hands and feet, and then we fought it with a board obtained from the boat, but in a few minutes it was beyond our reach; being on the side of a hill, it spread rapidly upward, through the long, dry, wiry grass interspersed with bushes.

"Well, where will this end?" asked my companion. I saw that it might be bounded by Well Meadow Brook on one side, but would, perchance, go to the village side of the brook. "It will go to town," I answered. While my companion took the boat back down the river, I set out through the woods to inform the owners and to raise the town. The fire had already spread a dozen rods on every side and went leaping and crackling wildly and irreclaimably toward the wood. That way went the flames with wild delight, and we felt that we had no control over the demonic creature to which we had given birth. We had kindled many fires in the woods before, burning a clear space in the grass, without ever kindling such a fire as this.

As I ran toward the town through the woods, I could see the smoke over the woods behind me marking the spot and the progress of the flames. The first farmer whom I met driving a team, after leaving the woods, inquired the cause of the smoke. I told him. "Well," said he, "it is none of my stuff," and drove along. The next I met was the owner in his field, with whom I returned at once to the woods, running all the way. I had already run two miles. When at length we got into the neighborhood of the flames, we met a carpenter who had been hewing timber, an infirm man who had been driven off by the fire, fleeing with his axe. The farmer returned to hasten more assistance. I, who was spent with

31. This was the illustration used by Edmund A. Schofield in the [Thoreau Research Newsletter](#) 2, 3 of July 1991 to show the extent of the forest fire Thoreau and [Edward Sherman Hoar](#) caused in April 1844.

Consider also Wang Yufeng, an 18-year-old transient laborer in the national forest whose carelessness with his brush cutter would set off the enormous Black Dragon fire in northern [Manchuria](#) in 1987 – a fire far larger than the two-thousand-square-mile fire of 1918 near Duluth, Minnesota which would take nearly 400 lives. Wang would be shown on television at his trial, sitting in a little wood-barred cage with his hands manacled. For refueling the machine before it had cooled off, and thus starting a fire which consumed an area, along the border between China and Russia, the size of Ireland, he would serve six and a half years in prison. (Salisbury, Harrison E., 1989, [THE GREAT BLACK DRAGON FIRE: A CHINESE INFERNO](#), Little, Brown, Boston.)

We might usefully compare Thoreau's reaction to his having set this forest fire with the feelings of guilt that Samuel Langhorn Clemens (Mark Twain) was experiencing during the same timeframe, after a jailed tramp set his prison cell on fire, burning himself to death. Sam had given him the matches! He "remembered" this hoosegow in his writings only as a place of truth and heroism, as the place where Tom Sawyer saved Muff by testifying against the real murderer, Injun Joe. When he would revisit this spot on a quiet Sunday morning in the spring of 1882, he would be already 47 years old. You can read about his reaction to this return to an early scene of importance in [THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK TWAIN](#), written at the end of his life and published in 1917. 

AUTOBIOGRAPHY



SURPRISE!

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running, remained. What could I do alone against a front of flame half a mile wide?

I walked slowly through the wood to Fair Haven Cliff, climbed to the highest rock, and sat down upon it to observe the progress of the flames, which were rapidly approaching me, now about a mile distant from the spot where the fire was kindled. Presently I heard the sound of the distant bell giving the alarm, and I knew that the town was on its way to the scene. Hitherto I had felt like a guilty person, – nothing but shame and regret. But now I settled the matter with myself shortly. I said to myself: "Who are these men who are said to be the owners of these woods, and how am I related to them? I have set fire to the forest, but I have done no wrong therein, and now it is as if the lightning had done it. These flames are but consuming their natural food." (It has never troubled me from that day to this more than if the lightning had done it. The trivial fishing was all that disturbed me and disturbs me still.) So shortly I settled it with myself and stood to watch the approaching flames. It was a glorious spectacle, and I was the only one there to enjoy it. The fire now reached the base of the cliff and then rushed up its sides. The squirrels ran before it in blind haste, and three pigeons dashed into the midst of the smoke. The flames flashed up the pines to their tops, as if they were powder. When I found I was about to be surrounded by the fire, I retreated and joined the forces now arriving from the town. It took us several hours to surround the flames with our hoes and shovels and by back fires subdue them. In the midst of all I saw the farmer whom I first met, who had turned indifferently away saying it was none of his stuff, striving earnestly to save his corded wood, his stuff, which the fire had already seized and which it after all consumed.

It burned over a hundred acres or more and destroyed much young wood. When I returned home late in the day, with others of my townsmen, I could not help noticing that the crowd who were so ready to condemn the individual who had kindled the fire did not sympathize with the owners of the wood, but were in fact highly elate and as it were thankful for the opportunity which had afforded them so much sport; and it was only half a dozen owners, so called, though not all of them, who looked sour or grieved, and I felt that I had a deeper interest in the woods, knew them better and should feel their loss more, than any or all of them. The farmer whom I had first conducted to the woods was obliged to ask me the shortest way back, through his own lot. Why, then, should the half-dozen owners and the individuals who set the fire alone feel sorrow for the loss of the wood, while the rest of the town have their spirits raised? Some of the owners, however, bore their loss like men, but other some declared behind my back that I was a "damned rascal;" and a flibbertigibbet or two, who crowed like the old cock, shouted some reminiscences of "burnt woods" from safe recesses for some years after. I have had nothing to say to any of them. The locomotive engine has since burned over nearly all the same ground and more, and in some measure blotted out the memory of the previous fire. For a long time after I had learned this lesson I marvelled that while matches and tinder were



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contemporaries the world was not consumed; why the houses that have hearths were not burned before another day; if the flames were not as hungry now as when I waked them. I at once ceased to regard the owners and my own fault, —if fault there was any in the matter, —and attended to the phenomenon before me, determined to make the most of it. To be sure, I felt a little ashamed when I reflected on what a trivial occasion this had happened, that at the time I was no better employed than my townsmen.

That night I watched the fire, where some stumps still flamed at midnight in the midst of the blackened waste, wandering through the woods by myself; and far in the night I threaded my way to the spot where the fire had taken, and discovered the now broiled fish, —which had been dressed, —scattered over the burnt grass.

The only thing that heated their homes in winter, was this wood from these woodlots. The wood standing as growing trees had value. The wood stored in cords at various places in these woodlots, that had not yet been carted to the woodsheds of the houses in Concord, had value. This wood equaled warmth in winter, it equaled not only the comfort but also the health of their families, it equaled security. And, a whole lot of wood equaled a whole lot of money. One way to understand this woodland carelessness and destruction, therefore is the economic way. Thoreau destroyed value and then made no attempt to compensate the victims. That, quite frankly, is a tort.

However, I wonder whether there might not be another way to understand this event.

For many, many years our national policy, in our national forests, has been exceedingly simplistic. Four legs good, two legs bad: Smoky the Bear prevents forest fires. The end result of this protectionism has been, that our national forests have become tinderboxes, ready to succumb in massive conflagration after massive conflagration caused by random strikes of lightning. Because all fire is suppressed all the time, there is so much undergrowth and so much dead wood lying around on the forest floor that when a forest fire occurs, of necessity it burns hot. In these hot fires, everything is destroyed. It didn't use to be like that. In the old days the native Americans kept these woodlands under control by constantly setting fires and burning off the undergrowth and dead wood. Very simply, open woodland was immensely more productive of game animals than dense woodland, and was easier to move through, and setting these fires was not a whole lot of work — so from the native American standpoint, this practice made a whole lot of practical sense. In consequence of such management practice by the native Americans, when a fire occurred, whether the fire was man-set or a random natural event, it moved rapidly through the forest at a comparatively low heat, leaving the trunks of the major trees protected by their thick bark and often not reaching into the canopy of leaves far overhead. Then came the white man whose mind was possessed of a different sort of greed, and the result has been, as we now understand, a whole lot of foolishness. The white man had the simplistic notion was that wealth was good and fire was destructive of wealth. The white man created the tinderbox.

So, in the Concord woodlots in Thoreau's florut, as a direct result of this incompetent white management practice, it was all danger all the time. Anyone who moved through the forest was liable "carelessly" to start something, the impact of which would inevitably be severe. —Therefore private property! —Therefore no trespassing! —Therefore this may look like nature, but what it is, this is asset! Yada yada yada. My conclusion is that Thoreau was prescient in protesting such a foolish arrangement. It was not **his** fault that the forests around Concord had been transformed insanely into this unsustainable tinderbox. Yes, his carelessness had set the match — but that release of destruction might just as well have come from a random strike of lightning. You flibbertigibbets of Concord, if you want to shout "Woods Burner!" at Henry's back as he walks down the town street, then for consistency you should be prepared also to shout "Woods Burner!" at God in the heavens, whenever you hear a roll of thunder in the distance or see a white flash on the horizon.



SURPRISE!

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1845

May 3, Saturday: Fire broke out in a theater in [Canton, China](#) and 1,670 were consumed.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.



"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

— A.J.P. Taylor



The cadaver of [Nicolò Paganini](#) was placed in unconsecrated ground at Villa Gaione, Parma.

Death of [Thomas Hood](#) after long illness at age 46.

A couple of weeks earlier President Tyler had vetoed a bill that would have prevented him from allocating federal funds to construct revenue cutters without prior approval from Congress. This was the 10th occasion on which President Tyler had exercised his veto power under the Constitution, making him and President Jackson by a considerable extent the most frequent users of this power. On this day the federal Congress for the 1st time by the necessary 2/3ds vote exercised its override power under the Constitution.

[Waldo Emerson](#) climbed 3,000-foot Mount Monadnock, near Peterborough in New Hampshire, during the night, and remained on the summit composing poetry from dawn until 10AM.

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Our national birthday, the 4th of July: This was [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s 41st birthday, and the flag was gaining another star as the State of Florida was entering the Union as our 27th state, making the score in this land of the free and home of the brave to amount to 14 states for human slavery versus 13 states agin it:



Ordinance of the Convention of Texas.

In Washington DC, the cornerstone of Jackson Hall was being laid and a good time was being enjoyed by all these American patriots who were equating patriotism with [inebriation](#), but on the grounds south of the Executive Mansion, some [drunken](#) celebrant fired off a dozen rockets into the crowd, killing James Knowles and Georgiana Ferguson and injuring several others — collateral damage due to friendly fire.

In Ithaca, New York, a celebration cannon, evidently overcharged with powder, blew apart, killing three.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)



SURPRISE!

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Ex-president John Tyler delivered an oration at William and Mary College.

In Nashville, Tennessee, the corner-stone of the State House was laid.

What to the slave is the 4th of July? On this day and the next Frederick Douglass was lecturing in Athol, Massachusetts.

[Henry Thoreau](#) began to sleep in the open frame of his new shanty “as soon as it was boarded and roofed...” not only on the anniversary of independence, but also on the day on which the US took the Texas territory from Mexico. Had he remained in Concord that day, he would have been subjected not only to offensive parades with flag-waving, but also to much offensive pro-war oratory.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

WALDEN: When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident was on Independence Day, or the fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited the year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth every where.

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We need not presume that he intended the date to have any metaphorical significance, as in the idea that moving to the shanty was his [Declaration of Independence](#) from human society. On this day of Thoreau's removal, an article appeared in the New-York [Daily Tribune](#) calling for a return to "the narrow, thorny path where Integrity leads." This article was authored in full awareness of the course Thoreau was following in Concord, for this sentiment had been penned by [Margaret Fuller](#).



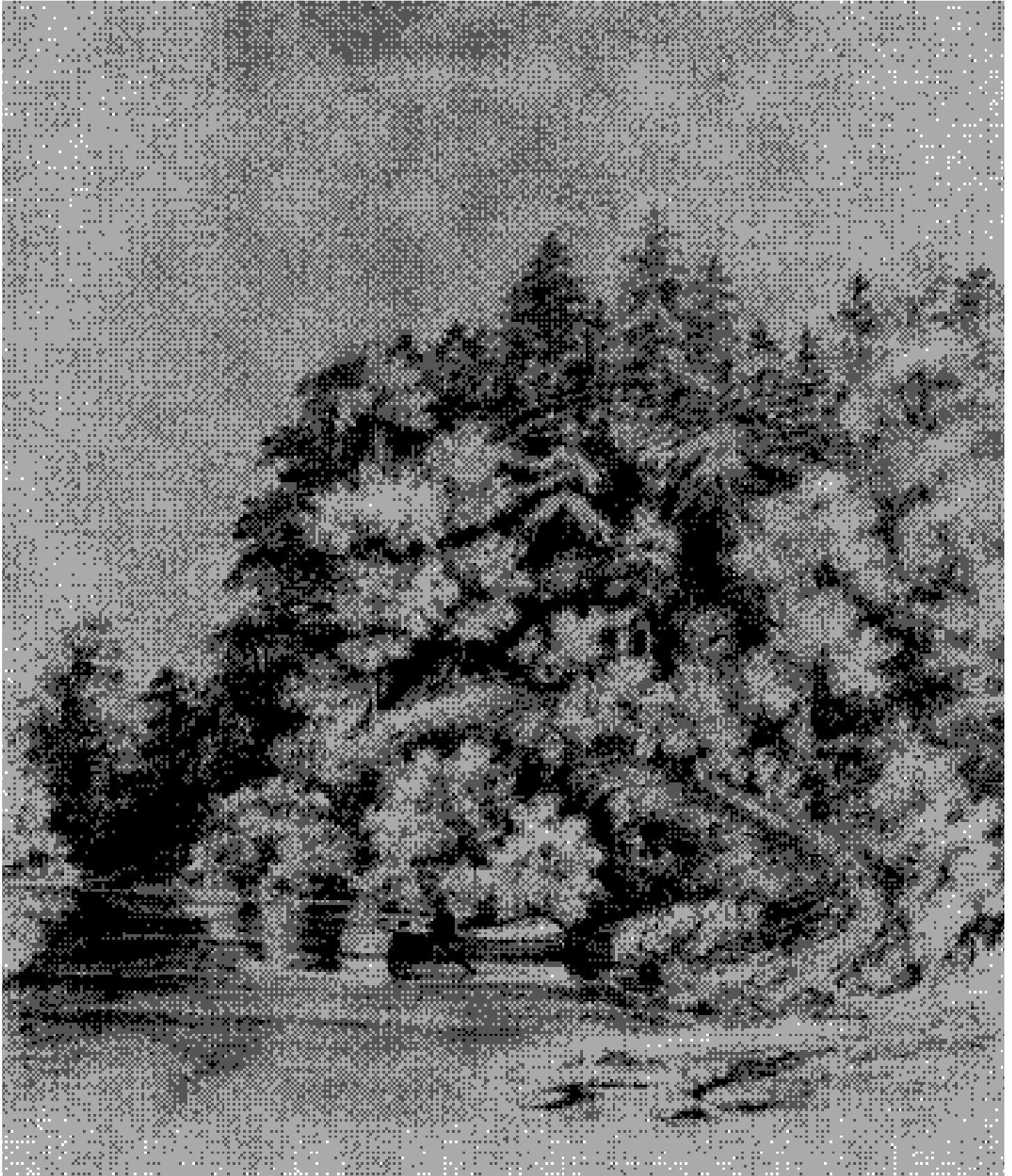
Years later, on May 1, 1850 to be exact, Thoreau recollected an incident of this day, that "*The forenoon that I moved to my house—a poor old lame fellow who had formerly frozen his feet—hobbled off the road—came & stood before my door with one hand on each door post looking into the house & asked for a drink of water. I knew that rum or something like it was the only drink he loved but I gave him a dish of warm pond water which was all I had, nevertheless, which to my astonishment he drank, being used to drinking.*"



Thoreau lived

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!


“At Walden, July, 1845, to fall of 1847, then at R.W.E.’s to fall of 1848, or while he was in Europe.”

At about this time, more or less, a number of people’s acquaintance’s lives were changing: for instance, Giles Waldo, whom Thoreau had chummed around with in New-York, was sailing to become vice consul at Lahaina in the Sandwich Islands, and George Partridge Bradford was abandoning the private school he had attempted to set up in [Waldo Emerson](#)’s barn to begin a private school in Roxbury MA.

[Thoreau](#) wrote the following sometime after he moved to his new shanty at Walden Pond, about the drumming of the ruffed grouse:



After July 4: {one-fifth page blank} When I behold an infant I am impressed with a sense of antiquity, and reminded of the sphinx or Sybil. It seems older than Nestor or Jove himself, and wears the wrinkles of Saturn.

Why should the present impose upon us so much! I sit now upon a stump whose rings number centuries of growth— If I look around me I see that the very soil is composed of just such stumps — ancestors to this. I thrust this stick many aeons deep into the surface — and with my heel scratch a deeper furrow than the elements have ploughed here for a thousand years— If I listen I hear the peep of frogs which is older than the slime of Egypt — or a distant partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (~~Partridge~~)] drumming on a log — as if it were the pulse-beat of the summer air.



CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

I raise my fairest and freshest flowers in the old mould.
 –Why, what we call new is not skin deep — the earth is not yet stained by it. It is not the fertile ground we walk upon but the leaves that flutter over our head
 The newest is but the oldest made visible to our eyes. We dig up the soil from a thousand feet below the surface and call it new, and the plants which spring from it.



After July 4: Night and day — year on year, / High & low — far and near, / These are our own aspects, / These are our own regrets.... / I hear the sweet evening sounds / From your undecaying grounds / Cheat me no more with time, / Take me to your clime. 1842, 1845, 1848: Night and day, year on year, / High and low, far and near, / These are our own aspects, / These are our own regrets.... / I hear the sweet evening sounds / From your undecaying grounds; / Cheat me no more with time, / Take me to your clime. (WEEK 389) (Johnson 388-9)



SURPRISE!

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July 19, Saturday: In New-York there was a fire in a warehouse in which saltpeter was being stored. When the



building collapsed there were firemen on the roof and some of these men actually rode the roof down and arrived at ground level uninjured. In the center of this period illustration, you can see one of these lucky firemen depicted as if on a surfboard! The general conflagration consumed an area to the north of Bowling Green between Broad Street and Broadway.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

1846

In New-York, William Kirkland, editor of the New York Evening Mirror and his own The Christian Inquirer, near-sighted and deaf, accidentally walked off a pier, and drowned.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

June 12, Friday night: There was a severe frost that ruined much of Henry Thoreau's cash crop of beans, and his garden of tomatoes, squash, corn, and potatoes for this year, which anyway was smaller than the previous year — and which anyway would not without manuring have produced nearly as much as the one-time crop he had achieved in the previous year on this depleted soil.

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!



After June 12, 1846: There was a frost on the night of June 12th which killed my beans tomatoes & squashes-and my corn & potatoes to the ground.

We have been unable as yet to corroborate, from weather records kept by other local farmers, that this frost of the night of June 12th had similarly harmed their crops. It may therefore have been the sort of frost that killed off only the more marginal plants, ones that were not being adequately nourished.

A hypothesis is that it would have been after this crop failure that Thoreau turned to day labor, as he would many years later describe in his journal, and, as a result, injure himself:



October 4, Sunday: A.M. ...While I lived in the woods I did various jobs about the town, –some fence-building, painting, gardening, carpentering, etc., etc. One day a man came from the east edge of the town and said that he wanted to get me to brick up a fireplace, etc., etc., for him. I told him that I was not a mason, but he knew that I had built my own house entirely and would not take no for an answer. So I went.

It was three miles off, and I walked back and forth each day, arriving early and working as late as if I were living there. The man was gone away most of the time, but had left some sand dug up in his cow-yard for me to make mortar with. I bricked up a fireplace, papered a chamber, but my principal work was whitewashing ceilings. Some were so dirty that many coats would not conceal the dirt. In the kitchen I finally resorted to yellow-wash to cover the dirt. I took my meals there, sitting down with my employer (when he got home) and his hired men. I remember the awful condition of the sink, at which I washed one day, and when I came to look at what was called the towel I passed it by and wiped my hands on the air, and thereafter I resorted to the pump. I worked there hard three days, charging only a dollar a day.

About the same time I also contracted to build a wood-shed of no mean size, for, I think, exactly six dollars, and cleared about half of it by a close calculation and swift working. The tenant wanted me to throw in a gutter and latch, but I carried off the board that was left and gave him no latch but a button. It stands yet, –behind the Kettle house. I broke up Johnny Kettle’s old “trow,” in which he kneaded his bread, for material. Going home with what nails were left in a flower bucket on my arm, in a rain, I was about getting into a hay-rigging, when my umbrella frightened the horse, and he kicked at me over the fills, smashed the bucket on my arm, and stretched me on my back; but while I lay on my back, his leg being caught over the shaft, I got up, to see him sprawling on the other side. This accident, the sudden bending of my body backwards, sprained my stomach so that I did not get quite strong there for several years, but had to give up some fence-building and other work which I had undertaken from time to time. I built the common slat fence for \$1.50 per rod, or worked for \$1.00 per day. I built six fences.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1847

Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) was wounded in the cheek by a boy, Philip Butler, who was firing a gun not far from his garden. So that he would not alarm relatives, Whittier bound up his face in a handkerchief, and had the wound dressed by a doctor before he let them know of it.



(As a [Quaker](#), he of course forgave the boy for this accident.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Whittier’s four-room home at 86 Friend Street in Amesbury MA was enlarged in this year. In 1903, this house being under renovation, a letter from Lewis Tappan of New York dating to this year would be discovered inside a wall, and it would be noted that the letter, which had included a check for \$100.⁰⁰ in payment for editorial work performed, was urging the Quaker poet “judiciously” to invest in real estate.

Randolph of Roanoke, by [John Greenleaf Whittier](#). (1847)

O MOTHER EARTH upon thy lap
 Thy weary ones receiving,
 And o’er them, silent as a dream,
 Thy grassy mantle weaving,
 Fold softly in thy long embrace
 That heart so worn and broken,
 And cool its pulse of fire beneath
 Thy shadows old and oaken.

Shut out from him the bitter word
 And serpent hiss of scorning;
 Nor let the storms of yesterday
 Disturb his quiet morning.
 Breathe over him forgetfulness
 Of all save deeds of kindness,
 And, save to smiles of grateful eyes,
 Press down his lids in blindness.

There, where with living ear and eye
 He heard Potomac’s flowing,
 And, through his tall ancestral trees,
 Saw autumn’s sunset glowing,
 He sleeps, still looking to the west,
 Beneath the dark wood shadow,
 As if he still would see the sun
 Sink down on wave and meadow.

Bard, Sage, and Tribune! in himself
 All moods of mind contrasting, —
 The tenderest wail of human woe,
 The scorn like lightning blasting;
 The pathos which from rival eyes
 Unwilling tears could summon,
 The stinging taunt, the fiery burst
 Of hatred scarcely human!



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Mirth, sparkling like a diamond shower,
From lips of life-long sadness;
Clear picturings of majestic thought
Upon a ground of madness;
And over all Romance and Song
A classic beauty throwing,
And laurelled Clio at his side
Her storied pages showing.

All parties feared him: each in turn
Beheld its schemes disjointed,
As right or left his fatal glance
And spectral finger pointed.
Sworn foe of Cant, he smote it down
With trenchant wit unsparing,

And, mocking, rent with ruthless hand
The robe Pretence was wearing.

Too honest or too proud to feign
A love he never cherished,
Beyond Virginia's border line
His patriotism perished.
While others hailed in distant skies
Our eagle's dusky pinion,
He only saw the mountain bird
Stoop o'er his Old Dominion!

Still through each change of fortune strange,
Racked nerve, and brain all burning,
His loving faith in Mother-land
Knew never shade of turning;
By Britain's lakes, by Neva's tide,
Whatever sky was o'er him,
He heard her rivers' rushing sound,
Her blue peaks rose before him.

He held his slaves, yet made withal
No false and vain pretences,
Nor paid a lying priest to seek
For Scriptural defences.
His harshest words of proud rebuke,
His bitterest taunt and scorning,
Fell fire-like on the Northern brow
That bent to him in fawning.

He held his slaves; yet kept the while
His reverence for the Human;

In the dark vassals of his will
He saw but Man and Woman!
No hunter of God's outraged poor
His Roanoke valley entered;
No trader in the souls of men
Across his threshold ventured.

And when the old and wearied man
Lay down for his last sleeping,
And at his side, a slave no more,
His brother-man stood weeping,
His latest thought, his latest breath,
To Freedom's duty giving,
With failing tongue and trembling hand
The dying blest the living.

Oh, never bore his ancient State
A truer son or braver!



SURPRISE!

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None trampling with a calmer scorn
On foreign hate or favor.
He knew her faults, yet never stooped
His proud and manly feeling
To poor excuses of the wrong
Or meanness of concealing.

But none beheld with clearer eye
The plague-spot o'er her spreading,
None heard more sure the steps of Doom
Along her future treading.
For her as for himself he spake,
When, his gaunt frame upbracing,
He traced with dying hand "Remorse!"
And perished in the tracing.

As from the grave where Henry sleeps,
From Vernon's weeping willow,
And from the grassy pall which hides
The Sage of Monticello,
So from the leaf-strewn burial-stone
Of Randolph's lowly dwelling,
Virginia! o'er thy land of slaves
A warning voice is swelling!

And hark! from thy deserted fields
Are sadder warnings spoken,
From quenched hearths, where thy exiled sons
Their household gods have broken.
The curse is on thee, — wolves for men,
And briers for corn-sheaves giving!
Oh, more than all thy dead renown
Were now one hero living!

Zimri Lew died in a train accident in Lowell on Fast Day.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Early Spring: It had been while she was still in Paris, before departing for Napoli, that [Margaret Fuller](#) had a tooth out while under the influence of [ether](#). (This was well before Thoreau's having all his teeth pulled at once, under ether.)

On her way from Paris to Napoli, the English steamer on which the Fuller/Spring party had embarked was rammed and nearly sunk by a coastal ship. In a letter to Emerson she would comment that she had "only just escaped being drowned."

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

August 19, Thursday: At about this point some of our troops were beginning to trickle home from the war against Old Mejico:



There was something of a pattern in these occasions. There was a parade, featuring a brass band, perhaps a local militia company, and the veterans themselves. Sometimes the citizens of the community joined in, and the entire procession then marched to a nearby spot for a grand picnic. When the revelers reached the picnic grounds, some prominent local speaker typically welcomed the soldiers back to their home state, "the honor of which you have so nobly, so gallantly and so valiantly sustained." There followed a recounting of the brave deeds performed and the hardships endured. These speakers also heaped lavish praise upon the volunteers who had not seen any enemy action.



August 17, Sunday [1851]: ... [Mexico](#) was won with less exertion & less true valor than are required to do one season's haying in New England— The former work was done by those who played truant and ran away from the latter. Those Mexican's were mown down more easily than the summer's crop of grass in many a farmer's fields...

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Although [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) would feel it inappropriate to make mention of this fact in his campaign bio of Brigadier General [Franklin Pierce](#) during that panjandrum's bid for the Presidency, complimenting the general instead on his horsemanship,

He had proved himself ... physically apt for war, by his easy endurance of the fatigues of the march; every step of which (as was the case with few other officers) was performed either on horseback or on foot. Nature, indeed, has endowed him with a rare elasticity both of mind and body; he springs up from pressure like a well-tempered sword. After the severest toil, a single night's rest does as much for him, in the way of refreshment, as a week could do for most other men.

at this point there was coming to us out of Old Mejico some bad news as well as the good.

Our horseback general had fallen off his horsie — but his injury, although serious enough to intercept any further acts of heroism or shepherdings of supply wagons, would not actually prove so serious as to prevent him from riding a desk, making important decisions, and accepting grand emoluments and praises.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Our campaign biographer tells the tale in a different manner — but notice carefully that this officer, having completed his assignment to bring up the supply wagons, had no official position on this day other than that of an observer, so that whenever and wherever Hawthorne speaks of “General Pierce’s brigade,” or in any of Pierce as having troops and command responsibilities, as giving orders, as leading anyone other than his own orderly, as making decisions, etc., this must be taken with a grain of salt the size of, say, the Plymouth Rock:



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

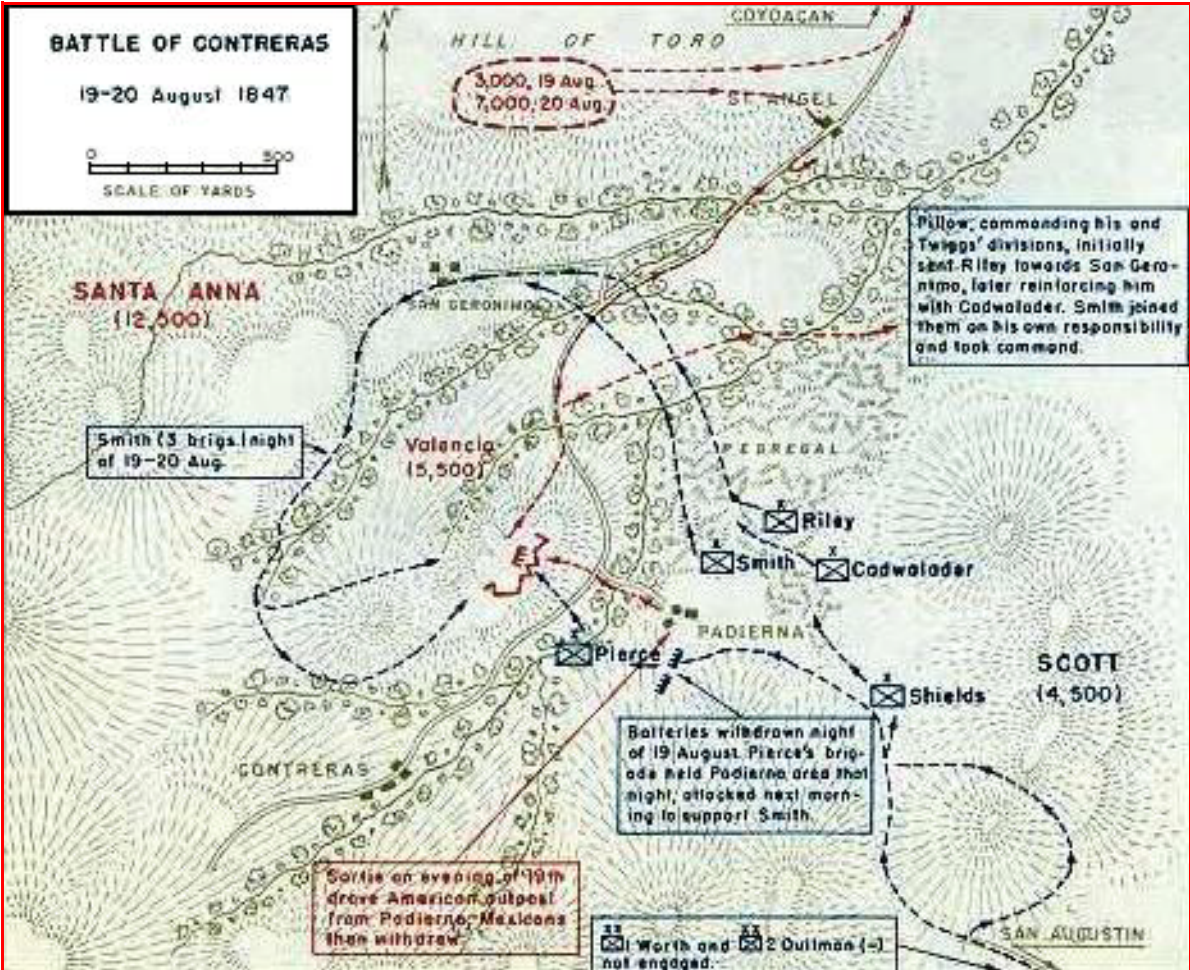
The enemy's force consisted of about seven thousand men, posted in a strongly-intrenched camp, under General Valencia, one of the bravest and ablest of the Mexican commanders. The object of the commanding general appears to have been to cut off the communications of these detached troops with Santa Anna's main army, and thus to have them entirely at his mercy. For this purpose, a portion of the American forces were ordered to move against Valencia's left flank, and, by occupying strong positions in the villages and on the roads towards the city, to prevent reenforcements from reaching him. In the mean time, to draw the enemy's attention from this movement, a vigorous onset was made upon his front; and as the operations upon his flank were not immediately and fully carried out according to the plan, this front demonstration assumed the character of a fierce and desperate attack, upon which the fortunes of the day much depended. General Pierce's brigade formed a part of the force engaged in this latter movement, in which four thousand newly-recruited men, unable to bring their artillery to bear, contended against seven thousand disciplined soldiers, protected by intrenchments, and showering round shot and shells against the assailing troops.... General Pierce's immediate command had never before been under such a fire of artillery. The enemy's range was a little too high, or the havoc in our ranks must have been dreadful. In the midst of this fire, General Pierce, being the only officer mounted in the brigade, leaped his horse upon an abrupt eminence, and addressed the colonels and captains of the regiments, as they passed, in a few stirring words - reminding them of the honor of their country, of the victory their steady valor would contribute to achieve. Pressing forward to the head of the column, he had nearly reached the practicable ground that lay beyond, when his horse slipped among the rocks, thrust his foot into a crevice, and fell, breaking his own leg, and crushing his rider heavily beneath him.

Pierce's mounted orderly soon came to his assistance. The general was stunned, and almost insensible. When partially recovered, he found himself suffering from severe bruises, and especially from a sprain of the left knee, which was undermost when the horse came down. The orderly assisted him to reach the shelter of a projecting rock; and as they made their way thither, a shell fell close beside them, and exploded, covering them with earth. "That was a lucky miss," said Pierce calmly. Leaving him in such shelter as the rock afforded, the orderly went in search of aid, and was fortunate to meet with Dr. Ritchie, of Virginia, who was attached to Pierce's brigade, and was following in close proximity to the advancing column. The doctor administered to him as well as the circumstances would admit. Immediately on recovering his full consciousness, General Pierce had become anxious to rejoin his troops; and now, in opposition to Dr. Ritchie's advice and remonstrances, he determined to proceed to the front.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

The 1st day of the Battle of Contreras:





SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

With pain and difficulty, and leaning on his orderly's arm, he reached the battery commanded by Captain McGruder, where he found the horse of Lieutenant Johnson, who had just before received a mortal wound. In compliance with his wishes, he was assisted into the saddle; and, in answer to a remark that he would be unable to keep his seat, "Then," said the general, "you must tie me on." Whether this precaution was actually taken is a point on which authorities differ; but at, all events, with injuries so severe as would have sent almost any other man to the hospital, he rode forward into the battle.

The contest was kept up until nightfall, without forcing Valencia's intrenchment. General Pierce remained in the saddle until eleven o'clock at night. Finding himself, at nine o'clock, the senior officer in the field, he, in that capacity, withdrew the troops from their advanced position, and concentrated them at the point where they were to pass the night. At eleven, beneath a torrent of rain, destitute of a tent or other protection, and without food or refreshment, he lay down on an ammunition wagon, but was prevented by the pain of his injuries, especially that of his wounded knee, from finding any repose. At one o'clock came orders from General Scott to put the brigade into a new position, in front of the enemy's works, preparatory to taking part in the contemplated operations of the next morning. During the night, the troops appointed for that service, under Riley, Shields, Smith, and Cadwallader, had occupied the villages and roads between Valencia's position and the city; so that, with daylight, the commanding general's scheme of the battle was ready to be carried out, as it had originally existed in his mind.

BAWTHORNE'S BIO OF PIERCE

WAR ON MEXICO



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1848

May 1, Monday: In Moravia, New York, on this day, William Rockefeller, father of John D. Rockefeller, is alleged to have raped hired girl Anne Vanderbeak.

In Rochester, New York, in another unrelated incident happening on the same day, a “snakehead” rail thrust up through the floor of a railroad coach, causing serious injury.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



“The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history.”

— A.J.P. Taylor



September 13, Wednesday: Phineas P. Gage, a 25-year-old foreman of blasting operations for the Rutland and Burlington RR, a sedate and responsible man, was intending to tamp sand into the mouth of a hole with a charge of blasting powder in it, when he allowed the tamping rod to fall directly against the charge before the pouring of the sand. The force of the accidental explosion blew the tamping rod directly back through Gage’s skull, entering under the left cheekbone and exiting through the top of the head. Although he lost the vision in his left eye, Gabe would become the 1st survivor of prefrontal lobotomy.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1849

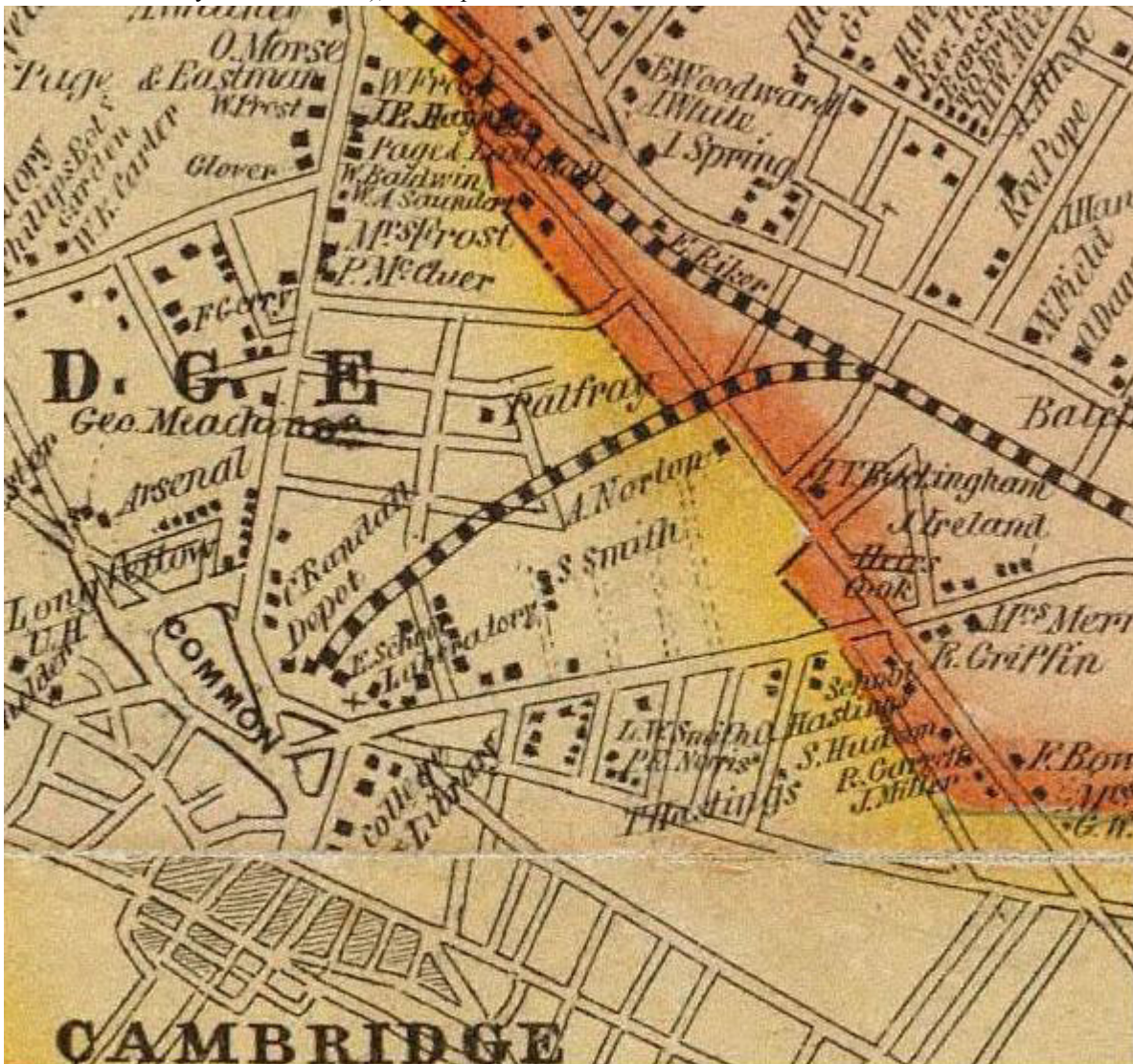
With candles passing out of favor for home illumination, accidents involving candles would no longer be categorically the prime cause of house fires.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 24, Tuesday: The RR link was completed in this year from Boston to Brattleboro VT, by the joining of the Fitchburg RR with the Vermont & Massachusetts RR. On this day a company was incorporated to construct a railroad line less than a mile in length in Cambridge, Massachusetts, from just west of Somerville station on the Fitchburg Railroad at Park Street, southwest to [Harvard College](#). The Harvard Branch Railroad, a short-lived branch from the Boston and Fitchburg Railroad line to Harvard Square (part of the former right-of-way is now used by Museum Street), would provide horse-omnibus service on rails.



In the course of the year a total of 29 serious accidents were reported by the Boston and Maine Railroad line, the Boston and Lowell Railroad line, and the Boston and Fitchburg Railroad line. Of these, the astonishing number of at least 16 occurred within the populated area in and around Boston, including the suburbs of Cambridgeport and Cambridge, no more than 13 occurring anywhere else in this extended rail network. One of these railroads attempted to defend this safety record before the Massachusetts Senate by charging that the citizens were “inclined to regard railroads as an infliction or encroachment.”³²

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

32. In other words: “If people only had the proper attitudes about us, they’d be more careful not to let us run into them.”

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!



"[The railroad will] only encourage the common people to move about needlessly."

– [Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington](#)



October 9-17: As [Henry Thoreau](#) would relate in [CAPE COD](#), he and [Ellery Channing](#) left Concord on the morning of the 9th with the agenda of taking the steamer from Boston to Provincetown and walking "up" Cape Cod (walking, that is, toward the south, toward its connection with the mainland). This was his initial excursion to the Cape, probably upon wrapping up work on Draft C of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#). The storm had, however, interrupted the steamer schedules and had caused, at Cohasset, the wreck of the *St. John*, one of the "coffin ships" loaded to the gunnels with Irish refugees. Changing their plans the duo boarded the southbound railroad for Cohasset to observe the aftermath of the shipwreck before continuing on to Bridgewater MA, where they spent the night.³³



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

33. With whom did they spend the night in the little town of Bridgewater MA? Did Thoreau perchance have any Dunbar cousins still residing in this locality? Or, possibly, would the duo have stayed with Thoreau's Harvard classmate William Allen there?

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Meanwhile [Ellen Fuller Channing](#) and the Channing children [Margaret Fuller Channing](#) and [Caroline Sturgis Channing](#) were visiting for three weeks in Rockport, Massachusetts and Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#) and the Emerson children [Ellen Emerson](#) and [Edith Emerson](#) and [Edward Emerson](#) were spending time in Plymouth.



Lidian and Eddie

Thoreau walked the shore at Cohasset with the Reverend Joseph Osgood, husband of Mrs. Ellen Sewall Osgood, seeing the gashed bodies of the drowned from the *St. John*. Thoreau and Channing walked via Cohasset and Sandwich MA, returning on the Provincetown/[Boston](#) steamer, and Thoreau, at least, perceived the shore as “naked Nature, –inhumanly sincere, wasting no thought on man.”³⁴

34. If you have scuba gear, you can swim in Henry David Thoreau’s and [Ellery Channing](#)’s footsteps: the track taken in 1849 by these hikers is now more than 400 feet out, beyond the breakers at the bottom of the ocean.



SURPRISE!

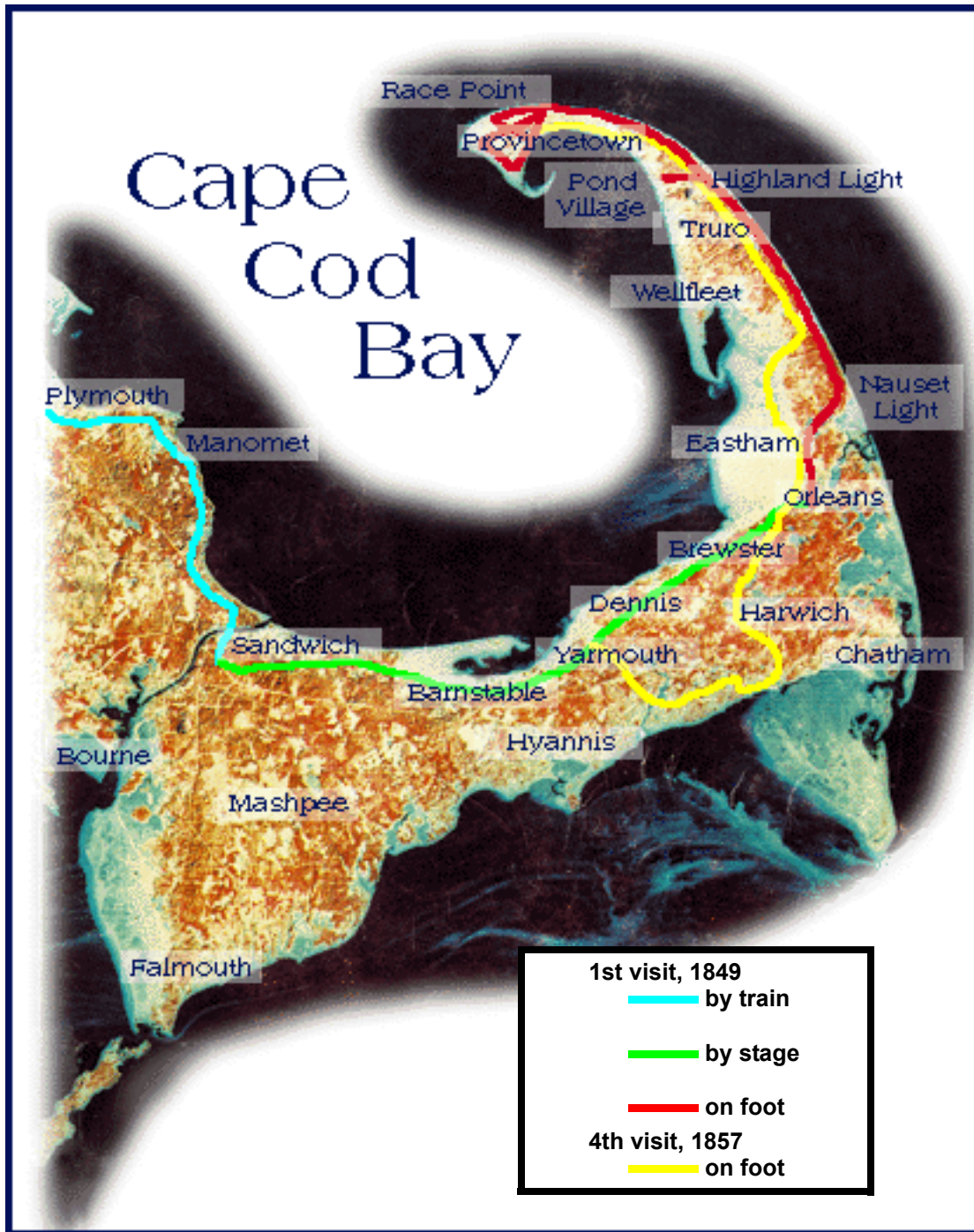
SURPRISE!

WISHING to get a better view than I had yet had of the ocean, which, we are told, covers more than two-thirds of the globe, but of which a man who lives a few miles inland may never see any trace, more than of another world, I made a visit to Cape Cod in October, 1849, another the succeeding June, and another to Truro in July, 1855; the first and last time with a single companion, the second time alone. I have spent, in all, about three weeks on the Cape; walked from Eastham to Provincetown twice on the Atlantic side, and once on the Bay side also, excepting four or five miles, and crossed the Cape half a dozen times on my way; but, having come so fresh to the sea, I have got but little salted. My readers must expect only so much saltiness as the land-breeze acquires from blowing over an arm of the sea, or is tasted on the windows and on the bark of trees twenty miles inland after September gales. I have been accustomed to make excursions to the ponds within ten miles of Concord, but latterly I have extended my excursions to the sea-shore.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

THOREAU'S 1ST VISIT TO CAPE COD



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

October 11, Tuesday: It may well have been on this day that [Henry Thoreau](#) found the 1741 silver French coin in the sands of the Wellfleet ocean beach as described in [CAPE COD](#), and then proceeded impishly to exercise his walking companion [Ellery Channing](#) with delusions of [pirate](#) treasure.³⁵



TIMELINE OF SHIPWRECKS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

CAPE COD: In the year 1717, a noted pirate named Bellamy was led on to the bar off Wellfleet by the captain of a snow which he had taken, to whom he had offered his vessel again if he would pilot him into Provincetown Harbor. Tradition says that the latter threw over a burning tar-barrel in the night, which drifted ashore, and the pirates followed it. A storm coming on, their whole fleet was wrecked, and more than a hundred dead bodies lay along the shore. Six who escaped shipwreck were executed. "At times to this day" (1793), says the historian of Wellfleet, "there are King William and Queen Mary's coppers picked up, and pieces of silver called cob-money. The violence of the seas moves the sands on the outer bar, so that at times the iron caboose of the ship [that is, Bellamy's] at low ebbs has been seen." Another tells us that, "For many years after this shipwreck, a man of a very singular and frightful aspect used every spring and autumn to be seen travelling on the Cape, who was supposed to have been one of Bellamy's crew. The presumption is that he went to some place where money had been secreted by the pirates, to get such a supply as his exigencies required. When he died, many pieces of gold were found in a girdle which he constantly wore."

As I was walking on the beach here in my last visit, looking for shells and pebbles, just after that storm which I have mentioned as moving the sand to a great depth, not knowing but I might find some cob-money, I did actually pick up a French crown piece, worth about a dollar and six cents, near high-water mark, on the still moist sand, just under the abrupt, caving base of the bank. It was of a dark slate color, and looked like a flat pebble, but still bore a very distinct and handsome head of Louis XV., and the usual legend on the reverse, *Sit Nomen Domini Benedictum* (Blessed be the Name of the Lord), a pleasing sentiment to read in the sands of the sea-shore, whatever it might be stamped on, and I also made out the date, 1741. Of course, I thought at first that it was that same old button which I have found so many times, but my knife soon showed the silver. Afterward, rambling on the bars at low tide, I cheated my companion by holding up round shells (*Scutellæ*) between my fingers, whereupon he quickly stripped and came off to me.

35. The coin Thoreau found may well have been the common "Black Dog." During the French regime in Canada, paper currency had been in use but the lowest paper denomination had been 7 sols 6 deniers. There had remained, therefore, a need for coins of low denomination, for making change and for small transactions. The most widely used coins were those made of *billon* (low-grade silver), of which the most important was the *sou marque* illustrated below:



These coins, struck between 1738 and 1764, had circulated not only in France but also in her colonies and, prior to 1760, large shipments of them had been sent to New France (Canada). The denomination was 2 sols (24 deniers). These *sous marques* had not been very popular because their silver content was low. In circulation, they tended to turn black, and for that reason they gained the nickname "black dogs" in the French colonies of the West Indies. However, because of the continuing shortage of small change, for some time after the British conquest they had continued to circulate in Canada.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

It may well have been at this point that Thoreau visited the 88-year-old Wellfleet oysterman, John Young Newcomb, whom Thoreau took to be 60 or 70. To see the correct age, we need only inspect his tombstone:



CAPE COD: Having walked about eight miles since we struck the beach, and passed the boundary between Wellfleet and Truro, a stone post in the sand, -for even this sand comes under the jurisdiction of one town or another, - we turned inland over barren hills and valleys, whither the sea, for some reason, did not follow us, and, tracing up a Hollow, discovered two or three sober-looking houses within half a mile, uncommonly near the eastern coast. Their garrets were apparently so full of chambers, that their roofs could hardly lie down straight, and we did not doubt that there was room for us there. Houses near the sea are generally low and broad. These were a story and a half high; but if you merely counted the windows in their gable-ends, you would think that there were many stories more, or, at any rate, that the half-story was the only one thought worthy of being illustrated. The great number of windows in the ends of the houses, and their irregularity in size and position, here and elsewhere on the Cape, struck us agreeably, -as if each of the various occupants who had their *cunabula* behind had punched a hole where his necessities required it, and, according to his size and stature, without regard to outside effect. There were windows for the grown folks, and windows for the children, -three or four apiece; as a certain man had a large hole cut in his barn-door for the cat, and another smaller one for the kitten. Sometimes they were so low under the eaves that I thought they must have perforated the plate beam for another apartment, and I noticed some which were triangular, to fit that part more exactly. The ends of the houses had thus as many muzzles as a revolver, and, if the inhabitants have the same habit of staring out the windows that some of our neighbors have, a traveller must stand a small chance with them.

CAT



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

CAPE COD: Our host told us that the sea-clam, or hen, was not easily obtained; it was raked up, but never on the Atlantic side, only cast ashore there in small quantities in storms. The fisherman sometimes wades in water several feet deep, and thrusts a pointed stick into the sand before him. When this enters between the valves of a clam, he closes them on it, and is drawn out. It has been known to catch and hold coot and teal which were preying on it. I chanced to be on the bank of the Acushnet at New Bedford one day since this, watching some ducks, when a man informed me that, having let out his young ducks to seek their food amid the samphire (*Salicornia*) and other weeds along the river-side at low tide that morning, at length he noticed that one remained stationary, amid the weeds, something preventing it from following the others, and going to it he found its foot tightly shut in a quahog's shell. He took up both together, carried them to his home, and his wife opening the shell with a knife released the duck and cooked the quahog. The old man said that the great clams were good to eat, but that they always took out a certain part which was poisonous, before they cooked them. "People said it would kill a cat." I did not tell him that I had eaten a large one entire that afternoon, but began to think that I was tougher than a cat. He stated that pedlers came round there, and sometimes tried to sell the women folks a skimmer, but he told them that their women had got a better skimmer than *they* could make, in the shell of their clams; it was shaped just right for this purpose. -They call them "skim-alls" in some places. He also said that the sun-squawl was poisonous to handle, and when the sailors came across it, they did not meddle with it, but heaved it out of their way. I told him that I had handled it that afternoon, and had felt no ill effects as yet. But he said it made the hands itch, especially if they had previously been scratched, or if I put it into my bosom, I should find out what it was.

CAT



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

CAPE COD: The light-house keeper said that when the wind blowed strong on to the shore, the waves ate fast into the bank, but when it blowed off they took no sand away; for in the former case the wind heaped up the surface of the water next to the beach, and to preserve its equilibrium a strong undertow immediately set back again into the sea which carried with it the sand and whatever else was in the way, and left the beach hard to walk on; but in the latter case the undertow set on, and carried the sand with it, so that it was particularly difficult for shipwrecked men to get to land when the wind blowed on to the shore, but easier when it blowed off. This undertow, meeting the next surface wave on the bar which itself has made, forms part of the dam over which the latter breaks, as over an upright wall. The sea thus plays with the land holding a sand-bar in its mouth awhile before it swallows it, as a cat plays with a mouse; but the fatal gripe is sure to come at last. The sea sends its rapacious east wind to rob the land, but before the former has got far with its prey, the land sends its honest west wind to recover some of its own. But, according to Lieutenant Davis, the forms, extent, and distribution of sand-bars and banks are principally determined, not by winds and waves, but by tides.

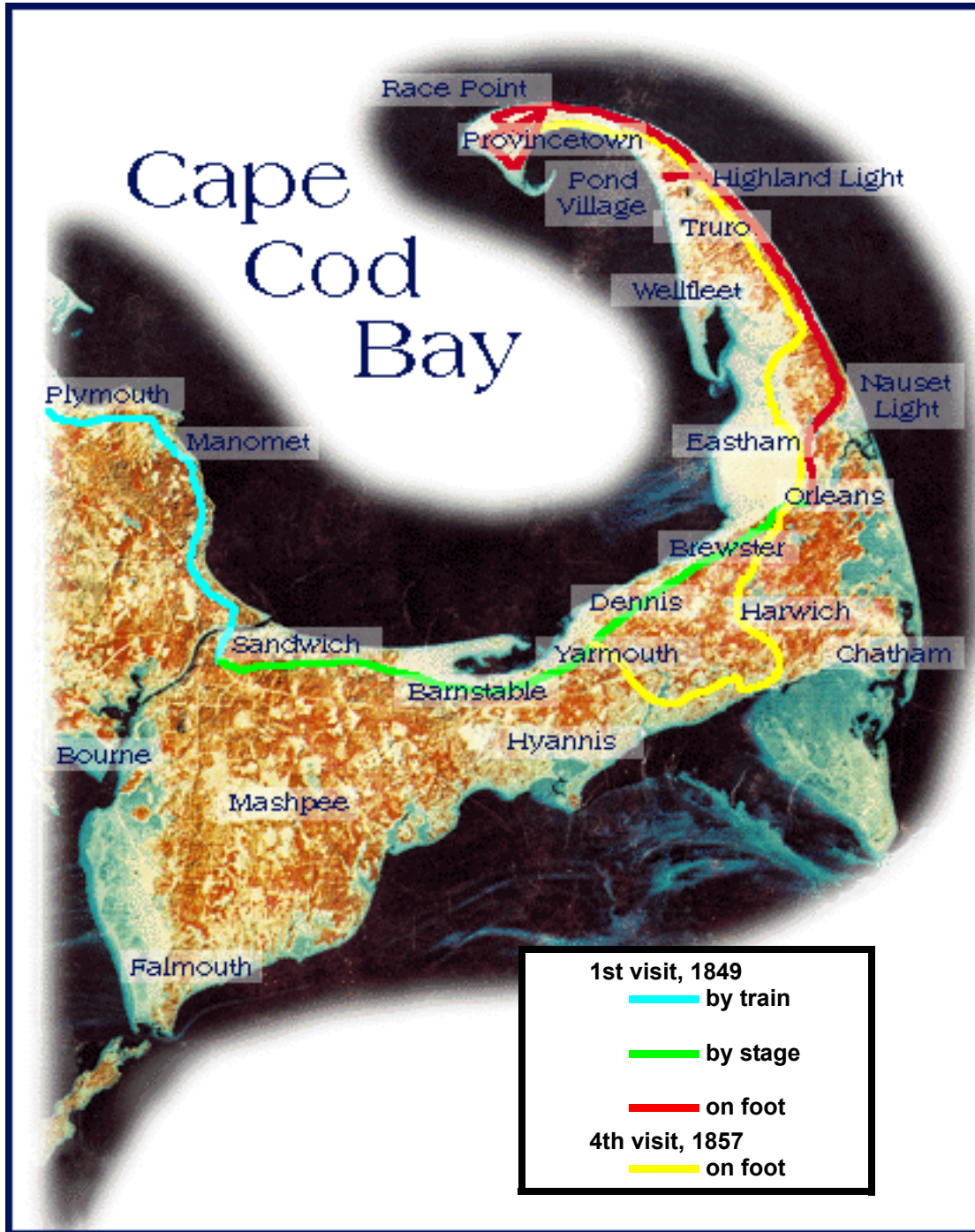
CAT

CHARLES HENRY DAVIS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

THOREAU'S 1ST VISIT TO *MANAMOYIK* (CAPE COD)

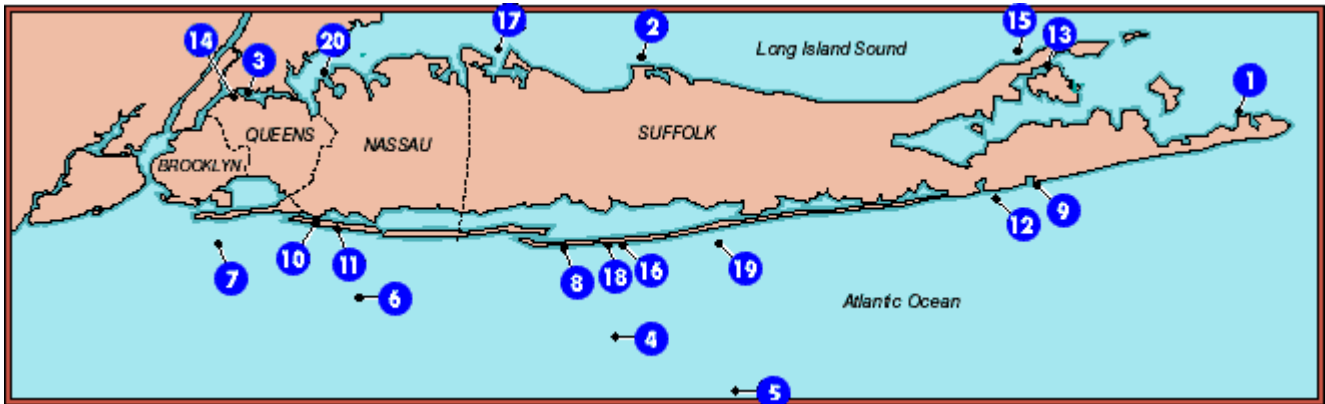
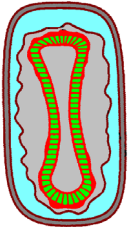


SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1850

July 19, Thursday: At 3:30AM, holding course with close-reefed sails, the *Elizabeth* struck a Fire Island sandbar. The ship's lifeboats were soon smashed. As it grew lighter figures could be made out on the beach but these humans didn't seem to be doing anything by way of a rescue, only waiting and watching. In fact these were not rescuers but resident scavengers waiting for their storm booty. At noon the first mate, in command of the *Elizabeth* since its skipper had died of the [small pox](#), picked himself out a likely plank and jumped overboard. His instructions to those he left behind: "Save yourselves!" There was only one life preserver, which would by tradition have gone to [Margaret Fuller](#), but as they all waited aboard the vessel and saw that it was breaking up in the surge, she offered that life preserver to a crewman who was volunteering to take his chances going overboard to summon aid (wreck #18 below):



TIMELINE OF SHIPWRECKS

The toddler had been slung into a canvas bag around the neck of a sailor. A [Tribune](#) reporter reached the beach at about 11AM. At about noon the Fire Island Lighthouse lifeboat and rescue howitzer arrived but, despite the fact that the ship was only a few hundred yards out into the breakers, rescue attempts were made difficult by wind and waves that were building into a hurricane. The lifeboat would never be launched. At about 3PM, with perhaps a thousand people on the beach at that point watching (half of whom were looting as cases of goods washed ashore), the ship began to come apart as pieces of its marble cargo broke through the hull. Some of the people aboard made it ashore by clinging to pieces of wreckage. When a sailor attempted to get the toddler ashore, the attempt failed and the tiny body would be submerged for about twenty minutes before being located and carried still warm out of the waves (the body would be placed in a chest donated by one of the sailors). Just before leaping overboard the cook heard Fuller, in her white nightgown, say "I see nothing but death before me." When the ship broke up all who had not made it to shore were drowned (of the total of 22 aboard, a total of 10 including the baby could not be gotten across the surf to shore). Ossoli was seen to reach up from

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

the water and attempt to grab a piece of rigging before disappearing beneath the waves.



The bodies of Giovanni and Margaret were not immediately recovered. When [Ellery Channing](#) reached that beach, some people who were still standing around informed him that they would have made a rescue attempt had they known someone “important” was on board.³⁶ The reporter took some letters found on the beach in a box back to New-York and dried them and turned them over to Horace Greeley. [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) had not met [Giovanni Angelo](#) but commented, according to his son’s NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE AND HIS WIFE, A

36. Four editions of the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA* held that their drownings occurred on July 16th and this error would not get corrected until 1974 — which would be hardly worth mentioning were it not such a graphic illustration of the general lack of value we place on a pushy woman’s contribution to our clownish society.

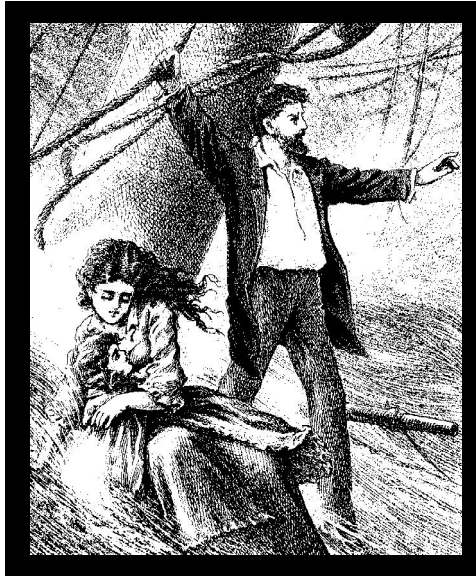
SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

BIOGRAPHY, that



Providence was, after all, kind in putting her and her clownish husband and their child on board that fated ship.



Yeah, and a kind Providence put those clownish [variola](#) scarifications on the fated child's face!

Behind this term “Providence” mobilized by Hawthorne we can see lurking the notion that this was an unquestionably murderous, yet unquestionably kind, act of God. His deity was merely disposing of a female who had gotten out of her place, sort of like crushing an ant that had wandered onto the author's dinnerplate. God as the sanitary police for the Old Boys Network. The schadenfreudian remarks [Nathaniel](#) made from time to time about the Ossolis may have had less to do with his generally livid gender chauvinism, and less to do with the two of them as a couple, or with the two of them as particular individuals, than with Hawthorne's special ambivalence toward the twisted sister with whom he had had those starry-night walks while his wife was inconvenienced, or his general misanthropy toward any woman who would do such an unwomanly thing

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

as to write:

I wish they were forbidden to write on pain of having their faces deeply scarified with an oyster-shell.



Dear reader, do you agree with Nathaniel that fortune was **kind** to Margaret and her family? Do you, perhaps, harbor a hope that fortune will smile on you and on your family as it did not smile on her and her family? Do you suspect, as so many scholars studying this period have suspected, that Margaret perhaps harbored some sort of a death wish, and that it was this death wish which prevented her from leaping overboard into the breakers and attempting to make it to the shore that was only a few yards away? Remember, if you will, that Margaret had a spinal deformity, which very likely was some part of the cause of part of pretty boy Nathaniel's hostility toward her and which very likely was the entire cause of his hostility toward her husband –what kind of clown could it be, who could marry a **deformed** woman, and have sex with her and produce a child?– and remember, also, if you will, that Margaret herself had long before been forced to abandon any suspicion she might have had in her earlier years, of the basic fairness of life. We were born to be mutilated, she commented, and, she might have added, we were born also, to be mocked:



I have no belief in beautiful lives; we were born to be mutilated: Life is basically unjust.

Several days after the *USS Elizabeth* had disintegrated, when all that lay in the breakers were some rough blocks of Italian marble and some hull timbers half buried in the sand, a sea captain named James Wick would show up at the offices of the New-York Herald Tribune on Manhattan Island with a packing crate containing the corpses of a man and a woman. Horace Greeley was informed that these were the bodies of the “Italian count” Ossoli and Greeley’s war correspondent [Margaret Fuller](#). Greeley “refused to have anything to do with

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

them,” according to [Tribune](#) reporter Felix Dominy.



The horses rattled the empty chariots,
 longing for their noble drivers.
 But they on the ground lay,
 dearer to the vultures than to their wives.

So Captain Wick and his mate, to get rid of the bodies of Greeley’s war correspondent and her clownish husband without getting themselves into trouble, would bury this packing crate at night on Coney Island without marking the spot.³⁷ We are reminded of something [Henry Thoreau](#) would jot down in his journal some nine months subsequent to this event, between April 19 and April 22, 1851, and something he would write into CAPE COD, and we are led to wonder whether Thoreau had in some manner come to suspect that his “friend” Greeley had something to do with the fact that it was **these** bodies in particular that had not been recovered from the wreck of the USS *Elizabeth*. For Thoreau did make an uncharacteristically bitter remark during this period, a remark about the moral character of editors in this country, a group of whom Greeley was arguably the single one who was the best known personally by Thoreau:



... probably no country was ever ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as are the editors of the periodical press in this country.

Later in this day, in Boston, an appeal brought on behalf of [Professor John White Webster](#) by the minister of the Unitarian church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, the Reverend George Putnam, D.D., failed to move the Governor’s Council on Pardons. Murder being contrary to the law of God, with one dissenting vote they recommended to the Governor of the commonwealth that he murder this murderer.

July 24, Tuesday: At the consecration of the Pine Grove Cemetery in Lynn, Massachusetts, Charles Chauncy Shackford delivered an address.

[Henry Thoreau](#) dashed off a note to Horace Greeley in New-York –who obviously already knew that embarrassing bodies would not be found, and obviously was going to say nothing to anyone about this– and hastily set out for New York to search the beaches of Fire Island for literary and physical remains. He recovered a sand-clogged coat that had belonged to the *marchése* and tore a button from it as a keepsake. Some unimportant papers were turned up, but not the important book-length manuscript on the course of the revolution that had been refused publication in Italy nor any incidental letters or documents that might embarrass [Waldo Emerson](#) or other of [Margaret Fuller](#)’s American literary associates. Or, at least, that is what our history books and biographies now report: I prefer to speculate that, if Thoreau did turn up any papers, or if he had turned up any papers of consequence, he would have been a whole lot smarter than to turn these papers over to Emerson to be destroyed!³⁸

37. A letter from Felix Dominy’s son, that is among the Fuller papers at Harvard, attests to this incident and is described in Chevigny, Bell Gale. *THE WOMAN AND THE MYTH: MARGARET FULLER’S LIFE AND WRITINGS*. Old Westbury NY: The Feminist Press, 1976.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!



“Why care for these dead bodies?”

38. Although Fuller’s manuscript on the Italian revolution was lost in the shipwreck or destroyed by her editors with the pretense that it had been lost, we do have some idea what was described in it. See the New York editor Theodore Dwight’s history THE ROMAN REPUBLIC OF 1849; WITH ACCOUNTS OF THE INQUISITION, AND THE SIEGE OF ROME, published in New-York by R. Van Dien in 1851, and bear in mind that where Dwight celebrates Garibaldi, Fuller would have been celebrating Mazzini. In the judgment of William L. Vance, author of the 2-volume AMERICA’S ROME, the reverential attitude which Fuller adopted toward the Italian Revolution of 1849 can only be paralleled by the attitude which the poet Ezra Pound adopted toward the early years of the Fascist era prior to 1936:



What Margaret Fuller was, among Americans, to the Roman Republic of 1849, Pound was to Mussolini’s Italy.

(Vance agrees also that Thomas Carlyle, Emerson’s English buddy, would have looked upon Benito Mussolini as a great hero of human history, and that James Russell Lowell, the Harvard professor and first editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, would have welcomed Mussolini as “an Italian brain ... large enough to hold it [the Idea of Rome], and to give unity to those discordant members.”)

Plaudits for Fuller were so exceptionally and uncharacteristically bitter that they indicate quite clearly, that there was a good deal going on that these old boys were unwilling to talk about but that they very badly needed to justify to themselves:

- Writing nine years after her drowning at age 40, Nathaniel Hawthorne called her a “great humbug” with an “unpliable, and in many respects defective and evil nature.”
- Waldo Emerson referred to her “mountainous me,” and this phrase was picked up by the generality of people and used as an epithet against her.
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who knew her in Italy, cautioned that “If I wished anyone to do her justice, I should say, as I have said, ‘Never read what she has written’” (my apologies for making EBB a member of the “old boys club,” but if that shoe fits her she will need to wear it).
- Henry James, Jr. suggested that she “left nothing behind her, her written utterance being naught.”



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

They really have no friends but the worms or fishes.”

TIMELINE OF SHIPWRECKS

July 25, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) visited Nino's new grave on Fire Island and remarked the fact that Horace Greeley had not shown up at the wreck scene, and remarked the fact that four bodies remained to be accounted for –Horace Sumner, and a sailor, and the two Ossolis. Clearly, this Captain James Wick, having illegally disposed of the bodies of the Ossolis after he found out they weren't worth anything to the employer, was not going to be spreading it around, what he had done. The truth about the disposal of [Margaret Fuller](#)'s corpse would not be known for many years. Among the fascinated observers on shore that day had been Felix Dominy, keeper of the Fire Island Lighthouse and part-time correspondent for Horace Greeley's New-York [Tribune](#), and his 9-year-old son Arthur. More than five decades later, Arthur Dominy was a superintendent for the Life Saving Service, in its 3rd district. On June 29, 1901, that son, Arthur Dominy, then in his early 50s, wrote a long letter to a Mrs. Anna Parker Pruyn in Albany, detailing the events of the shipwreck as he vividly remembered them:

"I was nine years of age, and every incident in this connection is as clearly imprinted on my memory as though it happened yesterday."

"I can see the doomed vessel lying in the terrible sea that at times completely covered her, as plainly as if a photograph were in front of me."

"In a day or two if my memory is right a brother of Margaret Fuller came to Fire Island took the child away with him and left instructions that if the bodies of the Count or Countess came on shore and could be identified to ship them to New York in Mr. Greely's care.... Some days elapsed before the bodies of the Count and Countess came on shore, and they were badly washed but clearly and easily identified."

"Two doctors who were on the beach and examined them were perfectly satisfied that they were the correct ones.... The remains of both were boxed and sent to New York by vessel owned and commanded by Capt. James Wicks of Penataquit, now Bay Shore, in Mr. Greely's care. The Capt. reported to him upon his arrival but Mr. Greely refused to receive them or to have anything to do with them."

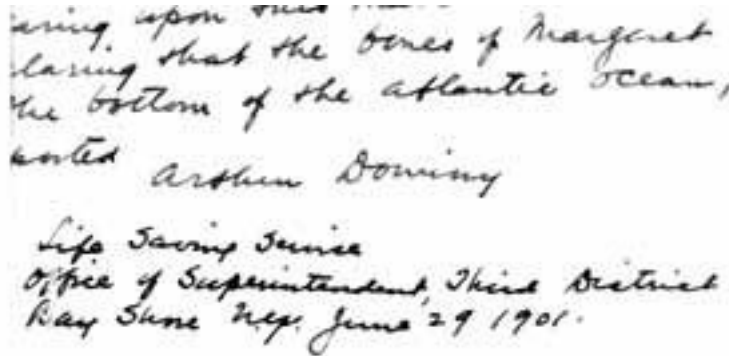
"The Captain in his plight became somewhat frightened, fearing he might get into trouble through having the bodies on board, got his vessel underweigh and went to Coney Island where he and his man took them on shore and buried them in the night, and where they no doubt lie today unmarked. I had a conversation with the Captain some years after and asked him if he thought he could locate the spot where he buried them. He said he did not think he could go anywhere near it as it was a very dark night and he and the man were half scared out of their wits by the nature of the business."

"There have been at various times articles published in newspapers and magazines bearing upon this matter and most of them wind up into declaring that the bones of Margaret were washing around the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, when the facts

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are as above reported."



...aring upon ...
 laring that the bones of Margaret
 the bottom of the atlantic ocean,
 noted Arthur Downing
 Life Saving Service
 Office of Superintendent, Third District
 Bay Shore N.Y. June 29 1901.

**“Why care for these dead bodies?
 They really have no friends but the worms or fishes.”**

[TIMELINE OF SHIPWRECKS](#)

[Thoreau](#) wrote to [Waldo Emerson](#):

*Fire Island Beach
 Thursday morn. July 25 '50
 Dear Friend,
 I am writing this at the house of Smith Oakes, within one mile of the wreck. He is the one who rendered the most assistance. W^m H Channing came down with me, but I have not seen Arthur Fuller – nor Greeley, Nor Spring. Spring & Sumner were here yesterday but left soon. Mr Oakes & wife tell me (all the survivors came or were brought directly to their house) that the ship struck at 10 minutes after 4 AM. and all hands, being mostly in their night clothes made haste to the forecastle – the water coming in at once. There they remained the, passengers in the forecastle, the crew above it doing what they could. Every wave lifted the forecastle roof & washed over those within. The first man got ashore at 9. Many from 9 to noon-. At floodtide about 3 1/2 o'clock when the ship broke up entirely – they came out of the forecastle & Margaret sat with her back to the foremast with her hands over her knees – her husband & child already drowned – a great wave came & washed her off. The Steward? had just before taken her child & started for shore; both were drowned.
 The broken desk in a bag – containing no very valuable papers – a large black leather trunk – with an upper and under apartment – the upper holding books & papers— A carpet bag probably Ossolis*



SURPRISE!

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and one of his? shoes – are all the Ossolis' effects known to have been found.
Four bodies remain to be found – the two Ossolis – Horace Sumner – & a Sailor–
I have visited the child's grave— Its body will probably be taken away today.
The wreck is to be sold at auction – excepting the hull – today
The mortar would not go off. Mrs Hasty the Captains Wife, told Mrs Oakes that she & Margaret divided their money–& tied up the halves in handkerchiefs around their persons that Margaret took 60 or 70 dollars. Mrs Hasty who can tell all about Margaret up to 11 'oclock on Friday is said to be going to Portland ME. today— She & Mrs Fuller must & probably will come together. The cook, the last to leave, & the Steward? will know the rest. I shall try to see them. In the meanwhile I shall do what I can to recover property & obtain particulars hereabouts. W^m H. Channing – did I write it? has come with me. Arthur Fuller has this moment reached this house. He reached the beach last night – we got here yesterday noon. A good part of the vessel still holds together where she struck, & something may come ashore with her fragments. The last body was found on Tuesday 3 miles west. Mrs Oakes dried the papers which were in the trunk – and she says they appeared to be of various kinds. “Would they cover that table”?, a small round one— “They would spread out”— Some were tied up. There were 20 or 30 books in the same half of the trunk. —another, smaller trunk empty, came ashore. — but there is no mark on it— She speaks of Paiolina as if she might have been a “sort of nurse to the child”— I expect to go to Patchogue whence the pilferers must have chiefly come –& advertise &c &c.

Here are some of Thoreau's preserved note fragments on his activities:

I found the engravings at Oakes'. They said that they were left out of the trunk. The gown and one article of the child's dress at Daniel Jones', Patchogue – and the other article of the child's dress at John Heiners in the same village. They said that they picked them up 1 1/2 or 2 miles east of the wreck. There were more things there and elsewhere which were either not worth taking – or not worth waiting to see.
I saw a calico dress like the pattern which I bought at Skinners It had silk fringes & was much torn also some drawers and a night gown all torn & without mark.
Elikom Jones agreed to forward to Mr. Dominy a lady's shift which a Quorum man had got, & which he thought had the letters S.M.F. on it.
At Carman Rowlands Patchogue I saw a gentleman's shirt.
At Wm Gregory's in the same village a cart load of rags & remains of a child's petticoat. He said that his brother had much more.
At Wm Smiths, near Patchogue a child's striped apron & a lady's skirt fringed.



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*Orrin Rose & Obadiah Greene of Sayville had something.
a silk dress – "lilac ground, middling dark stripe" which I could
not wait to get.*

*Mrs. Hasty & the Captain had left New York before I returned.
The only ones of the survivors who remained on board till the
vessel broke up are the Carpenter & the Cook. I conversed with
the former & the mate, but the Cook was not then to be found;
he was the only American among the crew, and was the only one,
they said who was unsteady – he was intoxicated most of the time
on shore.*

*The following is the account of Charles W. Davis 1st Mate –
A Hanoverian, who went out from New Orleans.*

*They had pleasant weather up to latitude 58°, so that they
painted*



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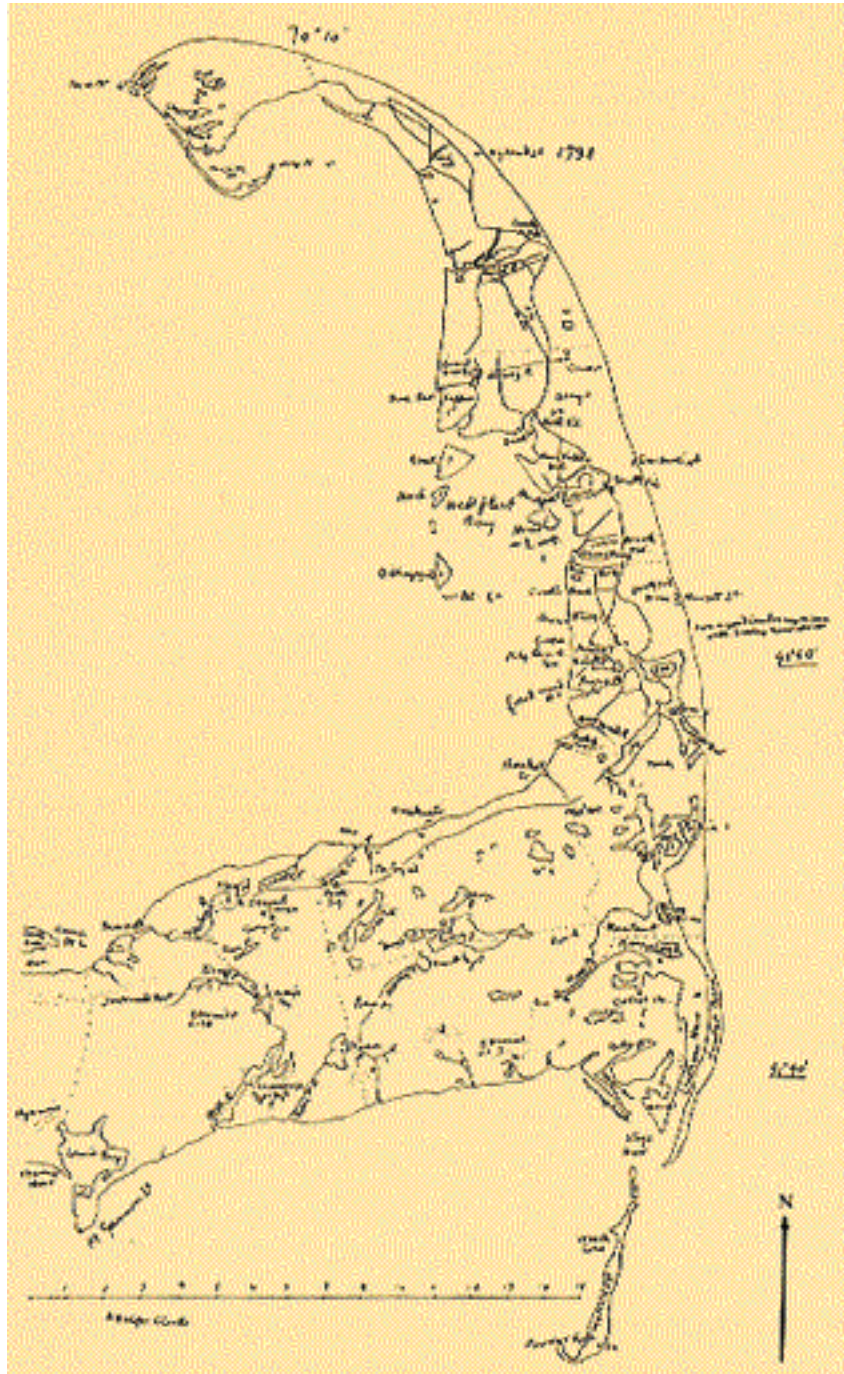
1851

July 25, Friday-August 1: During this period, soon after the “Wild/Walking” lectures, [Henry Thoreau](#) went on an excursion by getting aboard a 7AM train to Boston, then catching the 9AM boat to Hull, then on foot via Nantasket, Cohasset, Duxbury, Scituate MA, and Marshfield to [Plymouth](#) along the Massachusetts “South Shore,” where he visited his friends Benjamin Marston Watson and Mary Russell Watson, and returned home via [Boston](#).

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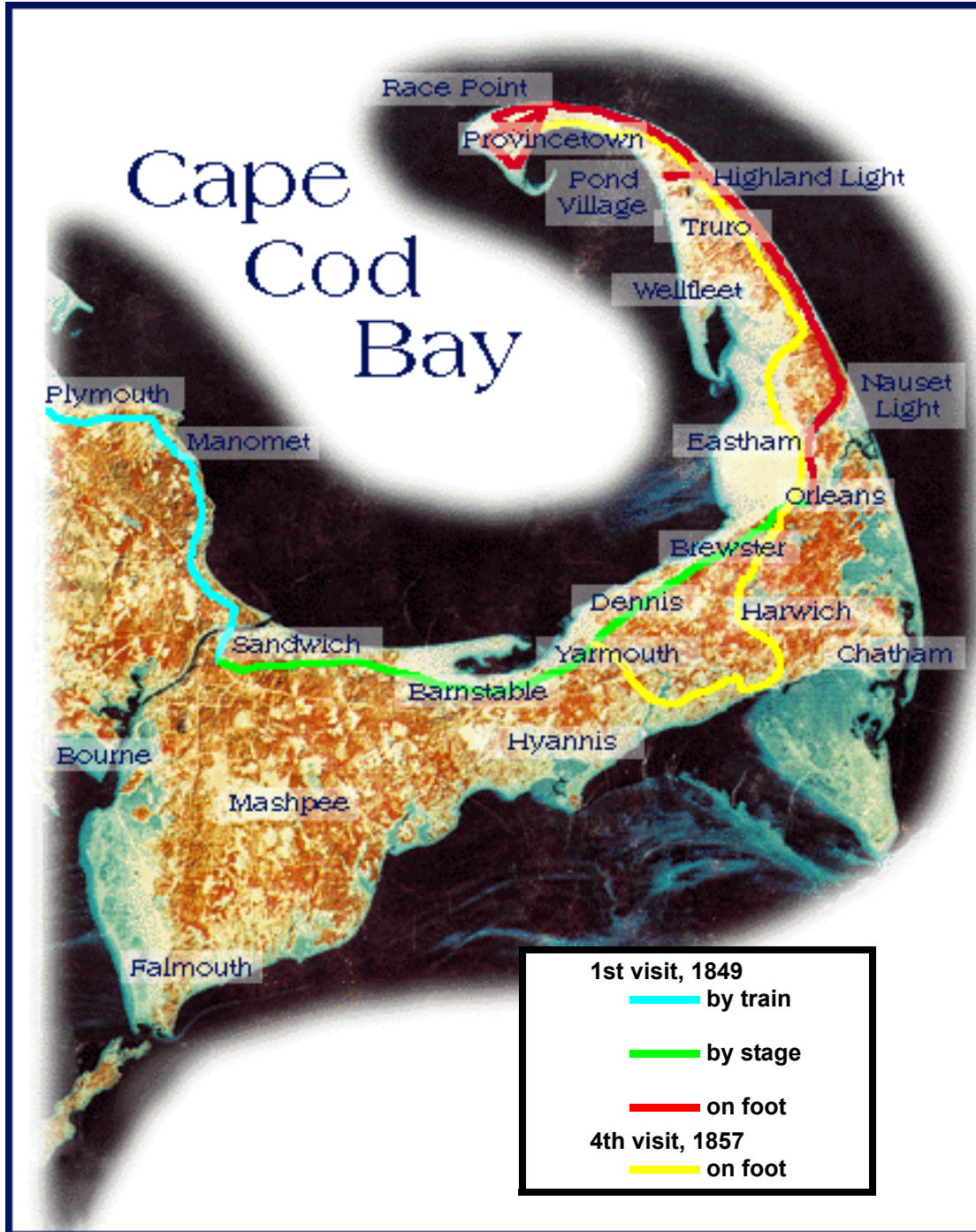
CAPE COD



It would appear that this was traced by Thoreau himself.

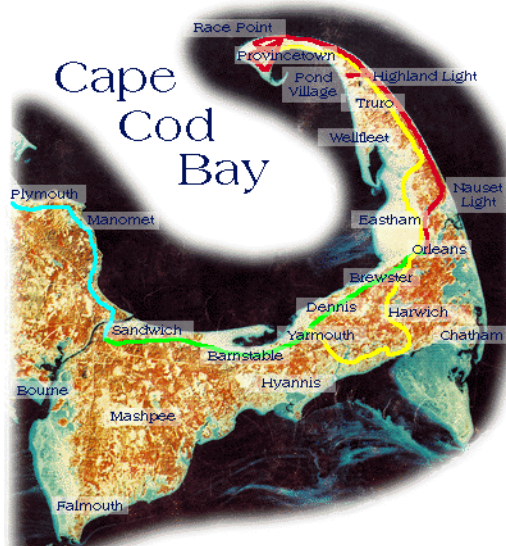
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- 1st visit, 1849**
- by train
- by stage
- on foot
- 4th visit, 1857**
- on foot

View Cornell University Library’s webpage of an 1869 history of this Cape Cod town by Frederick Freeman:

<http://historical.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/cul.cdl/docviewer?did=cdl447&view=50&frames=0&seq=17>



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Note that he initially stopped at Cohasset in order to visit Mrs. Ellen Sewall Osgood and her husband, the Reverend Osgood, and also called at Ellen's parents' home in Scituate. Note also that while attempting to wade out to Clark's Island in [Plymouth](#) Harbor he almost drowned, but made no comment on this in his JOURNAL.³⁹

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

The owner and inhabitant of the island, Edward Winslow "Uncle Ned" Watson, was an original well worth one's attention: a poet, a sea farmer, a sailer and philosopher whom everyone knew as "Uncle Ned,"⁴⁰ who had inherited the island from remote ancestors. [Thoreau](#) had become impatient while waiting for conveyance to the island, had misjudged the distance and the changing tides, and had tried to wade across mud flats to the island. He got caught in the rip tide and was saved by one Sam Burgess who happened by in a small lobster-pot boat. Some people saw and recorded this incident, or we would not know of it.⁴¹ It was just after this incident, in which Thoreau almost "became a dead poet at last," that an infamous exchange in regard to

39. He also made no allusion to the fact that the island had been used as a detention facility for Native Americans. Was Thoreau aware that he was walking on the site of a former concentration camp, exactly as if he had been walking on Deer Island in Boston Harbor where the Praying Indians of the Concord region had been held during "King Philip's War"?

40. As opposed to "Uncle Bill" Watson, who lived in a schooner.

41. See page 53 of Geller, Lawrence D. BETWEEN CONCORD AND PLYMOUTH: THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS AND THE WATSONS (Concord MA: Thoreau Lyceum, 1973).

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the hound/horse/turtledove parable of [WALDEN](#) occurred.

[WALDEN](#): In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men's, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint "No Admittance" on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.



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When questioned, Thoreau said only

"Well Sir, I suppose we have all had our losses,"



and "Uncle Ned" Watson commented in return

"That's a pretty way to answer a fellow."

Just after September 19, 1850 Thoreau had met a widow who had lost a child:

Those have met with losses, who have lost their children. I saw the widow this morning whose son was drowned.

I think it interesting that

- this conversation occurred just after Thoreau had visited the woman to whom he had proposed marriage
- this conversation occurred just after Thoreau himself almost drowned
- this conversation occurred on the grounds of a former racial concentration camp where an entire group of people had had their losses

and I find it interesting also that **no commentator previous to me has brought those three intriguing factoids before the reading public.** Why not? Why not, indeed!

Perhaps Thoreau's reluctance to explain the parable he had propounded may be attributed to a defect which he perceived in the question which he was being asked, the defect of eagerness to substitute, for all the influence to be derived from cultivating such a symbolic allusion in one's mind, a specious preoccupation with a dismissable "meaning" for these symbols. After all, the agenda of the person who seeks to establish such "meaning" is ordinarily to thus dispose of the symbolic allusion and the preoccupation with it, not to distance oneself from such symbolic allusions but merely to move toward other mental preoccupations with other



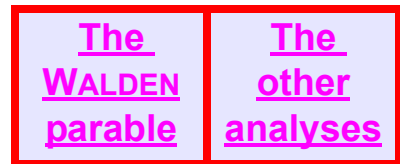
SURPRISE!

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symbolic allusions which may well be less than innocent:



The gnostic is not one who, when making a symbolic allusion, finds God nearer to himself than his symbolic allusion. Rather, the gnostic is the one who, because of his self-extinction in His being and self-absorption in contemplating Him, has no symbolic allusion.



Instead of this sort of careful analysis, what we have received from the Thoreau-watchers has been more on a level with the following supercilious material, which [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote into his journal in the July-October period of this year of 1851 so he would have something to use in Thoreau's funeral oration and then



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sell to the magazines — should the opportunity arise for him to deliver such a performance.

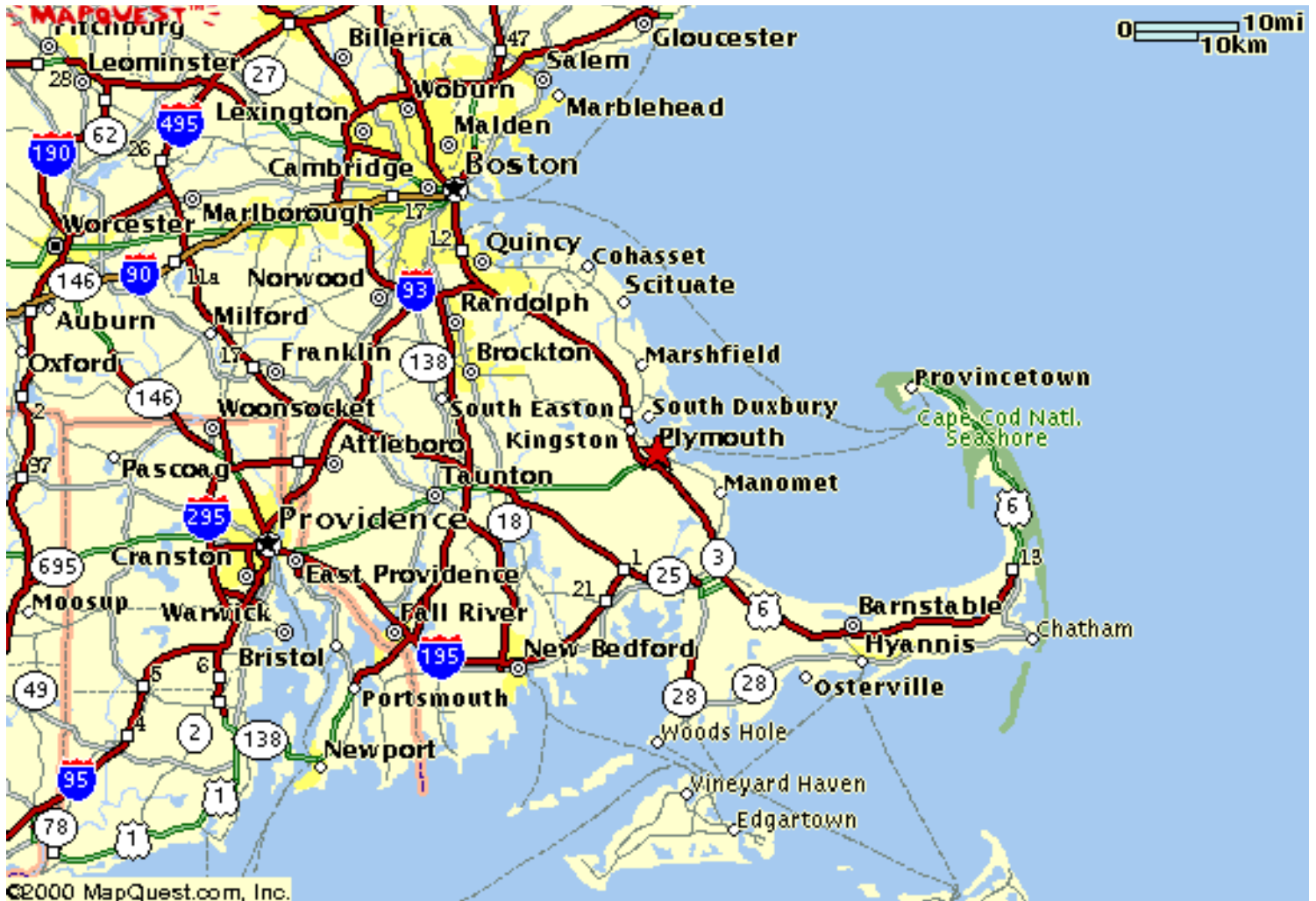
Henry Thoreau wants a little ambition in his mixture. Fault of this, instead of being the head of American Engineers, he is captain of a huckleberry party.

* * *

H.T. will not stick — he is not practically renovator. He is a boy, & will be an old boy. Pounding beans is good to the end of pounding Empires, but not, if at the end of years, it is only beans. I fancy it an inexcusable fault in him that he is insignificant here in the town. He speaks at Lyceum or other meting but somebody else speaks & his speech falls dead & is forgotten. He rails at the town doings & ought to correct & inspire them. [After a period of speaking of other topics, such as the genius of Shakspeare, which Emerson compares to the facility in calculating and memorizing of a super-smart schoolchild, he returned to the topic of Thoreau with:] One chamber more, one cell more is opened in this [Shakspeare's] brain, than is opened in all the rest, & what majestic results. I admire Thoreau, too, with his powerful arithmetic, & his whole body co-working. He can pace sixteen rods more accurately than another man can measure it by tape.

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July 25, Friday: Started for Clark's Island at 7 A.M.

At 9 Am took the Hingham boat and was landed at Hull. There was a pleasure party on board, apparently boys & girls belonging to the South end going to Hingham. There was a large proportion of ill-dressed and ill-mannered boys –of Irish extraction– A sad sight to behold Little boys of 12 years prematurely old sucking cigars I felt that if I were their mothers I should whip them & send them to bed. Such children should be dealt with as for stealing or impurity. The opening of this valve for the safety of the city! Oh what a wretched resource! What right have parents to beget –to bring up & attempt to **educate** children in a city– I thought of infanticide among the orientals with complacency– I seemed to hear infant voices lisp – “give us a fair chance parents.” There is no such squalidness in the country– You would have said that they must all have come from the house of correction and the farm-school –but such a company do the boys in Boston Streets make. The birds have more care for their young –where they place their nests– What are a city's charities –? She could be charitable perchance if she had a resting place without herself. A true culture is more possible to the savage than to the boy of average intellect born of average parents in a great city– I believe that they perish miserably. How can they be kept clean physically or morally? It is folly to attempt to educate children within a city –the first step must be to remove them out of it. It seemed a groping & helpless philanthropy – that I heard of.

I heard a boy telling the story of Nix's Mate to some girls as we passed that spot –how he said “If I am guilty this island will remain, but if I am innocent it will be washed away –& now it is all washed away” this was a simple & strong expression of feeling suitable to the occasion by which he committed the evidence of his innocence to the dumb-isle– Such as the boy could appreciate –a proper sailors legend –and I was reminded

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that it is the illiterate and unimaginative class that seizes on & transmits the legends in which the more cultivated delight. No fastidious poet dwelling in Boston had tampered with it –no narrow poet –but broad mankind Sailors from all ports sailing by. They sitting on the deck were the literary academy that sat upon its periods.

On the beach at Hull, and afterwards all along the shore to Plymouth –I saw the Datura –the variety (red stemmed) methinks, which some call *Tatula* instead of *Stramonium*– I felt as if I was on the highway of the world at sight of this cosmopolite & veteran traveller– It told of commerce & sailors yarns without end. It grows luxuriantly in sand & gravel. This Capt. Cook among plants– This Norse man or sea pirate –Vikings King of the bays –the beaches. It is not an innocent plant– It suggests commerce with its attendant vices.

Saw a public House where I landed at Hull made like some barns which I have seen of boards with a cleet nailed over the cracks, without clapboards or paint– Evidently very simple & cheap –yet neat & convenient as well as airy. It interested me –as the New House at Long Island did not –as it brought the luxury & comfort of the sea shore within reach of the less wealthy– It was such an exhibition of good sense as I was not prepared for and do not remember to have seen before. Ascended to the top of the hill where is the old French Fort with the well said to be 90 feet deep now covered. I saw some horses standing on the very top of the ramparts the highest part of Hull, where there was hardly room to turn round –for the sake of the breeze. It was excessively warm, and their instincts –or their experience perchance guided them as surely to the summit as it did me. Here is the Telegraph 9 miles from Boston whose state House was just visible –moveable signs on a pole with holes in them for the passage of the wind. A man about the Telegraph Station thought it the highest point in the harbor –said they could tell the kind of vessel 30 miles off –the no at mast head 10 or 12 miles –name on hull 6 or 7 miles. They can see furthest in the fall. There is a mist summer and winter when the contrast bet. the temperature of the sea & the air is greatest. I did not see why this Hill should not be fortified as well as George’s Island, it being higher & also commanding the main channel– However an enemy could go by all the forts in the dark –as Wolfe did at Quebec They are bungling contrivances.

Here the bank is rapidly washing away –on every side in Boston Harbor– The evidences of the wasting away of the islands are so obvious and striking that they appear to be wasting faster than they are– You will sometimes see a springing hill showing by the interrupted arch of its surface against the sky how much space must have occupied where there is now water as at Pt Allerton –what Botanists call premore



Hull looks as if it had been two islands since connected by a beach– I was struck by the gracefully curving & fantastic shore of a small island (Hog I.) inside of Hull – where every thing seemed to be gently lapsing into futurity



as if the inhabitants should bear a ripple for device on their coat of arms



–a wave passing over them with the Datura growing on their shores– The wrecks of isles fancifully arranged into a new shore. To see the sea nibbling thus voraciously at the continents.– A man at the Telegraph told me of a White oak pole 1 1/2 ft in diam. 40 feet high & 4 feet or more in the rock at Minots ledge with 4 guys –which stood only one year – – Stone piled up cob fashion near same place stood 8 years.

Hull pretty good land but bare of trees only a few cherries for the most part & mostly uncultivated being owned by few. I heard the voices of men shouting aboard a vessel half a mile from the shore which sounded as if they were in a barn in the country –they being between the sails. It was not a sea sound. It was a purely rural sound. Man needs to know but little more than a lobster in order to catch him in his traps. Here were many lobster traps on the shore. The beds of dry seaweed or eel grass on the beach reminds me of narrow shavings On the farther hill in Hull I saw a field full of Canada thistles close up to the fences on all sides while beyond them there was none So much for these fields having been subjected to diff. culture. So a diff. culture in the case of men brings in diff. weeds. Weeds come in with the seeds –though perhaps much more in the manure. Each kind of culture will introduce its own weeds.

I am bothered to walk with those who wish to keep step with me. It is not necessary to keep step with your



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

companion as some endeavor to do.

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

They told me at Hull that they burned the **stem** of the kelp chiefly for potash— Chemistry is not a splitting hairs when you have got half a dozen raw Irishmen in the laboratory.

As I walked on the beach (Nantasket) panting with thirst a man pointed to a white spot on the side of a distant hill (Strawberry Hill he called it) which rose from the gravelly beach, and said that there was a pure and cold and unfailing spring—and I could not help admiring that in this town of Hull of which I had heard but now for the first time saw a single spring should appear to me and should be of so much value. I found Hull indeed but there was also a spring on that parched unsheltered shore—the spring, though I did not visit it, made the deepest impression on my mind. Hull the place of the spring & of the well. This is what the traveller would remember. All that he remembered of Rome was a spring on the Capitoline Hill!

{²/₃ page missing}

rocks and the perfectly clean & rich looking rockweed—greatly enhance the pleasure of bathing here— It is the most perfect sea shore I have seen. The rockweed falls over you like the *tresses* of mermaids—and you see the propriety of that epithet— You cannot swim among these weeds and pull yourself up by them without thinking of mermen & mermaids. I found the

{²/₃ page missing}

water & fresh if you taste high enough up are all convenient to bathe your extremities in.— The barnacles on the rocks which make a whitish strip a few feet in width just above the weeds remind me of some vegetable growth which I have seen—surrounded by a circle of Calyx-like or petal-like shells like some buds or seed vessels. They too clinging to the rocks like the weeds. Lying along the seams of the rock like buttons on a waistcoat.

I saw in Cohasset—separated from the sea only by a narrow beach a very large & handsome but shallow lake, of at least 400 acres—with five rocky islets in it—which the sea had tossed over the beach in the great storm in the spring and after the alewives had passed in to it—stopped up its outlet and now the alewives were dying by thousands—and the inhabitants apprehended a pestilence as the water evaporated. The water was very foul.

The rockweed is considered the best for manure. I saw them drying the Irish moss in quantities at Jerusalem village in Cohasset— It is said to be used for sizing calico. Finding myself on the edge of a thunder storm I stopped a few moments at the Rock House in Cohasset close to the shore. There was scarcely rain enough to wet one & no wind. I was therefore surprised to hear afterward through a young man who had just returned from Liverpool that there was a severe squawl at Quarantine ground only 7 or 8 miles north-west of me such as he had not experienced for 3 years—which sunke several boats & caused some vessels to drag their anchors & come near going ashore.— Proving that the gust which struck the water there must have been of very limited breadth for I was or might have been overlooking the spot & felt no wind. This Rocky shore is called Pleasant cove on large maps—on the map of Cohasset alone the name seems to be confined to the cove where I first saw the wreck of the St John alone.

Brush island opposite this with a hut on it—not permanently inhabited— It takes but little soil to tempt men to inhabit such places. I saw here the Am. Holly *Ilex Opaca* which is not found further north than Mass. but S & west— The yellow gerardia in the woods.

CAPE COD: I heard a boy telling the story of Nix's mate to some girls as we passed that spot. That was the name of a sailor hung there, he said. — "If I am guilty, this island will remain; but if I am innocent, it will be washed away," and now it is all washed away!



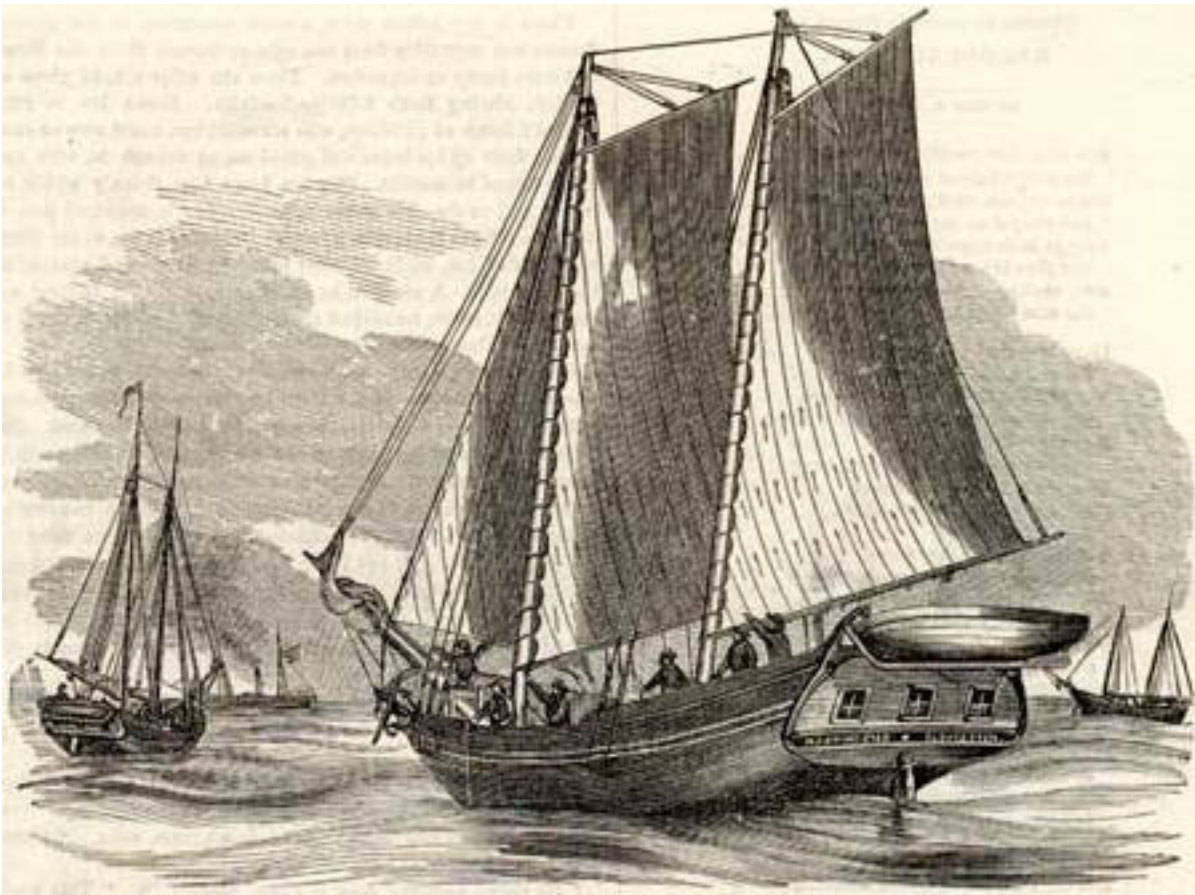
SURPRISE!

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SURPRISE!

October 3, Friday evening: At Prince Edward Island, the afternoon had been warm and still under a heavily clouded sky, and then, to the north and northwest, about sunset, the sky had seemed to have a lurid, glassy appearance. A violent gale and wind then arose out of the East-North-East that would continue for two terrifying days. Before this blow was over, the New England fleet fishing off the shores of this island would be devastated — nearly a hundred vessels would be wrecked or stranded, and hundreds of fishermen would be drowned. Homes would be opened to the chilled and exhausted survivors, and the local graveyards would contain the bones of many washed-up corpse. For many years wreckage would dot the shores, some of these wrecks of fishing craft surviving well into the 20th Century.



TIMELINE OF SHIPWRECKS

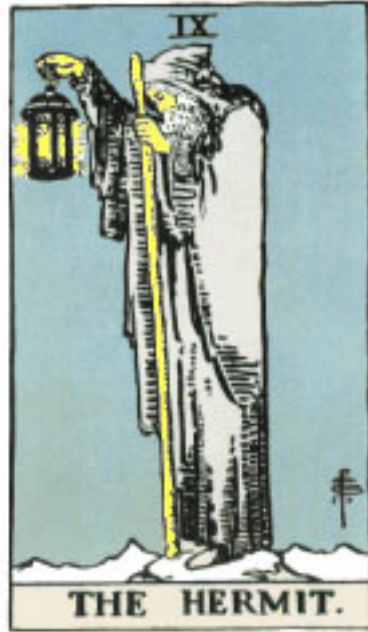
While the high tides of the great storm⁴² were beating the lighthouse on Minot's Ledge to pieces and dashing to death the two lighthouse keepers within it, a pilot boat went over to Green Island and removed temporarily for his own safety the [hermit Samuel Choate](#) who had been out there on that tiny rock outcropping alone since

42. Observing a great white oak which had gone down, during April, Thoreau would hypothesize that it had been taken down by the same storm "which destroyed the lighthouse."

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1845.⁴³



What follows is a selection from the local presses of the time:

THE YANKEE GALE

From Hazard’s Gazette of Tuesday last. [October 7, 1851]

On the night of Friday last, and throughout the whole of Saturday and the following night, we were visited with a gale of unusual violence, from the E.N.E., and violent storm of rain, almost unparalleled in the history of this Island; from the loss of ships accompanying it, and altogether so far as loss of life which has taken place. Owing to the difficulty of procuring accurate information from all the Districts on the North side, we are unable to give anything like a correct account of the extent of havoc occasioned by this terrific visitation, but as far as we have been able to do so, will give the results of our enquiries.

THE ISLANDER, Friday, October, 10, 1851. Violent Gale

On Friday night, the 3rd inst., a most violent gale of wind and rain arose from the E.N.E., which continued varying at intervals, the following two days. The loss of life and property among the shipping is almost incredible. The whole of the coast on the north side of

43. The American Lighthouse Service had been popularly considered to be only slightly less corrupt than the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but in this year there was a congressional investigation which would in the following year bring about a reformed Lighthouse Board.



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the Island is strewn with wrecks and dead bodies! Our present number contains a list of some of the wrecked vessels. We are unable as yet to give a correct account of the whole; indeed there are many that will never be heard of, having ran into each other and foundered at sea. The wrecks are chiefly American vessels fishing on the North side of the Island.

DISASTROUS GALE!

Dreadful loss of Lives, Vessels, etc., etc.

From 100 to 150 vessels supposed to be stranded on the Coast of this Island, besides a large number foundered at sea. Nearly 100 dead bodies already found!!!

Georgetown, October 9, 1851.

Mr. Ings:

Sir - The following vessels which have arrived here since the late gale, wished to be reported in the Island papers. Some of the Captains say, that they have been thirty years at sea, and never experienced such a gale before.

Yours etc.,

A Subscriber.

Schooner *Vulture*, Watts, of Newbury Port, U.S., in the gale of the 3rd inst., lost a man overboard, named Jas. Everett of Nova Scotia; also lost her boat, flying jib and jib-boom.

Schooner *Empire*, Dixon, of U.S., lost her jib boom and had her sails split.

Schooner *John*, R. Perkins, of Gloucester, U.S. lost her boat, had her sails split and deck swept of everything.

Schooner *Matamora* had her sails torn, reports that she passed an American vessel on her beam ends, with two men in the mast heads, but was unable to render them any assistance owing to the loss of her sails and the heavy sea which was running.

Schooner *Ocean*, Reed, master, from Booth Bay, U.S., had her bowsprit broken off by a sea while her jib was stowed, lost four bbls. mackerel and everything else which she had on deck at the time, also lost an anchor.

Schooner *Guess*, McKellie, master, from Westpoint, U.S., lost her boat.

Schooner *Hero*, of Lubec, Fergusson, master, lost both anchors at the Magdalen islands, was in company with five other vessels who also lost their anchors.

Schooner *Sarah*, Brooks, lost flying jib.

Several other vessels which called here, had lost some of their sails and went off again to the Gut of Canso



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to get new ones.

Schooner *Cadmus*, Elliot, master, arrived in 7 days from Boston, reports that the gale did not extend beyond Cape Sable. Saw a number of American vessels passing through the Gut, all more or less damaged, one the *Telegraph*, had lost two men overboard by the main boom striking them while jibing the sail, and Captain Attwood severely hurt, heard in the Gut that there were 75 sail of vessels ashore on the Island.

Extract of a letter from Darnley, October 6, 1851.

You will please give immediate notice that a number of American fishing vessels have been driven ashore, in the Harbour of Richmond Bay and the coast on the 4th inst., to the number of from 40 to 50 sail, and a great many lives lost. A number of the vessels are to be sold on Friday next, and perhaps before that time. There are two at Park Corner, near New London, to be sold on Wednesday next.

Extract from a letter from Rustico, October 7, 1851.

There is a schooner ashore on Robinson's Island called the *Shipjack*, from Liverpool, N. S. She is loaded with mackerel and salt - water logged. I have taken out 30 barrels of mackerel, besides salt and empty barrels; but the worst comes last - we took four dead bodies out of her on Monday last and Tuesday six more, which I think is her full crew.

Vessels on Shore at Tignish, etc.

American schooner *Commerce*, of Harwich, Mass., U.S., John Allen, master, ashore at Tignish near the North Cape. Crew saved. To be sold on Tuesday next, 14 of October.

The *Jenny Lind*, from Nova Scotia. Crew saved.

The *Rival*, of Truro, U.S. Crew saved.

The *W.R. Burnham*, U.S. Crew saved.

The *Golden Rule*, of Gloucester, U.S. Crew saved.

The *Mary Scotchburn*, of Newburyport, U.S. Crew saved.

American schooner *Pow Hatten*, of Gloucester, U.S., John Ross, master, ashore at Tignish, near the North Cape. Crew saved. To be sold on Monday next, the 13th inst.

American schooner *Bloomfield*, of Boston, Joseph McDonald, master, ashore at Tignish. Crew saved.

Capt. McDonald of the schooner *Bloomfield*, informs us a Brigantine was lost on the North Cape of this Island - that all hands perished - and that she has gone to pieces. He states that she was a British-built vessel, 70 feet long on deck, 22 feet beam, cedar timbers, softwood plank and beams - supposed to be Canada built, apparently four years old. A number of empty Puerto Rico sugar hogsheads with spruce heads came on shore from



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her. The number on the head of one of them was 28 E. 1206 (red chalk) and on the other end 1 / (black paint). The name of the vessel could not be discovered, but the stern of a boat supposed to belong to her came on shore with the name *Veloce*, *Mouraska* on it. Her bow sails, chains, anchors and windlass were found to the west of the N.W. reef.

Capt. McDonald and others also inform us that there are 20 to 30 vessels on shore between Malpec and North Cape – and that in Richmond Bay and on Hog Island, there are some 40 or 50 more. It is currently reported that some sixty or seventy bodies have been interred on Hog Island during the past week.

A vessel came on shore at Brackley Point on Monday last – 10 dead bodies were found on board – they were interred on Wednesday.

A large Bark, in ballast, from Europe, bound to Richibucto, is on shore at Cable Head.

We hear that a number of vessels are to be seen in the Gulf riding at their anchors, swept of everything, and all hands supposed to be dead.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 9, 1851.
TREMENDOUS GALE AND LOSS OF LIFE

Boston, Wednesday October 8.

A dispatch received Fast evening by the collector of this port, from B. Hammett, U.S. Consul at Pictou, states that the north-west coast has been swept by a terrible and destructive gale and that 100 fishing vessels were ashore on the north side of Prince Edward's Island. It is estimated that 300 persons have perished in the wrecks, and many bodies have already drifted ashore. Mr. Norton will proceed at once to relieve the distress and render such aid as he can.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 9, 1851.

Further as to the Storm at Prince Edward's Island.

No news has yet been received from the west part of Prince Edward's Island, where further loss is feared. Thirty vessels are piled on the beach at Melpome harbor. The dispatch gives account of the safety of the schooners *Florence* of Gloucester; *John*, of do; *Hannah Grant* of Newburyport; *Lady*, of Cohasset; *O'Conner* of Hingham MA; *Sarah Brooks*, of Scituate, and *Vulture*, of Newburyport. The vessels lost had many of them full freights of mackerel. Further particulars are promised



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tomorrow.

THE ISLANDER, Friday, October 10, 1851.
SHIPWRECKS

The schooner *James*, a fishing vessel of Newburyport, Currier, master, is cast away near McNally's Mills, Egmont Bay – advertised to be sold on 11th inst.

The schooner *Mount Hope*, a fishing vessel of Hingham MA, near Boston, is stranded at Cavendish – advertised to be sold on Friday next.

The schooner *Caledonia*, (fishing vessel), Joseph York, master, of Portland, U.S., lies near John Shaw's, Brackley Point, advertised to be sold on Friday next. She was cast away on Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, having lost her masts and rigging, she was left to the mercy of the waves. All the crew safely landed by a rope and by the assistance of the people on shore.

The schooner *Union*, of St. Andrews, N.B., Luther Matthews, master, is stranded near Mr. John Shaw's, Brackley Point – advertised to be sold on Friday next. She went on shore on Sunday morning at one o'clock. At 12 o'clock at night she was struck by a sea, which carried away the main sail, the only sail left, she then became unmanageable and drifted for the shore. On the receding of the tide at day – light all the crew got safe to land.

The wreck of a vessel grounded to the westward of Cove Head Harbour, and immediately went to pieces, and it is conjectured all on board must have perished. About 60 barrels of flour came on shore, and some other articles of dry goods.

American schooner *Triumph*, of Cape Elizabeth, Maine, Frederick Hanniford, master, drove on shore about two miles west of St. Peter's Harbour, on Sunday morning.

American schooner *Alms*, of Newburyport, John Aylwood, master, came into Charlottetown this morning in distress.

American schooner *Banner*, of Hingham MA, Mass., Isaac Marshall, master, split her foresail, arrived in Charlottetown this morning.

American schooner *Constitution*, of Gloucester, Mass., towed into Charlottetown Harbour

American schooner *C.E. Haskell*, L. Haskell, master, which vessel was found dismasted between the North and West Capes of this Island.

American schooner *Naiad Queen*, of Cohasset, Mass., Sampson Hunt, master, drove on shore at Tracadie



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Harbour.

American schooner *Nettle*, of Truro, Mass., Hopkins, master, wrecked on the North side of this Island.

American schooner *Duroc*, of Amesbury MA, William Johnson, master, drove from her anchors in Tracadie Harbour.

American schooner *Henry Knox*, of Cohasset, Mass., Perio Turner, master, ashore about four miles to the Eastward of Tracadie Harbour.

American schooner *Charles Augustus*, of Cohasset, Mass., Joseph Edwards, master, went on shore at St. Peter's Harbour.

American schooner *Harriet Newell*, Thomas Burgess, master, of Harwick, Mass., cast away at Tracadie – two hands lost.

American schooner *Lyon*, of Castine, Maine. Master, mate and six hands lost, five of the crew landed at Cavendish.

American schooner *Forrest*, Page, master, of Newburyport, cast away at St. Peter's.

American schooner *Mary Moulton*, belonging to Castine, all hands lost – nothing found but a box containing the Register, case, etc.

With respect to the loss of life, correct results cannot possibly be obtained until returns shall have been made from the several harbors. The Coroner of Queen's County started early yesterday morning for Cavendish to enquire into the death of 12 persons whose bodies had been washed ashore at that settlement. Several have also come ashore at Rustico Island, etc. In proportion of those lost between New London and Rustico, the total loss would exceed one hundred lives. We have heard that some hundreds of vessels succeeded in safely entering the various harbors from Richmond Bay to St. Peter's.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 10, 1851.

The Late Gale at Prince Edward's Island, etc.

Halifax, Wednesday, October 8.

A letter from Charlottetown, P.E.I., dated the 7th, gives an account of the recent fearful gale, which commenced on Friday night, the 3rd inst., and continued till Sunday night. The intelligence received is only from New London and Rustico, where it is estimated that at least 100 sail are ashore, and from 300 to 400 lives were lost, and it is feared that accounts further westward will be equally distressing. A great many bodies have been taken from the holds and cabins of the



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stranded vessels.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 11, 1851.
The Late Gale at Prince Edward's Island
Melancholy Suicide.

Boston, Friday Oct. 10.

No particulars have yet been received as to the late destructive gale at the East. The most intense excitement prevails at all the Fishing towns, as all are uncertain whether their friends are dead or living. From Newburyport and vicinity 70 vessels are out. The wife of the captain of the schooner *Martha*, upon hearing a rumor that her husband's vessel was lost with all on board, committed suicide, leaving a large family of young children.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 13, 1851.
Further Particulars of the Storm and Marine disasters on the Coast of Nova Scotia

The latest telegraphic despatches from Pictou, and letters from the scene of the late fearful storm in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and along the coast of Prince Edward's Island, state that the whole shore is strewn with wrecks of vessels and the dead bodies of their crews.

At the village of Cavendish, (P.E.I.) the bodies of twelve persons had floated ashore. The body of a man with a boy lashed to his back came ashore at Rustico. There is reason to believe that over 100 bodies have already floated to the beach.

Between three and four hundred sail of American vessels succeeded in getting safely into harbor just before or during the gale.

The schrs. *Florence* of Gloucester, *Oceana* of Hingham MA, *Lake* of Cohasset and *Hannah Branch* of Newburyport, arrived at Pictou subsequent to the storm to repair damages. One and all give the most dismal accounts of the storm.

(Here our correspondent gives the names of a large number of "vessels ashore – crews saved," which vary from previous accounts only in a slight degree) he, however, adds to the list, the following: "*Golden Gate*, of Kennebec; *Forest*, of Newburyport; *Triumph*, of Cape Elizabeth."

In the list of Vessels ashore, with loss of life," our correspondent says: "A vessel grounded to the westward of Cohead [Covehead], and immediately after, went to pieces. All on board perished. Sixty barrels of flour and some dry-goods floated ashore from the wreck."

Two vessels were sunk, near Stanhope – names unknown;



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crews, doubtless, all perished. Five of the crew of the schooner *Harriet*, of Castine, were saved – six lost. The schooner *Franklin Dexter*, of Dennis, lost her crew of ten men. Subsequently, five persons, perfectly naked were picked off her sides.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 15, 1851.
LATER FROM THE FISHING GROUNDS
MORE FAVORABLE NEWS

By an arrival at Gloucester from the Bay of St. Lawrence, we have additional intelligence from the scene of the late disastrous shipwrecks. The schooner *Telegraph* of Boston, before reported as having lost 18 men in the gale, lost in fact only two.

The *Flirt* of Gloucester, said to have lost 14 hands, was seen standing off the land, during the height of the gale, and it is thought all her crew are safe.

There are reports, not yet authenticated, however, that the crews of both the *Forest* and *Statesman*, of Newburyport, before reported lost, are also safe.

These if they all turn out to be true would give a total of nearly 60 men alive, who had been reported dead.

Another Dispatch:

Gloucester, Oct. 14, 1851

Captain Cannay of schooner *Atlantic*, which arrived here this morning from Prince Edward Island, reports the safety of the following vessels at the Gut of Canso: Schooners *Mary S. Niles* and *Yorktown* of Gloucester; "*Thirkeen*", and *Science*, of New London, and about 30 others.

A ship and 2 brigs are reported ashore near Rustico.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 16, 1851.
The Gale at Prince Edwards Island
Further Particulars

From the Boston Advertiser.

Information continues to be received from various sources, giving particulars of a large fleet of American fishermen, who were in the vicinity of Prince Edwards Island during the late destructive gale. The information is gratifying inasmuch as it shows that many individual vessels are safe, some of which had been reported lost; and that the violence of the gale was confined to that part of Prince Edwards Island from which the most disastrous news was first received. So great was the havoc in a space so limited, that it was not to be wondered at that those who knew how large a fleet were in the immediate vicinity, should have had little hopes of their safety, and should regularly set down as lost any vessel which might have been reported



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so upon authority however slight.

A telegraphic dispatch from Mr. Eben S. Smith, of Provincetown, dated Eastport, Oct. 14, says: "I learn from an Ipswich man, just arrived from P.E. Island, that schrs. *Dacid*, *Lombard*, *R.B. Rhodes*, *J.A. Paine*, *Arrow*, *Julia*, and *Mary J. Elliot* are all safe. Schr. *Millona*, of Provincetown, is supposed to be lost. Schr. *Eisineur*, of the same place, is lost. The fate of their crews is unknown. Schrs. *Richard* and *E.M. Shaw*, of Truro, is lost; crew taken off. I am in hopes that the fate of the Provincetown fleet will be favorable."

The Gloucester correspondent of the Merchants' Exchange reports the arrival at that place, on Monday, of schr. *C. and N. Rogers*, from the Bay of St. Lawrence. She reports leaving the Gut of Canso, 8th inst. and experienced the late gale severely, having lost foresail and jib. She also reports leaving at the Gut the schr. *Telegraph*, of Boston, with loss of two men. Capt. Atwood, of the *T.* had his leg broken. Also at the Gut, schrs. *Mary Niles*, *Davis*, and *Diligent*, *Bailey*, of Gloucester. Capt. Davis had his jaw broken. The *C. and N. Rogers* reports other vessels at the Gut, but gives no names.

An Extra from the Gloucester Telegraph informs us that a public meeting was held at Gloucester on Saturday evening; which filled the Town Hall to overflowing. *Benj. Kellough, Jr.* was appointed chairman. A committee was appointed to prepare a plan of action, to be submitted to a subsequent meeting to be called by the committee. Money was raised to procure information by telegraph; and a finance committee chosen to provide funds to be placed in the hands of the business committee if required.

The Telegraph also states, in relation to Gloucester vessels lost, that schooner *Golden Rule* was insured at the Gloucester Mutual Insurance office for \$3300, and the *Constitution* for \$2700. Schooner *Garland* was insured for \$3500 at the Marine office and \$300 on outfits at the Mutual. Schooner *Lucy Pulcifer* was insured at the Mutual for \$3466. Schooner *Powhatan* was partly owned at Annisquam, partly in Portland. The Maine office had \$1200 on her.

THE ISLANDER, Friday, October 17, 1851.

THE LATE GALES

American schooner *Cohannett* of Dennis, Mass., *Josiah Chase*, master, cast away inside of Tracadie Harbour, near the *Naiad Queen*, dragged her anchors. She is expected to be got off.

British schooner *Shipjack*, belonging to Liverpool, N.S., came on shore at Island on Sunday, and embedded in the sand. Ten bodies were taken from her. She had mackerel on board. It is supposed she had upset.



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An American schooner came on shore near Darnley on Sunday morning. Crew saved. Part of the deck of another schooner, windlass, etc., came on shore at the same place.

American schooner *Fair Play*, Zekiel Cushing, belonging to Portland, Maine, 11 hands on board, was wrecked on the night of the gale, all hands perished. Part of the wreck came on shore a mile East of Tracadie Harbour. The vessel's papers were found and a letter addressed to a person on the Island. Capt. Cushing was a son-in-law to Mr. Morrow, East Point.

The schooners *Greyhound* and *Charles Roberts*, of Gloucester, U.S., report the loss of the schooner *Flirt*, of Gloucester. about four miles from the Rustico Capes – demasted and water logged – all hands supposed to be lost – 16 crew. Another supposed to be the *Brothers*, of St. Andrews, NB., is now on the Cove Head Bar – three dead bodies were taken out of her on Saturday, the 11th. and another on the 12th.

The *Cambrien* from Rustico, belonging to W. Hodges. Esq., was lost near Cascumpec – all hands saved.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 17, 1851.

The Late Gale At Prince Edward's Island

Telegraphic advices received in Boston yesterday from the United States Consul at Pictou, dated October 14, states that Mr. Wade, the agent of the Insurance Companies, has arrived, in sixty hours from Boston, and sends the names of the following vessels ashore, with all hands safe:

Schooners *Martha Ann*, of Castine; *Enterprise* of Hingham MA; *Gentile*, *Index*, *Blossom*, *Good Intent*, *Spray*, *Franklin*, and *Forest*, of Newburyport, *Wanderer* of Beverly; *Ruby*, *Sophonra*, *Commerce*, *New Haven*, and *Leo*, of Frankfort; *George*, of Deer Island; *Henry Clay* of Tremont; *John Murray*, *Fair Play*, and *William of*___

The following are ashore, with all hands lost:

Schooners *Portland*, and *Regulator*, of Portland, *Reward*, *Lucinda*, *Martha Ann*, "not known" (so reads the dispatch); *Montano*, of Hingham MA; *Grafton*, of Dennis; *America*, of Newbeck; *Bloomfield* of Boston.

The following vessels are ashore, but will be got off:

Schooners *Belle*, of Beverly; *Seth Hill*, of Dennis; *Garland*, of Gloucester; *Bell*, of Dennis; *Tammer*, *Lena*, and *Belverian*, of Portsmouth.

Schooner *E.E. Haskell* has been towed into Charlottetown dismasted. Schooners *Banner* and *Oasis* of Hingham MA, repairing. A number of vessels are supposed to have sunk outside, and all hands lost. The coast is strewn with wrecks.

Schooner *Telegraph*, (of Boston) Capt. Atwood, arrived



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at this port yesterday, from the Gut of Canso, 8th inst., via Wellfleet. She reports the schooner *Sarah E. Lewis* safe at Port Hood. Saw in the Gut, bound home, schooner *Edwin*, of Newburyport. At Souris, schooners *Æuniata*, and *R.E. Cook*, of Provincetown. Some fifty sail went into Tracaty [Tracadie] the night previous to the gale. A number of vessels also got into Malpacque. [Malpec, Malpeque]

The following vessels all belonging to Gloucester, are reported safe; Schooners *Denmark*, *Montezuma*, *Ohio*, *Leader*, *Centurion*, *Orazimbo*, *Virgin*, *W.P. Doliver*, *St. Lawrence*, *Ocean Lodge*, *Pacific*.

A slip from the Newburyport Herald, dated 15th, 10 A.M., says: A letter from Capt. William C. Page, dated Charlottetown, Oct. 7, states the *Forest* to be lost – all hands **SAVED**. Reports being in company with schooners *Mary A. Ames*, *Fulton* and *Paragon*, the evening the gale commenced, and thinks, as they are superior vessels, they are **SAFE**. Capt. Page thinks there are about fifty vessels lost – three hundred in the different harbors, and the remainder of the fleet at sea.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 21, 1851.

THE GALE AT PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND

The Gloucester Telegraph states that the schr. *Win. P. Dolliver* was at Charlottetown, having split her sails in weathering North Cape. Schooners *Ocean Queen* and *Orinoco* were safe at Tracadie. Schooner *Baltic* was also reported safe. Schr. *Progress of Baltimore*, was safe at Souris during the gale. Schr. *Constitution*, of Gloucester, before reported at Charlottetown, has sails somewhat injured. She towed into Charlottetown schr. *C.E. Haskell*. Forty-seven Gloucester vessels remained to be heard from, and a few which have been reported heard from remain in some doubt. Schr. *Northern Light*, Hall, arrived at Belfast 14 inst., with 300 bbls. Mackerel. Left the Gut of Canso during the gale, had decks swept, and lost bowsprit. Was in company with several Belfast fisherman, whom she left when the gale sprung up.

A slip from the Register office, Yarmouth, dated 18th inst., states that a letter has been received from Capt. Josiah Chase, of schooner *Cohasset*, of South Dennis, dated Charlottetown, Oct 9, states that his vessel got into the harbour of Tracadie before the gale commenced, but dragged ashore; all his crew safe. The *J.P. Merriam*, of Harwich was safe in the harbor. Capt. C. reports the following Dennis and Harwich captains as safe, (names of vessels not given): Remark Wixon, Daniel Doane, Ebenezer Marshall, (vessel of Hingham MA,) Simeon Wixon, Sears Kelley, Caleb Kelley, Elijah Smith, Elisha Rogers. Schooner Captain Sampson Hunt, ashore near



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close by the Cohanet. Schooner *Harriet Newell*, ashore, as before reported with loss of two men, Mr. Judah Gage of Harwich, and a Portuguese vessel a total wreck and condemned. Schooner *Grafton*, Capt. Grafton Sears, before reported ashore with all hands lost, is ashore, but her crew are all saved! Schooner ____, Capt. Isiah Kelley, of Harwich, and ____, Capt. Job Wixon, ashore – crews saved, but vessels a total loss. Capt. Bush, Capt. Lorenzo Baker, Capt. Josiah C. Eldridge, were in Malpeck harbor, but came off safe. The loss of the *Franklin Dexter*, of Dennis, with all her crew is confirmed. A great number of other vessels are ashore at the east end of the island with great loss of life.

N.Y. DAILY TIMES, October 25, 1851.

THE GALE AT PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND

We continue to receive further particulars of the disastrous gale. The Newburyport Committee who went to Prince Edward's Island on behalf of the Owners of fishing vessels, belonging to that port, returned on Wednesday night, and brought accounts from all the Newburyport vessels, except two, from which nothing has been heard, when they left the Island on Saturday last. Capts. Bayley and Knight furnish the following statement. Of vessels belonging to Newburyport, 44 are safe, 19 lost, and the *Actor*, and *Augustus*, not heard from.

NEWBURYPORT VESSELS SAFE

Native American, (lost one man overboard belonging to Nova Scotia, and 57 bbls. fish off deck,) *Cypress*, *Sarah Jane*, *Charles Appleton*, *Herzon*, *Harbinger*, *Atlas*, *Vulture*, (lost one man,) *Palm*, *Rizpah*, *Pioneer*, *Tyro*, *Gen. Cushing*, *Paragon*, *Mary Frances*, *Go Ahead*, *Freedom*, *Mary*, *Victory*, *Hannah Grant*, *Reindeer*, *Edwin*, *Elizabeth*, *Independence*, *Thistle*, *Lion*, *Mary Clark*, *Equator*, *Empire*, *Angelina*, *Mary C. Ames*, *Martha*, *Gem*, *Pearl*, *William*, *Mary Felker*, *Ada*, *Mory*, *Albion*, *Ellen*, *Warren*, *Herald*, *Elvira*, *Alms*. Total 44.

NEWBURYPORT VESSELS LOST

James, *Traveller*, *Gentile*, *Mary Scotchburn*, *Statesman*, (crew of ten men lost,) *Duroc*, *Blossom*, *Forest*, *Franklin*, *Index*, *Hingram*, *Spray*, *Good Intent*, *Lucinda*, *Fulton*, *Ocean*, *Ruby*, *Atlantic*, *Enterprise*, Total 19.

NOT HEARD FROM

Actor, *Augustus* – 2.

The masters of schrs. *Fulton*, *Ruby*, *Montano* and *Grafton*, had chartered an English brig for \$1650 to bring up



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their fish.

The Committee estimate that although some vessels have undoubtedly lost at sea with all their crews, the whole number of vessels ashore and lost, will not exceed 75, and the number of lives lost will not exceed 150. The following is a list of the lives thus far known to be lost, and the names of the vessels to which they belonged:

Vessels Men Lost

Statesman, Fowler, of Newburyport 10
Traveller, F. Currier, of Newburyport 8
Balema, of Portsmouth 10
Lion, of Castine 6
Franklin Dexter, of Dennis 10
Nettle, of Truro 4
Harriet Newell, of Harwich 2
Fair Play, of Portland 11
Flirt, of Gloucester 13
Mary Moulton, of Castine 12
Vulture, of Newburyport 1
Native American, of Newburyport 1
America, of Lubec 9
Total 97

Several unknown vessels it is supposed foundered at sea, the crews of were of course lost. The committee visited the wreck of one about 80 or 90 tons, a mile outside Malpec harbor, but could not ascertain her name. She had an eight-square bowsprit, and from this they judged she was either a Gloucester or Provincetown vessel. She appeared to have foundered at her anchors.

The following is a list of vessels lost on the Island, and crews saved, belonging to other ports:

Schrs. Reward, of Deer Isle; *William*, of Portland; *Regulator*, do; *Montano*, Hingham MA; *Leo*, Castine; *Martha Ann*, Vinalhaven; *Triumph*, Cape Elizabeth; *Mount Hope*, Hingham MA; *Oscar Coles*, Portsmouth; *Golden Grove*, Kennebunk; *Garland*, Gloucester; *Eleanor*, do; *Belle*, Beverly; *Seth Hall*, Dennis; *Grafton*, of do; *Naiad Queen* of ___; *Chomet* of___; *Henry Knox*, Cohasset; *Caledonia*, Portland; *Melrose*, Provincetown; *Charles Augustus*, Cohasset; *Commerce*, Harwich; *Hickory*, Portland; *Governor*, Boston; *Wanderer*, Beverly; *Belle*, Dennis; *George*, Castine; *Bloomfield*, Boston; *C.E. Haskell*, Gloucester, (dismasted); *Norma*, Deer Isle;



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Eliza, Lubec; Tickler, New London. Total 32.

THE MASSACHUSETTS GLOUCESTER NEWS, October 23, 1851.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND – We mentioned in our last, that the Lieut. Governor of Prince Edward Island, had issued a proclamation directing all officers of the Revenue, Magistrates, and other subjects of Her Majesty, to render all aid in their power to the unfortunate fishermen of the United States who were wrecked on the Northern coasts of that Island, and especially to exert themselves for the preservation of property, and its restoration to the rightful owners; but it appears from what we learn of our fishermen who have returned from the scene of the late disaster, that the proclamation, though evincing the generous humanity of the Lieut. Governor, was unnecessary; for they all speak in the warmest terms of gratitude, for the universal hospitality and kindness they and all the ship-wrecked men received at the hands of these generous and humane Islanders. In the midst of the storm they were on the beach to render every aid in their power to save life. After it had abated they cheerfully offered their services to assist in the preservation of property. They bore from the wrecks the bodies of those who had perished, at their own expense prepared them for the grave, and administered to them the last sad rites of humanity. Nor was this all; they opened their doors to those who had no shelter, fed and clothed the destitute, and bestowed upon the sufferers generally every possible assistance which could alleviate their misfortune, and every possible attention that humanity could devise. At the instance of many of our returned townsmen, our exchanges in Halifax, and the P.E. Island papers are requested to make known to their readers the feelings of grateful remembrance in which the wrecked fishermen of Gloucester will always hold the generous hospitality extended to them in their misfortunes.

**THE ISLANDER, October 31, 1851.
REVIEW OF THE GREAT GALE**

Now that men's minds have recovered from the shock communicated by the unparalleled destruction of life and property on our North Shore, they begin to investigate the cause of the catastrophe. It has been mainly owing to bad vessels badly managed. The storm continued an unusual length of time, but it was not severe, and the mischief was consummated within a few hours from its commencement. On our Northern Capes, not a rickety out-house has been injured that we have heard of, not hardly a breach made in the still more rickety



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snake-fences, although exposed to the closest sweep of the blast. In short, we have heavier gales and higher tides almost every year without loss. Nevertheless, it seems probable that several American schooners capsized and foundered, besides what were driven ashore.

We have been informed that some are very cranky, and that others are broad, short, and low, and very unlikely to live in a heavy sea. It was, perhaps, a knowledge of the untrusty character of their vessels that induced so many Americans to court destruction by rushing towards unlighted harbours before a gale of wind mingled with a blinding rain. The following case presumes the probability that with ordinary good management, not a single life, nor a single vessel need have been sacrificed.

Donald Morrison, Esq., an enterprising merchant of New London, had a well equipped and ably commanded schooner fishing amongst the Americans, the night of the disaster and happened to be aboard himself. But Capt. Bell, instead of groping his way blindfolded to shore when the wind rose, judiciously stood out to sea. When day-light broke he made for New London Harbour, but when near the bar, he considered the land marks were even then so obscured by haze as to render the attempt to run too hazardous. He, therefore shaped his course for North Cape, which he doubled, without having tacked from leaving New London. He then ran down the coast and anchored under West Point, until the wind abated, in water as calm as a mill-pond.

As the American fishing fleet is always in land-locked positions, not one vessel should be considered insurable without a marine barometer on board. Another nocturnal storm preceded by a flattering afternoon, and a repetition of the late disaster may be anticipated on this or some other shore.

Schooner *Mary* of St. Andrews, N.B., has been lost on Hog Island in the late gale, and all hands lost; three dead bodies having been taken out of the forecastle.

N.Y. HERALD, November 11, 1851.
DISASTROUS GALE

Mr. E. Smith, of Provincetown, who has returned from Prince Edward Island reports: – That Schrs. *Grafton* and *Cohannet*, of Harwich; *Naiad Queen*, and *Charles Augustus* of Hingham MA, have all been got offshore, and the last named sailed for home 20th ult.; Schr. *Rival* of Truro, had also been got off Schr. *Melrose* of Princetown remained ashore at St. Peter's, and a contract was made with Gifford's Screw and Lever Company of Provincetown, to get her off and deliver her at home for \$775. The knight heads and forward part of a schr. with chain attached, came ashore on Hog Island, after the gale, name, etc., unknown. Appeared to be a small vessel. The



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chain was of three different pieces, from half an inch to seven-eighths of an inch. Had a five inch stay; the jib was 16 feet on the luff, had no bonnet, and had one reef in it. Schr. *Eleanor M. Shaw*, of Truro, which was seen at Malpeque during the gale, has not since been heard from. Mr. Smith reports that a part of the stern of a vessel, much broken, came ashore on Hog Island, having *Eleanor* on it. Mr. S. visited schr. *Eleanor*, of Gloucester, ashore about 5 miles from the place where the plank was picked up, and ascertained that it did not come from the Gloucester vessel, which remained unbroken. A schr. is sunk near Tignish; had two topmasts, and the heads of the masts were above water. Seven or eight schrs. are sunk off the coast, between Cavendish and St. Peter's, whose names are unknown. Schr. *Princetown*. – No tidings have yet been received from the missing schr. *Princetown*, of Gloucester, and it is feared is feared she must be reckoned in the list of vessels lost off the coast of P.E. Island in the late gale.

ROYAL GAZETTE, December 8, 1851.

The body of a man, supposed to be an American fisherman, was found near Tracadie Harbour, about three weeks since, with a mark on his right shin bone, about six inches above the ankle, supposed to have been caused by the blow of an axe. Two other bodies came on shore at Savage Harbour, on or about the 28th ult., on the arm of one of them was marked, in black ink, William Wallace and Mary Wallace. They were both decently interred in the Presbyterian Churchyard at St. Peter's, by order of James Coffin, Esq., J.P.

On the 14th inst. (sic), the body of a man was discovered on the beach on the North side of Malpeque Harbour, by Messers. Andrew and Benjamin Bell, who brought it across in their boat to Malpeque side, where they requested Benj. Bearisto, Esq., to take charge, and he having done so, caused it to be conveyed to a house near the Burial-ground, where he made arrangements to have it decently interred as soon as possible. – There were no marks by which deceased could be identified; the flesh was altogether gone off his hands and face; the supposition by all who saw him, was that he was an American seaman, as was his clothing, shoes, etc., were all of that kind.

ROYAL GAZETTE, December 15, 1851.

Picked up at Dead Man's Cove, Harding's Capes, New London, on Sunday the 30th ult., by Mr. Hugh Macleod, a Body supposed to be that of an American Fisherman, drowned in the gale of October last. The body was destitute of clothes, excepting a pair of boots and



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socks. On the inside of the boots was marked 8-27. The socks worsted, clouded, blue and white. The body was carefully examined by J. Pidgeon, Esq., J.P. and the only marks visible were a cross on the back of the left arm near the wrist, and on the inside thereof the letter T, and further towards the wrist was what appeared to be an anchor, but the flesh being off above the wrists, together with the hands and head, no other marks could be distinguished. He appeared to be about 20 years of age, and 5 feet 8 inches in height. A coffin was made by Mr. McLeod and George M'Kenzie, and the body wrapped in a sheet, was placed therein, and on Tuesday following interred by the inhabitants in the Church-yard at New London Harbour.

On Thursday the 4th instant, another Body was picked up by Mr. John Macleod, about a Quarter of a mile westward of Cape Tryon. There was on the body when found, a pair of American homespun trowsers, white flannel drawers, twilled striped cotton shirt, and red flannel do., new with about four inches joined to the bottom on both sides, a pair of coarse boots, with sparrowbills around the toes, and a pair of blue and white socks, cotton and worsted. The body was much mutilated, all the flesh being off the head, together with the lower jaw, hands also off by the wrists, and the flesh off the arms halfway to the elbows, no marks visible. He also appeared to be an American, about 35 years of age, and 5 feet 7 inches high. A coffin was made by Messrs. Mcleod and the body placed therein on the shore, having been previously wrapped in a sheet provided by Mrs. J. Mcleod, and then hoisted up the cliff by means of ropes. The body was interred the same evening, in the before mentioned church-yard by the side of his fellow fisherman. In both instances, the burial service was read by Mr. Pidgeon.

ROYAL GAZETTE, December 15, 1851.

MEMORANDA

A letter dated GASPE, Oct. 29, 1851, and addressed to the Postmaster, Charlottetown, has been handed us, wherein it is stated, that the Schr. *Barbeanne*, (*Barbara Anne*), Francois Candee, master, sailed from the above place, for Malpeque or Cascumpeque, P.E. Island, on the 28th of September last, having on board, beside the crew, the following passengers: Mr. M'Donnell, Mr. M'Carthy and family, and Miss McInnes, and that since her departure no tidings have been heard of her; and it is feared that she may have foundered at sea in the disastrous gale of the 3rd October last. Should any person have heard of either vessel or crew, they are requested to communicate the same to the Post Office at



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Charlottetown.

THE ISLANDER, March 30, 1852.
Missing Vessel

Schr., *Seth Hall*, of Dennis, got ashore on Prince Edward Island, in the gale of Oct. 3rd, was got off and laden with potatoes for Dennis via Provincetown. Sailed from the Island about Nov. 23, and left Canso harbor 28th, since which nothing has been heard from her. She was a good vessel of 85 tons, two years old, valued at \$4500 of which \$4210 was insured at the Union office, in Provincetown: her crew consisted of Seth Hall master, aged 30 years, who was married; John Burgess, 21; Hiram Rogers, 30; and Freeman Berry, 26 all of Brewster, and two Prince Edward Island men. She had also on board the bodies of three sons of Captain James Wixon of Harwich, viz, those of Captain James Wixon, Jr., aged 24, Nymphas, 22, and Joshua, 20, and of Marcus Taylor, 15, all of Harwich, the part of the crew of the late schooner Franklin Dexter, of Harwich, wrecked in the October gale. It will be recollected that Captain James Wixon, the father of the above, went to the Island after hearing of the loss of his four sons, and had the bodies disinterred, and identified the three above, and also that of Marcus Taylor. The body of the fourth son, Henry C., aged 15 could not be found. He made all necessary arrangements to have the bodies taken home for burial in the above vessel.

ROYAL GAZETTE MAY 3, 1852.

Eliot, York County, State of Main, January 28, 1852.

TO THE EDITOR OR PUBLISHER OF THE P.E. ISLAND GAZETTE:
Dear Sir:

Please pardon the liberty that I am taking in addressing you - being an entire stranger to you, and also belonging to another Country - but I trust, when you hear my object in addressing you, that you will freely pardon the liberty that I am taking. I had a son lost off your Island in the ill-fated gale of October 3d and 4th; he was on board the Schooner *Statesman*, of Newburyport, which went to pieces off your Island - a part of which (the stem) came on shore near Malpec Harbor. All hands on board perished.

Myself and family have been extremely anxious to obtain his poor body, that we might have it brought home and interred in our family burial-ground. We have seen published in the BOSTON TIMES, within a few weeks, an account taken from the "Prince Edward Island Gazette," that bodies had continued to come on shore off your Island, and that you gave a description of some of them,



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and that they were decently interred in the Church-yard of New London. One of them which you gave a description of, seems well to answer the description of my poor son, except his age; you judged him to be about twenty years of age; my son's age was about thirty, but had a young look. Your account says he was five feet eight inches in height, with a cross on the outside of his left arm, with the letter T on the inside. My son's name was Terence (?) F. Goodwin. The five foot eight was his height; and he had a cross -I- or similar to this, with a star on his hand on his hand between his thumb and forefinger, and some other marks on the inside of the left arm, and some of our family are pretty confident of that fact that he had a letter T on the inside of the left arm; but I am not confident of that fact myself, but know very that he had others beside the cross and star. - He was of light complexion, with very dark hair, some enclosed will correspond near to it, with sandy beard and whiskers; his whiskers when he left home, were some long around the chin and throat. The clothing that he took from home I will describe:- He had an overcoat of blue; lining, checked, dark blue and light blue, long outside jacket, cut sack fashion, with blue baize lining, and large black horn buttons. Three pairs of satinet trowsers, or pantaloons; 2 pairs of thin grayish black; the other pair lightish gray - a sample of both enclosed, A rob roy vest - sample enclosed with black back, lined with white cotton, with bright buttons. One other vest, made of vesting, black and red, with a black silesia back, black vesting buttons. 2 pairs of drawers, one of them white cotton and wool, plain cloth; other pair all wool, blue with white spots - a sample of both enclosed. Shirts, dark blue flannel. Stockings, blue gray mixed; others blue clouded - yarn of both kinds enclosed. Mittens, blue and white, checked: knit double. Also an oil-cloth suit.

Now, my dear Sir, you will perceive that I have been particular to describe his clothing, as near as I can, of what he carried from home; he obtained some additional clothing in Newburyport, previous to sailing, but of what description I am unable to state. Now if you will have the goodness to ascertain if the clothing of this person will correspond with any of the above, and his hair and beard will correspond, and will give me information by letter, I should feel under the greatest obligation to you; and if it should prove to be his poor body, it is my intention to come down the last of May, or first of June after it, and I will see you satisfied for your trouble. Or if you can hear of any body having come on shore, and been buried answering this description, do my good sir, write me, and you will get the prayers of an afflicted family for your health and prosperity in this life and a blest immortality beyond the grave. And if you should get any information about this body, and should write me, would you point



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out the most easy, safe route to your place. Not knowing any man's name on your Island, my only resource was to you, as Editor or Publisher of the GAZETTE.

I am, Sir, Respectfully,
Your humble Servant.
JAMES GOODWIN.

(The above letter was received by us a few weeks ago, which we now publish, with the view of obtaining from some of intelligent readers the information which the writer of the letter is anxious to receive, and which, hitherto, we have been unable to arrive at by private enquiry. The samples of clothing and hair of the unfortunate deceased, referred to in the letter, can be seen by any person making application at the Office of the ROYAL GAZETTE. We shall be obliged to any of our friends, who will enable us to communicate satisfactorily with the bereaved father, who thus appeals to our common humanity.) - EDITOR, ROYAL GAZETTE.

ROYAL GAZETTE, May 24, 1852.

To JAMES GOODWIN, Eliot York County, State of Maine. - We are requested to state for the information of this Correspondent, whose letter we published in the ROYAL GAZETTE on the 3d May instant, wherein he sought to obtain certain particulars respecting the body of his son, which was stated to have been washed onto the shore of this Island, after the disastrous gale of October last, - that James Pidgeon, Esqr., J.P., residing at New London, is the Magistrate who caused the body to be interred, (which was decently done) in the New London Burial-Ground, and that previous to the interment he noticed on the body of the deceased the marks referred to in Mr. Goodwin's letter. A pair of Socks and a pair of Boots taken from the person of the unfortunate man, are now in the possession of Mr. Pidgeon, and are in a sufficient state of preservation to be identified. Copies of the Gazette containing this notice, and the letter above referred to, are forwarded per Post to Mr. Goodwin's address.

ROYAL GAZETTE, June 21, 1852

FOUND

Near Rustico Harbour, shortly after the great Storm of Oct. 3, 1851, a SEAMAN'S CHEST, made of softwood, and covered with some kind of skin, greatly torn. The Chest, when found, contained a Silver Watch, and sundry wearing apparel, besides the Ship Papers belonging to the *MARY MOULTAN*. Any person or persons having claim to the above property will apply to the subscriber.



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Rustico, May 31, 1852.

Excerpt from an article “The Great American Gale”, in The Prince Edward Island Magazine, September, 1902, written by James D. Lawson:

“In an adjoining cove another vessel was aground, in which were fourteen men, none of whom had tasted food since the gale arose, and it was then Sabbath morning. Starving and with no prospect of relief at hand, the men were desperate. As a last resort they made two empty casks fast to ropes and threw them into the water. Presently these came ashore and were secured by the landsmen. The ropes by the latter were quickly fastened to a tree growing upon the bank and by that means four were safely rescued. Soon after that a tremendous wave lifted up the hull and landed it hard by the cliff. Fortunately all remaining on board sprang to the land and ran up the slippery bank.

At Rustico, another farming settlement adjoining Cavendish at its eastern side, three schooners were wrecked within five miles of each other – the *Franklin Dexter*, of Dennis, Mass., U.S., manned by a crew often; the *Shipjack*, N.S., by a crew of twelve, and the *Mary Moulton*, Castine, by a crew of fourteen. The *Mary Moutton* was smashed to pieces. The unfortunate crew lie buried in Cavendish Cemetery. The *Shipjack* was beached dismasted with a hole in her side and a balance reef in her mainsail, the supposition being that she was “laying to,” and was run down by another schooner. The remains of those on board were buried in the graveyard of the Episcopal Church, Rustico. The *Franklin Dexter* was owned by Capt. Wixon but was sailed by Capt. Hall. Capt. Wickson’s four sons and his nephew were on board. Three of the sailors forming the crew were found lashed to the rigging. Their bodies were horribly lacerated, their clothing being torn to shreds. The other members of the crew had disappeared. As soon as the aged parents of the Wickson boys heard of their sad fate, the mother prevailed upon their father – an old gentleman of seventy – to hasten from Dennis to the scene of the disaster and bring home, if possible, there bodies for interment in the Family plot. When he arrived in Rustico, Capt. Wickson recognized some of his sons’ clothing drying on a fence. As most of the bodies of the crew had been found and buried it was necessary to have them exhumed. On the lid of the first coffin being removed, Capt. Wickson fainted, and on being restored to consciousness he fainted again and again, and little wonder, for the lifeless form of his son was exposed to view before him. He soon identified two more of his sons and his nephew. As he searched the shore day after day for the body of his remaining son he became despondent, having been unsuccessful. His case elicited such universal sympathy that the inhabitants generally



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joined him in the search. At length the body was recovered. The five coffins were placed in a large packing case and placed on board the schooner *Seth Hall* which lay near, bound for Boston. Captain Wickson proceeded to Charlottetown and took the steamer for that city. Reaching home at Dennis, at the time expected, he met his relatives and friends, who mingled their tears with his as they listened to his touching story. But waiting and longing and hoping and praying for the arrival of the schooner with her precious freight brought her not, for the *Seth Hall* was lost at sea and never heard of more. The inhabitants of the port from which she sailed did not at all wonder at that, for before weighing anchor, the Captain cursed the storm, and the devastation it made, and impiously defied the God of the wind and the weather to prevent him from reaching his destination.

At the rear of Stanhope, another farming district, the writer's native place, fourteen miles from the capital, the schooner *Nettle*, of Truro, Mass., was stranded with four seamen washed overboard. Even yet some persons in this locality have distinct but melancholy recollections of the survivors weeping over their fallen comrades. And people there, now up in years, well remember the nervousness of women and children, especially after night on account of the dead bodies on the shore."

ROYAL GAZETTE, June 13 1853.
PAINTING OF THE OCTOBER GALE.

Last week we saw a very well executed painting of the disastrous gale which occurred in 1851, by which so many fishing vessels were wrecked, and so many lives lost. It has been painted by Mr. Thresher of this town for the New York Exhibition, and we doubt not will be an object of interest to many who may visit the Crystal Palace. The framing has been very neatly and appropriately done by M. Warren. (Haszard's Gazette)

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1853

January 6, Thursday: To the north, in the State of New Hampshire, the honored family of President-elect [Franklin Pierce](#) –husband, wife, and 10-year-old Benjy– were boarding the train for their move from Andover to Washington DC. (Life was going to be pretty good at the White House, since in that residence, beginning in this year, to get hot water in the first family’s second floor water closet, all one needed to do was turn a tap — the mansion had just been plumbed for, of all modern luxuries, **hot running water**. Also, the White House orangery was being transformed into a greenhouse.) A few minutes out of the Andover station the train plunged down an embankment and Benjamin was killed.⁴⁴ There is no notice of what became of the boy’s new pencil.



Juan Bautista Ceballos replaced Mariano Arista Luna as interim President of [Mexico](#).

44. Was the train pulled by one of their relative Abbott Lawrence’s locomotives constructed in the mill shops at Manchester NH, which Thoreau visited after January 1849?



After January 1849: Manchester, Warrington & Liverpool

Cylinder	15 inch diam.	£ 1.950-0-0	\$9.750
	16	2.113-10	10.566
	18	2.500	12.500

An engine went through a fourteen inch wall on starting.
 Most of their locomotives can draw 600 tons 12 miles an hour. with coke & water in weigh 50 tons apiece.
 Inspected after every journey by several persons in succession.
 A luggage truck lasts about 12 years.
 As soon as the luggage train is unloaded the wheels “are gauged to see that there are no bent axles, and that none of the ‘journals’ or working ends of the axles have been heated, for they sometimes get red-hot; squeezing wheels on to their axles, or wrenching them off.”
 The land & receive letters while going 40 miles an hour in the flying post office –with a landing net made of iron which catches them up.
 The northern division of the L & N W R. with its branches is 360 miles At their work shop in Crewe there are for this division 220 engines –100 being at work every day– They have “here turned out a new engine & tender on every monday morning” for the last year 1848
 Keep a record of casualties which is examined every fortnight by a special committee of directors.
 “A boiler of copper inside & iron outside.”
 Crewe is a rail way town of 8000 inhabitants
 Engine composed of 5416 pieces.
 Robert Stephenson said “A locomotive engine must be put together as carefully as a watch.”
 The total number of carriages maintained at Crewe is 670 –number of work men 260
 “half & inch thick of hair felt” then deal then tarpaulin, secured by iron hoops.
 The panels of all the carriages even luggage vans “invariably made of mahogany; ‘the bottom sides’ of English oak; the rest of the framing of ash. The break blocks are made of willow, and usually last about ten weeks work.”
 They employ in all over 10,000 persons

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Injured, and overcome with grief, Mrs. Pierce would return home and sit out her husband's presidency.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



She would meet with the Spiritualist [Maggie Fox](#) in an attempt to summon up the spirit of her dead son.

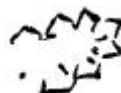
SPIRITUALISM



January 6th: Walden froze over apparently last night. It is but little more than an inch thick— & 2 or 3 square rods by Hubbards shore are still open. A dark transparent ice— It would not have frozen entirely over as it were in one night or may be a little more and yet have been so thin next the shore as well as in the middle, if it had not been so late in the winter, & so ready to freeze. It is a dark transparent ice. But will not bear me without much cracking. As I walked along the edge I started out 3 little pickerel no bigger than my finger from **close** to the shore which went wiggling into deeper water like bloodsuckers or pollywogs. When I lie down on it and examine it closely, I find that the greater part of the bubbles which I had thought were within its own substance are against its under surface, and that they are continually rising up from the bottom. perfect spheres apparently & very beautiful & clear in which I see my face through this thin ice (perhaps 1 & 1/8 inch) from 1/80 of an inch in diameter or a mere point up to 1/8 of an inch. There are 30 or 40 of these at least to every square inch— These probably when heated by the sun make it crack & whoop— There are also within the substance of the ice oblong perpendicular bubbles 1/2 inch long more or less by about 1/30 of an inch & these are commonly widest at the bottom? —or oftener separate minute spherical bubbles of equal or smaller diameter one directly above another like a string of beads—perhaps the first stage of the former— But these internal bubbles are not nearly so numerous as those in the water beneath. It may be 24 hours since the ice began to form decidedly.

I see on the sandy bottom a few inches beneath—the white cases of Cadis worms made of the white quartz sand or pebbles— And the bottom is very much creased or furrowed where some creature has travelled about and doubled on its tracks—perhaps the cadis worm, for I find one or two of the same in the furrows—though the latter are deep & broad for them to make.

This morning the weeds & twigs & fences were covered with what I may call a leaf frost—the leaves 1/3 of an inch long shaped somewhat like this



with triangular points but very thin. Another morning there will be no frost. I forgot to say yesterday that I picked up 4 pignuts by the squirrel's hole from which he had picked the meat—having gnawed a hole about



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half the diameter of the nut in width on each side. After I got home I observed that in each case the holes were on the sides of the nut & not on the edges—and I cut into a couple with my knife in order to see certainly which was the best way to get at the meat. Cutting into the edge I came upon the thick partition which runs the whole length of the nut, and then came upon the edges of the meats & finally was obliged to cut away a good part of the nut on both edges before I could extract the meat because it was held by the **neck** in the middle— But when I cut holes on the sides not only the partitions I met with were thin & partial but I struck the meats broad side & extracted them with less trouble. It may be that it is most convenient for the squirrel to hold the nut thus, but I think there is a deeper reason than that. I observe that out of six whole pig nuts which I picked from a tree 3 are so cracked transversely to the division of the meat that I can easily pry them open with my knife. They hang on as food for animals.

January 7, day: [Henry Thoreau](#) for the 6th time deployed in his journal a weather term that had been originated by [Luke Howard](#): “This is one of those pleasant winter mornings—when you find the river firmly frozen in the night, but still the air is serene & the sun feels gratefully warm—an hour after sunrise – though so fair a healthy whitish vapor fills the lower stratum of the air concealing the mts – the smokes go up from the village you hear the cocks with immortal vigor & the children shout on their way to school – & the sound made by the RR. men hammering a rail is uncommonly musical. This promises a perfect winter day. In the heavens, except the altitude of the sun, you have as it were the conditions of summer. Perfect serenity & clarity—& sonorousness in the earth— All nature is but braced by the cold. It gives tension to both body & mind. About 10 minutes before 10 Am I heard a very loud sound & felt a violent jar which made the house rock and the loose articles on my table rattle – which I knew must be either a powdermill blown up or an earth quake— Not knowing but another & more violent might take place I immediately ran down stairs, but I saw from the door a vast expanding column of whitish smoke rising in the west directly over the Powder mills 4 miles distant. It was unfolding its volumes above which made it widest there.... In 3 or 4 minutes it had all risen & spread it self into a lengthening somewhat copper colored cloud parallel with the horizon from N to S—and in about 10 minutes after the explosion it passed over my head being several miles long from north to south & distinctly dark & smoky toward the north not nearly so high as the few **cirri** in the sky.”

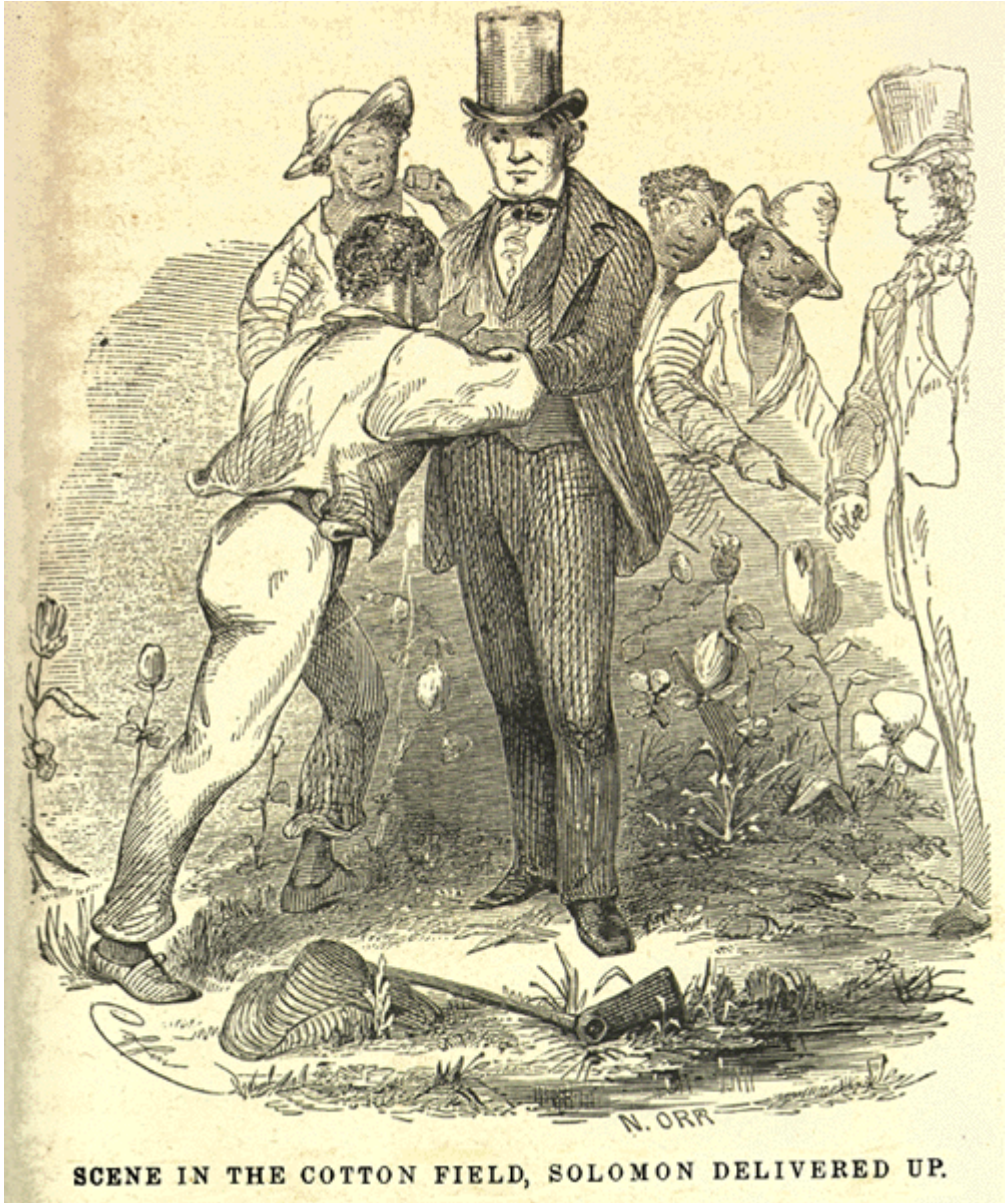
At 9:50AM three workmen were apparently in the kernel mill of the Acton gunpowder works, near Concord, turning a roller with a chisel, and the building blew up. Three seconds later there was a secondary explosion in one of the mixing houses, apparently unoccupied at the time. “Are there not two powers?”⁴⁵

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

45. Randall Conrad’s “‘I Heard a Very Loud Sound’ Thoreau Processes the Spectacle of Sudden, Violent Death.” (ATQ, June 2005, Volume 19 Issue 2, pages 81-94) would examine Thoreau’s 1853 analysis of a powder-mill explosion: “Thoreau was in fact a professional when it came to the powder-milling industry, now that he had become manager of the graphite-grinding that was the lifeline of the family business. Apart from the need for safety precautions, milling gunpowder is akin to milling graphite. Professionalism notwithstanding, Thoreau’s journal for January 7 presents internal clues that invite a more complex interpretation of its narrative voice. Consider first the immediate context of this passage — the whole journal entry for this date. Thoreau’s account of the disaster occurs, like the explosion itself, as a disruption of broader and more peaceful reflections on nature and the seasons’ cycle which comprise the overall entry for the day. The disruption dispels a morning mood of oneness and rightness induced by the promise of a perfect winter day. Visiting Nawshawtuct Hill very early that morning, Thoreau had been cheered by the serene air and sky, and by the sounds of everyday activities in the village below. Taking a closer look at vocabulary, we read that pieces of timber are strewn over the hills and meadows, as if sown. The simile as if sown continues, faintly, Thoreau’s preceding imagery of birch seeds scattered on the ground: even upon this field of death, a theme of regeneration in spite of winter persists. (And the snow is for the most part melted around.) ...”

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Jan 7th 53: To Nawshawtuct-

This is one of those pleasant winter mornings—when you find the river firmly frozen in the night, but still the air is serene & the sun feels gratefully warm—an hour after sunrise—though so fair a healthy whitish vapor fills the lower stratum of the air concealing the **mts**—the smokes go up from the village you hear the cocks with immortal vigor & the children shout on their way to school— & the sound made by the RR. men hammering a rail is uncommonly musical. This promises a perfect winter day. In the heavens, except the altitude of the sun, you have as it were the conditions of summer. Perfect serenity & clarity—& sonorousness in the earth— All nature is but braced by the cold. It gives tension to both body & mind.

Still the snow is strewn with the seeds of the birch—the small winged seeds or samarae & the larger scales or bracts shaped like a bird in flight—a hawk or dove—the least touch or jar shakes them off—& it is difficult to bring the female catkins home in your pocket. They cover the snow like coarse bran.

On breaking the male catkins I am surprised to see the yellow anthers so distinct promising spring. I did not suspect that there was so true a promise or prophesy of spring. These are frozen in december or earlier—the anthers of spring—filled with their fertilizing dust.

About 10 minutes before 10 Am I heard a very loud sound & felt a violent jar which made the house rock and the loose articles on my table rattle—which I knew must be either a powdermill blown up or an earth quake—

Not knowing but another & more violent might take place I immediately ran down stairs, but I saw from the door a vast expanding column of whitish smoke rising in the west directly over the Powder mills 4 miles distant. It was unfolding its volumes above which made it widest there.

In 3 or 4 minutes it had all risen & spread it self into a lengthening somewhat copper colored cloud parallel with the horizon from N to S—and in about 10 minutes after the explosion it passed over my head being several miles long from north to south & distinctly dark & smoky toward the north not nearly so high as the few cirrhi in the sky. I jumped into a man's wagon & road toward the mills. In a few minutes more I saw behind me far in the east a faint salmon colored cloud carrying the news of the explosion to the sea—& perchance over head of the absent proprietor. Arrived probably before half past 10. There were perhaps 30 or 40 wagons there. The Kernel mill had blown up first & killed 3 men who were in it said to be turning a roller with a chisel—in 3 seconds after one of the mixing houses exploded. The Kernel house was swept away & fragments mostly but a foot or 2 in length were strewn over the hills & meadows as if sown for 30 rods—& the slight snow then on the ground was for the most part melted around. The mixing house about 10 rods W was not so completely dispersed for most of the machinery remained a total reek— The press house about 12 rods east had 2/3 its boards off. & a mixing house next westward from that which blew up had lost some boards on the E side. The boards fell out—(ie of those buildings which did not blow up) the air within apparently rushing out to fill up the vacuum occasioned by the explosions—& so the powder being bared to the fiery particles in the air another building explodes. The powder on the floor of the bared Press house was 6 inches deep in some places—and the crowd were thoughtlessly going into it. A few windows were broken 30 or 40 rods off. Timber 6 inches square & 18 feet long was thrown over a hill 80 feet high at least—a dozen rods—30 rods was about the limit of fragments—

The Drying house in which was a fire was perhaps 25 rods dist. & escaped. Every timber & piece of wood which was blown up was as black as if it had been dyed except where it had broken on falling— other breakages were completely concealed by the color— I mistook what had been iron hoops in the woods—for leather straps. Some of the clothes of the men were in the tops of the trees where undoubtedly their bodies had been & left them. The bodies were naked & black— Some limbs & bowels here & and there & a head at a distance from its trunk. The feet were bare—the hair singed to a crisp. I smelt the powder half a mile before I got there. Put the diff. buildings 30 rods apart and then but one will blow up—at a time.

Brown thinks my read headed bird of the winter the lesser red-pole. He has that Fall snow bird he thinks the young of the Purple Finch. What is my Pine knot of the sea Knot or Ash colored Sandpiper—? or Pharope? Brown's Pine knot looks too large & clumsy. He shows me the Spirit Duck of the Indians—of which Peabody says the Indians call it by a word meaning spirit “because of the wonderful quickness with which it disappears at the twang of a bow.”

I perceive? the increased length of the day on returning from my afternoon walk. Can it be? The sun sets only about 5 minutes later & the day is about 10 minutes longer.

[Le Jeune](#) thus describes the trees covered with ice in Canada in the winter of '35-&6 — He **appears** to be at Quebec. “There was a great wind from the NE accompanied by a rain which lasted a very long time, and by a cold great enough to freeze these waters as soon as they touched anything, so that as this rain fell on the trees from the summit to the foot, there was formed (il s'y fit) a crystal of ice which enchased both trunk (tige) & branches, so that for a very long time all our great woods appeared only a forest of crystal; for in truth the ice which clothed them universally par tout every where was thicker than a testoon (epaisse de plus d'un teston); in a word all the bushes & all that was above the snow was environed on all sides and enchased in ice: the Savages have told me that it does not happen often so. “(de meme).”



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“I HEARD A VERY LOUD SOUND”:

**THOREAU PROCESSES THE SPECTACLE
OF SUDDEN, VIOLENT DEATH.**

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This essay originates in a presentation given at the 2002 convention of the American Literature Association, just nine months after the fall of the World Trade Center Towers. Thoreau Society panelists had been asked to consider how (or whether) the Transcendentalists' philosophy can help twenty-first-century citizens cope with a disaster of the magnitude of September 11, 2001. Seeking some equivalent in Thoreau's experience, I decided to examine the following journal passage for 7 January 1853, in which the thirty-five-year-old philosopher writes of viewing burnt, scattered human remains, the fresh result of a powdermill explosion.



About 10 minutes before 10 Am I heard a very loud sound & felt a violent jar which made the house rock and the loose articles on my table rattle — which I knew must be either a powdermill blown up or an earth quake — Not knowing but another & more violent might take place I immediately ran down stairs, but I saw from the door a vast expanding column of whitish smoke rising in the west directly over the Powder mills 4 miles distant. It was unfolding its volumes above which made it widest there. In 3 or 4 minutes it had all risen & spread it self into a lengthening somewhat copper colored cloud parallel with the horizon from N to S — and in about 10 minutes after the explosion it passed over my head being several miles long from north to south & distinctly dark & smoky toward the north not nearly so high as the few cirrhi in the sky. I jumped into a man's wagon & road [sic] toward the mills. In a few minutes more I saw behind me far in the east a faint salmon colored cloud carrying the news of the explosion to the sea — & perchance over [the] head of the absent proprietor. Arrived probably before half past 10. There were perhaps 30 or 40 wagons there. The Kernel mill had blown up first & killed 3 men who were in it said to be turning a roller with a chisel — in 3 seconds after one of the mixing houses exploded. The Kernel house was swept away & fragments mostly but a foot or 2 in length were strewn over the hills & meadows as if sown for 30 rods — & the slight snow then on the ground was for the most part melted around. The mixing house about 10 rods W was not so completely dispersed for most of the machinery remained a total [w]reck — The press house about 12 rods east had 2/3 [of] its boards off. & a mixing house next westward from that which blew up had lost some boards on the E side. The boards fell out — (ie of those buildings which did not blow up) the air within apparently rushing out to fill up the vacuum occasioned by the explosions — & so the powder being bared to the fiery particles in the air another building explodes, The powder on the floor of the bared Press house was 6 inches deep in some places — and the crowd were thoughtlessly going into it. A few windows were broken 30 or 40 rods off. Timber 6 inches square & 18 feet long was thrown over a hill 80 feet high at least — a dozen rods — 30 rods was about the limit of fragments — The Drying house in which was a fire was perhaps 25 rods dist. & escaped. Every timber & piece of wood which was blown up was as black as if it had been dyed except where it had broken on falling other breakages were completely concealed by the



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color — I mistook what had been iron hoops in the woods — for leather straps. Some of the clothes of the men were in the tops of the trees where undo[u]btedly their bodies had been & lefte them. The bodies were naked & black — Some limbs & bowels here & and there & a head at a distance from its trunk. The feet were bare — the hair singed to a crisp. I smelt the powder half a mile before I got there. Put the diff. buildings 30 rods apart and then but one will blow up — at a time.⁴⁶

Thoreau depicts the scene unsentimentally and apparently mean-mindedly. In a detached style highlighted with flashes of irony, he marshals observed details, some horrid, in order to deduce the sequential phases of the conflagration — and then, wasting no breath lamenting the tragedy, suggests a better design for future factories. To any reader with an animus against the hermit of Walden, these six hundred words can only confirm the stereotypical curmudgeon and misanthrope (Bridgeman xii). Any champion of Thoreau, on the other hand, will assume that the acid social satirist who wrote Walden's "Economy" chapter had to be aware of the irony in a gunpowder worker's death by explosion — the ultimate wage of "driving for Squire Make-a-Stir." Thus Laura Dassow Walls, in a rich discussion of chance and necessity in Thoreau's philosophy, stretches toward social consciousness by interpreting Thoreau's punch line ("Put the different buildings ...") as a criticism of the reification introduced into society by "the factory system" (250).

Actually Thoreau's narrative does not primarily express either misanthropy or progressive social criticism. In this essay I examine its themes and imagery in relation to several related journal entries during 1853 as well as related lectures, essays, and correspondence by Thoreau around this time. I establish that the horrifying vision continued to haunt Thoreau's imagination for months, perturbing his dreams and waking meditations, and unsettling his vital sense of oneness with nature — a state which brought him to the brink of despair. Consciously or not, Thoreau set himself the project of "working through" (as we now say) this emotionally painful experience: he would mediate the intolerable horror through his writing, finally employing the rich resources of his art to resolve the alarming philosophic contradictions he had discovered.

Until recently, few scholars took notice of this journal entry, even though its traumatizing content fairly leaps off the page. Among the pioneer modern writers, only Richard Lebeaux (1984) discusses this episode as one of the stressors which, evincing

46. J5:428-29 (bracketed interpolations are mine). The Assabet Manufacturing Company, situated along two miles of the Assabet River forming part of the Acton and Concord town line, produced gunpowder through various changes of name and ownership until 1940. See Jane G. Austin for a highly readable tour of this company's mills, virtually unchanged seventeen years after Thoreau's experience (apart from introducing steam-heat instead of fire). The "absent proprietor" was Nathan Pratt, who founded the company in 1835 and owned it until 1864.

The reason Thoreau can narrow the possibilities immediately upon first hearing the noise is that explosions at the Assabet mill happened at least every several years. "Explosions that shattered a few window panes as far away as Acton Centre while not common were by no means unheard of. Anyone who had lived in the vicinity for twenty five years had almost certainly experienced two or three" (Phalen 140).

Some acquaintance with the industrial process itself may be helpful here. Kernelling, also called corning, graining and granulating, consists of feeding the processed powder into sets of rollers to achieve a given fineness of grain. If the three mill-hands were "turning a roller with a chisel," the scrape of iron against iron ignited the fatal spark.

Powdermill structures were built on solid foundations and frames, but their boarding and roof were intentionally light so that an explosion would blow them off easily. This, it was hoped, would minimize damage to the framework and machinery (Austin 535). As Thoreau deduces, four buildings exploded in this order: kernel house, one mixing house, press house, and another mixing house. In the manufacturing process, of course, the order is otherwise. The mixing houses were used first, followed by the press house, kernel mill, glazing house (not observed by Thoreau), and drying house (Conant 5-6). One rod being equal to 5.5 yards or somewhat greater than five meters, the debris was flung nearly one-tenth of a mile distant.



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the inevitable finality of death, seriously shook Thoreau's comforting vision of a unified, cyclical Nature during the winter of 1853. Two twenty-first-century interpreters, Michael West and Michael Sperber, apply aesthetic and psychoanalytic criteria, respectively. West, analyzing the richly symbolic "sand foliage" passage in Walden's "Spring" chapter, describes Thoreau's image of the divine Artist's laboratory as a "charnel house" in which body parts are "indiscriminately strewn about" and infers a strong influence of the 1853 powdermill explosion (464-65). West offers absorbing discussions of Walden's sand-bank passage in terms of Thoreau's glossology (185-89; cf. 196-200), his "homespun fecal cosmology," and ultimately his anticipation of death (450, 465). Sperber, writing from a psychiatrist's standpoint, presents Thoreau's experience of the fatal explosion as one of several triggers which, that year, coincided to catalyze the recurring depression he had experienced every January since his brother's sudden, traumatizing death in January 1842 (17).⁴⁷ Sperber argues persuasively that Thoreau's narrative voice in this journal entry is expressive of the "psychic numbing" that is a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder, one facet of Thoreau's lifelong, complex depression.

The present essay considers the image-making in several interrelated pieces of Thoreau's writing not merely as biographical data – evidence of mental depression – but as cohesive fragments of an ongoing, self-healing therapeutic process which Thoreau undertook between January and November 1853. During these months, Thoreau realized that his very sanity was at risk, exerted his creative powers to recover stability, and in the end re-imagined himself as a seer in the presence of the divine.

Let us begin by accounting for the dispassionate tone Thoreau affects in his narrative, which alienates so many readers. A simple explanation, of course, is that Thoreau is merely expressing a certain professionalism. Only months before, the Boston surveyor and cartographer H.F. Walling had credited Thoreau with the title "Civ. Engr" (civil engineer) for the latter's contribution of his pond survey to a new, authoritative map of Concord Village (Stowell 11). Why should Thoreau not presume to propose, from an engineer's standpoint, a more efficient design idea for the powdermill campus?

Thoreau was in fact a professional when it came to the powder-milling industry, now that he had become manager of the graphite-grinding that was the lifeline of the family business. Apart from the need for safety precautions, milling gunpowder is akin to milling graphite. For example, Thoreau's contemporary Addison G. Fay, initially a minister, easily made the transition from operating a graphite mill to part ownership of the very gunpowder mill under discussion here, only to perish when the mill exploded in 1873 (Conant 7). Among Thoreau's engineering innovations in his own field, he designed and built with his father a seven-foot-tall mill-extension in 1838 that allowed finer grades of pencil-lead. He increased the efficiency of a

47. I showed an early version of this paper to Dr. Sperber in 2003 while assisting with research for his book. Reciprocally, this version is indebted to his key concept of Thoreau's "self-therapeutic successes" in discussing Thoreau's "processing" of emotional experience.



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lead mill in Acton by replacing iron grinding balls with a stone in 1859 (Harding 56-57, 397, 409). (Did he have the accident of 1853 in mind?)

Professionalism notwithstanding, Thoreau's journal for 7 January presents internal clues that invite a more complex interpretation of its narrative voice. Consider first the immediate context of this passage – the whole journal entry for this date. Thoreau's account of the disaster occurs, like the explosion itself, as a disruption of broader and more peaceful reflections on nature and the seasons' cycle which comprise the overall entry for the day. The disruption dispels a morning mood of oneness and rightness induced by the promise of "a perfect winter day." Visiting Nawshawtuct Hill very early that morning, Thoreau had been cheered by the "serene" air and sky, and by the sounds of everyday activities in the village below. Examining birch seeds in the snow, he had just written: "I am surprised to see the yellow anthers so distinct, promising spring. I did not suspect that there was so sure a promise or prophecy of spring. These are frozen in December or earlier, – the anthers of spring, tilled with their fertilizing dust" (J5: 428). At exactly this point, Thoreau's warmly affecting vision of the season's immanent regeneration yields to the explosion narrative. At the end of it, Thoreau concludes the day's entry by returning to nature observation: he believes he detects the lengthening of daylight, another promise of the spring that will recur (J5: 429).

Taking a closer look at vocabulary, we read that pieces of timber are "strewn over the hills and meadows ... as if sown." The simile "as if sown" continues, faintly, Thoreau's preceding imagery of birch seeds scattered on the ground: even upon this field of death, a theme of regeneration in spite of winter persists. (And the snow is "for the most part melted around.") Coincidentally or not, the double meaning of some plant-derived vocabulary adds to the effect. The fatal blast was ignited in the "kernel" house; Thoreau finds "limbs" and a "trunk" among the body parts. It is therefore conceivable that Thoreau in composing this passage was by no means being callous but in fact was already stirred by emotion, indeed conflicting emotions. Thoreau's biographers agree that he was in a generally grim mood during this winter of 1853. Sensitive to the approach of midlife, Thoreau saw mortality everywhere, a state strongly reinforced by the spectacle at the mills. According to Lebeaux in *Thoreau's Seasons*, the cyclical vision of life that usually sustained Thoreau yielded, for a time, to "the dreaded prospects of life's finite linearity and uncontrollability and of personal annihilation" (174).

If Thoreau was having a mid-thirties crisis of this tenor, it is not hard to identify circumstances that would aggravate it. First of all, as noted, the January anniversary of John Thoreau, Jr.'s, horrific death in his brother's arms surely stimulated feelings of guilt, as Lebeaux suggests, along with a pronounced longing for forgiveness and redemption. Second, Thoreau's sustaining friendship with Ralph Waldo Emerson, shaky in recent years, was nearing its nadir. Thoreau would complain to his journal on 25 May 1853: "Talked or tried to talk with R.W.E.

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Lost my time – nay almost my identity – he assuming a false opposition where there was no difference of opinion – talked to the wind – told me what I knew & I lost my time trying to imagine myself somebody else to oppose him” (J6: 149, Thoreau’s italics and hyphen.). Third, compounding the grief and sense of loss, January also brought the anniversary of little Waldo Emerson’s demise. Sympathy over the child’s sudden death from scarlet fever in 1842 had once brought Thoreau as close to his friend and mentor as they were now distant. The five-year-old’s passing had prompted Thoreau to console Emerson with his most eloquent statement of the reason for contemplating death with indifference.



How plain that death is only the phenomenon of the individual or class. Nature does not recognize it, she finds her own again under new forms without loss. Yet death is beautiful when seen to be a law, and not an accident — It is as common as life. (To R. W. Emerson, 11 March 1842. Correspondence 63)

Thoreau of course does not mean to seem indifferent to the dead child individually. As Emerson well knew, Thoreau had “come to love the boy” while living in the Emerson household in 1841 (Harding 129). It is simply that Thoreau cannot summon the customary sympathy-card sentiments, the conventional language of what Emerson would call “habitual” grief.⁴⁸ Thoreau will not employ, nor would Emerson accept, a conventional rhetoric of mourning prescribed by the prevailing culture. Eleven years later, he is all the less likely to do so in recording the deaths of total strangers at the explosion site. Thus we gain additional insight into Thoreau’s narrative of 7 January: its very terseness may signal a deliberate refusal to mourn which is prompted by integrity rather than cynicism.

For comparison, the historical record furnishes a fortuitous and rich example of such a conventional rhetoric, lavished upon an identical event at the same powder mill at a time when several dangerous processes “usually carried on in separate buildings” had been grouped under one roof. On 16 November 1836 – the first year of the company’s operation – three men were blown to pieces when more than half a ton of powder exploded. A fourth worker lingered for hours before succumbing to acute burns and fractures.

Like Thoreau, the unnamed writer for the weekly Concord Freeman witnesses a panorama of horror and writes it up with comparable realism: “his mangled limbs, his tattered flesh, and parts of his body, were found in a neighboring field, twenty or thirty rods distant, and on a hill at least fifty feet higher than the mill.” Quite differently from Thoreau, the reporter goes on to solicit pity. “There the miserable fragments of humanity were scattered, and the pieces hanging like rags on the bushes and trees about showed how effectual was the work of destruction.” The writer laments the deaths as untimely (the mill-hands were in their 20s and 30s) and strikes chords of quasi-tragic irony:

48. In contrast to “trivial or ‘habitual’ grief,” Jennifer Gurley (“Goodness and Grief ...”) considers whether genuine grief, for Emerson, is to be verbalized at all. How Emerson coped with Waldo’s loss emotionally and philosophically — absent the traditional consolations of Christianity — is summarized by David Lyttle (66-72).

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It was heart rending to behold these poor relics of man, so torn, so mangled, so burned, and blackened, and so suddenly changed from the beauty and vigor of confident manhood to the shattered form of loathe-some death.... the swift death of these four men, only showed how sooner than was expected the powder had effected its intended purpose of destruction. ("Powder Mill Explosion")

In an era when the local newspaper in America increasingly served to codify middle-class values and to model appropriate sentimental responses to events, the bare prose of Thoreau's journal entry raises the standard of non-conformism.

Fourth and finally, we must consider one more depressive factor in 1853, possibly the most serious of all, involving Thoreau's life as an author. At this time, Thoreau was one year into his last and deepest revision of the manuscript that would be the masterwork of his lifetime, *Walden*. Undoubtedly, this periodic creative exertion obliged Thoreau on the one hand to relieve the disturbing doubts and uncertainties of his quest in the woods, while on the other hand feeling pressed to present his experiences positively for posterity. If Thoreau was pouring his creative energy into composing a sustained affirmation of nature's life-cycles for publication, it is not surprising that his emotional reserves were depleted when it came to managing everyday mood changes. No wonder his unifying concept of life "wavered" upon viewing hair-raising evidence of life's "linearity and uncontrollability," feeling the finality of death, and conceiving mortality as divine punishment.

How natural then that Thoreau, drawing upon his creative abilities as a writer, would use his journal to process his intolerable feelings. In a number of instances, we will find Thoreau recalling the mill-yard scene, re-experiencing the deeply unsettling emotions it has roused, and finally weaving multiple memories and associated fantasies into a unifying vision. We may now consider this related material in the journal of 1853. Thoreau harks back to his experience of 7 January in three separate entries that he composed two days, two weeks, and five months after that date. In these passages there is no trace of the cold, factual narrating voice he initially assumed. Instead, Thoreau is demonstrably haunted by what he made himself see.

Perhaps surprisingly, Thoreau's response as he begins to process the experience is to moralize – to preach and scold almost as severely as if Calvinism were still alive and flourishing in Concord. Thoreau's reactions to intimations of mortality are colored by a stark dualism. As Lebeaux notes in *Thoreau's Seasons* (177), Thoreau admits only extreme alternatives, and these in the most judgmental terms – innocence or sin – redemption or damnation – nature ("infinite and pure") or man ("the source of all evil").

On 9 January, after two days of internalizing the experience, Thoreau writes: "Day before yesterday I looked at the mangled & blackened bodies of men which had been blown up by powder, and felt that the lives of men were not innocent, and that there was an avenging power in nature ..." (J5: 437). Then on 21 January Thoreau records a nightmare in which he feels defiled after unearthing and touching rotten corpses. He interprets the "moral" of the dream: "Death is with me and life far away" (J5: 448). It should be noted that Thoreau gets away with significant



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sleight of hand in the entry for 9 January. He attributes the destructive power of the gunpowder to nature, which he depicts as the divine agency of judgment and retribution, an “avenging” dispenser of a death deserved. Can this mean that Thoreau believes these three specific millworkers were “not innocent” – that they deserved their fate? Not literally. In the world of transcendental analogy, actual realities, mere details, and variable circumstances take a back seat to the (presumed) universal symbolism of an experience. These three men, who in reality were blown to pieces because they neglected procedure and mishandled equipment, have become symbolic stand-ins for the sinful human race. “Nature” stands in for a punishing God, while the blackened, smoking mill yard makes a picture-perfect Hell. In fact, it is Thoreau’s rhetorical strategy of treating the explosion no differently from a force of nature that enables him to sermonize with such idealizing abstraction. His transcendentalist perspective gives him the privilege of glossing over workaday details that might undermine the universal truth of his meditation on mortality. After all, by most reckonings, a fatal industrial accident is to be reported differently from an accidental death caused, for example, by a lightning strike or a shipwreck.

The key towards unlocking the nature of what is haunting Thoreau lies in the third of his subsequent journal entries, written amid the bloom of late spring. On 1 June, Thoreau reports seeing pieces of the mill buildings “[s]till black with powder” reappearing along the bank of the Concord. He exclaims: “How slowly the ruins are being dispersed!” – expressing perhaps a note of wonder at the persistence of his own morbid recollections (J6: 169). (Ironically, the Assabet mill would explode again in June, without fatalities and without comment from Thoreau [Conant 7].) Thoreau proceeds to imagine these pieces of wood pursuing their journey downriver and across the Atlantic, “[s]till capable of telling how & where they were launched to those who can read their signs.” He draws a parallel with the cloud-as-sign that he saw in January: “The news of the explosion of the Powder Mills – was not only carried seaward by the cloud which its smoke made – but more effectually – though more slowly by the fragments which were floated thither by the river –” (J6: 169).⁴⁹

At this point in the journal, quite unexpectedly, the idea of the Atlantic Ocean unlocks an entirely different level of memory and image, as Thoreau vividly evokes the sight of a drowned man: “To see a man lying all bare lank & tender on the rocks like a skinned frog – or lizzard – we did not suspect that he was made of such cold tender clammy substance before” (J6: 169). Whence this drowned man? Until now, Thoreau had been remembering explosion victims. Following the association with the Atlantic takes us to the answer. Three years earlier, Thoreau had obliged himself to face the mangled, swollen bodies of shipwreck victims on two occasions – at Cohasset, Cape Cod, in 1849 and also during

49. At the core of the drowned-man image is Thoreau’s memory of his brother’s horrid death. Forever unable to accept John’s loss, Henry invested enormous emotional energy in seeing his dead brother as proof of the eternal reciprocity between death and life. In the concluding pages of *Young Man Thoreau*, Richard Lebeaux sensitively detects wide-ranging aspects of “private grief and guilt” underpinning the opening chapters of *Cape Cod* (199-204). “Can anyone doubt that the ‘funeral’ and ‘corpse’ that Thoreau had in mind were John’s?” (201).

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his fruitless mission to retrieve the effects of Margaret Fuller, who had drowned in a wreck on the shore of Fire Island, New York, in 1850.

In his journal at that time, Thoreau uses the image of parallel streams to depict the two worlds that we simultaneously inhabit, that of reality and that of the spirit – the latter alone having substance and value:



This stream of events which we consent to call actual & that other mightier stream which alone carries us with it — what makes the difference — On the one our bodies float, and we have sympathy with it through them; on the other, our spirits. We are ever dying to one world and being born into another — and possibly no man knows whether he is at any time dead ... or not. (after 29 July 1850 [J3: 95])

In Thoreau's metaphysics, we are all, at any given instant, so many corpses in the wash of tides. Death is our birth into another world (or, as Thoreau more often conceived it, our continuity in nature). "Who knows but you are dead already?" he repeats (J3: 96).

In a public version of these reflections – "The Shipwreck," composed and delivered as a public lecture as early as 1850 – Thoreau helps his audience visualize this birth into another world by playing upon the conventional idea of an afterlife in a parallel dimension.



Why care for these dead bodies? They really have no friends but the worms or fishes. Their owners were coming to the New World, as Columbus and the Pilgrims did, they were within a mile of its shores; but, before they could reach it, they emigrated to a newer world than ever Columbus dreamed of, yet one of whose existence we believe that there is far more universal and convincing evidence — though it has not yet been discovered by science ... I saw their empty hulks that came to land; but they themselves, meanwhile, were cast upon some shore yet further west, toward which we are all tending, and which we shall reach at last, it may be through storm and darkness, as they did. ("Cape Cod" 635)

"The Shipwreck" was polished for publication as the introductory section of "Cape Cod" by 1852, when Thoreau offered it to G. W. Curtis for Putnam's Monthly Magazine. By that time, Thoreau must have all but memorized his text, considering that he delivered his Cape Cod lecture before several audiences in 1850-51. (Putnam's ran "Cape Cod" – the opening four chapters of the posthumous book we now know – serially and unsigned in June, July, and August 1855.)

So fully does Thoreau in "The Shipwreck" conceive death as integral to life that the idea of an untimely, unfair, or undeserved death is meaningless. A psychological analyst of Thoreau's statement – noting in particular the abstract and universal voice adopted here by the writer – might well suspect that this highly rational denial of death is constructed as a defense against an intolerably painful affect, including sheer physical revulsion. John Thoreau, Jr., we recall, died in the arms of his adoring younger brother, who could only watch as the ghastly death-sneer (risus sardonius) of lockjaw froze his brother's facial muscles into a mocking mask in the final moments of respiratory muscular paralysis and suffocation (Sperber 9-10). (Almost from the instant it took place, this death-scene became romanticized by friends and family as an

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exchange of beatific smiles, although Thoreau would later use the words "ugly pain" in a memorial poem.) As Lebeaux has well established in Young Man Thoreau, the unbearable pain of experiencing this extraordinarily wrenching loss "froze" the normal grieving process in Thoreau, initiating instead a chronic depressive cycling (167-68, 172).

Only substitute the 1853 explosion instead of death by drowning – and extend "the law of Nature" to include industrial fatalities – and Thoreau's comment in "The Shipwreck" could be read as a justification of his seemingly emotionless description of the fatalities at the Acton mill:



On the whole, it was not so impressive a scene as I might have expected. If I had found one body cast upon the beach in some lonely place, it would have affected me more. I sympathized rather with the winds and waves, as if to toss and mangle these poor human bodies was the order of the day. If this was the law of Nature, why waste any time in awe or pity? ... Take all the grave-yards together, they are always the majority. It is the individual and private that demands our sympathy. A man can attend but one funeral in the course of his life, can behold but one corpse. (635, my emphases)

Thoreau's grief-work on the first of June required him to dig down to the earlier recollection of the "bare, lank and tender" body on the beach. (He sensed soon after visiting the explosion site that this work of exhumation, though repugnant, would be necessary to bring resolution. His nightmare of 21 January, mentioned above, expresses this idea [J5: 448].) Writing his June entry, Thoreau succeeds in substituting a memory of a death-encounter that is "tender" (he uses the word repeatedly) for one that is limb-wrenching and bloody – a vision of birth/death cradled by the eternal rhythm of the salt-water tides instead of sudden, hideous dismemberment amid apocalyptic fire. He has recovered that "one body ... in some lonely place" that he wished to see on Cape Cod, and has allowed it to "affect" him. The figure of the drowned man embodies the eternal interchange of death and life. No sooner has Thoreau substituted the drowned man for the burnt men than he is free to begin reclaiming the redeeming vision that sustains him. That one affecting corpse holds the key to life.⁵⁰

The process traced above guided Thoreau out of his dualistic dead end. It recaptured his vanished closeness with Ralph Waldo Emerson. Most important for literature, it helped to shape one of the most inspired symbolic visions in Walden. Late in the stressful year of 1853, as J. Lyndon Shanley's work documents, Thoreau proceeded with final revisions to Walden, amplifying many passages and relocating some to better artistic advantage. One of these was the description of the thawing sand bank along the "deep cut" that had been dug southwest of the pond for the

50. Fragments embedded in a hillside by the force of the January 1853 explosion (and others) remained visible six years afterward, as Thoreau noted during some Assabet River excursions. In a supreme use of irony, he now declares the victims' body parts expunged from this exhibit:



As you draw near the powder-mills, you see the hill behind bestrewn with the fragments of mills which have been blown up in past years, — the fragments of the millers having been removed, — and the canal is cluttered with the larger ruins. The very river makes haste past the dry-house, as it were for fear of accidents. (21 July 1859; Journal XII: 248)

This is, to my knowledge, the last reference to the blast in Thoreau's journal.



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new railroad. As published, these enthusiastic lines in the climactic "Spring" chapter form one of the book's cardinal passages, the symbolic revelation of the earth as nature's infinite matrix of life.

In Thoreau's initial draft of 1846-47, the shapes assumed by the rivulets of sand as they flow down the embankment are limited to those of "vegetation, of vines and stout pulpy leaves" (Shanley 204). The expanded revision, which Thoreau worked up in October or November of 1853, adds a multitude of details and colors, bringing the tumbling cascade to life and deepening its symbolic meaning – while restating in a positive mode the theme of scattered organs and limbs. As revised, the shifting forms recall not only vegetal and coral shapes but also animal parts – "leopard's paws or birds' feet" – and finally "brains or lungs or bowels, and excrements of all kinds" (Walden 305). Thoreau sees in the thawing sand and clay "the different iron colors, brown, gray, yellowish, and reddish" (305). This is the same palette he uses to color his initial journal entry of 7 January describing the sky and earth at the explosion site.

Michael West finds it ironic that Thoreau's vision of life should be grounded in a mineral mixture "destined to sandy sterility" (465). However, this deficit is outweighed by the resonant personal – even heroic – meaning that clay held for Thoreau. By introducing the use of clay to create an improved pencil-lead after 1838, Thoreau brought an enormous boon to American artists, engineers, and writers – and he knew it. (Thoreau's intuitive research has been nicely reconstructed by Henry Petroski [110-12].) Quite conceivably, then, the idea of "the Artist" – God or Nature – working in a matrix of sand and clay contains some admixture of Thoreau the writer-inventor, bringer of benefit to scholars, poets, and scribes for all time. By his art Thoreau manages to redeem and purify the horrifying image of the millhands' torn corpses ("some limbs & bowels here & there"). Evoking the "laboratory of the Artist who made the world and me," he transfigures the lifeless organs of dead men into the material of birth, renewal, and creation.

Of course, the gruesome festoons in the Assabet millyard were not the sole inspiration for Thoreau's elaboration of the sand-bank passage. Well before the 1853 explosion, Thoreau was in the habit of visualizing all creatures' vital organs in the sand bank's spring-like, if "somewhat foecal and stercoral," outpouring. By playing upon the classic connotation of "bowels" (seat of the affections – sympathy or "heart"), he endows his complex image with poetic ambiguity in the journal. "There is no end to the fine bowels here exhibited – heaps of liver – lights & bowels. Have you no bowels? Nature has some bowels, and there again she is mother of humanity" (31 Dec. 1851 [J4: 231]. Cf. Walden 305). Much as the archetypal leaf, Goethe's famous *Urpflanze*, became Thoreau's template for every life form, so the dynamic "motion in the earth" that pushes it to the surface is Thoreau's *Urstuhl*, an archetypal flux that partakes of both unclean excretion and raw creativity. In the journal passage cited above, Thoreau incorporated this grand peristalsis into his symbol for poesis.

As this essay has sought to establish, selections from Thoreau's



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journalizing during 1853 present a continuing introspective process that is deliberate, yet is guided in part by unconscious association toward a goal of resolution of conflict and liberation from depression. This decidedly modern mode of journal-keeping offers a particularly rich illustration of the self-therapeutic practice that Sperber identifies as "writing it out," and which he sees as "a crucial part of the treatment program that Thoreau unconsciously devised to deal with his severe stress, mood and personality disorders" (119). With myth-making force, Thoreau the seer celebrates in Walden the return of spring that he glimpsed even in the scorched millyard. Perhaps echoing the Psalmist as much as Genesis, Thoreau now asks, "What is man but a mass of thawing clay?" (307). He proclaims the oneness of plant and animal life-forms, a unity visible in the common clay from which they are pouring in profusion. Far from "soiling" his fingers in the putrid bodies of dead men as he did in his nightmare, the seer stands in the presence of the divine creative force, in the place where nature perpetually "finds her own again under new forms without loss."

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January 10-11, 1859: P.M.—Up Assabet to Sam Barrett's Pond. ... The cold rapidly increases; it is — 14° in the evening. I hear the ground crack with a very loud sound and a great jar in the evening and in the course of the night several times. It is once as loud and heavy as the explosion of the Acton powder-mills. This cracking is heard all over New England, at least, this night. ... At 6 A.M. —22° and how much more I know not, ours having gone into the bulb; but that is said to be the lowest. Going to Boston to-day, I find that the cracking of the ground last night is the subject of conversation in the cars, and that it was quite general. I see many cracks in Cambridge and Concord. It would appear then that the ground cracks on the advent of very severe cold weather. I had not heard it before, this winter. It was so when I went to Amherst a winter or two ago.



July 20, 1859: ... So completely emasculated and demoralized is our river that it is even made to observe the Christian Sabbath, and Hosmer tells me that at this season on a Sunday morning [He should rather say Monday morning.] (for then the river runs lowest, owing to the factory and mill gates being shut above) little gravelly islands begin to peep out in the channel below. Not only the operatives make the Sunday a day of rest, but the river too, to some extent, so that the very fishes feel the influence (or want of influence) of man's religion. The very rivers run with fuller streams on Monday morning. All nature begins to work with new impetuosity on Monday.



July 21, 1859: P.M.—To Assabet, above factory.
For about one third the way from the factory dam to the powder-mills the river is broad and deep, in short a mill-pond. ... The pontederia on the Assabet is a very fresh and clear blue to-day, and in its early prime,—very handsome to see. The nesaea grows commonly along the river near the powder-mills, one very dense bed of it at the mouth of the powder-mill canal.
The canal is still cluttered with the wreck of the mills that have been blown up in times past,—timber, boards, etc., etc.—and the steep hill is bestrewn with the fragments of the mills, which fell on it more than half a dozen years ago (many of them), visible half a mile off. As you draw near the powder-mills, you see the hill behind bestrewn with the fragments of mills which have been blown up in past years,—the fragments of the millers having been removed,—and the canal is cluttered with the larger ruins. The very river makes greater haste past the dry-house, as it were for fear of accidents.

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May 6, Friday: The railroad drawbridge outside South Norwalk, Connecticut had been raised to allow the passage of the steamboat *Pacific*. A red ball the size of a basketball (not invented yet) had been raised to the top of a signal mast alongside the tracks, to warn approaching trains that the Norwalk River drawbridge was up. The speed limit posted on these tracks was 10 miles per hour. A passenger train approached the Norwalk River at a high rate of speed, disregarding the speed limit, its engineer being the Edward Tucker who had survived the New York & New Haven's first wreck in 1849,⁵¹ and when Tucker belatedly saw the red ball at the top of the mast he yelled out for his brakemen to apply the brakes (railroad safety brakes had been invented by Elisha Graves Otis in 1845), and leaped from the locomotive without closing the throttle of the engine. His jump broke his leg. The brakemen, seeing their engineer leaping out of the locomotive, followed almost instantly by the fireman, also jumped instead of applying the brakes. The train took a nose-dive off the end of the tracks, shattering against the stone bridge abutments on the other side of the drawbridge and dropping into the water. Of the passengers, 46 were killed and 25 injured. This being America, a mob immediately assembled but was distracted from its purpose by an argument, hopefully staged, about whether to hang Tucker with his broken leg from the signal mast or, [hanging](#) being too fine a fate for him, to simply put him out of his misery by shooting him, and meanwhile Tucker was blubbering that the bridge attendant must have raised the red ball after the accident to save his own hide, and this combination of argumentation and blubbering and blaming delayed the mob from its amusement until the authorities could come to Tucker's rescue. The engineer had survived yet another crash.⁵²

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

September 29, Thursday: When the *Annie Jane* sank off the coast of Scotland, 348 Irish emigrants drowned.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



December 23-24, Friday and Saturday: The steamer *San Francisco* was wrecked 300 miles out of New-York harbor, but its passengers were rescued:

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

51. For general background, please refer to Robert B. Shaw's A HISTORY OF RAILROAD ACCIDENTS, SAFETY PRECAUTIONS, AND OPERATING PRACTICES (2d edition, N.p.: Vail-Ballou Press, 1978).

52. Was Edward Tucker fired for his misconduct? No, because he had already lost his job with the railroad on account of his injury. This was the United States of America, land of liberty, and Tucker was a free man, which meant that his destiny was his own. In that day and age anyone injured in the workplace for any reason was automatically out of work — because an injured worker can't continue to do work and therefore had no claim to receive any more pay. In the American South, this was one of the arguments for slavery: that being someone's slave meant that someone had some responsibility toward one, and cared whether one lived or died.



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I understand the large hearts of heroes,
The courage of present times and all times;
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steam-ship,
and Death chasing it up and down the storm,
How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was faithful of days
and faithful of nights,
And chalk'd in large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, We will not desert you;*
How he saved the drifting company at last,
How the lank loose-gowned women look'd when boated from the side of
their prepared graves,
How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the sharp-lipp'd
unshaved men;
All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,
I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

— Walt Whitman

On the stage of [Concord](#)'s Town Hall, Caroline Downes Brooks Hoar set up a [Christmas](#) tree for the children of Concord, decorating it with candles and gifts. 700 children and their teachers formed a semicircle in front of the stage, a hymn was sung — and St. Nicholas appeared. While he addressed the assembly presents were passed out and bags of candy were tossed into the crowd. A box had been prepared for residents of the poor farm, and there were specific gifts for Concord notables such as Josiah Bartlett and Waldo Emerson.

This is the [Christmas](#) season on which Ellen Emerson in boarding school at age 14 had written home to her father Ralph Waldo Emerson and her mother Lidian Emerson, asking for specific presents:

Dear Mother, This is only a despatch about presents which I am writing in haste.... I want presents for nine girls, pretty little ornaments and trifles of that kind are fashionable here.... May I have in my Christmas box some candy of various kinds, some macaroons ... and cocoa-nut cakes and some apples?... Two cakes of "Chocolat Perfectionné", some almond candy, some vanilla cream candy and particularly I want a whole quantity of barley candy....

We note that it is clear from this note what is the state of development of the commercialized [Christmas](#) gift-giving tradition at this point in time: Ellen has received Christmas presents before and expects Christmas presents again, and she is thinking at least primarily of items to be purchased in stores rather than items to be made at home.

Santa Claus, or Saint Nicholas, was definitely a presence by this year, or, at least, he rated a mention in the New Hampshire Gazette:

The genuine New England article for the reception of all the Christmas and New Year's gifts which the good Santa Claus chooses to bestow upon children [is] an article wonderfully characteristic of our thrift and also of our want of poetic taste, ... the woolen stocking, red or blue.... by the least imaginative among the young folks, suspended at the head of the bed, but by those whose intuitive belief in the marvelous is stronger, as near the fireplace as possible, in order to make sure that Saint Nicholas will not overlook it.



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1854

May 6, Saturday: A comment in Scientific American helps us understand Thoreau's remark in WALDEN, "often the richest freight will be discharged upon a Jersey shore":

The late terrific shipwrecks on the Jersey shores, by which so many lost their lives....

TIMELINE OF SHIPWRECKS

WALDEN: I have always endeavored to acquire strict business habits; they are indispensable to every man. If your trade is with the Celestial Empire, then some small counting house on the coast, in some Salem harbor, will be fixture enough. You will export such articles as the country affords, purely native products, much ice and pine timber and a little granite, always in native bottoms. These will be good ventures. To oversee all the details yourself in person; to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter; to buy and sell and keep the accounts; to read every letter received, and write or read every letter sent; to superintend the discharge of imports night and day; to be upon many parts of the coast almost at the same time; -often the richest freight will be discharged upon a Jersey shore;- to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking all passing vessels bound coastwise; to keep up a steady despatch of commodities, for the supply of such a distant and exorbitant market; to keep yourself informed of the state of the markets, prospects of war and peace every where, and anticipate the tendencies of trade and civilization, -taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements in navigation;- charts to be studied, the position of reefs and new lights and buoys to be ascertained, and ever, and ever, the logarithmic tables to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier, -there is the untold fate of La Perouse;- universal science to be kept pace with, studying the lives of all great discoverers and navigators, great adventurers and merchants, from Hanno and the Phoenicians down to our day; in fine, account of stock to be taken from time to time, to know how you stand. It is a labor to task the faculties of a man, - such problems of profit and loss, of interest, of tare and tret, and gauging of all kinds in it, as demand a universal knowledge.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

JEAN-FRANÇOIS DE GALOUP

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In the afternoon Henry Thoreau went to a location where there was epigaea, by way of Clamshell Hill. He made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” It would be combined with an entry made on March 7, 1852 to form the following:

[Paragraph 76] We may well be ashamed to tell what things we have read or heard in our day. I do not know why my news should be so trivial,—considering what one’s dreams and expectations are, why the developments should be so paltry. The news I hear for the most part is not news to my genius. It is the stalest repetition. How many a man continues his daily paper because he cannot help it, which is the case with all vicious habits?¹ *Communication from Heaven* is a journal still published, which never reprints the President’s Message, but rather the higher law.² These facts appear to float in the atmosphere, insignificant as the sporules of fungi—and impinge on some neglected thallus or surface of my mind, which affords a basis for them—and hence a parasitic growth. We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Methinks that in a sane moment a man would bear with indifference if a trustworthy messenger were to inform him that the sun drowned himself last night. Of what consequence though our own planet explode, if there is no character involved in the explosion?

1. This and the following sentence were drawn from the Nantucket Inquirer summary. Their placement at this point in the paragraph is indicated by the arrangement of the sentences in the Inquirer and by a caret in the copy-text manuscript.
 2. Bradley P. Dean has emended the Nantucket Inquirer forms ““Communication from Heaven”” and ““higher law”” by dropping the quotation marks from both and italicizing the former.

July: The New York Times reported that, according to its Paris correspondent, there had been a sad accident in France. An inventor, M. Leroy, had devised a vehicle powered by steam, which he had for ten years been attempting to run upon the ordinary post roads. However, in descending a hill he had struck an obstacle and his device had tipped over, badly scalding him. The Scientific American magazine for this month picked up this story, editorializing that locomotives might make sense on rail roads but made no sense at all on post roads, and adding the observation that M. Leroy in attempting to invent a self-propelled road device had been “foolish.” He might as well have been “going to mill with corn in a bag, having a stone in one end to balance the grain in the other”!

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS
ROAD VEHICLES
STEAM ENGINES



WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, —we never need read of another. One is enough.

SURPRISE!

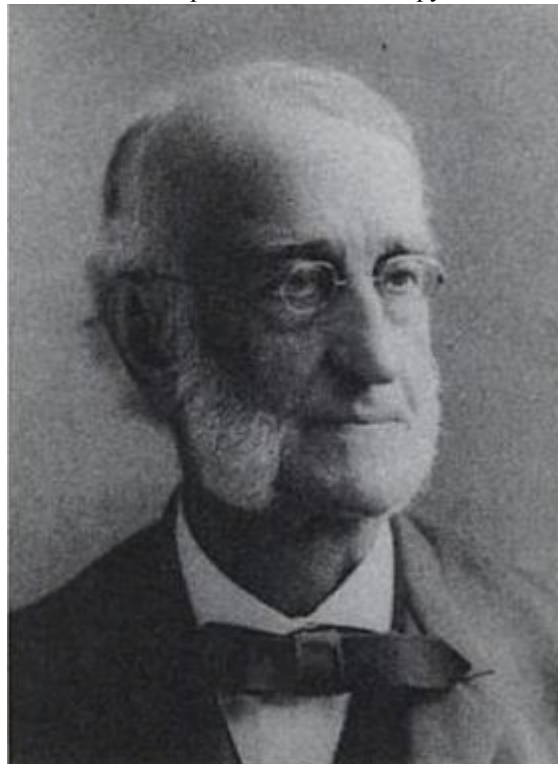
SURPRISE!

September 21, Thursday: The USS *Porpoise*, a 10-gun brig with approximately 80 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

LOST AT SEA



By this date [Henry Thoreau](#) had asked his publisher to send a copy of WALDEN to H.G.O. Blake in Worcester.





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He wrote Blake about this, and his letter helps us date the first delivery of his “What Shall It Profit?” sermon:

I have agreed to go a-lecturing to Plymouth, Sunday after next (October 1) and to Philadelphia in November, and thereafter to the West, if they shall want me; and, as I have prepared nothing in that shape, I feel as if my hours were spoken for. (CORRESPONDENCE 339)

*Concord [S]ep 21st '54
Blake,
I have just read your
letter, but do not mean now to
answer it, solely for want of time
to say what I wish. I directed a
copy of Walden to you at Ticknor's on*

*Page 2
the day of its publication, and it should
have reached you before. I am encour-
aged to know that it interests you
as it now stands — a printed book —
for you apply a very severe test to
it — you make the highest de-
mand on me.*

*Page 3
[As for the excursion you]
speak of, I should like it right
well, indeed I thought of pro-
posing the same thing to you &
Brown some months ago. Per-
haps if would have been better if
I had done so then, for in that
case I should have been able
to enter into it with that in-
finite margin to my views--
spotless of all engagements--*

*Page 4
which I think so necessary. A[s]
it is, I have agreed to go a-
lecturing to Plymouth Sunday af[ter]
next (Oct 1st) and to Philadelp[hia]
in November — and thereafter to
the [west,] if they shall want me,
and as I have prepared nothing
in that shape, I feel as if [my]*



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Page 5

*However, I think that after
having been to Plymouth I may
take a day or two. — if that
date will suit you & Brown. At
any rate, I will write to you
then[.]
Henry D. Thoreau.*

In the afternoon [Thoreau](#) went to Flint's, or Sandy, Pond (Gleason J10).

SURPRISE!

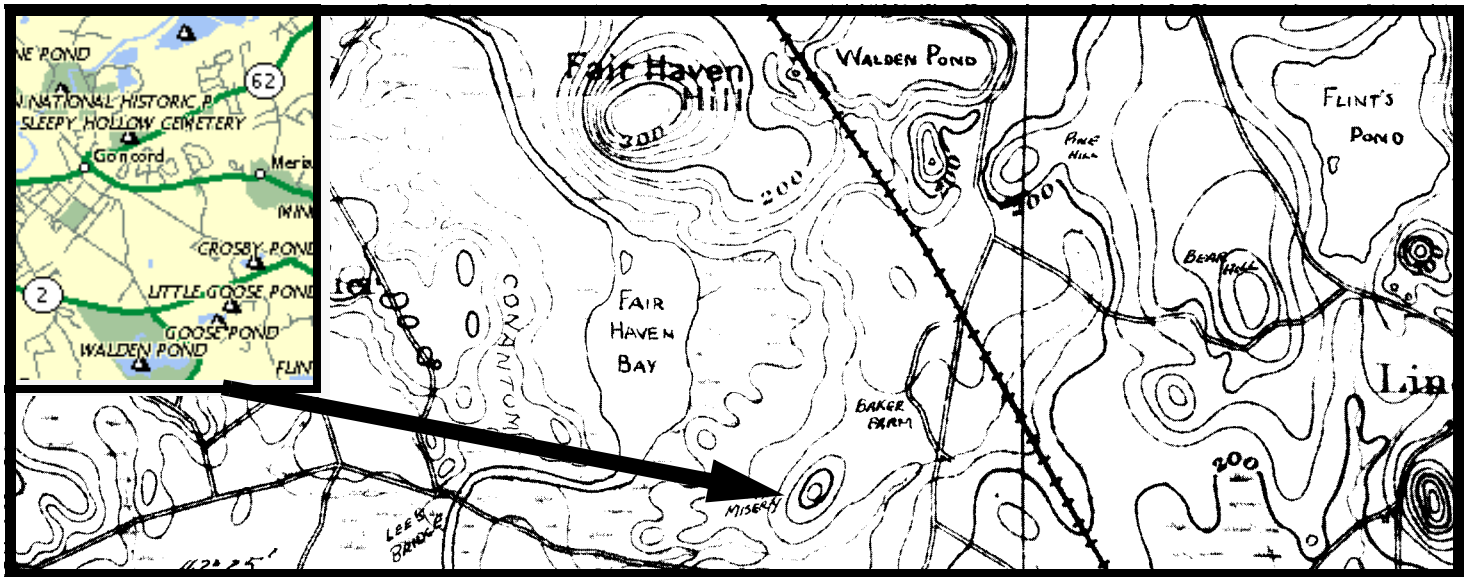
SURPRISE!

September 29, Friday: The USS *Albany*, a 20-gun sloop of war with approximately 210 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

LOST AT SEA



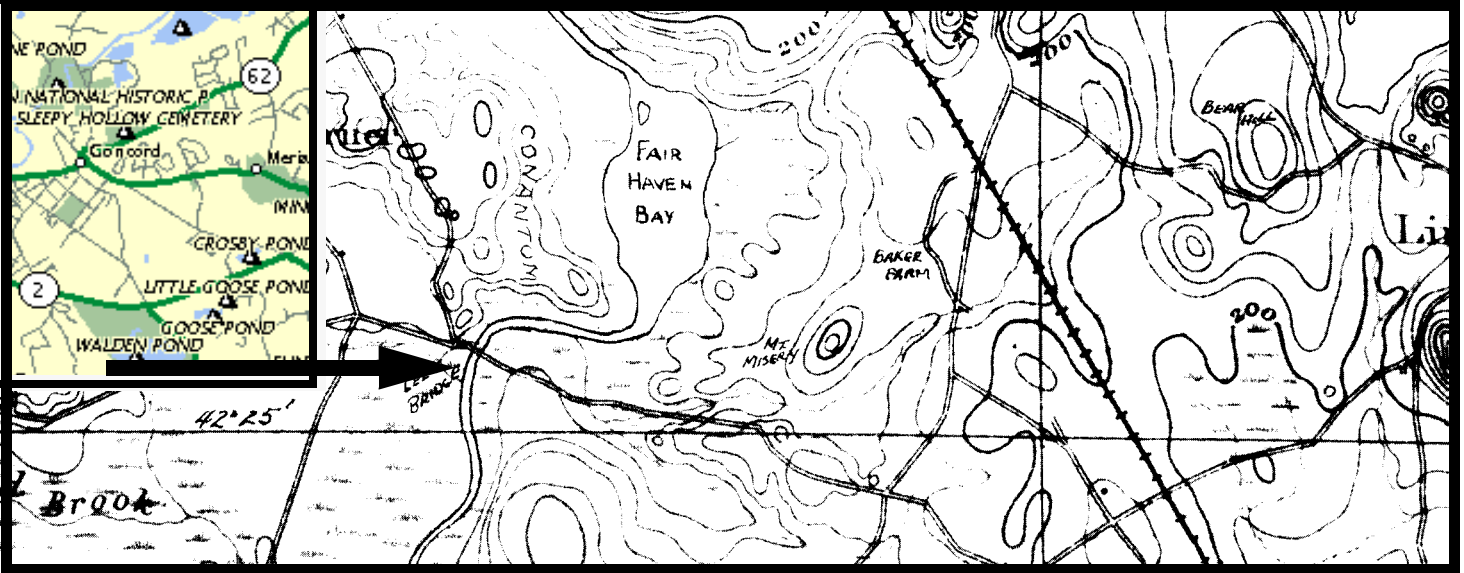
James Walter Spooner visited [Henry Thoreau](#) and ate at the Thoreau boarding house, and they went for a tramp to Mt. Misery:



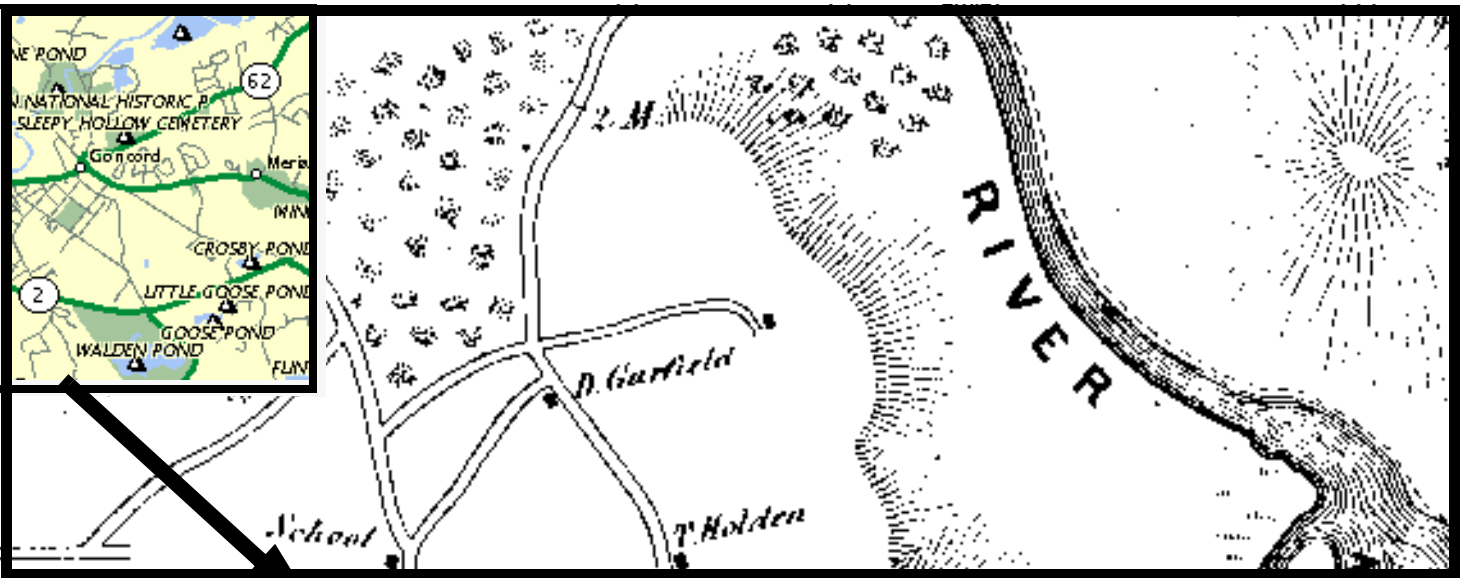
and then Lee's, or Corner, Bridge:

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returning by way of Conantum:



I dined at Mr. Thoreau's today. I went in and knocked gently, but as no one heard, for the family was in the next room, walked in & made myself at home reading Walden. There was an English Gentleman, with an unpronounceable name which I wish I had written just for curiosity, there. By going in so I had the opportunity of hearing Mr. Thoreau play upon his flute in the next room, which was very fine. He accompanied his sister upon the piano, Mrs. T. Says. They must be pretty well off by the look of things. Mr. T. showed me another large white two story house short distance over the fields which he said his father owned. He said he dug the cellar while he lived at Walden &

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stoned it. They lived there when it was built but his mother & sister preferred living down nearer & so they moved down. He said he didn't care where they lived, so long as it was in Concord, if he could only get off the back way into the woods, which you can do from almost every house by going across the fields or meadows.



1855

January 9, Tuesday: On the Atlantic Ocean, the sinking of the *Guiding Star*.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

1856



It was at about this time that the term “casualty” made its journey from the world of insurance, where it had meant accidental loss, into public discourse where it was coming to be used as a pot category “casualties” inclusive of both the dead and of those so seriously injured as to have become “ineffective” (but exclusive of the category “deserter”).

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)



“The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history.”

— A.J.P. Taylor



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

July 17, day: On the single-line tracks in existence at this point, on which two railroad trains could be directed at one another on the same track, one of the trains was supposed to pull off onto a siding and allow the other train to pass. Adherence to schedule was important not only for the timeliness of travel but also for its safety, because being on schedule meant, at least in theory, that your train was alone on the section of track over which you were traveling. The rule of the roadway was that a train which was more than 15 minutes behind schedule was supposed to travel slowly, constantly ring its bell and toot its whistle, keep careful watch ahead, and on every appropriate occasion pull onto a siding and yield the right of way to a train coming toward it which was scheduled to be using that track at that time. However, on this particular morning, a regularly scheduled passenger train headed toward Philadelphia having been delayed in the station, the stationmaster ordered its engineer to get back on his schedule no matter what he had to do. The passengers, sensing the danger in which they were being placed, all went as far to the rear as they could and huddled in the last car. Also on those tracks at that time was an excursion train and heading for a pic nic at Fort Washington. The engineer of that train coming out of Philadelphia had no schedule and therefore was not governed by the rule of yielding right-of-way, and in accordance with the railroad schedule he understood the tracks ahead were supposed to be clear. The train was carrying 1,500 Irish-American children of Philadelphia's St. Michael's Church on a day's excursion, the pic nic at Fort Washington, and the engineer was trying to get the children to their pic nic as quickly as possible.



The conductor on the passenger train coming toward Philadelphia survived the head-on collision and the fire which followed among the shattered wooden coaches, and saw the carnage among the children. Of the children in the lead cars, 66 were dead and 60 had been seriously injured. The conductor found a handcar alongside the tracks, levered it up onto the rails, and pumped his way as quickly as he could into Philadelphia, where he alerted the authorities to send help. "I'm so sorry," he said. He then ran to an apothecary and to the railroad office, gulped arsenic, and died on the floor in convulsions in front of the other employees.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

That evening, [Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by [Mary Moody Emerson](#).

*Dear Henry,
I expect to [set] out to-
morrow morn. for Goshen. A place
where "wit & gaety never comes that*



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

*comes to all” But hopes lives & travels
on with the speed of suns & stars. And
[when] there are none but clouds in
the sky its very nakedness has power
to aid the hour says old Sir Walter. But
however the “old Bobin woman was steady
to her bible” where each page unfolded
worlds of comfort & asurance, yet the memo
ry of [intelligence] extensive mentality
will never fail to give a vivid pleasure
to reflectio[n-]-if shaded by the faith of
future uncertainties—tis well to admit
the decrees of unerring rectitude—[If] you
write to ME it will brighten the
solitude so desired. Had I not been de
tained by nothing but weather—but I
must pack up by day light.*

Page 2

*It is a pleasure I've dependended
on for weeks to visit you and was
sure last eve. When I returned from
the Manse that I should spend part
of this day at your house. But [the]
weather is extremely trying when visit
ing and I conclude I must forgo
the gratification of seeing your sons
library and daughters drawings and
leaving my good wishes with Mr
Thoreau and family personally
But they will exist without [vow]
that you may all be prepared
to meet your friends [and] the good of
all [nations] & denominations in a world
delivered from the alternations of woes
caused by the passions of undisciplined
men and rulers.*

Affectionately aduie

MM Emerson

Thurs. eve July 17.

Page 3

Mr & Mrs Thoreau & family

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

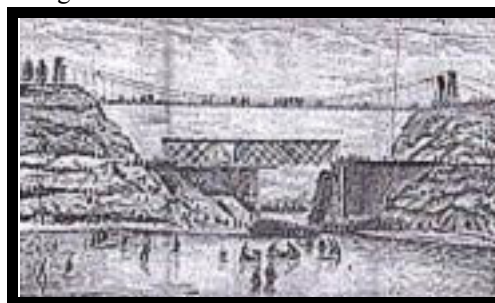
December 26, day: The *Louis A. Surette*, a 65-ton schooner, was sailing from Boston to Eel Brook on the coast of Nova Scotia with a cargo of oats when it ran aground off Cranberry Head. Two died in this wreck.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS
LOST AT SEA
CANADA

1857

March 12, Thursday: On this evening there was a terrible railroad accident on the Great Western Railway at Hamilton in Canada. The train broke an axle while crossing a swing bridge and plunged into the Desjardins Canal. In this illustration we can make out the wrecked train hanging off the lower bridge, engine submerged, with an initial few of the 59 bodies being laid out on the ice:



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



March 12. P.M. — To Hill.

Observe the waxwork twining about the smooth sumach. It winds against the sun. It is at first loose about the stem, but this ere long expands to and overgrows it. Observed the track of a squirrel in the snow under one, of the apple trees on the southeast side of the hill, and, looking up, saw a red squirrel with a nut or piece of frozen apple (?) in his mouth, within six feet, sitting in a constrained position partly crosswise on a limb over my head, perfectly still, and looking not at me, but off into the air, evidently expecting to escape my attention by this trick.



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

I stood and watched and chirruped to him about five minutes so near, and yet he (lid not at once turn his head to loot: at the or move a foot or wink. The oily motion was that of his tail curled (riC1, his back in the wind. At length lie (lid change his attitude a little and look at me a moment. Evidently this is a trick they often practice. If I had been farther off lie might have scolded at me.
Snowed again last night, as it has clone once or twice before within ten days without my recording it, — robin snows, which last but a day or two.

September: The Scientific American magazine announced a new technique for the protection of the lives and forms of the ladies:

Many ladies have been burnt to death by their light gauze and cambric dresses taking fire and blazing up before there was time to extinguish the flame. Actresses and *danseuses* are most liable to this, and the talented Clara Webster and others⁵³ lost their lives this way. It ought, therefore, to be generally known that by steeping the dress, or material composing it, in a diluted solution of chloride of zinc, it will be rendered perfectly fire-proof.

October 4, Sunday: At one point during his seasons at Walden Pond, [Henry Thoreau](#) had been rather seriously injured while coming home from some day work, building a woodshed for a farmer who lived out the Lexington Road. My guess is that this was something that would have happened subsequent to the June 12, 1846 frost that ruined his cash crop for that growing season. In his journal here, he reminisced about this:



October 4, Sunday: A.M. –By boat to Conantum.

River fallen again. Barberrying and graping. Many of the grapes shrivelled and killed by frost now, and the leaves mostly fallen. The yellow leaves of the white willow thickly strew the bottom of my boat. Willows, elms, etc., shed their oldest leaves first, even like pines.⁵⁴ The recent and green ones are seen mottling a yellowish ground, especially in the willow; and, in the case of the willow, at least, these green ones wither and fall for the most part without turning yellow at all.

The button-bushes are generally greenish-yellow now; only the highest and most exposed points brown and crisp in some places. The black willow, rising above them, is crisped yellowish-brown, so that the general aspect of the river's brim now is a modest or sober ripe yellowish-brown, –generally no bright colors. When I scare up a bittern from amid the weeds, I say it is the color of that bird's breast, –or body generally, for the darker part of its wings correspond to the sere pickerel-weed. Now that the pontederia is brown, the humble, weedy green of the shore is burweed, polygonum, wool-grass, and, in some places, rushes. Such is the river's border ordinarily, –either these weeds mingled with the sere and dark-brown pontederia or a convex raised rim of button-bushes, two to four feet high by a rod wide, through [which] the black willows rise one to a dozen feet higher. Here and there, to be sure, are the purple-leaved *Cornus sericea*, yellowish sweet-gale, reddish rose bushes, etc., etc.

Alders are still a fresh green. The grape leaves are generally crisp and curled, having a very light-colored appearance, but where it is protected by other foliage it is still a dense canopy of greenish-yellow shields.

From the midst of these yellowing button-bushes, etc., I hear from time to time a half-warbled strain from some young sparrow who thinks it is spring.

Scared up from the low shore at the bend, on the south side, opposite Clamshell, a flock of seventy-five or one hundred of what appeared solitary tattlers (??), that went off with a rippling note, wheeled, and alighted there again.⁵⁵

Now again, when other trees prove so fickle, the steadfast evergreenness of the pines is appreciated.

Bright-tinted flaming scarlet or yellow maples amid pines show various segments of bright cones embosomed in green.

53. The death of [Fanny Appleton Longfellow](#) by fire would not occur until 1861.

54. Altered in pencil so as to read, "These willows shed," etc.

55. Henry Haynes next year thought they might be "Black-backs."



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

At Potter's Swamp, where they are all maples, it adds to the beauty of the maple swamp at this season that it is not seen as a simple mass of color, but, different trees being of different tints, –green, yellow, scarlet, crimson, and different shades of each, –the outline of each tree is distinct to where one laps on to another. Yet a painter would hardly venture to make them thus distinct a quarter of a mile off.⁵⁶

Hear a catbird and chewink, both faint.

Fever-bush has begun to yellow. Some nightshade leaves are a very dark purple.

See a grackle on the shore, so near I see the light mark about the eye.

While I lived in the woods I did various jobs about the town, –some fence-building, painting, gardening, carpentering, etc., etc. One day a man came from the east edge of the town and said that he wanted to get me to brick up a fireplace, etc., etc., for him. I told him that I was not a mason, but he knew that I had built my own house entirely and would not take no for an answer. So I went.

It was three miles off, and I walked back and forth each day, arriving early and working as late as if I were living there. The man was gone away most of the time, but had left some sand dug up in his cow-yard for me to make mortar with. I bricked up a fireplace, papered a chamber, but my principal work was whitewashing ceilings. Some were so dirty that many coats would not conceal the dirt. In the kitchen I finally resorted to yellow-wash to cover the dirt. I took my meals there, sitting down with my employer (when he got home) and his hired men. I remember the awful condition of the sink, at which I washed one day, and when I came to look at what was called the towel I passed it by and wiped my hands on the air, and thereafter I resorted to the pump. I worked there hard three days, charging only a dollar a day.

About the same time I also contracted to build a wood-shed of no mean size, for, I think, exactly six dollars, and cleared about half of it by a close calculation and swift working. The tenant wanted me to throw in a gutter and latch, but I carried off the board that was left and gave him no latch but a button. It stands yet, –behind the Kettle house. I broke up Johnny Kettle's old "trow," in which he kneaded his bread, for material. Going home with what nails were left in a flower bucket on my arm, in a rain, I was about getting into a hay-rigging, when my umbrella frightened the horse, and he kicked at me over the fills, smashed the bucket on my arm, and stretched me on my back; but while I lay on my back, his leg being caught over the shaft, I got up, to see him sprawling on the other side. This accident, the sudden bending of my body backwards, sprained my stomach so that I did not get quite strong there for several years, but had to give up some fence-building and other work which I had undertaken from time to time. I built the common slat fence for \$1.50 per rod, or worked for \$1.00 per day. I built six fences.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Minott and Rice are apt to tell me the same story many times over. Minott told me the other day again of his peach tree. John Richardson was going by with a basket full of peach-stones. What are you going to do with them?" asked M. He said he was going to plant. "Well, give me two or three of them, and I'll try too." So he raised one fine tree, which bore first-rate rare-ripes as big as an apple, but after bearing once or twice something got into it and the tree died. They're short-lived things.

1858

By the late 1850s it was common for a locomotive to sport a real headlight consisting of a box of sheet iron with a tin reflector mounted behind a whale oil lamp.⁵⁷

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Thus we get the following observation in [Henry Thoreau's](#) journal of 1853, in regard to one of these early attempts at locomotive headlights, as he was modifying his observation from his window at the train station behind the house for his collection of material upon the theme of night and moonlight:

56. Excursions, page 262; Riv. 321.

57. In those early years the weight of the engine would sometimes cause one of the iron strips used as rails to pull loose from the screws and dowels holding it to the wooden stringer underneath it. It could curl up and, if it did so, it could impale passengers in the coach behind the locomotive. (Hey, have you ever ridden in one of those old DC3 aircraft, and observed the white stripe that they paint around the inside of the fuselage exactly parallel to the blades of the propellers outside, and observed that there is a row of passenger seats missing at that position in the fuselage? You probably thought that was for extra legroom for the people in the front row, right?)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!



January 21, 1853: As I sat looking out the window the other evening just after dark, I saw the lamp of a freight-train, and ~~nearly~~ [^]*farther along at the same height,* just over the train, a bright star which looked exactly like the former, as if it belonged to a different part of the same train. It was difficult to realize that the one was a feeble oil lamp, [^]*and* the other [^]*perhaps* a world.



1859

Hiram Wells, formerly the machinist for the [Association of Industry and Education](#), tied the safety valve of a steam engine down in order to force it to operate at greater pressure. He blew himself up, and along with himself two of his workmen.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

By this year, Brooklyn had for several excellent reasons banned steam locomotives along its Atlantic Avenue.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

The rise of the port of New-York, much better situated to make connections with the interior of the continent than the port of Boston, was not something to be prevented by mere railroad enthusiasm. As of 1811 the foreign trade through Boston and New-York ports had been approximately equal, but by this point Boston was exporting only \$16,000 per year whereas New-York was exporting \$41,000,000 worth of inland commodities. Boston RR enthusiasts were fond of asserting with an air of confidence that “steam could run uphill cheaper than water can run downhill,” but being able to say things that aren’t true with an air of confidence isn’t the same as being able to make things happen that aren’t going to happen. Although Boston investors would continue to pour money into railroad ventures, the Hoosac Tunnel through the Berkshires would be a money sink for a quarter of a century and the eastern portal would not link up with the western portal, underground, until after 1863, when nitroglycerine would be introduced by Alfred Nobel. This would finally give to the Fitchburg RR the lowest and easiest crossing of the Appalachians — but it would simply come too late in the development of the railroad web.

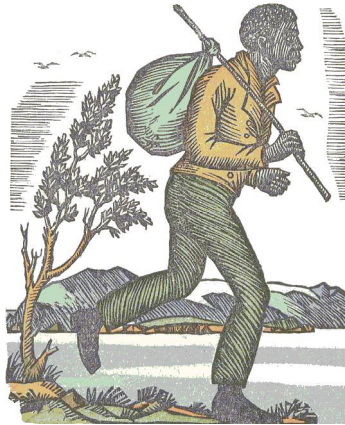
SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

July 11, Monday: At 6:50AM, while the steam boiler at the Hiram Wells & Company machine works in Florence was being fired up for the day's work, someone became irritated at the delay and instructed the engineer, Frank Spear, 38 years of age, to weigh down the safety valve, which was releasing some steam, so that pressure could build up a bit more quickly in the system. The engineer reluctantly did so, while commenting that if the boiler should burst, "he would catch it." That was the last thing he said on this earth. The boiler, 30 feet in length, did burst. The force of the explosion scattered the bricks of a nearby wall over a distance of five or six rods. Although they managed to dig the engineer out of the rubble, he lived only until 9:30AM. The owner of the shop, Hiram Wells, 48 years of age, lived through the day. Another employee, John Franzen, would succumb to his burns after some six weeks of suffering.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Simeon Bushnell completed his 60-day sentence in Cleveland jail for having helped to rescue the fugitive slave John Price, and was able to return to Oberlin, Ohio to be the guest of honor at a great celebration.



July 11. Another hot day with blue haze, and the sun sets red, threatening still hotter weather, and the very moon looks through a somewhat reddish air at first.

The position of the button-bushes determines the width of the river, no less than the width or depth of the water determines the position of the button-bushes. We call that all river between the button-bushes, though sometimes they may have landed or sprung up in a regular brink fashion three or four rods further from, or nearer to, the channel.

That mass (described on the 9th, seen the 10th) in the Wayland meadows above Sherman's Bridge was, I think, the largest mass drifted or growing at all on that great meadow. So this transplantation is not on an insignificant scale when compared with [THE] whole body that grows by our river. The largest single mass on the Wayland meadows, considering both length and breadth, was the recently drifted one. To-day the farmer owns a meadow slightly inclined toward the river and generally (i. e. taking the year together) more or less inundated on that side. To-morrow it is a meadow quite cut off from the river by a fence of button-bush and black willow, a rod or more in width and four to seven or eight feet high, set along the inundated side and concealing the river from sight.

I hear that Mr. and Mrs. Such-a-one are "going to the beach" for six weeks. What a failure and defeat this suggests their lives to be! Here they live, perchance, the rest of the year, trying to do as they would be done by and to exercise charity of all kinds, and now at last, the parents not having realized their aspirations in the married state, and the misses now begun to be old maids without having found any match at all, succumb and slope to the beach for six weeks. Yet, so far from being felt to be a proof of failure in the lives of these Christians, it is thought to be the culminating-point of their activity. At length their season of activity is arrived, and they go to the beach, they energetically keep cool. They bathe daily and are blown on by the sea-breeze. This keeps their courage up for the labors of the year. This recess which the Sabbath-school teachers take! What if they were to abide, instead, with the caravan of sweltering pilgrims making their way over this Sahara to their Mecca?

We hear at length that Miss Such-a-one, now well advanced in years, has at length shut up house and gone to the beach. Man servant and maid servant went long ago to prepare the way for her,—to get the bottles of all kinds



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

ready. She has fought the good fight here until at length no shield nor pretense will serve, and now she has gone to the beach, and have not her principles gone with her? She has flitted to Swallow Cave, where, perchance, no duties lurk.

Ah, shall we not go to the beach after another fashion some of us one day? Think of the numbers who are imbeached by this time! How they flutter like devil's-needles and butterflies commingled along our pontederia'd shores!

They have gone and left an empty house. The silver is cached, as prairie travellers leave behind provisions which they expect to return to. But the rent of the last house goes on nevertheless, and is to be added to the board at the great watering-place. So is it with every domicil we rent; the rent never ceases, but enlarges from year to year. They have gone to the beach to get a few pebbles, which help digestion for the rest of the xxxxxxx

1860

The waist of the Empress of Austria could be compressed by her favorite corset to a mere sixteen inches.⁵⁸ The fashion was to wear a strip of black velvet around the throat, and, in the evening, to wear a gold or jewel ornament on this strip of black velvet. The “waterfall” hairdo of this period was a frame of horsehair attached to the back of the head with an elastic, with the back hair brushed smoothly over it and the ends caught up underneath. A net could be worn over this “chignon” to hold the hair in place, or the whole structure could be made of false hair, and it fastened onto the back of the head with hairpins. “Foulard,” a silk with figures of pansies, clusters of berries, fruits, etc., was introduced.

A name is at most a mere convenience and carries no information with it. As soon as I begin to be aware of the life of any creature, I at once forget its name.

– “Henry David Thoreau, *The Journal* (1860),” as quoted on page 98 of William Least Heat-Moon’s [PrairyErth \(a deep map\)](#) [Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1991].

The most important requisite in describing an animal is to be sure and give its character and spirit, for in that you have, without error, the sum and effect of all its parts, known and unknown. You must tell what it is to man. Surely the most important part of an animal is its *anima*, its vital spirit, on which is based its character and all the peculiarities by which it most concerns us. Yet most scientific books which treat of animals leave this out altogether, and what they describe are as it were phenomena of dead matter.

– “Henry David Thoreau, *The Journal* (1860),” as quoted on pages 417-8 of William Least Heat-Moon’s [PrairyErth \(a deep map\)](#) [Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1991].

The hoop skirt attained its fullest expression. The newspapers frequently carried accounts of crinoline accidents in which a woman was severely burned or burned to death in a fire that began by brushing against a candle.

58. When Sears & Roebuck would begin to advertise corsets in their mail-order catalog, their American corsets would start at eighteen inches. Lillian Russell’s measurements would be 42-22-38.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

September 18, Tuesday: The USS *Levant*, a 22-gun sloop of war with approximately 190 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.



September 18, Tuesday: According to all accounts, very little corn is fit to grind before October 1st (though I have one kind ripe and fit to grind September 1st). It becomes hard and dry enough in the husk in the field by that time, much of it. But long before this, or say by the 1st of September, it begins to glaze (or harden on the surface), when it begins to be too hard to boil.

P.M.—To beeches.

This is a beautiful day, warm but not too warm, a harvest day (I am going down the railroad causeway), the first unquestionable and conspicuous autumnal day, when the willows and button-bushes are a yellowed bower in parallel lines along the swollen and shining stream. The first autumnal tints (of red maples) are now generally noticed. The shrilling of the alder locust fills the air. A brightness as of spring is reflected from the green shorn fields. Both sky and earth are bright. The first clear blue and shining white (of clouds). Cornstalk-tops are stacked about the fields; potatoes are being dug; smokes are seen in the horizon. It is the season of agricultural fairs. If you are not happy to-day you will hardly be so to-morrow.

Leaving Lowell on the morning of the 10th, after the rain of the day before, I passed some heaps of brush in an opening in the woods,—a pasture surrounded by woods,—to which the owner was just setting fire, wet as they were, it being the safest time to bum them. Hence they make so much smoke sometimes. Some farmer, perhaps, wishes to plow this fall there, and sow rye perchance, or merely to keep his pasture clear. Hence the smokes in the horizon at this season. The rattle-pod (in Deep Cut) has begun to turn black and rattle for three or four days. Notice some green pods of lady's-slipper still, full of chaffy seed.

The beechnut burs are browned but not falling. They open directly in my chamber. The nuts are all empty.

White pine cones (a small crop), and all open that I see. [Are they not last year's?]

The toadstools in wood-paths are perforated (almost like pepper-boxes) by flattish slippery insects, bronze and black, which are beneath and within it. Or you see their heads projecting and the dust (or exuviae) they make like a curb about the holes.

Smooth sumach berries are about past their beauty and the white creamy incrustation mostly dried up.

I see in the Walden road two dead shrews and some fox-dung by them. They look as if bitten and flatted by the fox. Were they not dropped there by him? Perhaps they will not eat one. [Vide 24th.]

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1861

Phineas P. Gage, the foreman of blasting operations for the Rutland and Burlington RR who had in 1848 by accident given himself the 1st prefrontal lobotomy, died a derelict. The effect of the loss of brain tissue had been that while he had retained his memory, speech, and other capabilities, he had lost his previous sedateness and responsibility, becoming not only irritable and endlessly profane but also capricious and quite unemployable. —And of course, this goes without saying, his employer, the Rutland and Burlington RR, had felt no further responsibility toward him once he had thus in their service rendered himself unusable.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

— A.J.P. Taylor



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

March 16, Saturday: Governor of [Texas Sam Houston](#) declined to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America.



The Boston & Fitchburg railroad management, including [Winthrop Emerson Faulkner](#),⁵⁹ had closed the rail spur that led to [Harvard College](#) after a customer protest at increased fares, and so on this afternoon his son the college student [Winthrop Harrison Faulkner](#) had needed to hike all the way up to Porter's Station in West Cambridge to retrieve a valise sent from his home in Acton [ACTON](#). The lad was crossing the main track to return to his dorm when whacked by an engine being sent into Boston at a high speed.⁶⁰ The engine, in that era of let-the-pedestrian-beware, was neglecting to ring its bell.⁶¹ [Waldo Emerson](#) would conduct the funeral service, speaking of the deceased only as a classmate and friend of his student son [Eddie Emerson](#) and as therefore a "frequent" visitor at the Emerson home in Concord. Emerson closed his service with the utterly strange remark "We commit him to the Fates."⁶²

HISTORY OF RR

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



March 16. A severe, blocking-up snow-storm.

59. William B. Stearns, President, Boston; Alvah Crocker, Director, Fitchburg; W.E. Faulkner, Director, South Acton; William B. Stearns, P.B. Brigham, and William A. Brigham, Directors, Boston.

60. Although badly injured, the young man survived for an hour. One source alleged that the killing was "instant" but that is false, unless "instant" meant something different in the 19th Century than it does now.

61. Note that had the dead-end spur over to Harvard Common been allowed to remain in service, there would have been a buffer between these high-speed through operations and the public. We don't know how the father handled his semi-involvement in his son's accident, although we do know that in that era of no liability, an agenda for pedestrian safety would not have been considered to be any part of the job responsibility of any railroad director. However, imagine how that locomotive engineer must have felt when somebody broke the news that the pedestrian he had struck down while incautiously speeding his engine through West Cambridge had not been some nobody, but had been actually the Boston & Fitchburg Railroad director's Harvard son! "Oh-oh."

62. Faulkner Hospital in Jamaica Plain now has an institutional history on the Internet (http://www.faulknerhospital.org/PDF/The_History_of_Faulkner_Hospital_31110.pdf), and—rather than confess that their founder had descended from a Salem witch—is trying to tell us that "Colonel Francis Faulkner's second son Winthrop was Emerson's grandfather." This would of course make the deceased, over whose mangled body Waldo was here officiating, out to have been something of a relative. It does seem plausible that the deceased had on occasion visited the Emerson home in Concord in the company of his classmate Eddie. However, in fact the name "Faulkner" nowhere appears in the most extensive Emerson genealogy I have seen, one which in some branches takes the family back into a generation of Great-Great-Great-Great Grandparents living toward the end of the 16th Century.

WALDO'S RELATIVES

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!





SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 18, Thursday: [Giuseppe Garibaldi](#), angered by the disbanding of his army, came through cheering streets to the Italian Parliament in Turin. He entered by a side door (just as the government was explaining its decision to disband his army) and after five minutes of cheering he took the oath as a deputy and was seated. Count Cavour and Garibaldi then took part in a fractious, personal debate.

Pierre Paul Broca presented the findings of an autopsy he had performed on the previous day to the Anthropological Society of Paris. He offered that the reason the patient could not speak was due to softening of the tissue in a particular area of the brain. This suggested to him that different physical areas of the brain must be governing different functions.

The temple scene from a projected opera by Modest Musorgsky to Ozerov's (after Sophocles) play Oedipus in Athens was performed for the initial time, at the Mariinsky Theater of St. Petersburg.

In a machine shop connected with the silk mill in [Florence](#), Massachusetts, Edwin Thwing got his clothes caught "through carelessness" on the shafting that carried the mill power to the work machinery. "He was whirled around the shaft with great rapidity, death coming in a few seconds."

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

There is no comment in the record about safety shields on the power equipment, and I suppose the attitude at the time was that workmen were supposed to be careful to protect themselves against injury — and if they neglected so to do it would be nobody's fault but their own.

[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR 18 APRIL]

SURPRISE!

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July 9, Tuesday: It was a hot day at Craigie House in Cambridge and the Longfellows had been postponing their departure to their summer cottage at Nahant on the North Shore.



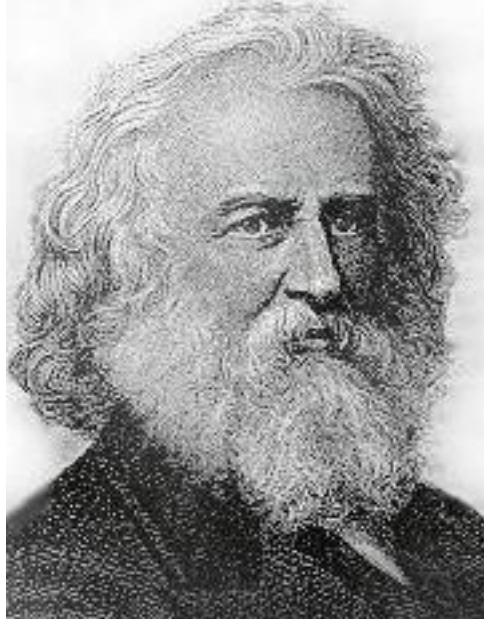
[Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#)'s second wife Fanny had opened the windows to catch the breeze and was sitting in a summer dress, using a candle and hot sealing wax to seal locks of her daughters' hair into remembrance packets. Her dress caught fire. The husband burned his face and hands while rolling her in a carpet to put out the flames. Although [Fanny Appleton Longfellow](#)'s face was untouched, she sustained very serious burns to the skin of her body.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

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The poet would attempt to hide his burns beneath a long beard:



1862

Late December: The 5-story wooden factory structure known as “Damon’s Mill,” at Damondale toward the west end of Concord burned to the ground (it would be rebuilt in brick and this brick edifice would still be standing in 1917 to become one of the assets of the American Woolen Company of Maynard).

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1863

July 13, Monday through July 16, Thursday: Antebellum white anti-slavery people were **forced** to have categorically excessive positive feelings for the American black as victim, because the race issue was so troublesome and dangerous that the only alternative attitude available to them would have been an unacceptably bitter resentment of American blacks in all their troublesomeness. In fact this submerged resentment did from time to time come to the surface, as in the New-York anti-draft riot of this summer, and ever and again would need to be pushed down into the cultural unconsciousness.

During this four-day period in steamy New-York, a largely Irish proslavery Copperhead mob attacked the Colored Orphan Asylum at 5th Avenue and 43d Street, driving the orphans into the street. One of the orphans, ten year old, by the name of Jane Barry, was killed when the rioters were heaving a bureau out of a window and by accident it landed on top of her.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

During the four days in which this sort of thing would be going on, the mob would also **lynch** some citizens

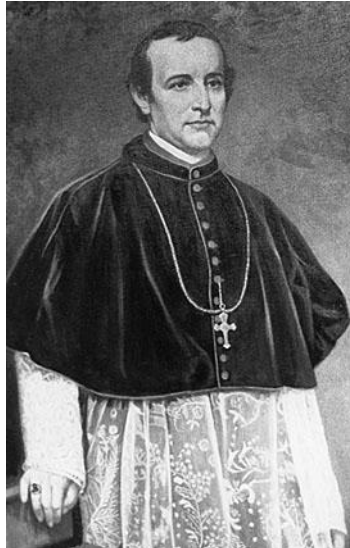
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of African descent, lightening people up by hanging them from lamp-posts. Sometimes they lightened them up by cutting off their fingers and toes.

In regard to a Mr. William Jones whom they **hanged** from a tree on Clarkson Street, they lit a fire beneath him as he swung. After they had strongarmed a disabled black coachman by the name of Abraham Franklin from his home and strung him up in this manner, an 18-year-old Irishman by the name of Patrick Butler dragged the corpse of Abraham Franklin through the streets by the genitals, to general applause. The mob drove some blacks into the river, where they drowned. The Roman **Catholic** bishop there, John Joseph Hughes, who had



been born in Ireland, helped bring this to a stop, but mostly, what brought it to a stop was the arrival of US Army troops still alive after an intense struggle which had taken place at Gettysburg PA (July 2d and 3d) to take military control over the streets of the city.⁶³ For these four days the city police made themselves very scarce –precisely as the white-dominated LAPD would make itself scarce while the 1992 riots in LA were starting, though perhaps for quite opposite tactical reasons– while these gangs of “outraged citizens” went into black neighborhoods and set them to the torch. The question of the day among these outraged whites was, “Is it not outrageous that Irish men are being drafted by the Union government in Washington DC, merely to send them off and endanger their precious lives in order to obtain freedom for these unworthy black people?” In other words, these race riots were draft riots, with anger directed against the distant government that was offering to let rich men escape the draft for a cash payment of \$300, and yet were redirected against innocent and helpless local people.

63. This factoid has been offered by some in a demonstration that it is not categorically correct to presume that during this period, due to the intensity of the economic competition, the American Irish were hopelessly hostile to American blacks on a racial basis. If it makes you feel better to suppose this, fine, but factor into your thinking that once upon a time during a correspondence with the convert to **Catholicism Orestes Augustus Brownson**, Archbishop John Joseph Hughes declared himself as perplexed and frustrated at the insanity of a crusade to end human enslavement in America:

[S]ometimes it has appeared to us that abolitionism ... stands in need of a strait jacket and the humane protection of a lunatic asylum.



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The complex of events would be described by [Herman Melville](#) in “The House-Top: A Night Piece”:

No sleep. The sultriness pervades the air
And blinds the brain — a dense oppression, such
As tawny tigers feel in matted shades,
Vexing their blood and making apt for ravage.
Beneath the stars the roofy desert spreads
Vacant as Libya. All is hushed near by.
Yet fitfully from far breaks a mixed surf
Of muffled sound, the Atheist roar of riot.
Yonder, where parching Sirius set in drought,
Balefully glares red Arson — there — and there.
The town is taken by its rats — ship-rats
And rats of the wharves. All civil charms
And priestly spells which late held hearts in awe —
Fear-bound, subjected to a better sway
Than sway of self; these like a dream dissolve
And man rebounds whole aeons back in nature.
Hail to the low dull rumble, dull and dead,
And ponderous drag that jars the wall.
Wise Draco comes, deep in the midnight roll
Of black artillery; he comes, though late;
In code corroborating Calvin’s creed
And cynic tyrannies of honest kings;
He comes, nor parlies; and the Town, redeemed,
Gives thanks devout; nor, being thankful, heeds
The grimy slur on the Republic’s faith implied,
Which holds that man is naturally good,
And — more — is Nature’s Roman, never to be scourged.

The rioters, it would turn out, had been able to disrupt police communications merely by clipping single telegraph lines. This would have the effect of forcing the police to become intensely aware of their need to establish multiple independent routes for information flow: redundancy. And it was this sort of concern for the reliability which comes only through redundancy which would eventually lead to Dr. Douglas C. Engelbart’s proposal in 1950 that we establish a national information network. Just as it was the police in 1863 that first grasped the need for local redundancy, it would be the military in 1950 that would first grasp the need for national redundancy. This was achieved by asking the military hard questions such as “How does the East Coast give orders to the West Coast after Castro has taken out the Midwest?” and the result would be an item in the development of ELECTRIC WALDEN technology, the military ARPAnet of 1969.



Commenting on the Scorsese movie “Gangs of New York”:
“In my own research of New York history, through first-person accounts and newspaper reports, I have found that our past was often at least as violent and squalid, if not more so, than the movie depicts.”



— Kevin Baker

Eric Foner refers to this event as “the largest civil insurrection in American history other than the South’s rebellion. Nevertheless it has been the sort of non-event which Mary McCarthy, writing in 1946, would term, like [Hiroshima](#) and [Nagasaki](#), the phenomenon of the “hole in human history.” There is such a hole in human history, it would seem, at every point at which an atrocity has been committed by some group which then “won.” —For instance, the hole in Concord history which resulted from the racial mass murder on the watershed of Walden Pond as of the Massachusetts race war in 1675-1676.—For instance, the hole in human history which resulted from the use of Christian Dakota as hostages during this race war of 1863. Writing thirty years after the fact of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Ralph Lapp, who had worked on the A-bomb, would ask “If the memory of things is to deter, where is that memory?” He would add that “Hiroshima has been taken out of the American conscience, eviscerated, extirpated.” We might easily say “The New-York draft riot of 1863 has been taken out of the American conscience, eviscerated, extirpated.”

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Speaking of holes in American history, one hole was left when the bulk of the private papers of Friend [Isaac T. Hopper](#) were destroyed in the sacking and torching of the home of his daughter Abby Hopper Gibbons. The home was known to the Copperhead rioters to have been one that had housed antislavery activists. Abby herself was not endangered by the proslavery New-York rioters because at the time she was nursing wounded at the front. However, we have been forced to reconstruct the detail of Friend Hopper's life out of what Lydia Maria Child had included in her 1853 biography of him.⁶⁴

Here are these New-York draft riots, as they would be described in Frederick Douglass's 1893 LIFE AND TIMES:

This [race prejudice] was especially true of New York, where there was a large Irish population. The attempt to enforce the draft in that city was met by mobs, riot, and bloodshed ... the Irish began to hang, stab, and murder the negroes in New York.

Douglass had come to detest the American Irish and lower-class [Catholics](#) in general. At one point he would become reflective, attempting to figure out why it was that these marginal whites were "among our bitterest persecutors." Here is his rumination, in which, to put the matter in the vernacular, his concept was simply that what had been going around had been coming around:

It is said that a negro always makes the most cruel negro driver.... The Irishman has been persecuted for his religion about as rigorously as the black man has been for his color.

* * *

They [the immigrant Irish, arriving as foreigners] are taught to believe that he [the native-born American negroes] eats the bread that belongs to them.

What Douglass had to say to Ireland in 1893, by way of amelioration of this hostile standoff, was utterly blunt and hostile:

[S]end no more such children here.

64. [Lydia Maria Child](#). [ISAAC T. HOPPER](#): A TRUE LIFE (Boston: Jewett)



A TRUE LIFE



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(For background, on the following screens appears the article “The Conscription a Great National Benefit” as it was printed on this day in [The New-York Times](#).)

The New York Times
"May you live in interesting times."



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The National Enrollment Act, the enforcement of which was commenced in this City on Saturday, will be carried into execution until the quota of the State of New York and of every State in the Union shall be raised and in the field. It may not be necessary that a man of those drafted shall ever go into line of battle during this war. Yet it is a national blessing that the Conscription has been imposed. It is a matter of prime concern that it should now be settled, once for all, whether this Government is or is not strong enough to compel military service in its defence. More than any other one thing, this will determine our durability as a Republic and our formidableness as a nation. Once establish that not only the property, but the personal military service of every able-bodied citizen is a the command of the national authorities, constitutionally exercised, and both successful rebellion and successful invasion are at once made impossible for all time to come. From that time it will be set down as a known fact that the United States is the most solidly based Government on the face of the earth.

The standing reproach against the Republican form of government hitherto has been, that its superior freedom was obtained at the expense of its security. It has been deemed a very comfortable sort of Government for fair weather, but quite unfit for a storm. A Federal Republic, made up like ours of distinct States, has been considered particularly weak. Every philosophical writer who has treated of our institutions, has put his finger upon the weakness of the central authority as the special reason for doubting their perpetuity. De Tocqueville himself, much as he admired our constitutional system, did not hesitate to say, "It appears to me unquestionable that if any portion of the Union seriously desired to separate itself from the other States, they would not be able, nor indeed would they attempt, to prevent it." and to illustrate the helplessness of the federal authority, he cites from a letter of Jefferson's to Lafayette the statement that, "during the [War of 1812](#), four of the Eastern States were only attached to the Union like so many inanimate bodies to living men." Everybody knows that one of the chief embarrassments of that war was the unwillingness of some of the State authorities to surrender the control of their military forces to the Federal Executive. Another of these embarrassments was the great difficulty of keeping the armies up to the necessary figure, notwithstanding extraordinary bounties for the encouragement of the enlistments. The Secretary of War, at that period, in his strait for soldiers, proposed a Conscription system, but it was deemed by Congress dangerous and impracticable, and hardly obtained a hearing.

In fact, up to the last year the popular mind had scarcely bethought itself for a moment that the power



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of an unlimited Conscription was, with the sanction of Congress, one of the living powers of the government in time of war. The general notion was that Conscription was a feature that belonged exclusively to despotic Governments, and that the American reliance could only be upon volunteered effort, as prompted by patriotic feeling or pecuniary inducements. It was not until the second year of this terrible rebellion that the public mind began seriously to question whether it would answer to depend entirely upon these precarious stimulants; and even then it began to question only in a whisper. Even the boldest shrank; for they well understood how quickly the factious enemies of the Government would seize upon the old hated word Conscription, and do their best with it to make the war itself odious. But as the war lingered on without result, the Government gradually braced itself up to the responsibility of demanding under the mild name of a National Enrollment bill, what was in reality nothing less than a Conscription law on the European model. Congress, after deliberation, framed and passed such a law. The great practical question now to be determined is whether such a law can be sustained or not in other words, whether this American Republic has or has not the plenary power of its own defence which is possessed by a European monarchy.

For a time after the act was passed, the chiefs of faction were free in their threats that any attempt to carry it out should be resisted by force and arms. In some few localities they succeeded in working up popular passion against its first processes, even to a fighting place; but it was very quickly made apparent that the people at large would never sustain any such resort to violence, and that it was worse than idle to contend thus with the Government. Since then, the talk of these factionists on the platform and in their newspaper organs has been that the appeal shall be carried to the ballot-box. They flatter themselves that, by working diligently upon the basest motives and meanest prejudices, they can secure popular majorities that will force a repeal of the measure, or at least deter the Government from carrying it out to its complete execution.

Well, let them do their worst. We want it determined whether the majority of the American people can be induced by any such influences to abandon the cause of their country. So far as the Government itself is concerned, we have no fear that it will fail to do its duty. Every day adds new evidence that it means to go straight on to the complete enforcement of the act. The world will now have a better chance to judge than ever before what the real strength of this Republic is. And unless we greatly mistake, it will be seen that an overwhelming majority of the people will stand by the Government in this exercise of the mightiest of its



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powers; and will show a proud satisfaction in demonstrating that freemen are as capable as subjects and serfs of abiding any needful requirements for the national safety. No people on the face of the earth have such reason to submit to the extremist sacrifices for the salvation of their Government; and, if conscription be necessary to replenish its struggling armies, no population, we undertake to say, has ever endured it with more patience or cheerfulness than the American people will now do. The Government is the people's Government, and the people will never consent that their Government shall suffer in a critical hour for the want of a power which is not grudged even the worse Government when its existence is threatened. When it is once understood that our national authority has the right, under the Constitution, to every dollar and every right arm in the country for its protection, and that the great people recognize and stand by that right, thenceforward, for all time to come this Republic will command a respect, both at home and abroad, far beyond any ever accorded to it before. It will be a new and priceless security against all future rebellion and wanton foreign attack.



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LABOR COMPETITION AND THE NEW YORK DRAFT RIOTS OF 1863

By Albon P. Man, Jr.

Journal of Negro History, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, October 1951

The New York draft riots of July, 1863, had their origin largely in a fear of black labor competition which possessed the city's, Irish unskilled workers. Upon emancipation, they believed, great numbers of Negroes would cross the Mason-Dixon line, underbid them in the Northern labor market and deprive them of jobs. Similar fears helped produce mass anti-Negro violence in World Wars I and II, also periods of acute labor shortage. The movement of Negro strikebreakers into the East St. Louis, Illinois, area, for example, touched off the demonstrations which occurred there in July, 1917,⁶⁵ while the upgrading of a few Negro employees signalled the start of the ugly Philadelphia transit strike of August, 1944.⁶⁶

But the New York draft disturbances remain the bloodiest race riots of American history. Police figures on deaths among the white rioters ranged from 1,200 to 1,500, and it is impossible to know how many bodies of Negro victims of the lynch mobs were borne away by the waters on either side of Manhattan Island.⁶⁷ Significantly, the Negro population of the metropolis dropped 20% between 1860 and 1865, declining from 12,472 to 9,945.⁶⁸

This article will seek to answer some of the more important questions bearing upon the white workers' dread of labor competition from contrabands: What predictions as to the consequences of emancipation were made by pro-slavery politicians and journalists between the campaign of 1860 and the sultry week of July 12, 1863? How did abolitionists and Republicans try to allay the fear stirred up in the minds of white workers by opponents of emancipation? Did former slaves within Union lines in the South really wish to go northward at that time? Was there any appreciable migration to the North? In addition, this article will examine the actual, rather than anticipated, labor competition between whites and Negroes in various occupations in New York, with special attention to the crucial longshore field and to the anti-Negro violence which marked the waterfront strikes of 1855 and 1863.⁶⁹ For that violence was to be repeated, intensified a thousandfold, in the draft riots immediately following the strikes of 1863.

At the outset, mention should be made of the fact that before the spurt in immigration in the decades of the forties and fifties, such occupations in New York as those of longshoremen, hod-carriers, brickmakers, whitewashers, coachmen, stablemen, porters, bootblacks, barbers, and waiters in hotels and

65. Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, *They Seek a City* (Garden City, 1945), pp. 125-131.

66. *New York Times*, August 2-11, 14-18, 1944.

67. William Osborn Stoddard, *The Volcano Under the City* (New York, 1887), p. 293; *New York Herald*, July 18, 1863.

68. United States Census Office, 8th Census, 1860; *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington, 1864), pp. 335, 337.

69. For a preliminary but suggestive treatment of the subject of labor competition, see Williston H. Lofton, "Northern Labor and the Negro during the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXIV (July, 1949), 251.



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restaurants had been almost wholly in the hands of colored men.⁷⁰ Domestic maids, cooks, scullions, laundresses and seamstresses were generally colored women. They were secure in these types of employment and earned relatively good wages. But with the huge influx of white foreigners, particularly after the Irish famine of 1846, their position changed radically.

The unskilled Irish swarmed into the menial occupations which had been monopolized by the colored. Offering to work for any wages they could obtain, they reduced the Negroes' earnings drastically and deprived many of employment.⁷¹

As Frederick Douglass wrote, admonishing Negroes to learn trades or perish: "Every hour sees the black man elbowed out of employment by some newly arrived emigrant whose hunger and whose color are thought to give him a better title to the place."⁷² Thus the Irish themselves had earlier subjected Negroes to the same job rivalry that Democratic politicians and journalists prophesied would be offered to the Irish by former slaves from the South. To those dire predictions, especially as uttered during the election campaigns of 1860, 1861 and 1862 and after the Emancipation Proclamation and adoption of the draft act in March, 1863, we shall now turn.

At the Democratic rally on October 8, 1860, to ratify the coalition Douglas-Breckinridge-Bell slate of presidential electors in New York, James W. Gerard, prominent lawyer and candidate for Congress, ventured a typical prediction of intensified Negro-white labor competition in the event of emancipation.⁷³ He warned his listeners—above all, his "friends from Ireland" and immigrants from other countries—that the Republican party was an abolition party:

Abraham Lincoln, if honest to his party, means to do his best that the free men of the North shall make free the laboring population of the South. (Cries of "Never," and cheers.) ... I call upon all adopted citizens to stand up and vote against Abraham Lincoln, or you will have negro labor dragging you from your free labor.

Speaking again later in the month, Gerard returned to this theme, cautioning Irish and German laborers not to vote Republican lest in casting their ballots to exclude slavery, they "exclude bread from their own table."⁷⁴

Likewise, General Leslie Combs, of Kentucky, declared at a Democratic mass meeting in New York during the campaign of 1860 that if the slaves in the South were liberated, they would come North and take away the jobs of white longshoremen and other

70. The New Moral World (Owenite newspaper), June 29, 1844, in John R. Commons et al., A Documentary History of American Industrial Society (Cleveland, 1910-1911), IX, 60, 61; G. E. Haynes, The Negro at Work in New York City (New York, 1912), pp. 67, 68, 97; A.A. Payne, "The Negro in New York prior to 1860," Howard Review, I (June, 1923), 1-64; Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris, The Black Worker (New York, 1931), pp. 12, 13.

71. J.H. Harmon, A.G. Lindsay and C.G. Woodson, The Negro as a Business Man (Washington, 1929), p. 4; Lindsay, "The Economic Condition of the Negroes of New York Prior to 1861," Journal of Negro History, VI (April, 1921), 193-196; Charles E. Wesley, Negro Labor in the United States, 1850-1925 (New York, 1927), pp. 75-77.

72. Quoted in Charles E. Wesley, Negro Labor in the United States, 1850-1925 (New York, 1927), pp. 61, 62.

73. Herald, October 9, 1860.

74. Herald, October 28, 1860.



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laborers. He warned:

*Let the four millions of slaves in the South be set at liberty, and left to their own free will and desires, and we should very soon have, not the great conflict so long predicted between free labor and slave labor, but a terrible conflict between white labor and black labor. (Applause.) ... The unemployed slaves will be found among you in sufficient numbers to compete with you at your wharves and your docks, and in every branch of labor in which white people alone are now employed.*⁷⁵

Pro-South business houses, too, brought pressure to bear upon their employees to vote for the fusion Democratic ticket, to preserve themselves from Negro competition.⁷⁶

During the campaign of 1860, the virulently anti-Negro Herald also carried editorials foretelling catastrophe if Lincoln were elected. A wholesale exodus of four million Negroes from the South would occur. If they were anything like the fugitive slaves "of the most vicious and degraded, character" who had already emigrated to the North, it said on one occasion, they would refuse to work and would steal the fruits of Northern industry and burden Northern workers with taxes for their maintenance." The Herald did not hesitate to contradict itself in its arguments, however, for after dwelling one day upon the supposed laziness of freed Negroes, the tax burden for their support, and their criminal tendencies, on another day it would raise the spectre of job competition from apparently hard-working contrabands:

*Hundreds of thousands will emigrate to their friends - the republicans -- North, and be placed by them side by side in competition with white men. Are you ready to divide your patrimony with the negro? Are you ready to work with him in competition to work more than you do now for Less pay? If you are, vote for the republican candidate.*⁷⁷

Similar to this was the final appeal of James Gordon Bennett, editor of the Herald, to Irish and German laborers on election day, 1860: "If Lincoln is elected to-day, you will have to compete with the labor of four million emancipated negroes.... The North will be flooded with free negroes, and the labor of the white man will be depreciated and degraded."⁷⁸

Even the surge of patriotism which swept the city immediately after the attack on Port Sumter did not delete from Democratic newspapers the theme of Negro labor competition upon emancipation.⁷⁹ It was reiterated by the demagogic Fernando Wood in campaigning for the office of mayor of New York in the fall of 1861. He charged that his Republican opponent was the candidate of a party which would fill regiments with Irish and German laborers and then bring Negroes North to take their jobs

75. Herald, October 25, 1860.

76. Basil Lea Lee, *Discontent in New York City, 1861-1865* (Washington, 1943), p. 7.

77. Herald, October 1, 1860.

78. Herald, November 5, 1860.

79. Herald, November 6, 1860.



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away.⁸⁰ Wood also used the inconsistent argument that the support of contraband paupers in the North would be a crushing financial burden.⁸¹ He played upon fear of Negro labor competition most often in bidding for Irish votes.⁸² In the mayoralty campaign of 1861 the Herald once more used its stock prediction of the displacement of white workers, notably the Irish, by black workers, should the Republicans prevail.⁸³

In the interval between the campaigns of 1861 and 1862, there were few allusions by politicians and press to the danger of Negro labor competition in the event of emancipation. But with the appearance of the preliminary proclamation of emancipation in September, 1862, and the Seymour Wadsworth contest for the New York governorship that year, the old warnings were re-echoed. George Francis Train, the Irish nationalist, said that the abolitionists were "combining to manacle the white man" and were engaged in a "conspiracy against the Irish," whom they sought to degrade by placing Negroes to work beside the⁸⁴ Another Irish-American leader, Richard O'Gorman, describing himself as "a sincere friend of the negro," spoke of the impolicy of freeing the black man from the civilizing restraints of servitude.⁸⁵ "May not these poor people, joying their newly acquired freedom, swarm on us here in the North?" he asked.

Congressman Samuel S. Cox, of Ohio, felt sure that New Yorkers would elect the Democratic candidate for Governor, Horatio Seymour, because "they would never consent to have negroes compete with them. "I Indeed, he suggested that when whites and freed Negroes clashed in New York's labor market, blood would flow and colored men would get the worst of it.⁸⁶ In his campaign pronouncements Seymour himself was more restrained in criticizing Lincoln's preliminary proclamation on the score of Negro labor competition.⁸⁷ Of course, the Herald ran true to form editorials on the menace of Negro labor, addressed to Irish and German laborers. "The Irish and German immigrants, to say nothing of native laborers of the white race, must feel enraptured," Bennett wrote, "at the prospect of hordes of darkeys overrunning the Northern States and working for half wages, and thus ousting them from employment."⁸⁸

Promulgation of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, and adoption of the conscription act on March 3, 1863, caused a new outburst. The rabid New York Weekly Caucasian rejoiced that the Proclamation had led the Metropolitan Record, which had been the official organ of the [Catholic](#) Archbishop of New York, to oppose the war and asserted that its course was generally approved by Irish Americans, who did not relish the thought of having Negroes on their economic level.⁸⁹ The newly-

80. Herald, April 20, 1861; Irish American, May 24, 1861.

81. Herald, November 28, 1861; New York Tribune, November 28, 1861; Lee, op. cit., p. 289.

82. Herald, November 30, 1861; Tribune, November 30, 1861.

83. Harper's Weekly, V (December 21, 1861), 802, 803.

84. Herald, October 20, 31, November 27, 28, 1861.

85. Herald, September 24, 1862; Tribune, October 2, 1862; Irish American, October 11, 1862.

86. Herald, November 8, 1862.

87. Herald, October 29, 1862.

88. Herald, October 30, 1862; Tribune, October 30, 1862.

89. De Alva Stanwood Alexsinder, Political History of the State of New York (New York, 1906-1923), III, 27-29; Sidney D. Bummer, Political History of New York State during the Period of the Civil War (New York, 1911), pp. 238-240.



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formed Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge, an anti-emancipation propaganda group in New York City, published as its first pamphlet a letter written by Henry Clay twenty years before, depicting a horrible doom for white labor in the North if slavery were abolished. As Orestes A. Brownson, one of the few leading anti-slavery Catholics, wrote, Democratic leaders and journalists in this period convinced the Irish that in resisting the draft they were simply refusing to fight for their own economic suicide.⁹⁰

How did Republicans and Abolitionists deal with these predictions of their opponents? In 1860 and 1861 they failed to answer them at all. In 1862, however, they began to grasp the fact that the labor competition argument was making a deep impression upon the working people of New York, particularly the Irish, and that it could no longer be allowed to go unchallenged. In fact, Horace Greeley declared on the eve of the election of 1862 that it was the most common argument advanced against the abolition of slavery.⁹¹

From the summer of 1862 on, Greeley and other Republican and abolitionist leaders undertook to refute it on every possible occasion. Whatever Negroes had migrated to the North had done so to escape slavery, they said. Eliminate, slavery, and the movement northward would stop, the Negro having an exceptionally strong attachment to the locality in which he was born, according to General Hunter.⁹² Furthermore, with the terror of the auction block removed, the colored population of the North would go south, as it was by nature better suited to the climate there and more adept at raising cotton, tobacco, rice and sugar than earning a living at other pursuits in the North. It was therefore clearly to the interest of white workers, including Irish laborers, to support emancipation.⁹³

This was the approach of James S. Wadsworth, in his message in October, 1862, accepting the Union party's nomination for Governor of New York and defending Lincoln's preliminary proclamation against the Negro labor competition arguments. Daniel S. Dickinson, erstwhile Democratic leader, reasoned the same way, as did Secretary of War Stanton, Senator Charles Sumner, Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts, Major General Cassius M. Clay (who was most disturbed by the effect of the competition idea upon the Irish), and Robert Dale Owen.⁹⁴

Greeley also ridiculed the inconsistency of anti-emancipationists in contending that former slaves would work so hard and so cheaply that they would displace white men and then adding in the same breath that they would be indolent paupers whose upkeep would drain the public treasury.⁹⁵

In his extremely eloquent oration on the Emancipation Proclamation, on February 6, 1863, at the Cooper Institute,

90. Herald, October 20, 1862; see also Herald, October 13, 21, November 1, 1862.

91. New York Weekly Caucasian, March 28, 1863.

92. Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge, Papers (New York, 1863), no. 1.

93. [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#), "Catholics and the Anti-draft Riots," [Brownson's Quarterly Review](#), Third New York Series, IV (October 1863), 401.

94. Tribune, November 5, 1862.

95. Tribune, August 4, 1862.



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Frederick Douglass similarly heaped scorn upon such logic.⁹⁶ Once Greeley was bold enough to declare that even if there were an influx of fugitives into the North, it would not injure white workers, because the normal labor force of the North had been depleted by the demands of the army and needed supplementing.⁹⁷ The Negroes would produce as much as they would consume, he insisted, observing not very convincingly that they would, moreover, leave whites free to secure "higher, easier, better recompensed positions."⁹⁸

Lincoln himself took note of the Negro labor competition argument against the emancipation program in his message to Congress on December 1, 1862.⁹⁹ His answer was colonization: "Reduce the supply of black labor by colonizing the black laborers out of the country, and by precisely so much you increase the demand for, and the wages of, white labor." But Lincoln denied that even without the deportation of freed slaves there would be any mass migration northward and supplanting of white workers, since Negroes would no longer have to flee from bondage in the South.

Unfortunately, information on whether there was actually any movement of freed Negroes from the South to the Northeast is scanty, incidental and inconclusive.¹⁰⁰

There is a hint here and there buried in the fine print of a Civil War newspaper, a random suggestion in an obscure pamphlet, but no authoritative or extended treatment of this interesting problem. The Tribune would, at one time, admit unqualifiedly that Negroes were leaving the South in considerable numbers to escape slavery. "Were slavery dead tomorrow, the main current of negro migration would flow southward, not northward," wrote Greeley in January, 1863.¹⁰¹ To the same effect he declared in March: "There is at present a very general exodus of poor people from the region cursed by the Slaveholders' Rebellion ... Black men are fleeing to escape from Slavery to traitors."¹⁰² Yet within a month of making this last assertion he said of liberated slaves: "It is quite certain that up to this time many thousands have been liberated, but as far as we can learn, very few have come among us."¹⁰³ This, however, was contradicted in January 1863 by Fincher's Trades Review, which stated that a large number of colored persons had already reached the Northern states and that many of them were filling positions formerly occupied by white men. The leading labor paper of its time then proceeded to demand that the government place restrictions on the ingress of emancipated slaves into the North.

96. Harper's Weekly, VI (August 23, 1862), 530, 531; Tribune, August 28, November 5, 1862; January 12, March 23, April 16, 1863; R. Dale Owen, J. McKays and Samuel G. Howe, Preliminary and also the Final Report of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission. United States Congress. Senate Executive Documents, No. 53, 38th Cong., 1st sess., p. 8, 1864.

97. Herald, October 6, 1862; Tribune, October 6, 23, 1862; Brummer, op. cit, pp. 238-240.

98. Tribune, October 7, 9, 22, November 24, December 5, 1862; Herald, October 8, 17, 1862.

99. Tribune, July 5, August 6, 1862; March 27, 1863.

100. Tribune, February 7, 1863; National Anti-Slavery Standard, February 14, 1863.

101. Tribune, October 17, 1862.

102. The idea of giving Negroes land confiscated from rebels was hailed by Greeley and Roscoe Conkling as removing the apprehension of white workers that the North would be swamped by an influx of freedmen. Tribune, February 12, March 21, 1863; Loyal National League, Opinions of Loyalists Concerning the Great Questions of the Times ... Mass Meeting on Union Square, New York, on the 11th of April, 1863 (New York, 1863), p. 96.

103. Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln - the War Years (New York, 1941), I, 620, 621.



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It is doubtless true that by the summer of 1863 thousands of former slaves had left Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi for Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas and Minnesota, despite stringent laws passed by some midwestern states forbidding the immigration of contrabands lest whites be deprived of employment.¹⁰⁴ So many Negroes left Missouri, in fact, that it was predicted that crops would perish or remain undeveloped for want of labor.¹⁰⁵ The codes of these states which excluded former slaves but urgently needed agricultural workers to replace men serving in the army were hotly denounced by abolitionists as examples of the absurd lengths to which fear of Negro labor competition could carry white people.¹⁰⁶ But the opposition to emancipation could still point to the northward movement of Negroes in the midwest and predict a similar influx into New York and consequent unemployment for white men.¹⁰⁷

Into the Middle Atlantic states only a negligible migration of freed Negroes took place. The demand for colored labor in Washington, D.C., and on Maryland plantations exceeded the supply.¹⁰⁸ Three hundred contrabands did arrive in Washington in the summer of 1862 from various parts of Virginia, but the men among them were promptly hired about government hospitals and camps and on public works, while the women did washing for the soldiers.¹⁰⁹ The advent of a small number of contrabands in Chester County, Pennsylvania, however, did cause some excitement, which was reported in the New York press. False rumors arose that they were so numerous that they took work away from whites and accepted employment for ten cents a day. These statements led to assaults upon Negroes in Northern cities.¹¹⁰ When about a hundred fugitives who came from the South by boat landed in Philadelphia in March, 1862, an immense crowd greeted them with shrieks of abuse.¹¹¹ There was probably a trickle of Negroes into New Jersey also, for anti-administration forces there called upon the legislature early in 1863 to bar former slaves from the state.¹¹²

Some migration of Negroes to New York City did unquestionably occur, at least enough to give an appearance of validity to the predictions of politicians and press and the fear of the Irish proletariat regarding black labor competition.¹¹³ Refugees may well have settled in the Five Points neighborhood, in close proximity to the Irish.¹¹⁴ During the longshore strike a month before the draft riots it was reported that three carloads of contrabands had reached Jersey City and that the Negroes then

104. Woodson is volume pioneered in this field. Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration* (Washington, 1918).

105. *Tribune*, January 12, 1863.

106. *Tribune*, March 27, 1863; *Anti-Slavery Standard*, March 7, 1863.

107. *Tribune*, April 16, 1863.

108. *Fincher's Trades Review*, June 13, 1863.

109. *Tribune*, August 4, October 30, 1862; *Herald*, September 22, 1862; *Anti-Slavery Standard*, January 30, June 30, 1863. On the fear of an influx of contrabands into Kentucky, see Governor Robinson's message to the Kentucky legislature upon the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. *Tribune*, January 12, 1863.

110. *Anti-Slavery Standard*, June 20, 1863.

111. *Tribune* July 9, 1862; *Anti-Slavery Standard*, May 9, 30, 1863. Minnesota farmers did employ contrabands in place of whites serving in the army. *Anti-Slavery Standard*, May 30, 1863.

112. *Tribune*, October 30, 1862.

113. *Anti-Slavery Standard*, January 10, 1863.

114. *Tribune*, August 11, 1862.



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took the ferry to New York.¹¹⁵ One source suggests that the colored workers used to break the strikes of longshoremens in 1863 were emancipated slaves, but there is no definite proof of that.¹¹⁶ It does, seem, though, that the Negroes sheltered in the Seventh Avenue Arsenal during the draft riots included contrabands,¹¹⁷ and not to be forgotten is that shout by "someone with an Irish accent" who interrupted Archbishop John Hughes's speech appealing to [Catholics](#) to abstain from rioting: "Let the niggers stay in the South!"¹¹⁸ The following day, speaking of Negroes "that float hither from the South," the Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register urged that they be "driven out again, imprisoned or exterminated."¹¹⁹ Such a furor could hardly have arisen without some pretext.

But that the pretext was small is apparent from the available information on whether the Negroes of the South did really wish to go north in 1862 and 1863. Although it was well known that General Hunter, commander of the army's Department of the South, at Port Royal, South Carolina, gave passes to the North to all Negroes seeking them, he stated in July, 1862, that not more than a dozen had applied to him for such passes since his arrival.¹²⁰ Hunter branded the idea of a general migration of Negroes to the North a "carefully fostered delusion." The superintendent in charge of contrabands in Washington, D. C., made a special investigation into the supposed desire of former slaves to emigrate to the North and found it non-existent.¹²¹ Of those who came under his charge during his first four months in office, not thirty-five were willing to go farther north.

The most thorough attempt to ascertain whether Southern Negroes wished to move to the North was made by a special committee of the Emancipation League.¹²² Late in 1862 this committee sent a questionnaire to the different superintendents of contrabands in the South containing the following query, among others: "Do they desire to go North? In the event of general emancipation, and fair treatment at home, would there, in your judgment, be any disposition to go North?" Even though the question was obviously loaded, the answers received leave little room for doubt that the contrabands did not wish to leave the South. The reply from Fortress Monroe, Virginia, was typical: Very few are willing to go North, except for safety. I have had applications from large numbers wishing servants, and offering good wages, lying over for months, because of the unwillingness of any to go." The results of this survey were confirmed by a report of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission in June, 1863, that there was no disposition on the part of Negro refugees within Union lines in South Carolina and Florida to go north.¹²³

115. Tribune, July 11, August 6, 1862; Anti-Slavery Standard, March 28, 1863.

116. Tribune, April 3, 1862.

117. Tribune, January 12, 1863.

118. Woodson's work has an account of the migration of fugitives to New York City in the first half of the century. Woodson, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-86.

119. Committee of Representatives of the New York [Yearly Meeting](#) of Friends upon the Condition and Wants of the Colored Refugees, Report (New York, 1862), P. 20.

120. Tribune, June 10, 1863; Committee of New York Meeting of Friends, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

121. Spero and Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

122. Tribune, July 18, 1863; Herald, July 18, 1863.

123. Herald, July 18, 1863; Daily News, July 18, 1863; Irish American, July 18, 1863.



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The preceding pages have described the manner in which political leaders and journalists in New York played upon the fear of white workers that freed Negroes would compete with them for jobs. They have also discussed the extent to which there was a movement of contrabands from the South who could compete with them. It is now appropriate to look into the competition actually taking place between Negroes and whites before the draft riots of July, 1863.

Such competition was omnipresent in the South, to be sure. It greatly heightened the tension between Negroes and poor whites, with slaves used in skilled capacities both on plantations and in towns and cities, as well, where their masters easily underbid white mechanics. It extended to almost all branches of manual labor.¹²⁴ Everywhere the Southern white worker turned, the Negro seemed to deprive him of a job, except for the most dangerous occupations, in which it would be folly to expose a valuable slave to injury or death.¹²⁵

In the North, some contrabands were competing with white workers by June, 1863, at least according to Fincher's Trades Review, and this development drew a cry for restrictions by the Federal government upon the movement of emancipated slaves into free states.¹²⁶ Although our information about racial competition in the longshore field, which will be explored below, is rather plentiful, the press was not very specific about other areas in which the new rivalry was occurring. Random reports did tell of trouble in Washington, D. C., where navy yard workers showed hostility toward twenty or thirty colored calkers brought from Baltimore,¹²⁷ and of the replacement of white domestic servants by Negro contrabands in St. Louis.¹²⁸ The agitation throughout the North during the Civil War for state laws banning the immigration of Negroes from the South can also be taken as a probable indication of job competition between blacks and whites.

In New York, the ousting of the Democratic party from control of the Federal government in 1861 appeared ominously to bring even political patronage to Negroes. Colored men were appointed to positions in the custom house, replacing good Irish Democrats, said the newspapers, and depressing the wages paid custom house employees.¹²⁹ When, in July, 1862, Negro workers were substituted for whites on a ferry line in New York harbor, and the press carried rumors of contrabands' taking away the jobs of white men in Pennsylvania by agreeing to work for ten cents a day, it seemed high time to stop this trend.¹³⁰ The method of doing so which was applied by a mob of Irishmen in Brooklyn in August, 1862, may well have been suggested by attacks in recent weeks upon Negroes in Cincinnati and Toledo, Ohio, and

124. Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register, July 18, 1863.

125. Tribune, August 4, 1862.

126. Tribune, November 7, 1862.

127. Tribune, January 27, 1863; Anti-Slavery Standard, February 7, 1863.

128. R. Dale Owen et al, op. cit., p. 8.

129. Spero and Harris, op. cit., pp. 5-11. In an emancipation debate with George Francis Train in New York, Cassius M. Clay gave an excellent description of the underbidding of free labor by slave labor in the South. Herald, November 2, 1862. See also Charles Nordhoff, America for Free Working Men! (New York, 1865), p. 1.

130. Charles Nordhoff, America for Free Working Men! (New York, 1865), pp. 12, 13.



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Evansville, Indiana.¹³¹

In the midst of an Irish neighborhood in south Brooklyn stood two tobacco factories.¹³² All the employees of one were colored, numbering from fifty to seventy-five and consisting mostly of women and children. About 250 persons, colored and white, were employed in the other and worked harmoniously side by side. The resentment against the employment of the Negroes that had been smoldering among the Irish in that area finally broke into flames on August 4, 1862, when a mob of from two to three thousand whites, stirred up by pothouse politicians I talk of competition from contrabands, smashed their way into one of the factories, shouting "Down with the nagurs!" Many were drunk from liquor dispensed at the neighborhood's numerous rum-shops, where the attack on the factory was planned. Failing to reach the Negro employees barricaded on the second floor, they prepared to set fire to the place and were prevented from doing so only by the arrival of a strong detachment of police, who quelled the riot, after a fashion, by clubbing the, Negroes.

The rioters may be said to have won their point, however. Although one tobacco factory closed down entirely, the proprietor of the other promised not to hire any more colored workers.¹³³ Thus the effectiveness of mob violence in reducing black labor competition was fully demonstrated. Greeley raged, but his editorial lectures to the rioters were scarcely of a type which would cause them to repent, conceding the very competition that had incensed them in the first place. In a characteristic piece he flayed Democratic leaders for playing upon the Irishman's fear of black labor competition and then continued in this dubious manner:

*Least of all have the laboring white men of the United States, native or foreign, cause to hate the negro. He takes off from them the discredit of the lowest social place, and does offices which leave them free to compete for the higher rewards of industry.... The fugitive colored porter, waiter, or stevedore promotes some shrewd Irish lad to keep a shop, to become constable, or alderman, or to go to Congress.... The transformation of four million chattel slaves into four million free citizens ... will benefit no class so much as that whose tasks they assume and whose toils they relieve.*¹³⁴

In the weeks following the attack on the tobacco factory, there were a number of cases in Brooklyn and New York City in which gangs of Irishmen beat up individual Negroes.¹³⁵ A secret organization of workingmen formed in New York at this time inserted in its otherwise radical statement of principles a warning about the danger of emancipated slave labor.¹³⁶ In refusing to work with Negroes, the longshoremen, whose strikes and anti-Negro violence will be discussed presently, were not

131. Fincher's Trades Review, June 13, 1863; Frank Tracy Carlton, History and Problem of Organized Labor (Boston and New York, 1920), p. 64.

132. Herald, September 26, 1862.

133. Freeman's Tourn, January 17, 1863.

134. Lee, op. cit., pp. 137, 138.

135. Lee, op. cit., p. 139; Tribune, August 6, 1862.

136. Tribune, August 8, 1862.



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unique. The Tribune cited the typical experience of a Negro cooper, a refugee from the South, who had just been refused work at several barrel-making establishments in New York. The employer at each place told him: "Yes, I have work; I would like to employ you; but my journeymen would all leave me if I did, and I cannot."¹³⁷

Another movement of workingmen at this time expressed apprehension about Negro competition. It consisted of whites concerned over the importation of cheap labor from abroad by employers, with the cooperation of the Lincoln administrations Iron and shipbuilding workers, in particular, faced the prospect of wage reductions occasioned by an influx of foreigners. Early in February, 1863, they held a mass meeting at Tammany Hall, primarily to protest the importation of foreign labor. It is noteworthy, however, that they also adopted an angry statement denouncing steps by employers "to bring hordes of blacks from the South, as well as whites from Europe, to fill the shops, yards and other places of labor, and by that means compel -us to compete with them for the support of our families." To cope with this menace, they declared their intention "to effect a common organization of all the artisans and laborers throughout the country against the anticipated inundation of contrabands in Northern cities." One speaker at this gathering of ironworkers charged that their masters had already started to introduce contrabands in their midst.¹³⁸

But the fiercest competition, with the most violent and far-reaching results, occurred in the longshore field. The remainder of this article will be devoted chiefly to an analysis of longshore work, labor organization among waterfront workers, their strikes of 1855, 1862, and 1863, and their violence against Negro strikebreakers.

Almost all longshoremen in New York City were Irish.¹³⁹ Strictly speaking, it is incorrect to classify their work as unskilled labor.¹⁴⁰ It required a degree of special competence to perform the more difficult branches of the work which could be acquired only by years of experience and which raised it above the level of what is ordinarily known as common labor. It was, however, an exhausting, hazardous, casual, and oversupplied occupation.¹⁴¹ The irregular employment of longshoremen resulted in unstable earnings which made a settled standard of living impossible.¹⁴² One of the persistent complaints of striking longshoremen in 1855, 1862, and 1863 was that they averaged only three or four days of work a week. At the October, 1862, pay rate of \$1.50 a day, this meant that they earned between \$4.50 and \$6.00 a week, which was low even according to Civil War wage standards.

Their irregularity of employment and hanging about piers in the hope of being hired also led longshoremen to drift into

137. Tribune, August 5, 6, 1862; Lee, op. cit., pp. 139, 140.

138. Tribune, January 24, 1863.

139. Tribune, August 8, 1862.

140. Tribune, August 21, 22, 29, September 4, 6, 1862.

141. Tribune, August 8, 1862.

142. Tribune, November 25, 1862; January 24, 1863.



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waterfront bars and encouraged drinking.¹⁴³ Many of the waterfront assaults on Negroes by longshoremen during the spring of 1863 and at the time of the draft riots planned in groggeries on West Street and South Street, across from the piers.¹⁴⁴ Press reports to that effect were borne out by the testimony of the police captain in charge of stopping fights between whites and Negroes along the waterfront in April, 1863: "The trouble is due more to the influence of rum than anything else."¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, having no steady jobs to be endangered, longshoremen flared up at bad treatment more quickly than men in other trades. Hence their readiness to strike.¹⁴⁶ The first longshore strike in New York of which there is record took place in February, 1836, when for several days the men paraded through the streets and before the docks in what amounted to a kind of picketing's.¹⁴⁷ The strike of 1836 eventually became so violent that the civil authorities called out a regiment of soldiers, which, abundantly supplied with ammunition, established itself at City Hall, thereby intimidating the longshoremen.

The earliest permanent associations of New York longshoremen were formed for benevolent purposes. The Longshoremen's Union Benevolent Society, the organization of longshoremen most frequently mentioned by the press during the first two years of the Civil War, was founded in 1852 and had as its chief functions to provide relief to members who were injured or sick, to aid in the burial of deceased members, and to give financial assistance to their widows and orphans.¹⁴⁸ It was overwhelmingly Irish in make-up. But although members complained at its meetings of the high cost of living during the war, calling for wage increases and threatening to strike, the Longshoremen's U. B. Society, as it was called, never had any power as a labor union in the present-day sense of the term.

Negro-white friction on the waterfront became pronounced in the middle fifties. In December 1854, the merchants of New York reduced the wages of longshoremen from \$1.75 to \$1.50, using as one reason for the slash the allegation that the Longshoremen's U. B. Society had "attempted to dictate to them."¹⁴⁹ A strike, not led by the Society, broke out. Gangs of strikers visited ships from which other longshoremen were still unloading cargo, forced them to desist, and beat them as they came ashore. The merchants, however, called the police, under whose protection the work of loading and unloading vessels was resumed. When employers replaced striking Irishmen with colored labor, anti-Negro violence resulted, with the whites trying to prevent the blacks from working.¹⁵⁰ But, handicapped by the fact that shipping was slow at the time, the strike petered out in the

143. Weekly Caucasian, February 14, 1863; Tribune, February 7, 1863.

144. Nor were urban occupations the only ones in which there were complaints of racial competition. A few days before the draft riots, contrabands obtained from a Government agent were reported working for no pay on farms near New York City. Daily News, July 10, 1863.

145. Charles B. Barnes, *The Longshoremen* (New York, 1915), p. 5.

146. Charles B. Barnes, *The Longshoremen* (New York, 1915), pp. 51-54.

147. Charles B. Barnes, *The Longshoremen* (New York, 1915), pp. 129 ff.

148. Charles B. Barnes, *The Longshoremen* (New York, 1915), pp. 55-92; Tribune, January 19, 1855; Herald, October 22, 1862.

149. Barnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 13 ff.

150. Herald, April 14, 1863; Anti-Slavery Standard, April 18, July 25, 1863.



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ensuing weeks.¹⁵¹ The Negroes, having served their strikebreaking purpose, were gradually discharged by the merchants, and by the middle of February, 1855, only a few were still working, in the employ of shippers who had taken the lead in the movement to reduce wages.

There is no evidence that the Longshoremen's U. B. Society called the strikes of 1862 and 1863. By the time of the Civil War it had evidently abandoned any pretense to trade union action and confined itself exclusively to benevolent, social and Irish functions, including annual balls and St. Patrick's Day parades.¹⁵² Its members would turn out six hundred strong on the latter occasions, dressed in handsome green and gold regalia and carrying Irish and American flags and the Society's imposing banners.

Scattered items in the press in June and July, 1863, indicate the existence of one or two other organizations of longshoremen at the time of the draft riots. In June, 1863, a Longshoremen's Association was established and within a week enrolled three hundred members.¹⁵³ During the riots it was said that white workers, in driving the Negroes from the docks, were insisting that longshore jobs be held exclusively by members of the Longshoremen's Association and such other whites as they permitted upon the waterfront.¹⁵⁴ The only other longshore labor organization mentioned during the strike of June, 1863, was a Joint Committee of the North and East Rivers, which agreed upon a general rate of wages to be asked of the shippers.¹⁵⁵

In the interval between the winter of 1854-1855 and October, 1862, no major labor disputes occurred on the city's waterfront. In the autumn of 1862, however, the strain of having to buy with 1855 wages goods sold at war-inflated prices became too great for the longshoremen, who were then working only three days a week. On October 20 they struck. Through a representative committee they demanded that wages be increased from \$1.50 a day to \$1.75, overtime rates raised, and the working day reduced from nine to eight hours, giving as their reason for wanting more pay "the advanced prices of food, clothing, and other necessaries."¹⁵⁶ Alongside one editorial on the danger of an influx of Negro labor into the North, the Herald published another supporting the strike, which the next day brought fulsome praise from the chairman of a strikers' meeting at the Battery.¹⁵⁷ What role, if any, Negro strikebreakers played in this dispute is not clear, but it appears that the longshoremen failed to win an increase in wages at that time.¹⁵⁸

For late in January, 1863, workers in one section of the waterfront were informed that thenceforth their pay would be

151. Herald, April 16, 1863.

152. Barnes, op. cit., p. 93.

153. William Leete Stone, History of New York City (New York, 1872), pp. 486, 487.

154. Tribune, February 15, 1855; Irish American, March 22, 1862; March 28, 1863.

155. Tribune, January 18, 19, 1855.

156. Tribune, February 15, 1855; Charles Lionel Franklin, The Negro Labor Unionist of New York (New York, 1936), p. 25; Spero and Harris, op. cit., p. 197; Wesley, op. cit., pp. 79, 80.

157. Tribune, February 15, 1855.

158. Irish American, October 27, December 8, 1860; January 5, March 23, August 3, October 12, 10, November 2, 1861; February 15, March 15, 22, August 30, November 15, 1862; February 21, March 7, 14, 28, 1863.



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only \$1.12 a day instead of the \$1.50 they had been receiving previously.¹⁵⁹ This action of the merchants started a labor war on the docks of New York which, except for brief truces, continued till the draft riots in July. Upon reduction of their wages the longshoremen went on strike. They were willing to go back at \$1.25 a day provided they were employed permanently, claiming that their irregular work on the waterfront often compelled them to seek jobs elsewhere or remain idle much of the time. Press accounts of two longshore strikes in March, 1863, which refer to \$1.12 a day as the prevailing rate of wages, indicate, though, that the cut was put into effect on a wide scale and that the January strike against it did not succeed.¹⁶⁰ But on March 23, 1863, longshoremen working on the North River piers of the Erie Railroad Company, having previously won back part of the slash and restored their wages to \$1.25 a day, struck for \$1.50.¹⁶¹

When the company foreman refused to yield to their terms and announced that he would employ other workers in their places, a thousand men gathered in the street in front of the pier. No disturbances broke out until the foreman hired a gang of Negroes to move bales of cotton. Instantly the crowd fell upon the Negroes with sticks, stones, and fists and drove them from the waterfront. The company then agreed to pay \$1.50 a day but declined to hire about half the strikers. At first some measure of solidarity was shown by the group, as those whom the company offered to take back held out for the reemployment of the others. By the next morning, however, this unity had disappeared. The company hired all but sixty of the most militant strikers, and work resumed under strong police protection.¹⁶²

The example set by the Erie Railroad longshoremen was immediately followed by employees of the Hudson River Railroad, who struck for an increase in wages from \$1.12 a day to \$1.50 and notified the company's directors that they would not allow any other persons to take their places for lower wages. Nevertheless, with a squad of police standing by, the company did hire both white and colored strikebreakers. Although here no violence actually broke out, the defeated workers seethed with resentment against those replacements whose dark skin made them stand out conspicuously and rendered them easy targets for revenge.

The next month, April, new strikes broke out among the longshoremen of lower Manhattan. Their exact wage demands are not clear, but for three days mobs of Irish longshoremen, inflamed by drink, beat up Negroes found working on the waterfront and chased them from the docks, shouting "Drive off the damn niggers" and "Kill the niggers."¹⁶³ "They were determined, they said, that the blacks should not drive white

159. Daily News, June 16, 1863.

160. Daily News, July 17, 1863. Speaking of the longshore and railroad workers strikes in 1863, McNeil says that "assaults were made upon the non-unionists who took the place of the men on strike." (Emphasis added.) George E. McNeil, *The Labor Movement—the Problem of Today* (Boston and New York, 1887), p. 126. This implies the existence of a union conducting the strike. See also United States Commissioner of Labor, *Third Annual Report* (1887), p. 1048.

161. Herald, June 10, 1863.

162. Tribune, October 21, 22, 1862; Herald, October 21, 22, 1862.

163. Tribune



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labor out of the market, and remonstrated against the employment of negroes along shore."¹⁶⁴ Four or five hundred white longshoremen took part in these disturbances, and with difficulty the Metropolitan Police saved from lynching a couple of Negroes who tried to defend themselves. At least two hundred colored longshoremen were employed on the docks at that time, and according to police they did not receive less than the usual rate of wages. In the course of this outbreak, crowds of longshoremen also hunted down and stoned Negroes in other sections of lower Manhattan besides the waterfront, pursuing all the colored porters, cartmen and laborers within sight until routed by the locust batons of the police.

Greeley regarded the episode as the natural result of the persistent efforts of the pro-slavery press of New York to strengthen its readers' prejudices and to persuade them that "white men were to be cheated out of work by an immigration of negroes." Said he further:

*If longshoremen or any other class of laborers do not choose to work with negroes they need not. No law compels them. But the negro, as well as the white man, has a right to work for whoever will employ and pay him, and the law, and courts, and police, and public opinion ought to protect him in that right, and will.*¹⁶⁵

May was a quiet month on the waterfront, but trouble flared up again early in June, when the longshoremen of New York stopped work *en masse*, demanding an increase in pay to twenty-five cents an hour during the regular working day and overtime of fifty cents an hour after 6 PM. Five hundred of them marched from pier to pier, inducing men who were still working to quit. Their number swelled as they proceeded. When non-strikers at one pier balked at leaving work, they were attacked by the strikers and compelled to desist until the police arrived and gave them protection.¹⁶⁶

After a week of fruitless negotiation between committees of strikers and shipowners, the United States government stepped in. It was a now-familiar story: Army transports, supposed to sail with cargoes of ammunition and other supplies, were being held up by the strike.¹⁶⁷ Accordingly, about 150 deserters from Governor's Island and sixty-five convalescent soldiers from Bedloe's Island were put to work loading the transports, as a detachment of regular troops stood guard with fixed bayonets and nearly five hundred policemen patrolled the waterfront.¹⁶⁸

But the strike grew despite this formidable show of might opposing it. By the middle of June three thousand longshoremen were idle.¹⁶⁹ On June 18, however, a group of important shipping firms gave notice that they would pay \$2.00 for a day of nine hours and twenty-five cents an hour overtime, and that was

164. Wesley, *op. cit.*, pp. 99, 100.

165. Tribune, February 2, 1863.

166. Tribune, March 25, 1863; Herald, March 25, 1863.

167. Times, March 24, 1863; Tribune, March 24, 1863; Herald, March 24, 1863.

168. Herald, March 25, 1863; Tribune, March 25, 1863.

169. Herald, April 18, 1863.



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probably the formula on which the strike ended. One thousand of the strikers accepted it by returning to their jobs the next day.¹⁷⁰

While the longshoremen were thus engaged in June, 1863, (with the impassioned support, it might be noted, of the pro-slavery Daily News), occupational groups closely related to them struck successfully for higher pay.¹⁷¹ These included workers on canal boats and barges in the lower part of the city and freight handlers on the Hudson River Railroad and the New York Central. Another strike of Erie Railroad employees for a wage increase occurred.¹⁷² Again the company hired strike breakers, although it is not certain that they were Negroes, and again the strikebreakers were assaulted by some of the old employees.

Similar work stoppages for higher wages took place in other northern cities during the Civil War. Negroes were often used as strikebreakers, with uniformly violent results.¹⁷³

Such strikes are important as a partial explanation of the draft riots in those places. Perhaps the most serious disorders broke out in Buffalo. In August, 1862, striking Buffalo longshoremen demanded higher pay and sought to keep non-strikers from continuing to work at the former rates, but the racial aspect does not seem to have entered into their struggle at that time.¹⁷⁴ The same is true of another strike of longshoremen and grain shovellers in Buffalo in May, 1863, when they won an increase in pay to \$1.50 a day.¹⁷⁵ Only a week before the draft riots, though, some Buffalo shippers tried to replace Irish longshoremen with colored workers, and violence ensued, with three Negroes slain and twelve badly beaten.¹⁷⁶ Not only did Irish longshoremen seek to prevent Negroes from working on the docks, but, in addition, mobs of other whites attacked colored inhabitants of the city generally. A prominent Democratic politician was heard to declare publicly that every Negro and every Black Republican ought to be driven out of town.¹⁷⁷ More truthfully than they knew, the editors of Fincher's Trades Review commented on the Buffalo situation two days before the draft riots began: "This, we fear, is but the beginning of the end."¹⁷⁸

The result of this labor strife was that when resistance to the draft started in New York on July 13, 1863, longshoremen formed the van of the mobs.¹⁷⁹ Deputations recruiting rioters thoroughly

170. Herald, April 16, 1863. See also Herald, April 14, 15, 1863; Tribune, April 13-16, 1863; Anti-Slavery Standard, April 18, 1863; Lee, op. cit., pp. 141, 142.

171. Tribune, April 14, 1863.

172. Herald, June 6, 9, 1863; Tribune, June 8, 9, 20, 1863.

173. Herald, June 15, 16, 1863; Herald, June 16, 1863.

174. Similar to the longshore situation in 1863 was the strike of New York longshoremen in October, 1945, at the end of World War II. At that time, Federal authorities, pleading the piling up of military cargoes on the docks, sent two platoons of Negro soldiers with longshore experience to unload mail and baggage from the British transport, Queen Elizabeth. Times, October 10, 11, 1945. The Negro troops performed this task amid the hissing and booing of the strikers.

175. Tribune, June 15, 1863.

176. Tribune, June 20, 1863; Herald, June 20, 1863; Daily News, June 20, 1863.

177. Tribune, June 16, 1863; Herald, June 16, 1863; Tribune, June 17, 1863.

178. Daily News, June 20, 1863.

179. Spero and Harris, Op., Cit., pp. 197, 198; Wesley, op. cit., pp. 99, 100. For an interesting account of anti-Negro violence in a Toledo, Ohio, longshore strike, during which the members of the local board of trade were sworn in as special police, see Tribune, July 11, 1862.



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canvassed the waterfront, so that by the second day of the upheaval the loading and unloading of ships in the harbor had stopped, except at a wharf here and there which happened to be under the guns of an armed vessel.¹⁸⁰ No colored dockhands were to be found on any pier.¹⁸¹ Negroes who ventured on the streets near the waterfront or near saloons frequented by longshoremen were horribly tortured and beaten to death by bands of longshoremen and their bodies cast into the East River and Hudson River.¹⁸² One reporter described conditions about the piers thus:

*So determined and bitter is the feeling of the 'longshoremen against negroes that not one of the latter dares show himself upon the docks or piers even when a regular employee of the place. The white workmen have resolved, by concerted action, to keep colored men from this branch of labor, and have evinced, by their conduct toward their former comrades in work, a spirit as murderous and brutal as it is illiberal and selfish. It is a prevalent rumor, to which the authorities give full credence, and which the 'longshoremen seem proud of, that scores of these unfortunates have been thrown into the river and drowned, for no other reason than that they were obnoxious to the sensitive-minded individuals of a lighter color.*¹⁸³

Another observer likewise noted that longshoremen made

*no attempt to conceal their determination to keep negroes ... from that sort of labor. They insist upon it that the colored people must and shall be driven to other departments of industry, and that the work upon the docks, the stevedoring, and the various job-work therewith connected, shall be attended to solely and absolutely by members of the 'Longshoremen's Association, and such white laborers as they see fit to permit upon the premises.*¹⁸⁴

The mobs along the waterfront which attacked other Negroes besides dock workers consisted, in all likelihood, of white longshoremen.¹⁸⁵ Next to the colored dock workers, waiters and other Negro employees in downtown hotels and restaurants were the chief objects of the rioters' fury.¹⁸⁶ One firm, fearful that its property might be destroyed by demonstrators who believed it to have employed colored persons, sought to avert that fate by placing in the window a sign in conspicuous capitals: "No niggers in the rear."¹⁸⁷

It is not contended here that the competition of Negroes with whites ceased completely with the draft disturbances. Indeed,

180. Tribune, August 13, 1862.

181. Tribune, May 14, 1863; Herald, May 14, 16, 1863.

182. Fincher's Trades Review, July 11, 1863; Tribune, July 8, 1863; Herald, July 8, 1863; Daily News, July 11, 1863.

183. Tribune, July 10, 1863.

184. Fincher's Trades Review, July 11, 1863.

185. Emerson David Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions in the North during the Civil War* (New York, 1910), pp. 189, 190; Spero and Harris, *op. cit.*, pp. 197, 198.

186. Daily News, July 15, 1863; Weekly Caucasian, July 18, 1863; Stoddard, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

187. Herald, July 17, 1863.



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as early as Saturday, July 18, the last day of the riot week, a few colored workers began to pursue their usual vocations in public without being molested.¹⁸⁸ On Monday, the 20th, more colored people, including waiters in several restaurants, summoned up enough courage to return to their jobs, and this trend continued in the succeeding days, to a point where even some Negro longshoremen returned to the docks of the Erie Railroad Company.¹⁸⁹

But the committee of merchants formed to give relief to colored victims of the riots was forced to admit that after this civil war within a Civil War many Negroes discharged by employers who feared destruction of their property because they had hired colored workers were not taken back in their old positions, despite years of service. White workers who wished to drive their competitors from the city were responsible, said the merchants, for pressure upon employers not to reinstate Negroes. They also persuaded the street railway companies to refuse colored persons permission to ride on their cars, making it difficult for or them to travel to work.¹⁹⁰

To alleviate these conditions, the committee kept its office open as an employment agency after it stopped dispensing financial relief,¹⁹¹ in pursuance of a resolution, adopted at its first meeting, on July 18:

*That we will exert all the influence we possess to protect the colored people of this city in their rights to pursue unmolested their, lawful occupations.... That we will not recognize or sanction any distinction of persons of whatever nation, religion, or color, in their natural right to labor peaceably in their vocations in the support of themselves and those dependent upon them.*¹⁹²

Brave talk this, but its implementation was another matter. As the more timorous merchants and transportation companies continued to withhold jobs from Negro former employees, their brethren connected with the committee could only shake their heads and repeat that the whole sorry mess was the result of the merchants' having tolerated months ago the dictation of striking longshoremen as to whom they should employ and on what terms.¹⁹³

That many, Negroes were not restored to their old jobs is also clear from editorials in the Tribune after the riots. Greeley urged the merchants of New York to welcome Negroes back "to any work they are able and willing to do at a satisfactory price," and, in a thrust at the Irish, urged that colored persons -- "American born and bred" -- be protected in the exercise of this

188. Daily News, July 17, 1863; New York Committee of Merchants for the Relief of Colored People Suffering from the Late Riots, 1863, Report (New York, 1863), pp. 20, 21; David M. Barnes, The Draft Riots in New York (New York, 1863), p. 24; Stoddard, op. cit., p. 239.

189. Times, July 17, 1863; Anti-Slavery Standard, July 25, 1863.

190. Daily News, July 17, 1863.

191. Tribune, July 17, 1863.

192. Barnes, op. cit., p. 34; Stoddard, op. cit., pp. 80, 81, 91; Alexander, op. cit., 111, 68. Colored servants in private homes were another large class assaulted by rioters. Herald, July 17, 1863.

193. Tribune, July 20, 1863. When the danger abated, this concern denied the charge that it had disclaimed having any Negro employees, asserting that it sheltered a number of colored refugees during, the disorders. Tribune, July 21, 1863.



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right.¹⁹⁴ Failure to do so meant capitulation to the demands of the rioters:

*The mob exults in the belief that, if it failed in its other objects, it [had?] at least secured possession of the labor of the city, and has driven the blacks to seek work elsewhere... . It is the duty of merchants and other employers to take pains to recall their workmen immediately, and assure them of permanent protection.*¹⁹⁵

Greeley observed, nevertheless, that reluctance to reemploy Negroes persisted.¹⁹⁶ Of course, the great decrease in the city's colored population by 1865 also indicated a drop in the employment of Negroes.¹⁹⁷

To review the main points of this article, Democratic leaders and newspapers in New York, from the secession crisis to the draft riots, constantly harped upon the note that if the slaves were freed, they would flock north and take away the jobs of Irish laborers. The election campaigns of 1860, 1861, and 1862 and Lincoln's emancipation program were the occasions for their heaviest barrages of propaganda on this score. Republicans and abolitionists were slow to answer their opponents' predictions. When they finally did reply, they argued that elimination of slavery would forestall any danger of an inundation of blacks.

Although information about the actual movement of Negroes during the Civil War is sparse, it appears that some northward migration of contrabands did take place. It was small, to be sure, but enough seemingly to give point to the warnings of anti-administration politicians and journalists and to alarm the New York proletariat, despite surveys proving that the great majority of former slaves had no desire to leave the South.

Rivalry for jobs between Negroes and Irishmen in New York had existed before the Civil War, and employers had occasionally hired black workers to break the strikes of white workers. During the war, with the numerous strikes for higher wages which it brought, the use of Negro strikebreakers by employers became much more frequent, particularly in the longshore field, dominated by the Irish. In the first half of 1863 the longshoremen of New York went on strike after strike for increased pay, only to see their places filled by colored men working for less money under police protection. While longshore wages gradually rose, white labor on the waterfront was, obsessed with the fear of competition from Negroes which needed only the commencement of the draft to be transformed into wholesale murder. The violence inflicted upon black workers on

194. Tribune, July 20, 1863.

195. Tribune, July 21, 22, 1863; Herald, July 30, 1863; New York Committee of Merchants, op. cit., pp. 4-6. The claim of the committee that within a few weeks the demand for colored servants had increased tenfold must be treated with caution. Herald, p. 27. It is quite possible that new Negro domestics were being sought to replace those who had fled from the city during the riots.

196. Herald, pp. 12, 13.

197. Wesim op. cit., pp. 100, 101

136. Tribune, July 21, 1863.

137. Tribune, July 25, 1863.

138. Tribune, July 20, 1863.

139. Tribune, July 21, 1863.

140. Tribune, July 23, 1863.

141. See footnote 4 supra.



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the docks and in other occupations by the draft rioters did, in fact, result in a decline for some years to come in the job rivalry which the former had offered. Thus the rioters partially achieved their aims.

ALBON P. MAN, JR.

New York, New York

1864

June 29, Wednesday: A railway accident on the Grand Trunk Railway at Beloeil, Quebec, took 99 lives. This was Canada's worst railway disaster.

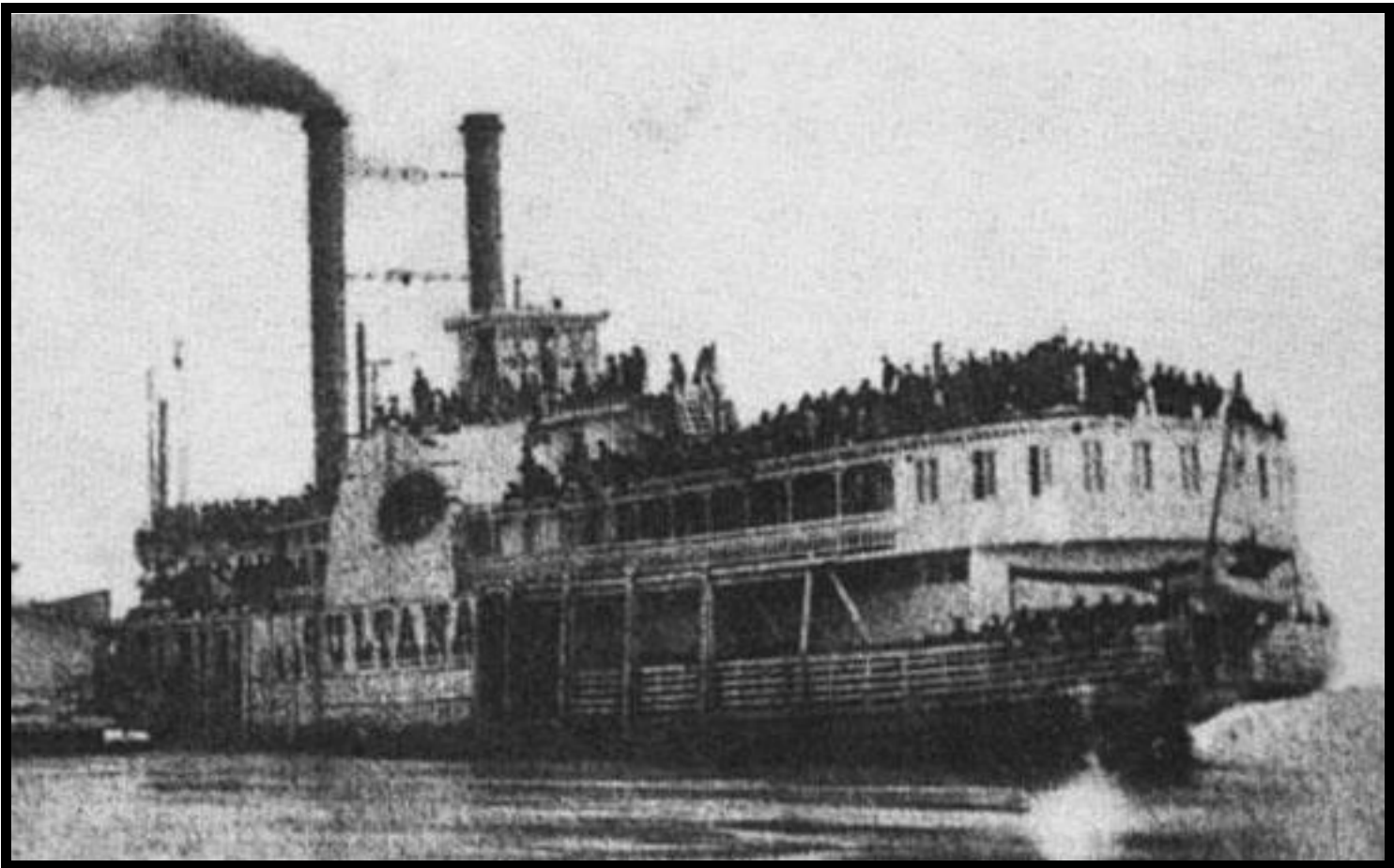
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1865

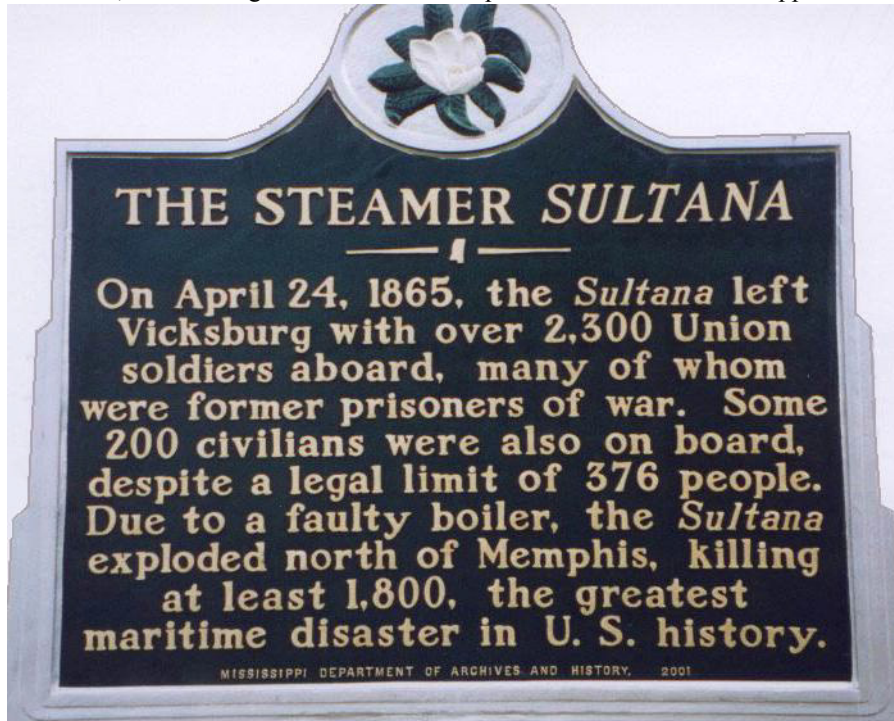
April 24, Monday: The worst marine disaster in American history was upon us, 47 years before the sinking of the Titanic, when three whole trainloads of freed Union soldiers who had been prisoners of war were required to board a Mississippi riverboat, the *Sultana*. The steamer was probably loaded up with about 2,400 of these men eager to get home after their release from the famous Confederate prison camps at Andersonville and Cahaba, which was about six times its legal capacity of 376 customers. It was so top-heavy with all this human meat packed onto its decks that the skipper specially warned the freed prisoners, to not for any reason rush to one side of the vessel. This is what it looked like as it pulled away from the dock:



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Around 1,800 people would perish, fatally scorched or blown to bits, or drowned, 300 more deaths than for the *Titanic* disaster, thus earning this vessel the sobriquet “*Titanic* of the Mississippi.”

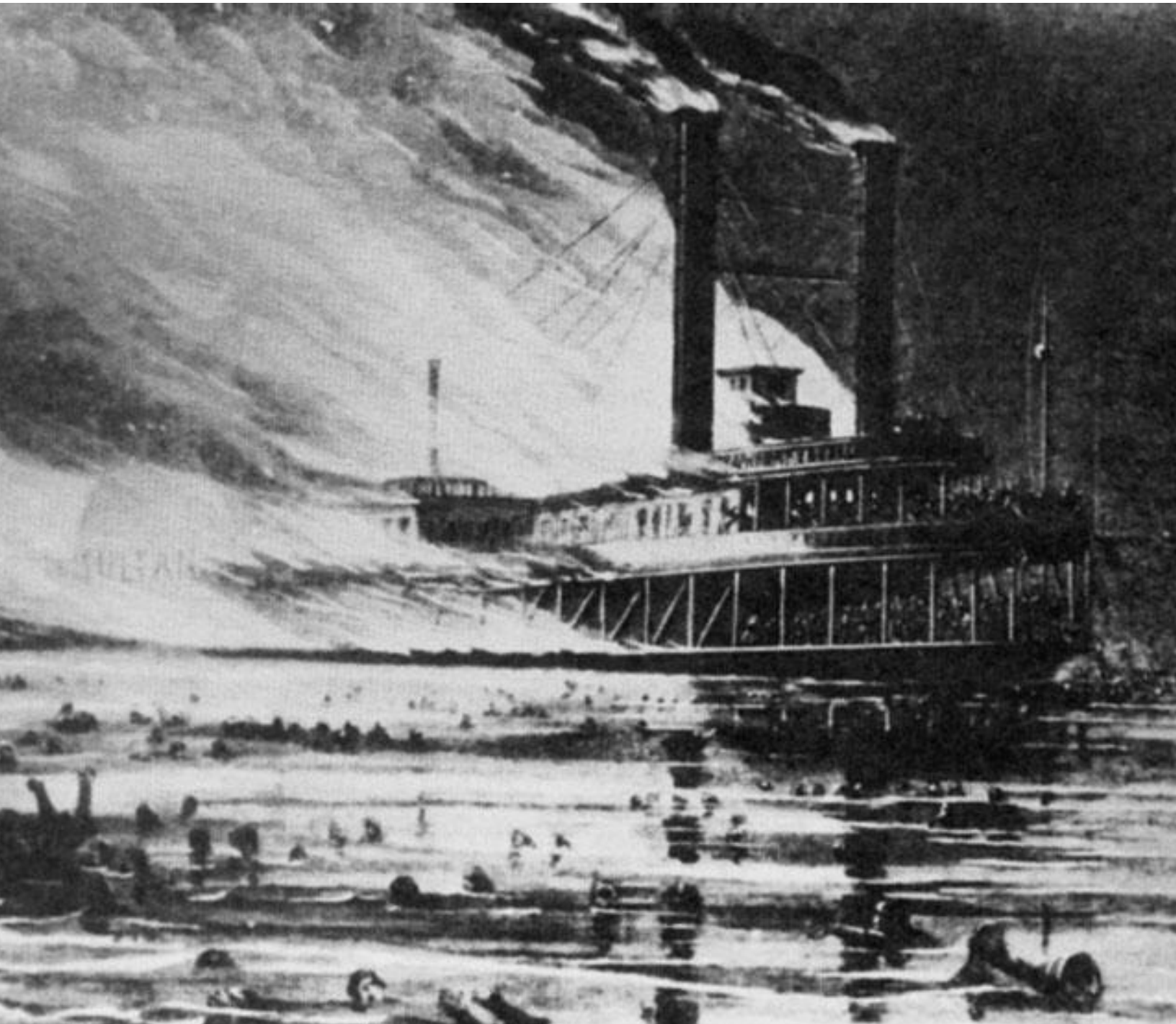


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April 27, Thursday: At 2:00AM, on the Mississippi River just north of Memphis, Tennessee, three of the *Sultana*'s four boilers exploded and then the boat became enveloped in flames.

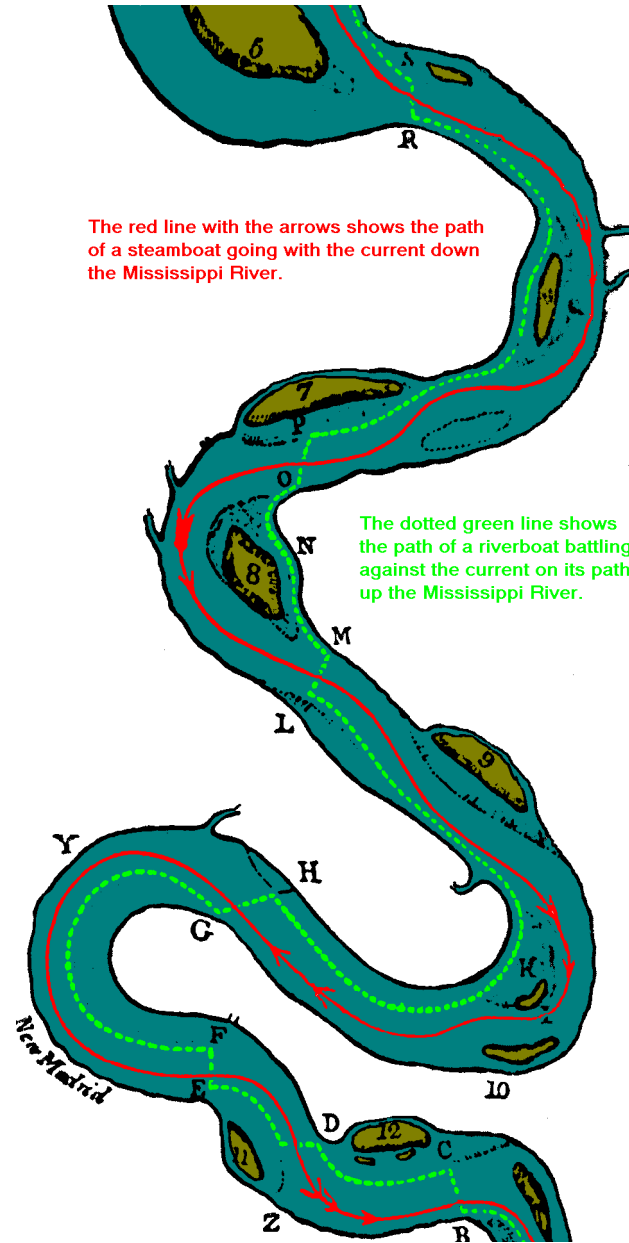


The vessel had a pet alligator, and even this alligator was a casualty — because one of the soldiers knifed it in order to obtain its crate in hope of using this crate as a float for himself!

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

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June 9, Friday: Charles Dickens was returning with Ellen Ternan by train from a holiday in Paris. He later wrote a friend about what happened:

I was in the only carriage which did not go over into the stream. Our carriage was caught upon the turn of some of the ruin of the bridge and hung suspended and balanced in an apparently impossible manner. I got out with great caution and stood upon the step. Looking down I saw the bridge had gone, and nothing below me but the line of rail. Some people in the two other compartments were madly trying to plunge out of the window, and



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had no idea that there was an open swampy field fifteen feet below them and nothing else. Suddenly I came upon a staggering man covered with blood (I think he must have been flung clean out of his carriage), with such a frightful cut across his skull that I couldn't bear to look at him. I poured some water over his face and gave him some brandy, and laid him down on the grass, and he said, "I am gone," and died afterwards.

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On this day and the following one, a report from Walt Whitman:¹⁹⁸

"Specimen Days"

I have been sitting late to-night by the bedside of a wounded captain, a special friend of mine, lying with a painful fracture of left leg in one of the hospitals, in a large ward partially vacant. The lights were put out, all but a little candle, far from where I sat. The full moon shone in through the windows, making long, slanting silvery patches on the floor. All was still, my friend too was silent, but could not sleep; so I sat there by him, slowly wafting the fan, and occupied with the musings that arose out of the scene, the long shadowy ward, the beautiful ghostly moonlight on the floor, the white beds, here and there an occupant with huddled form, the bed-clothes thrown off. The hospitals have a number of cases of sun-stroke and exhaustion by heat, from the late reviews. There are many such from the Sixth corps, from the hot parade of day before yesterday. (Some of these shows cost the lives of scores of men.)

June 17, Saturday: In the New-York Times, a report on the dangers (other than the hazard of coming too close to a fireplace or a candle) presented by the popular crinoline underskirt:

A Young Lady Dragged Two Miles by Runaway Horses. About 11 o'clock on Thursday night a shocking accident occurred at Rahway, resulting in the death of a highly respected young lady, Miss Kate Degraw....Miss Degraw, together with her two sisters, had attended a picnic a few miles out of town, in company with a young gentleman named Ennis. Upon their return the carriage drew up at the door, and the two sisters had alighted, and as the deceased was being assisted from the carriage, the horses took a sudden fright and dashed off at furious speed. The young lady's crinoline became entangled in the steps of the carriage, and with her head and shoulders dragging upon the ground, the horses made the circuit of the village twice before the citizens could stop them. When they did so the young lady was found to be lifeless, and her remains presented a mutilated and ghastly appearance.

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198. Actually the moon had been full on the night of the 7th.

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1867

Léopold Trouvelot, a Massachusetts researcher associated with Professor [Louis Agassiz](#) of Harvard College, was experimenting with various silk-producing moths including the “European” [gypsy moth](#) *Porthetrea dispar* or *Lymantria dispar*.¹⁹⁹ The investigator reported that he had put five acres of woodland in Medford, Massachusetts within an 8-foot fence, and covered this area over with nets adequate to keep out all birds in order to experiment with these [silk](#)-producing moths.²⁰⁰ He was intending to breed a disease-resistant silkworm and do good and do well. He would accidentally release a very small number of European gypsy moths into the vacant lot next door, which is to say, into the ecosystem. Oops.²⁰¹



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

[Dr. Samuel Kneeland, Jr.](#) began to serve as an instructor in zoology and physiology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. An avid collector, he would venture on collection expeditions to Brazil, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Iceland (he does not seem to have brought back with him anything quite as devastating as the gypsy moth). He would contribute over 1,000 articles, mostly on zoological and medical subjects, to APPLETON’S AMERICAN CYCLOPÆDIA.

March 5, Sunday: John Muir was blinded in a factory accident. After weeks of agony, his sight would return, and he would determine to abandon factory work for the study of nature.

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199. “Dispar” referred to the fact that the males and females are of different colors.

200. This risk was entirely unnecessary as it was run due to the fact that at that time the “European” [gypsy moth](#) (which actually had originated in Japan) was incorrectly being classified by [entomologists](#) and taxonomists as in the same genus with the silkworm *Bombyx mori*. It was all a stupid mistake, folks.

201. We may well note that there is no monument in Medford, Massachusetts to mark the “Forefathers Tree” in which the progenitors of the gypsy moths of America “stepped ashore” in 1867 or 1868 in this New World. Is this or is this not discrimination between one kind of intrusive, highly honored, and another kind, decidedly unwanted? –And why do we continue so gratuitously to insult Gypsies, after we have learned that it is so very wrong to insult Jews?

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1873

Addison Grant Fay, who had at one time served as minister for Concord's Universalists, and had then gone from creating pencils into creating gunpowder, was killed in one of the series of explosions (not the most serious one) at the gunpowder mills of Acton.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

- A.J.P. Taylor



1875

October 20, Wednesday: When Frederic Hudson called upon his friend, Judge John Shepard Keyes, they decided to go out for a ride through Concord in a carriage. The Judge was holding the reins and they were deep in conversation as they approached the Monument Street crossing of the Middlesex Central Railroad. Struck by the train, their carriage was dragged down the track. The horse became detached, and would be saved. Judge Keyes was thrown from the carriage and hurt, but was able to seek help on foot for Hudson, who had serious internal injuries and was entangled in the wreckage.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



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1876

The Old Colony Railroad, which had opened in 1845 between [Boston](#) and Plymouth, Massachusetts, leased the Boston, Clinton, Fitchburg & New Bedford Railroad, which extended from Fitchburg to New Bedford and had a branch from Framingham MA to Lowell MA.

RAILROAD

The highwheeler bicycle was imported to the USA to be exhibited on the 450-acre fairground of the International Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia celebrating America's first full century of freedom. We now regard this unwieldy device as having been responsible for more than 1,000 unnecessary deaths, as well as for countless injuries, primarily due to the accident form known as "pitchover."

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Early cyclists were sometimes whipped by drovers as they passed, and sometimes people would maliciously tie ropes between trees in order to knock them off their machines. Such problems existed in the US but were even worse in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. A compact revolver for the bicyclist's use in self-defense was offered by the Iver Johnson Company. At this celebration of our freedoms, native American artifacts were on display as examples of "a primitive stage of civilization." Phineas Taylor Barnum was exhibiting two small whales, presumably belugas, which were remarkable for their white coloration. An attempt was made to deny access to the grounds to Frederick Douglass on account of his brownness.²⁰²

1892

March 26, Saturday: Walt Whitman died at age 72. His brain, when taken to the American Anthropometric Society in Philadelphia,²⁰³ would accidentally be dropped on the floor and would have to be discarded. They would be able to take a measurement indicating that it was somewhat smaller than average.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

202. In this year the giant elm (*Ulmus americana*) of Boston Common crashed to earth. That it did so in protest of these shenanigans in Philadelphia is likely — but has not yet been established with certainty.

203. In 1849 Walt Whitman had had his head examined by a phrenologist, who had said nice stuff about him. Whitman, who vastly impressed himself, was vastly impressed that [phrenology](#) thought highly of him and therefore made this bequest.

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April 10, Sunday: Per the [Boston Evening Transcript](#) for April 12th, on a blustery cold evening with winds out of the northwest, students at Thompson Academy had made a routine run from Thompson Island to a yacht club in South Boston to pick up their instructor, who had been attending church. The boat that they used was a larger



version of the pulling boats used on the island today, suitable for rowing or sailing. At about 6:20PM the 90 boys and their instructor left the yacht club for the island. A detailed account of the accident, by 16-year-old Walter (Ove) Clemenson, survives. He was one of the two surviving boys. All of the boys had made this run across Boston Harbor many times and were experienced swimmers and sailors. Clemenson reported that about halfway back to the island a squall struck them and that there had not been enough time to lower the sail. The boat tipped and filled with water but the boys were able to flip it upside-down. Some of the boys straddled the overturned boat; some of them clung to the keel as they struggled in the cold water to not get so numb as to lose their grip. They called to a passing tug boat but were not noticed. They prayed together and tried to encourage one another, but gradually, one by one, their fingers slipped from the overturned hull. Clemenson figured that they had been in the water about 3 hours when he noticed that they had drifted on a strong current and were close to Spectacle Island. He made a sail out of his coat and the two remaining boys were able to bring the boat close enough to the north end of the beach that they were able to wade to shore. That evening they were rescued by one of the fireman working for the Ward Company on Spectacle. The drowned boys were buried on Thompson Island.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

1895

The most severe explosion to have occurred at the Acton, Massachusetts powder mills. Five dead.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

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1896

May 30, Saturday: The 1st automobile accident to be reported. Miss Evelyln Thomas was riding a bicycle on Broadway in New-York's Upper West Side when a tourist in a Duryea Motor Wagon ran her down. She was knocked unconscious and one of her legs was broken.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1898

February 15, Tuesday: The USS *Maine* exploded in Havana harbor, killing 260. Although this was most likely an accident, the convenient incident would in April enable a US declaration of war.



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Thousands of Americans would protest this Spanish-American War. Leaders would include Mark Twain, the author of "A War Prayer" and other works on the folly of war.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

November 26, Saturday: 157 drowned when the *City of Portland* sank near Cape Cod. Wesley Pingree was keeper of

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



LOST AT SEA

the Deer Island Light during this weather excursion and would survive to describe the experience to Edward Rowe Snow:

At two o'clock in the afternoon the ocean was as smooth as glass. At five p.m. it had started snowing and the wind was coming up. A little later the Bangor boat went by but returned to the harbor, as the sea was rapidly getting worse. At 7 p.m. the Portland came down the channel, and the other boat, anchored in President Road, whistled a warning to her. At this time the waves were hitting so high that I was lashing my dory fast to the light.

All told, 141 vessels were wrecked and 456 lives lost.

1903

August: According to Leslie Perrin Wilson, curator of the special collections at the Concord Free Public Library, the intersection of Main Street and Sudbury Road in [Concord](#) has over the years been the scene of any number of accidents. During this month Alfred Munroe, a brother of the founding benefactor of the Concord Free Public Library, William Munroe, was in that intersection run over by a carriage (he would survive but would not fully recover from his injuries, and would die during July 1904).

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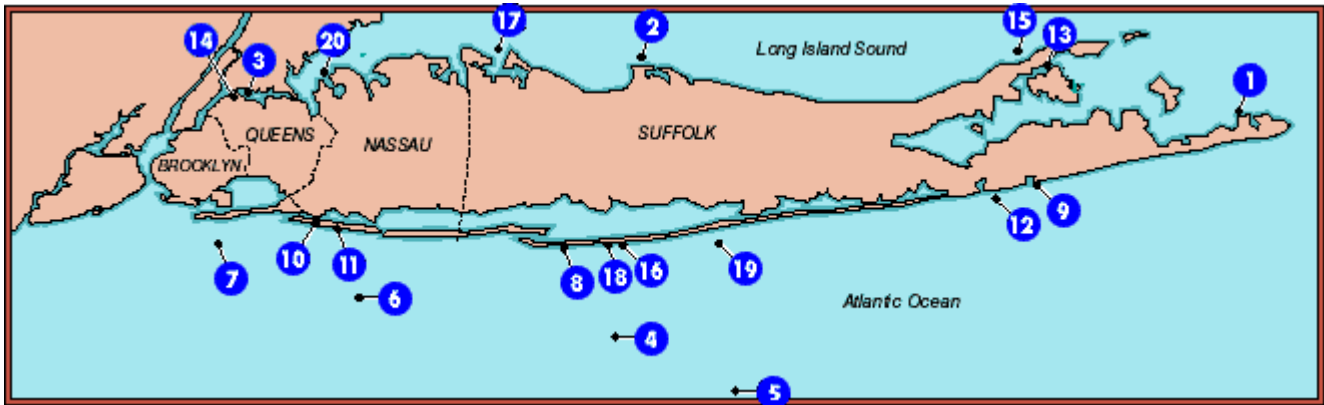
1904

June 15, Wednesday: [John Robinson Jeffers](#) received his Bachelor's Degree from Occidental College.

Although two [Japanese](#) battleships were lost to Russian mines, the blockade of Port Arthur continued. After a 2-day battle at Telissu north of Port Arthur, Russian forces were forced to withdraw but managed to escape encirclement.

A 2d daughter was born to Gustav and Alma Mahler at their summer home Maiernigg. She would be named Anna Justine after Alma's mother and Mahler's sister.

A chartered excursion paddle wheeler with 1,525 passengers and 23 crewmen, the *General Slocum*, ran aground in the East River at North Brother Island, which is #3 on this map, caught fire, and burned to the waterline. Only 407 of these people survived.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1905

September 11, Monday: A New York City elevated plunged onto Ninth Avenue, killing twelve. The police put the blame on railroad employees.

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1907

October 16, Wednesday, 9:15AM: When an overheated shaft in the glazing department came in contact with particles of black gunpowder dust, the DuPont powder mill a bit to the south of the little town of Fontanet, Indiana blew up. There would be four separate detonations, the 4th and last coming about 90 minutes later. Not a building in the little town or an adjacent one, Coal Bluff, would escape damage. At Montezuma, 20 miles away, a piece of lumber was blown through a window and imbedded in the wall. Four Fontanet schoolchildren would be found wandering miles from the scene near Ehrmandale, and reported that they had no idea how they got there.

The 2d explosion was in the press mill. It would never be determined where the 3d explosion took place, but the 4th explosion was of four tons of dynamite being stored in the magazine section. Over the 90 minutes of the explosion, 3,000 tons of black powder were involved. The shock was felt in Terre Haute and Brazil, where downtown store windows were shattered. Twenty-seven laborers were killed outright, and among the survivors arms, fingers, even ears had been torn off. Several suffered eye damage. Laborers were brought to the Terre Haute hospitals with parts of their bodies fried to a crisp. Plant Superintendent A.B. Monahan had burned to death in his office and his wife had burned to death in the basement; her sister and a niece who lived with them would also die of burns.

Although the town would be rebuilt, it no longer had any industry and would go slowly downhill.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1912

March 5: The Spanish steamer *Principe de Asturias* struck a rock off Sebastien Point, and 500 drowned.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 14, evening: Radiotelegraph operator John Phillips was becoming increasingly frustrated. He was having trouble keeping up with the stacks of business and social messages of the passengers of the liner, especially since that afternoon his radio transmitter had malfunctioned for a few hours. The huge passenger ship was drawing near the 80-mile-wide Atlantic ice pack and he had received an ice warning from the *Mesaba* that he had stuck under a paperweight on his desk. At 11:00PM a transmission between the *Titanic* and a shore station was interrupted by a broadcast from radiotelegraph operator Cyril Evans aboard the *Californian* about ten miles away, to the effect that his ship, surrounded by icebergs, had for safety reasons stopped for the night. Phillips responded,

SHUT UP, SHUT UP, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I AM BUSY?

April 15: The HMS *Titanic* sank shortly after sideswiping an iceberg, and 1,513 died in the chill waters.

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

The initial news reports which reached America were distorted. For instance, this is from the [Rhode Island](#) diary of John Hamlin Cady (1838-1914): “str. Titanic, largest str. afloat, strick an iceberg off Cape Race & sent wireless dispatches that she was sinking. Later passengers all saved.”

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

April 16: In the [Rhode Island](#) diary of John Hamlin Cady (1838-1914), a correction to the previous day’s news report: “The Titanic reports were false yesterday. She went down with 1600 passengers and crew, including the Capt.”

1914

May 29, day: The *Empress of Ireland* sank after a collision in the St. Lawrence River with a loss of 1,024 lives.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1915

The Tommy gun –the first lightweight semiautomatic infantry rifle– was introduced for use in World War I.

The Isle of [Jersey](#) Overseas Contingent departed the island for service elsewhere, leaving this Channel Island entirely undefended (perhaps under the assumption that, since there really wasn't anything on the island that would be of value to either side in the war, if entirely undefended it could be considered to be a neutral area).

An explosion at the Acton powder mills was felt within a 50-mile radius. The business would struggle along until the completion of the orders created by the killing going on worldwide, and then declare its economic (as well as its moral) bankruptcy.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

July 24: Talaat sends instructions to Urfā, Der-el-Zor (Deir el-Zor), and Diyarbekir to bury the bodies of those fallen by the roadside and not throw them in ditches, lakes, or rivers.

Between this day and August 1st, the registration and classification of all prisoners from Sivas would be being carried out. This was done in accordance with a directive in general circulation.

When the *Eastland*, a Great Lakes excursion steamer, capsized in the [Chicago](#) River, of the 2,572 people aboard, 812 died.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1916

November 21: The Britannic, sister ship to the Titanic, was in use as a hospital ship when it sank in the Aegean Sea following an unexplained explosion. The vessel, which was only on its 6th voyage, may have hit a mine. Only 30 of the more than 1,100 on board were killed.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS
LOST AT SEA
WORLD WAR I



«La guerre est une série de catastrophes qui produisent la victoire.»

- Georges Clemenceau



1917

January 19, Friday: At 6:52PM an explosion was heard and, indeed, felt all over London and Essex. An area in Silvertown had disappeared from the face of the Earth. News would arrive, that this blast had been heard for more than 100 miles, in for instance Southampton and Norwich. The glow of the fires in Silvertown could be seen for 30 miles, in for instance Guildford and Maidstone. The blast had occurred in a chemical works that had been established in Silvertown in 1893, producing mainly soda crystals but also caustic soda. Production of caustic soda had been discontinued in 1912 and that part of the plant had been neglected until the outbreak of World War I. It had in September 1915 been re-opened as a plant for the purification of TNT. What had happened was that 50 tons of TNT standing in railway wagons had been detonated by a fire near the plant's "melt-pot." It would be found that only 73 people had lost their lives in the blast, although more than 400 had been injured, because at that time of the evening at the end of the work week, most of the laborers had been home having supper with their families, because there had been warnings of a fire before the occurrence of the detonation, and because people in the locale were aware of what it was that was being manufactured.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

- A.J.P. Taylor



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December 6: The Finnish Parliament declared independence from Russia. The acting Head of State was Pehr Evind Svinhufvud.

A [German](#) counterattack south of Cambrai ended after winning back most of the British gains in November.

1,900 people lost their lives as the *Mont Blanc*, a French munitions carrier, collided with a Belgian merchant steamer, the *Imo*, at the narrow entrance to Halifax Harbor, Nova Scotia, Canada. The collision caused a fire aboard the *Mont Blanc* and the crew abandoned ship allowing it to drift toward the city where firemen, unaware of its cargo, began to fight the fire. At 9:05AM the 3,000-ton vessel, carrying 2,300 tons of wet and dry picric acid, 200 tons of TNT, ten tons of gun cotton, 35 tons of benzol, and 300 live artillery shells, exploded. 9,000 were seriously injured. Many of those injured would die promptly, as hospitals were stretched to four or five times their capacity. One gun from the ship landed almost six kilometers away. Part of the anchor, weighing over 500 kilograms, landed five kilometers away. The shock was felt in Sydney, over 430 kilometers away. Windows were broken for a distance of 80 kilometers. Fires began throughout the city from overturned stoves. 1,630 buildings were destroyed and many more damaged — more than 300 acres of city buildings adjoining the harbor were demolished.

(31,000 people were left homeless —this would go on record as the largest man-made explosion ever, until a [nuclear weapon](#) would come whistling down from the maw of a bomber. This explosion was so severe that, when J. Robert Oppenheimer would go about calculating the likely effect of an atomic bomb upon a human city might prove to be, he would use data from this accident. Refer to Laura M. Mac Donald's 2005 CURSE OF

ROWS, NY: Walker & Company.)«*La guerre est une série de catastrophes qui produ*...e.»



[TIMELINE](#)



— Georges Clemenceau



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1919

January 15, Wednesday: The leftist uprising in Berlin was over. German Communist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were arrested by thugs employed by the Provisional Government. Liebknecht was clubbed, driven to a deserted part of Berlin, thrown from the car and shot repeatedly. Luxemburg was clubbed, stuffed into a car and shot, and then her body was dumped into the Landwehr Canal (it would be recovered in May). Only three people would ever be convicted in connection with the crime. One would serve a few months of a two year sentence. Another would receive two years for illegal disposal of a corpse, but would escape to the Netherlands. The 3d would be awarded six weeks in solitary confinement, but he also would escape to the Netherlands. Everyone else involved would be acquitted.

At the corner of Foster and Commercial Sts. in Boston, a enormous overhead tank 30 meters above street level filled with 7,500,000 liters of molasses, property of the Purity Distilling Company, exploded sending molasses ten meters into the air and a 15-foot wave of molasses moved outward for some distance at an estimated 35 miles per hour, crushing and smothering 21 passers-by and injuring an additional 150. The local fire station was shoved off its foundation and some of its firemen were among the missing. Four of the molasses-soaked bodies would not be recovered for several days. The firm, in addition to losing its facility and its molasses, would be obligated to pay \$1,000,000 in damages to survivors and property owners.

(There's a moral here somewhere.)



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1928

November 12: When the British steamer *Vestris* sank in gale off Virginia, 110 died.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

1934

September 8: Off the coast at Asbury Park, New Jersey, the *Morro Castle* burned and 134 died.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

1935

May 18: The *Maxim Gorky* was an airliner with the wingspread of a Boeing 747. Its eight engines generated some 7,000 horsepower. There were red lights on its fuselage to flash propaganda slogans as it flew above the USSR at night. On this day it collided with another aircraft and crashed into a house, killing 39 passengers and crewmembers and people in the house.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

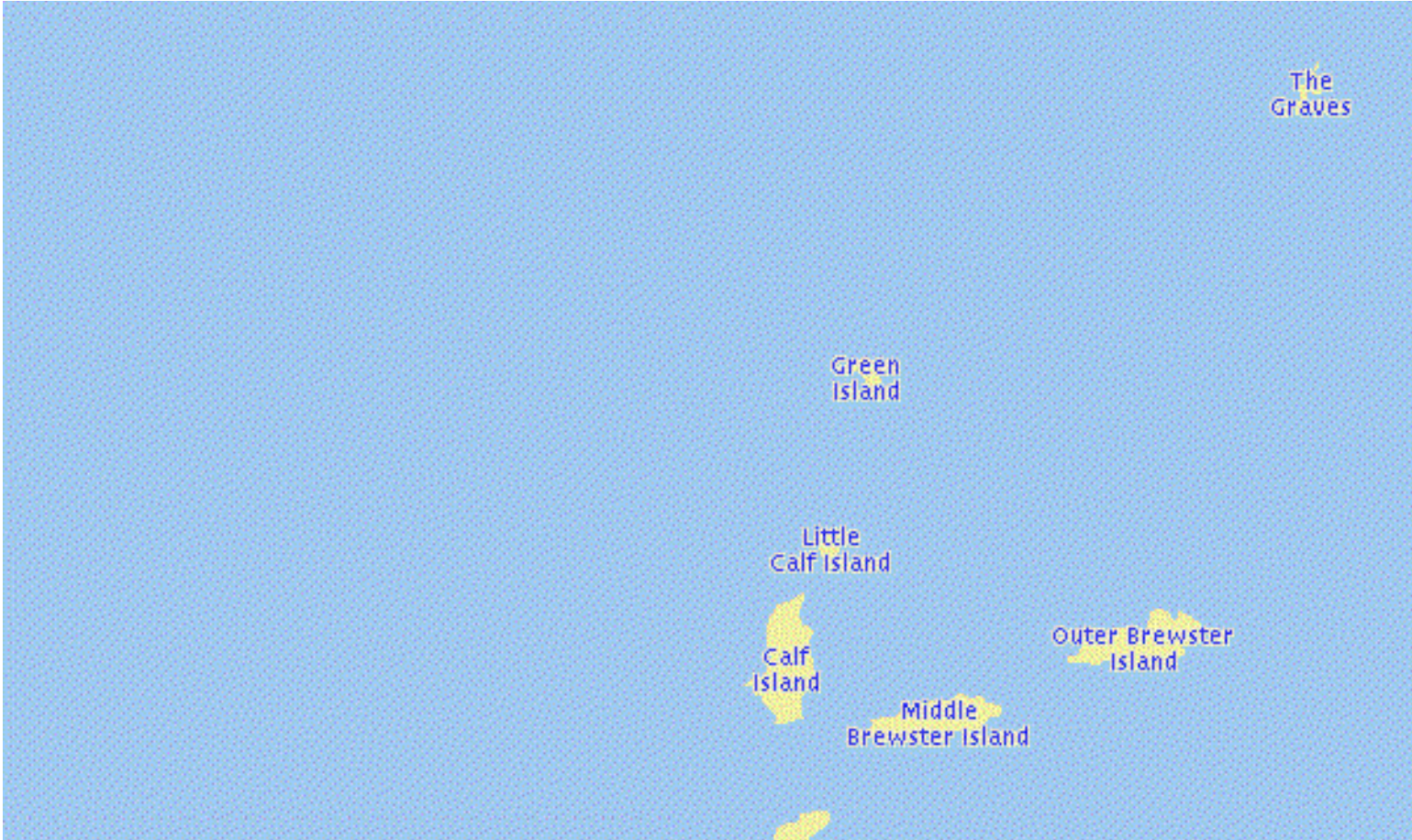
WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1938

The wreck of the *City of Salisbury*, a freighter carrying animals, off the rocky ledge known as The Graves, inspired divers throughout the summer to visit the remains of what was becoming known as the “zoo ship.”²⁰⁴



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

204. Graves Island was named in honor of the 17th-Century admiral Thomas Graves, but its name is now popularly associated with “watery graves” surrounding it as the result of numerous shipwrecks on and near these jagged rocks. Shipwrecks may have been more numerous around Boston Light, but disasters at The Graves have tended to be somewhat more flamboyant.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

An east coast hurricane spread the [gypsy moth](#) beyond previously infested areas.



(I wonder if this ship had been sunk by the same major hurricane that blew down the trees that Thoreau had planted, and also blew down the elms at the [Newport, Rhode Island](#) cottage “The Elms,” and whether this was the same weather event that spread the gypsy moths.)



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1939

May 23: Although the submarine *Squalus* sank with a crew of 59 off Hampton Beach NH, 33 of the crew were saved.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



June 1: When the submarine *Thetis* sank in Liverpool Bay, England, 99 perished.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

WORLD WAR II



LOST AT SEA

A brand-new Douglas DC-4 flew 40 passengers from [Chicago](#) to New York City, inaugurating service by that airframe between the two population centers.



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1940

October 22, Tuesday: Jewish businesses in the Netherlands were required to register.

ANTISEMITISM

The [Germans](#) expelled 7,000 Jews from [Germany](#) into Vichy France.

The Canadian destroyer HMCS *Margaree*, a vessel of 1,375 tons that had been built at Hebburn-on-Tyne as the HMS *Diana* and then transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy, was escorting Convoy OL-8 from Liverpool into the North Atlantic when west of Ireland it collided with the freighter *Port Fairy* and sank. 142 died. Many of those who drowned at this point were survivors of the sinking of the destroyer HMCS *Fraser*, which had collided with the British cruiser *Calcutta* during the evacuation from Dunkirk.²⁰⁵

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

US Naval Squadron 40-T under Rear Admiral D.M. LeBreton, operating in the western Mediterranean area, was disbanded.

WORLD WAR II

1941

December 15, Monday: Soviet forces captured Klin, 85 kilometers northwest of Moscow and would immediately begin to rebuild the Tchaikovsky Museum which had been destroyed by the [Germans](#).

95 hostages were executed in Mont Valérien Prison for the attempted murder of a [German](#) officer in Paris.

Patrol Wing 10 departed Philippine Islands for Netherlands East Indies. Kahului, Maui was shelled by a [Japanese](#) submarine.

United States naval vessels sunk:

- PT-33, damaged by grounding and sunk by United States forces, Philippine Islands area, 13 degrees 46 minutes N, 120 degrees 40 minutes E.

205. At a first order of approximation there seems to be a remarkable similarity between fighting at sea and feeding fish.



“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

The HMS *Galatea*, a 5,220-ton British cruiser of the Alexandria Fleet, 15th Cruiser Squadron, commissioned in 1935, was sunk by a torpedo from the U-boat U557 off Alexandria, [Egypt](#). Captain Sims, 22 of his officers, and 447 ratings died.²⁰⁶



(The crew of U557 would have about a day to celebrate, and then west of Crete they would be rammed accidentally by the Italian torpedo boat *Orione*, and all 43 aboard this German submarine would die.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS
WORLD WAR II

206. Isn't it curious, the macabre way these statistics are routinely kept? The number of officer deaths gets cited, then the number of "ratings" deaths? Imagine trying to say to a "rating" who is going down for the third time, "Look, fellow, you're obviously taking this pretty hard—it's your death and all that—but can't you at least derive some consolation from the fact that this would have been a significantly greater loss to us, had you been an officer? God must have loved you enlisted types, he made so many of you. Soon you will lose consciousness — and then you'll be a mere nameless, painless statistic who has given your life for your country! Don't sweat it, it's the way things are. Come on now, at least you can hum a bit from 'There'll always be an England'...."



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1942

February 2, Monday: [Japanese](#) naval vessel sunk: Minesweeper #9, by mine, Netherlands East Indies area, 3 degrees 42 minutes South, 128 degrees 10 minutes East.

What was the American tradition? According to [Ezra Pound](#): “The determination of our forbears to set up and maintain in the North American continent a government better than any other. The determination to govern ourselves internally, better than any other nation on earth. The idea of Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, to keep out of foreign shindies.”

The following headline, and commentary about the remorselessness of accidents, appeared in [The Los Angeles Times](#):

THE QUESTION OF JAPANESE-AMERICANS

by W. H. Anderson

Perhaps the most difficult and delicate question that confronts our powers that be is the handling –the safe and proper treatment– of our American-born Japanese, our Japanese-American citizens by the accident of birth. But who are Japanese nevertheless. A viper is nonetheless a viper wherever the egg is hatched.

WORLD WAR II
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1943

March 27, Saturday: Michael Tippett’s String Quartet no.2 was performed for the initial time, in Wigmore Hall, London.

A cable signed by several Soviet composers of standing arrived at Sergei Rakhmaninov’s Beverly Hills home, congratulating him on his 70th birthday.

The Army Chief of Ordnance reported in Washington DC that the soldiers were using a new anti-tank weapon called a “bazooka,” that was based on a “rocket gun” principle (every war they kill you a new way, and yet some people will say there is no such thing as progress).

395 British warplanes indiscriminately dropped 1,050 tons of explosives on Berlin over a period of 50 minutes. Unknown amounts of rubble bounced an unknown number of times. “Is the war over yet?”

The HMS *Dasher*, a US-built merchant ship originally named *Rio de Janeiro* and later converted to an escort aircraft carrier and loaned to the Royal Navy under the Lend-Lease Agreement, had seen service in the Mediterranean and on convoy duties to Murmansk. At this point it was in use as a Fleet Air Arm Training ship. At about 4:45PM during the hazy afternoon, in the Firth of Clyde in Scotland, between Ardrossan and the Isle of Arran, while heading for the port of Greenock, its Swordfish planes were practising takeoffs and landings when a pilot misjudged a landing and crashed into a store of aviation fuel drums and explosives. Violent



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

explosions destroyed the *Dasher* in less than 5 minutes, its bow rising almost vertically before it plunged stern-first. The oil on the water caught fire. 358 died but 149 floaters were salvaged by dozens of small rescue vessels from Ardrossan. (The *Dasher* now lies upright at 310 fathoms. As the 50th anniversary of its sinking approached, the Royal Naval Association undertook to erect a memorial at Ardrossan.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

The *City of Guildford*, an Ellerman Lines passenger/cargo ship of 5,157 tons, while enroute from Alexandria to Tripoli, North Africa carrying aviation fuel and munitions, was sunk near Derna by Kapitän-Leutnant Gerd Kelbling's U-593. 68 crewmen, 11 gunners, and 46 passengers died and there were 13 floaters (U-593 would be sunk on December 13th in the Mediterranean by depth-charges from USS *Wain* and HMS *Calpe*; all members of its crew would survive).

United States Naval Air Facility, Natal, Brazil, and Naval Operating Facilities at Victoria, Florianopolis, Fortaleza, Maceio, Recife, Rio Grande do Sul, Santos, and Sao Luiz, Brazil, were established.

United States Coast Guard Cutter #85006 sank after an explosion off Long Island, New York.

WORLD WAR II

April 24, Saturday: The inaugural concert of Edgard Varèse's Greater New York Chorus was taking place in Washington Irving High School in New York.

Drei Lieder von Bertolt Brecht for voice and piano by Stefan Wolpe was being performed for the initial time, in the Heckscher Theater of New York City.

Meanwhile, an ammo ship had caught fire while at a dock in New York harbor, near other such ammo ships, plus ammo warehouses, plus ammo trains. The ship, the *El Estero* of Panamanian registry, contained at the time some 1,400 tons of high-explosive cargo. The possibility existed of destroying portions of lower Manhattan, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Jersey City, and Bayonne. Thousands, or tens of thousands, of unaware civilians were at risk. As it burned out of control, the Coast Guard towed the vessel toward deeper water, while pumping more and more water into its hold. Even if the vessel had detonated after it had been isolated, even if it had gone off after it was resting on the floor of the harbor, the explosion would have been devastating.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

There was not such a detonation and so our military was able to keep the wraps on the whole incident.

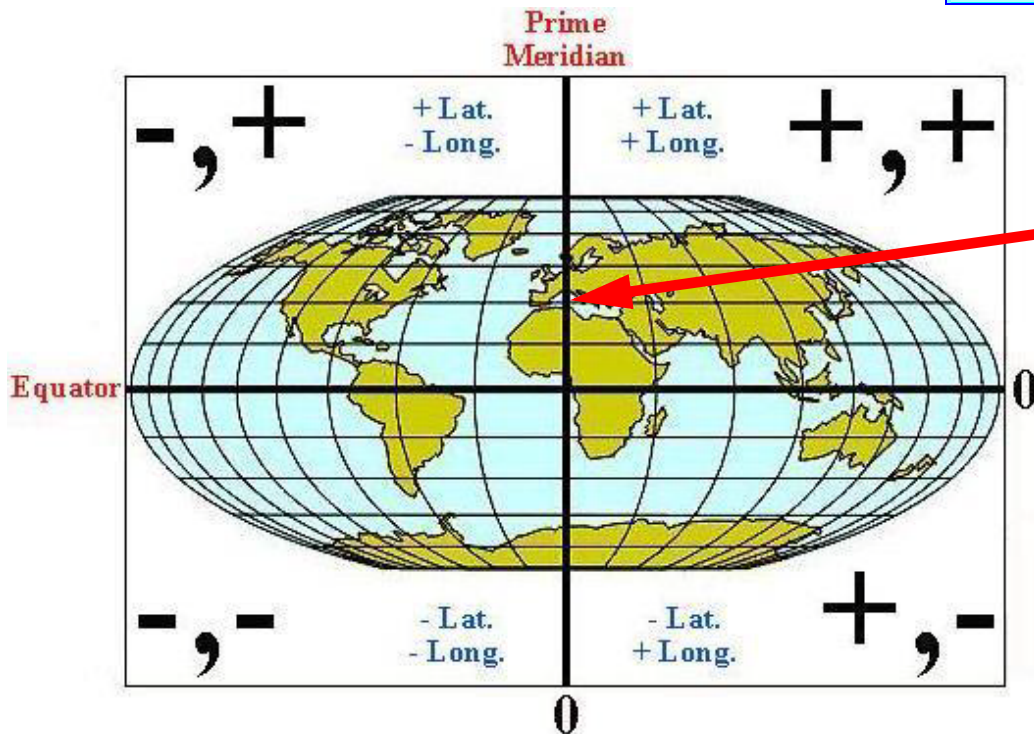
SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

May 13, Thursday: The last Axis troops evacuated from North Africa.

Italian Submarine *Mocenigo* was sunk by US Army aircraft at Cagliari, Sardinia.

WORLD WAR II



Cruisers and destroyers (Rear Admiral W.L. Ainsworth) bombarded the [Japanese](#) on Munda and Vila, Solomon Islands, while minelayers laid mines across northwestern approaches to Kula Gulf.

Two United States naval vessels in the Pacific Ocean were damaged by accidental explosions:

- Light cruiser *Nashville* (CL-43), Solomon Islands, 8 degrees 28 minutes South, 158 degrees 49 minutes East
- Destroyer *Nicholas* (DD-449), Solomon Islands, 8 degrees 30 minutes South, 158 degrees 1 minute East

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

August 10, Tuesday: Bozidar Puric replaced Milos Trifunovic as prime minister of the Yugoslav government-in-exile.

American forces reached Cape Orlando on the north coast of Sicily. United States Landing Ship – Tank LST318 had been damaged by a dive bomber on the previous day in the vicinity of Sicily, at 38 degrees 4 minutes North, 14 degrees 30 minutes East. On this day it was beached and abandoned.

United States Salvage Vessel *Brant* (ARS-32) was damaged by friendly gunfire in the vicinity of Sicily, at 36 degrees 49 minutes North, 13 degrees 27 minutes East.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS
WORLD WAR II



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

August 18, Wednesday: On his 50th birthday, the BBC broadcasts a 30-minute special program on Ernest MacMillan, whom they termed “one of the ten outstanding musicians of the empire.”

The last shipment of Jews from Thessaloniki arrived in Auschwitz — since March 5th, 48,533 had been processed.

ANTISEMITISM

United States cruiser and destroyer force shelled Gioia Taura and Palmi on the Italian mainland.

Task group composed of 4 destroyers (Captain T.J. Ryan) engaged 4 [Japanese](#) destroyers escorting landing barges north of Vella Lavella, Solomon Islands.

United States Advanced Amphibious Training Base, St. Mawes, Cornwall, England, was established.

United States naval vessel sunk:

- LST396, by accidental explosion, Solomon Islands area, 8 degrees 18 minutes South, 156 degrees 55 minutes East

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

United States naval vessel damaged:

- Destroyer *Abner Read* (DD-526), by mine, Aleutian area, 52 degrees 1 minute North, 177 degrees 26 minutes East

[Japanese](#) naval vessels sunk:

- Auxiliary submarine chasers Numbers 5 and 12, by surface craft, Vella Lavella Island, Solomon Islands area

WORLD WAR II

September 30, Thursday: The Red Army entered Byelorussia and captured Krichev, south of Bryansk.

American troops captured Avellino, 40 kilometers east of Naples.

US Submarine *Bowfin* (SS-287) delivered supplies and evacuated certain personnel from vicinity of Siquijor Island, Philippine Islands.

United States naval vessels sunk:

- Submarine *Grayling* (SS-209), Pacific Ocean area, reported as presumed lost
- PT-68, damaged by grounding, eastern New Guinea area, 5 degrees 56 minutes South, 147 degrees 18 minutes East; sunk by United States forces
- PT-219, foundered, Attu, Aleutian Islands, sometime during September

United States Coast Guard Cutter *Wilcox* (YP-333) foundered off Cape Hatteras, [North Carolina](#).

United States naval vessels damaged:

- LST334, by dive bombers, Solomon Islands area, 7 degrees 43 minutes South, 156 degrees 40 minutes East



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

fire. Then, in the jammed Allied hospitals, the medicos were at a loss to understand what it had been that had created such unusually magnificent skin effects. Over and above the usual war hospital odor of mingled ether, shit, burning chicken feathers, rotting meat, and gunsmoke, there was this funny odor like someone had just eaten a ham sandwich, a ham sandwich with lots and lots of mustard. Of the only 617 to make it to the hospitals, 83 wouldn't make it to the New Year. If the medicos had known at the time it was an accidental detonation of the Allied stockpile of 2,000 M47A1 sulfur mustard (H) [poison gas bombs](#), it is possible that they could have come up with the proper treatment and saved some more lives. –But, of course, there weren't any members of the 701st Chemical Maintenance Company still around to tell them. (The first casualty of war being, as the saying goes, the truth, Winston Churchill immediately imposed a total secrecy order, and it would not be until about 5 years later that we would begin to hear of this.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

An official account:

One United States naval vessel that was damaged on this day was more promptly acknowledged:

- Gasoline tanker *Aroostook* (AOG-14), by horizontal bomber, Italian area, 41 degrees 6 minutes North, 16 degrees 52 minutes East

[President Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) and Prime Minister [Winston Churchill](#) met in Cairo with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek of [China](#). Lord Mountbatten proposed the recapture of Burma.

British troops captured Lanciano, on the Adriatic Sea 160 kilometers east of Rome.

The British government announced that it planned to conscript 30,000 men to work in coal mines.

British bombers struck at Berlin, killing 378 Berliners.

The submarine *Narwhal* (SS-167), landed ammunition and stores at, and then evacuated certain personnel from, Mindanao in the Philippine Islands.

WORLD WAR II

December 4, Saturday: In an Allied air raid on Leipzig, the buildings and stockroom of Breitkopf and Härtel were destroyed, incinerating all but a few of the copper plates used to print works of the great masters during their lifetimes. Manuscripts and other precious items had been stored in rural air raid shelters by the employees.

Bolivia announced that it has declared war on [Germany](#) and [Japan](#).

The Great Depression was declared to be over, and the “WPA” Works Progress Administration was discontinued.

Aircraft from task force which includes six carriers (Rear Admiral C.A. Pownall) bombed Kwajalein and Wotje Atolls, Marshall Islands.

WORLD WAR II

United States naval vessels damaged, Marshall Islands:

- Carrier *Lexington* (CV-16), by aircraft torpedo, 13 degrees 30 minutes North, 171 degrees 25 minutes East



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

- Light cruiser *Mobile* (CL-63), by accidental explosion, 12 degrees 47 minutes North, 170 degrees 57 minutes East
- Destroyer *Taylor* (DD-468), accidentally by United States naval gunfire, 10 degrees 0 minutes North, 170 degrees 0 minutes East

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

December 14, Tuesday: Soviet forces begin a new offensive south of Nevel. They also captured Cherkassy on the west bank of the Dnieper.

Nine members of the Polish Communist Party were executed at Herby near Czestachowa. Don't be that way.

United States Naval Air Facility, Maceio, Brazil, was established.

[WORLD WAR II](#)

United States naval vessel sunk:

- PT-239, by accidental fire, Solomon Islands area, 7 degrees 42 minutes South, 156 degrees 47 minutes East

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

1944

January 1, Saturday: At Plaszow, a suburb of Krakow, a forced labor camp was converted to a death camp.

[Stalin](#) established a Polish National Council with armed forces and administration as a government-in-exile to rival the London government.

The US Treasury ended the minting of zinc-coated steel pennies and resumed the use of copper.

General Joseph Stilwell appointed Brigadier General Frank D. Merrill as commander of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), code name "Galahad," popularly to be known as Merrill's Marauders.

Aircraft from carrier task group (Rear Admiral F.C. Sherman) bombed a [Japanese](#) convoy escorted by cruisers and destroyers off Kavieng, New Ireland.

Naval Air Facility, Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaiian Islands was established.

United States naval vessels damaged:

- Destroyers *Smith* (DD-378) and *Hutchings* (DD-476), by collision, eastern New Guinea area, 5 degrees 0 minutes South, 146 degrees 0 minutes East.
- LST446, by accidental explosion, Solomon Islands area, 6 degrees 15 minutes South, 155 degrees 2 minutes East

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

As of the beginning of this year, Britain's Operation Vegetarian was ready to go. Its pellets of cattle food had been manufactured, its [anthrax](#) had been manufactured, the anthrax had been injected into the cattle food, the pellets had been loaded into cardboard boxes, a delivery scheme involving the RAF had been completed — everything was just coming up roses. All that remained was for [Winston Churchill](#) to give the order to proceed with the devastation of [Germany](#). Dr. Paul Fildes was urging that it was crucial to the success of the attack with

GERM WARFARE



[anthrax](#) spores, that it be mounted during the summer months: “The cattle must be caught in the open grazing fields when lush spring grass is on the wane.” “Trials have shown that these tablets ... are found and consumed by the cattle in a very short time.” “Cattle are concentrated in the northern half of Oldenburg and northwest Hanover. Aircraft flying to and from Berlin will fly over 60 miles of grazing land.” He calculated that a RAF bomber flying at an average ground speed of 300mph would need to dump its load within 18 minutes. “If one box of tablets is dispersed every two minutes, then each aircraft will be required to carry and disperse nine, or say 10, boxes.” A single Lancaster bomber ought to be able to scatter 4,000 anthrax-infected cakes over a 60-mile swathe in less than 20 minutes while returning from a raid on Berlin, and a dozen such aircraft would be sufficient to cover most of the north German countryside.

WORLD WAR II

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

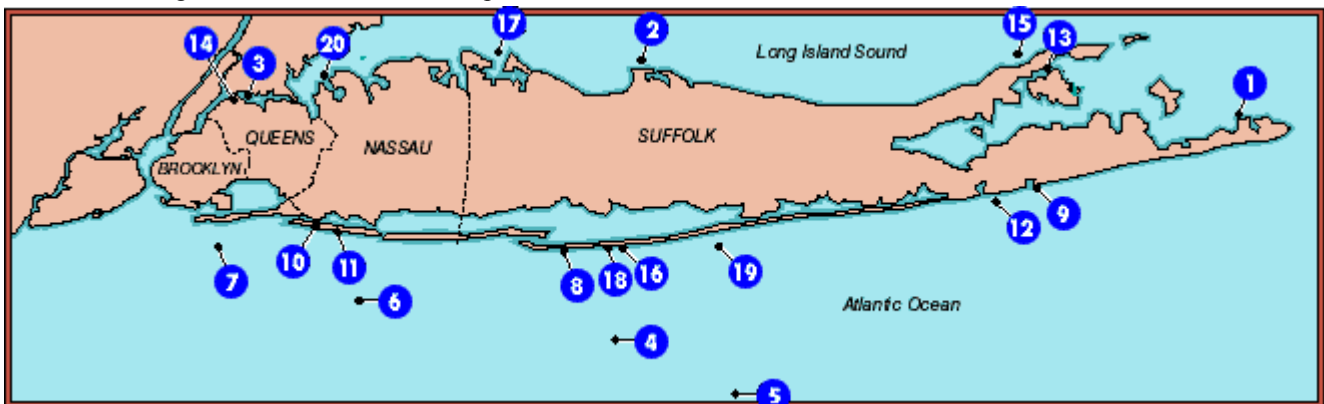
January 3, Monday, morning: Soviet troops secured Novograd-Volynskiy, 360 kilometers east of Lublin.

Returning to the USA after completing its 3rd Atlantic convoy duty, the destroyer USS *Turner* (DD-648) had anchored the night before in the Ambrose Channel off Sandy Hook NJ, to wait its turn to enter the Brooklyn Navy Yard for repairs. At about 6:30AM, while the crew was preparing for their breakfast, a series of internal explosions began in the ship's ammunition stores. Its fuel tanks were ignited. The bottom of the vessel blew open and it began to sink by the stern. The hulk now lies at #7 on the chart below. We will never know for certain what began this process, of course, but our presumption is that the initial explosion was produced during an incautious and unnecessary cleaning of an anti-submarine weapon. 15 officers and 138 enlisted men died.²⁰⁷

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



165 floaters were picked up by nearby ships and taken to the hospital at Sandy Hook. A Coast Guard helicopter brought in several cases of blood plasma from New York, which saved a number of lives.



The submarine *Bluefish* (SS-222) laid mines off eastern Malayan coast.

WORLD WAR II

207. My cold-blooded intent here is to characterize the period of our 2d world war as what it was. It was a convulsion of helplessness beyond anything humankind had to that point experienced. I will attempt to forego sympathy and access the affect of helpless people on the various sinking ships at sea –torpedoed or whatever, waiting for their collective fate to engulf them– merely to assist in depicting the general helplessness of such a spasm.



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

February 1, Tuesday: Oswald T. Avery, Colin M. MacLeod, and Maclyn McCarty's "Studies on the Chemical Nature of the Substance Inducing Transformation of Pneumococcal Types" in the Journal of Experimental Medicine demonstrated that DNA was the carrier of genetic material.

Piet Mondrian died in New York at the age of 71.

A Soviet offensive captured Kingisepp, 115 kilometers southwest of Leningrad, reaching the border of Estonia.

The command designated "Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet" was established, with headquarters at Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaiian Islands. Vice Admiral R.K. Turner, Commander Fifth Amphibious Force, assumed this command as additional duty.

An United States Naval Base was established at Finschhafen on the island of New Guinea.

The 4th Division's 23d and 24th Marines landed on the islands of Roi and Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll of the Marshall Islands. US Army troops landed on Kwajalein Island itself, under cover of heavy naval gunfire from battleships, cruisers and destroyers.

Several United States naval vessels were damaged in the Marshall Islands invasion:

- Destroyer *Anderson* (DD-411), by grounding, 9 degrees 10 minutes North, 167 degrees 25 minutes East
- Destroyer *Haggard* (DD-555), by accidental explosion, 9 degrees 0 minutes North, 167 degrees 0 minutes East

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

Japanese naval vessel sunk:

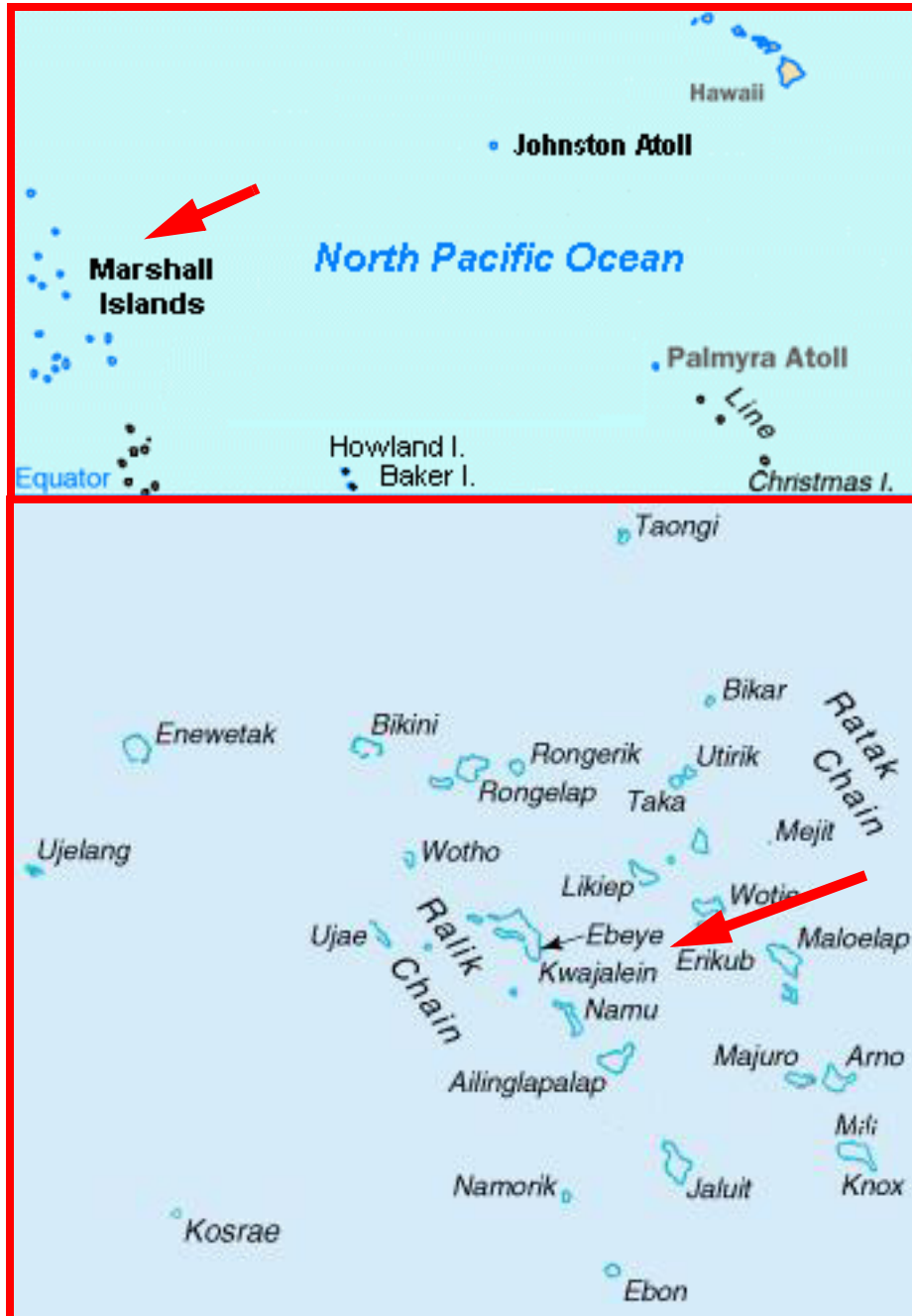
- Destroyer *Umikaze*, by submarine *Guardfish* (SS-217), Caroline Islands area, 7 degrees 10 minutes North, 151 degrees 43 minutes East

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

- Submarine RO-39, by destroyer *Walker* (DD-517), Marshall Islands area, 9 degrees 24 minutes North, 170 degrees 32 minutes East

USMC
WORLD WAR II



March 27, Monday: United States naval vessels sunk:



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

- PT-121 and PT-353, accidentally by friendly bomber, Bismarck Archipelago area, 5 degrees 17 minutes South, 151 degrees 1 minute East

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

United States naval vessel damaged:

- PT-207, by naval gunfire, Italian area, 41 degrees 27 minutes North, 12 degrees 40 minutes East

WORLD WAR II

March 30, Thursday: The Allies bombed Nürnberg, [Germany](#)

Fast carrier forces under Commander Fifth Fleet (Admiral R.A. Spruance) commence intensive bombing of [Japanese](#) airfields, shipping, fleet service facilities, and other installations at Palau, Yap, Ulithi, and Woleai in the Caroline Islands group. Extensive minefields were planted by carrier-based aircraft in and around the channels and approaches to the Palau Islands. Attacks continue until April 1st.

United States naval vessel sunk:

- Submarine *Grayback* (SS-208), Pacific Ocean area, reported as presumed lost

United States naval vessel damaged:

- Submarine *Tunney* (SS-282) accidentally by friendly aircraft off Palau Islands, 7 degrees 29 minutes North, 134 degrees 26 minutes East

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

[Japanese](#) naval vessels sunk, Palau, Caroline Islands raid:

- Repair ship *Akashi*, oilers *Ose*, *Sata*, and *Iro*, submarine chasers #6 and #26, auxiliary submarine chasers #22 and #53, and patrol boat #31, by carrier-based aircraft

WORLD WAR II

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 14, Friday: [Anne Frank](#) to her diary: “If the truth is told, things are just as bad as you yourself care to make them.”



The 7,142-ton British Ministry of War Transport steamship SS *Fort Stikine* had brought 1,400 tons of munitions and 9,000 bales of cotton to its berth at the Bombay docks. A fire broke out that reached the forward section of the ship where the munitions were stored. This must have been almost as big a boom as the one made by the ammunition ship *Mont Blanc* in Halifax harbor during WWI! There were 18 merchant ships in the vicinity that vanished or went down or were severely damaged. Flaming bales of cotton were sent soaring through the air like minivans to set the wooden shacks of Bombay’s slums aflame in all directions. The general conflagration would go on for two days and two nights. 336 would be killed and more than 1,000 injured. It was not a good scene. Things were approximately as bad as we ourselves cared to make them.

WORLD WAR II
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

April 29, Saturday: When Commander John Stubbs’s Canadian destroyer HMCS *Athabaskan* was torpedoed north of Ile de Bas, France while clearing mines in the English Channel prior to the invasion of France by German torpedo boat T-26, the Commander and 128 crewmen died. The destroyer HMCS *Haida* was able to retrieve 44 of the floaters, but 83 others were retrieved by German torpedo boats and became POWs.

Aircraft from fast carrier task force (Vice Admiral M.A. Mitscher), including 12 carriers, commence 2-day bombing attack on [Japanese](#) shipping, oil and ammunition bums, aircraft facilities, and other installations at Truk, Caroline Islands.

United States naval vessels sunk:



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

- PT-346 and PT-347, accidentally by friendly aircraft, Bismarck Archipelago area, 4 degrees 13 minutes South, 151 degrees 27 minutes East

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

[Japanese](#) naval vessels sunk:

- Submarine I-174, by aircraft from light carrier *Monterey* (CVL-26) and destroyers *MacDonough* (DD-351) and *Stephen Potter* (DD-538), Caroline Islands area, 6 degrees 13 minutes North, 151 degrees 19 minutes East. River gunboat *Tahure*, by submarine *Flasher* (SS-249), South China Sea, 13 degrees 2 minutes North, 109 degrees 28 minutes East

[German](#) submarine sunk:

- U-421, by Army aircraft, Toulon, France

[WORLD WAR II](#)

May 21, Sunday: In the village of Frayssinet just south of Tulle in central France, members of the underground killed a [German](#) officer. The Germans in reprisal carefully selected some young males of one-child families, in such manner as to negate any hope of further French familial line of descent. Outside the entrance to the local church there is a small monument with a stone cross, and a plaque bearing the names of all 15 youths.

There was a gynomous detonation at the West Locke Munitions Facility at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, and the official story is that the cause of this has never been discovered. (You don't suppose someone made the mistake of reasoning that out of the doing of harm, good would come? — Come on, we know the mistake that was made: the mistake was that deadly explosives were being accumulated!) The ships destroyed were Landing Ship-Tank LST-43, LST-69, LST-179, LST-353, and LST-480, and Landing Craft-Tank LCT(6)-961, LCT(6)-963, and LCT(6)-983. It is said there must have been at least 1,000 who were either killed or wounded.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)



Naval land-based and Army aircraft attacked [Japanese](#) positions on Wotje Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

[WORLD WAR II](#)



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

June 17, Saturday: Allied task force (Rear Admiral T.H. Troubridge, RN), including US naval vessels, landed French troops on island of Elba off Italy.

United States naval vessels damaged:

- Escort carrier *Fanshaw Bay* (CVE-70), by horizontal bomber, off Marianas Islands, 15 degrees 0 minutes North, 145 degrees 0 minutes East
- Motor minesweeper YMS-377, by mine, Normandy area, 49 degrees 29 minutes North, 1 degree 8 minutes West
- LST84, accidentally by United States naval gunfire, Marianas Islands, 15 degrees 10 minutes North, 145 degrees 58 minutes East

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

[Japanese](#) submarine sunk:

- RO-117, by naval land-based aircraft (VB-109) from Eniwetok, 11 degrees 5 minutes North, 150 degrees 31 minutes East

[WORLD WAR II](#)

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

June 19, Monday: Artificial harbor area Normandy, France, was severely damaged by storm.

During the 2-day battle of the Philippine Sea, a spread of 6 torpedoes was sent out by Lieutenant-Commander Kossler's USS *Cavalla* and 4 struck Captain Matsubara Hiroshi's aircraft carrier IJN *Shokaku*.



The carrier was dead in the water and aflame. One of the torpedoes had touched off the forward aviation fuel tanks near the main hanger, and planes that had just landed and were being refuelled were on fire. There were ammunition and bomb explosions, and gasoline was spewing from shattered fuel pipes. With the ship down at the bow and its fires very much out of control, the crew began to abandon ship. Volatile gas fumes had been seeping throughout the vessel and an aerial bomb exploding on the hanger deck set off a series of fuel/air explosions which simply blew the giant ship apart. 1,263 died. The 570 floaters included the ship's skipper. (The USS *Cavalla* is on public display in Galveston, Texas.)

Also during this naval engagement, Japan's largest and newest carrier, the 29,300-ton IJN *Taiho*, was torpedoed west of Guam by Lieutenant-Commander H. Rimmer's USS *Albacore*. Flagship of Vice-Admiral



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Jisburo Ozawa, the carrier sank after sparks from an electrical generator set off a fuel/air explosion and 1,650 of the ship's complement of 1,751 crewmen died. (On November 7, 1944 the USS *Albacore* would hit a mine while submerging during its 11th patrol off the coast of Japan, and its crew of 86 would die.

WORLD WAR II

Summary: The battle of the Philippine Sea opened as [Japanese](#) carrier-based aircraft attacked Fifth Fleet (Admiral R.A. Spruance) covering Saipan operation. Two United States battleships, two carriers, and a heavy cruiser were damaged. [Japanese](#) lose over 300 aircraft, and two aircraft carriers were sunk by United States submarines. The Japanese military attempted ineffectually to use [bubonic plague](#) and the [cholera](#) against American landing forces on Saipan.

GERM WARFARE

United States naval vessel sunk:

- LST523, by mine, Normandy area, 49 degrees 30 minutes North, 1 degree 10 minutes West

United States naval vessels damaged:

- Battleship *South Dakota* (BB-57), by dive bomber, Battle of the Philippine Sea, 14 degrees 10 minutes North, 143 degrees 15 minutes East
- Battleship *Indiana* (BB-58), by Kamikaze, Battle of the Philippine Sea, 14 degrees 4 minutes North, 143 degrees 23 minutes East
- Carrier *Bunker Hill* (CV-17), by dive bomber, Battle of the Philippine Sea, 14 degrees 46 minutes North, 143 degrees 2 minutes East
- Carrier *Wasp* (CV-18), by dive bomber, Battle of the Philippine Sea, 14 degrees 19 minutes North, 143 degrees 48 minutes East
- Heavy cruiser *Minneapolis* (CA-36), by horizontal bomber, Battle of the Philippine Sea, 14 degrees 11 minutes North, 143 degrees 9 minutes East
- Destroyer *Hudson* (DD-475), accidentally by United States naval gunfire, Battle of the Philippine Sea, 14 degrees 11 minutes North, 143 degrees 9 minutes East

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

- Motor minesweeper YMS-323, by coastal defense gun, Saipan, Marianas Islands, 15 degrees 10 minutes North, 145 degrees 58 minutes East
- Ocean tug ATR-15, by grounding, Normandy area, 49 degrees 22 minutes North, 0 degrees 26 minutes West

[Japanese](#) naval vessels sunk:

- Carrier *Shokaku*, by submarine *Cavalla* (SS-244), Battle of the Philippine Sea, 11 degrees 50 minutes North, 137 degrees 57 minutes East
- Carrier *Taiho*, by submarine *Albacore* (SS-218), Battle of the Philippine Sea, 12 degrees 22 minutes North, 137 degrees 4 minutes East
- Submarine I-184, by aircraft (VT-60) from escort carrier *Suwannee* (CVE-27), Central Pacific area, 13 degrees 1 minute North, 149 degrees 53 minutes East

WORLD WAR II



"A victory described in detail is indistinguishable from a defeat."

— Jean-Paul Sartre





SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

July 17, Monday: The 7,212-ton Liberty ship *E.A. Bryan* was at Port Chicago Naval Base, California taking on ammunition and explosives. Just before 10:20PM, 4,600 tons of munitions and 1,780 tons of explosives detonated, sending smoke and debris 12,000 feet into the skies. Windows were shattered for 20 miles around. A 2nd ship moored nearby, the brand-new *Quinalt Victory* getting ready for its maiden voyage, was also loaded with munitions. It had taken 3 days and nights to load these ships, all the labor being performed mostly of course by black naval personnel.²⁰⁸ Everyone on board these ships and many on the pier were of course killed instantly. A total of 320 died (*E.A. Bryan* 53, *Quinalt Victory* 44) and 390 were injured. A 12-ton locomotive on the pier simply vanished, not a single piece of it ever being identified. The 1,200-foot wooden pier, and 16 boxcars loaded with bombs and ammunition, likewise simply vanished. The damage bill to what is now known as the Concord Naval Weapons Station (our western storage yard for atomic warheads) was estimated at \$12,000,000. Due to the utter loss of all evidence in the explosion itself, the Court of Inquiry would be unable to establish a cause.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Japanese naval vessel sunk:

- Minesweeper #25, by submarine *Gabilan* (SS-252), off Honshu, 33 degrees 51 minutes North, 138 degrees 35 minutes East

WORLD WAR II

October 3, Tuesday: United States naval vessels sunk:

- Submarine *Seawolf* (SS-197), accidentally by United States forces, off Morotai Island, Netherlands East Indies
- Destroyer escort *Shelton* (DE-407), by submarine torpedo Netherlands East Indies area, 2 degrees 33 minutes North, 129 degrees 18 minutes East

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Japanese submarine sunk:

- Submarine I-364, by destroyer escort *Samuel S. Miles* (DE-183), Palau Islands area, Caroline Islands, 7 degrees 48 minutes North, 133 degrees 18 minutes East

WORLD WAR II

208. This was not because black American servicemen are considered to be stronger and more adaptable than white American servicemen. It was because black American servicemen are considered to be expendable by way of contrast with white American servicemen.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

October 12, Thursday: [Senator Harry S Truman](#) began his official vice-presidential campaign tour, by railroad, with a speech in New Orleans (the railroad car he used was named the “Henry Stanley” and perhaps the joke of the day may have been “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”).



Carrier-based aircraft from Third Fleet (Admiral W. F. Halsey) commence 5-day attack against enemy shipping, airfield facilities, and industrial plants on Formosa and northern Luzon, Philippine Islands. These strikes meet with intensive counterattacks by [Japanese](#) aircraft.

United States naval vessel damaged:

- Destroyer *Prichett* (DD-561), accidentally by United States naval gunfire, Formosa area, 21 degrees 8 minutes North, 123 degrees 19 minutes East

WORLD WAR II
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

November 7, Tuesday: Americans took Bloody Ridge west of Dagami, Leyte after fierce fighting.

The Greek government ordered the dissolution of the two largest resistance groups.

Voting in the United States ensured the re-election of [President Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) to an unprecedented 4th term as president (the parties remained virtually unchanged in the Senate, but Roosevelt’s Democrats made strong gains in the House of Representatives). [Senator Harry S Truman](#) was elected as vice-president.

Adam Clayton Powell of New York was elected as the initial African-American Congressman (subsequent to the Reconstruction Era).

United States Patrol Torpedo Boat PT-301 was damaged by accidental explosion in the vicinity of western New Guinea, at 1 degree 15 minutes South, 136 degrees 23 minutes East.

WORLD WAR II
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

November 10, Friday: The USS *Mount Hood* (AE-11), commissioned on August 6, 1944, had come through the Panama Canal. It was fully loaded with ammunition and explosives when it came to anchor in Seadler harbor at Manus in the Admiralty Islands. There, only 4 months into its period of active duty, at 08:55 hours while ammo was being offloaded to other vessels in preparation for the invasion of the Philippines, it blew up sending a smoke cloud 7,000 feet into the air. The largest piece of this ship that would be found would measure 16 feet by 10 feet (no statistic is available as to the largest fragment of a human being that was found). Where the ship had been there was a new trench on the harbor floor that was 300 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 35 feet deep. Its 295 crewmembers had disappeared. The blast also killed 49 and injured 371 on other ships in the harbor. There were 18 survivors from the *Mount Hood* — these were of course men who had for one reason or another been ashore at the time. Some suggest that this would have been caused not by our careless handling of ammunition — but perhaps by some Japanese *kaiten* midget suicide sub that we just hadn't noticed? Go figure.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

United States naval vessel sunk:

- PT-321, by grounding, Leyte area, Philippine Islands 11 degrees 25 minutes North, 124 degrees 19 minutes East; sunk by United States forces

Japanese naval vessels sunk:

- Coast defense vessel #11, by Army aircraft, Ormoc Bay area of the Philippine Islands
- Patrol boat #46, by submarine *Greenling* (SS-213), off Honshu, Japan, 34 degrees 30 minutes North, 138 degrees 34 minutes East

WORLD WAR II

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December 3, Sunday: Following the gynomous explosion at the Port Chicago Naval Base, 50 black sailors of a racially segregated stevedore group had gotten together and made some plans, and on this day they refused to load explosives onto a Pacific-bound ship. They would face court-martial and be reduced to the lowest rank. 5 would be given 8 years in prison, 11 would be given 10 years, 24 would be given 12 years, and 10 would be given 15 years. The public outcry would, however, be such that some months later all would be released — and this fun and games of ammunition-loading would cease to be a “blacks only” affair.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



United States naval vessel sunk:

- Destroyer *Cooper* (DD-695), by torpedo from undetermined source, Ormoc Bay, Philippine Islands 10 degrees 54 minutes North, 124 degrees 36 minutes East

United States naval vessels damaged, Ormoc Bay, Philippine Islands:

- Destroyer *Allen M. Sumner* (DD-691), by [Japanese](#) horizontal bomber. 10 degrees 54 minutes North, 124 degrees 36 minutes East
- Destroyer *Moale* (DD-693), by naval gunfire, 10 degrees 54 minutes North, 124 degrees 36 minutes East

[Japanese](#) naval vessel sunk:

- Destroyer *Kuwa*, by naval gunfire, Ormoc Bay, Philippine Islands 10 degrees 50 minutes North, 124 degrees 35 minutes East
- Coast defense vessel #64, by submarine *Pipefish* (SS-388), South China Sea, 18 degrees 36 minutes North, 111 degrees 54 minutes East

WORLD WAR II

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1945

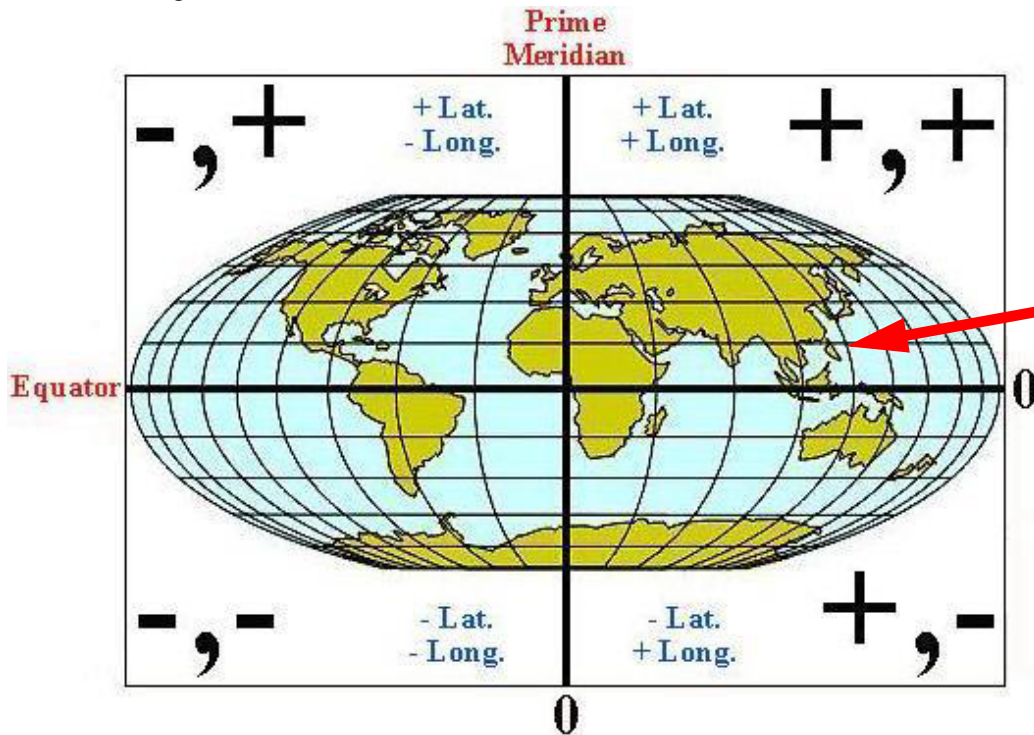
February 1, Thursday: United States naval vessels sunk:

- PT-77, accidentally by United States naval gunfire, Philippine Islands area, 13 degrees 55 minutes North, 120 degrees 36 minutes East; beached and abandoned
- PT-79, accidentally by United States naval gunfire, Philippine Islands area, 13 degrees 55 minutes North, 120 degrees 36 minutes East

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Japanese naval vessels sunk:

- Transport #115, by Army aircraft, Philippine Islands area, 20 degrees 0 minute North, 121 degrees 0 minute East
- Submarine RO-115, by destroyers *Jenkins* (DD-447), *O'Bannon* (DD-450), and *BELL* (DD-587), and destroyer escort *Ulvert M. Moore* (DE-442), Philippine Islands area, 13 degrees 20 minutes North, 119 degrees 20 minutes East

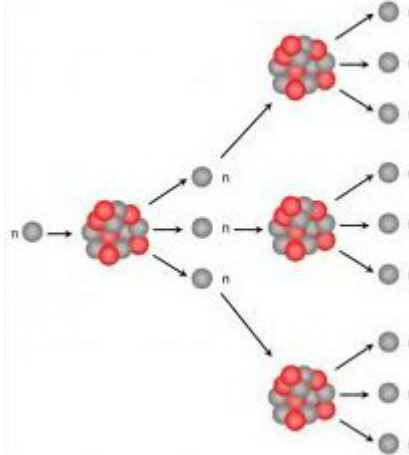


WORLD WAR II

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

February 11, Sunday: There was an unexpected [criticality](#) nuclear reaction at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. The material went beyond criticality into [prompt-criticality](#), which is the next stage after criticality in the generation of a bomb-like nuclear detonation. This was the 1st time in the history of the US's nuclear program, that such a supremely dangerous Chernobyl-like event had occurred in the laboratory.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

(To date there have been a couple of dozen such incidents. Not to worry, we are told — a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident can produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen. Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like a **dirty** bomb — except that at the Fukushima Daiichi site there are some 2,000 **tons** of nuclear material in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools, within a few thousands of yards of one another.)

British and Canadian forces captured Prüm, 80 kilometers west of Koblenz.

Missa brevis for chorus and organ by Zoltán Kodály was performed for the initial time, in Budapest.

Achille van Acker replaced Hubert Pierlot as prime minister of Belgium at the head of a broad unity government.

[Stalin](#), [Prime Minister Winston Churchill](#) and [President Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) signed a joint declaration after their meeting in Potsdam. It put forth guidelines for the end of the war and the maintenance of peace thereafter: An Agreement Relating to Prisoners of War and Civilians Liberated by Forces Operating Under Soviet Command and Forces Operating Under United States of America Command.

READ THE FULL TEXT

United States naval vessel sunk:

- LST577, damaged by submarine torpedo, east of Philippine Islands, 8 degrees 1 minute North, 130 degrees 37 minutes East, sunk by United States forces

United States naval vessel damaged:

- Ocean tug *Takelma* (ATF-113), by collision, Philippine Islands area, 10 degrees 50 minutes North, 125 degrees 25 minutes East

[Japanese](#) submarine sunk:



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

- RO-112, by submarine *Batfish* (SS-310), Philippine Islands area, 18 degrees 53 minutes North, 121 degrees 50 minutes East

WORLD WAR II

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

March 24, Saturday: [George Smith Patton, Jr.](#) had his driver stop in the middle of the military pontoon bridge across the Rhine — so the general, always a showman, could have himself photographed taking a contemptuous leak into that famous [German](#) river.



A group of battleships under the command of Vice Admiral W.A. Lee bombarded the island of Okinawa in the Ryukyu chain. Two small [Japanese](#) vessels were sunk, coast defense vessel #68 and the torpedo boat *Tomozuru*, by US carrier-based aircraft in the South China Sea, 28 degrees 25 minutes North, 124 degrees 32 minutes East.

WORLD WAR II

Back stateside, on this eventful day, a 55-year-old black truck driver, Ebb Cade, was involved in a very severe car accident. He was taken comatose to the US Army Manhattan Engineer District Hospital in Oakridge, Tennessee, with injuries apparently so severe that he would not survive. Comatose, severely injured, ignorant, poor and, when all is said and done, black, he would have no way whatever to defend himself against the

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

government doctors of the Atomic Energy Commission. What a wonderful opportunity for them to conduct ghoulish experiments with [radiation](#)!

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS
SECRET MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS

April 9, Monday: Pastor Dietrich Bonhoffer was hanged.

The Mauthausen concentration camp was evacuated.

GERMANY

A US shipload of bombs exploded at [Bari, Italy](#) and not fewer than 360 died.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



Army troops supported by destroyer gunfire and air strikes land on Jolo in the Sulu Archipelago, Philippine Islands.

United States naval vessels damaged, Okinawa area:

- Escort carrier *Chenango* (CVE-28), by crash of friendly aircraft.
- Destroyer *Sterett* (DD-407), by Kamikaze suicide plane, 26 degrees 47 minutes North, 128 degrees 42 minutes East
- Destroyer *Porterfield* (DD-682), accidentally by United States naval gunfire, 26 degrees 34 minutes North, 128 degrees 28 minutes East
- High-speed transport *Hopping* (APD-51), by coastal defense gun, 26 degrees 15 minutes North, 127 degrees 55 minutes East
- LST557, by coastal defense gun, 26 degrees 14 minutes North, 127 degrees 57 minutes East

[Japanese](#) naval vessels sunk:

- Submarine RO-46, by destroyers *Mertz* (DD-691) and *Monssen* (DD-798), Okinawa area, 26 degrees 9 minutes North, 130 degrees 21 minutes East



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

- Minesweeper #3, by submarine *Parche* (SS-384), off Japan, 39 degrees 6 minutes North, 141 degrees 57 minutes East

WORLD WAR II

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 10, Tuesday: Hanover fell to the Allies.

GERMANY

Dr. Robert S. Stone injected his “expected casualty,” the black truckdriver Ebb Cade who had been rendered comatose in a bad highway crash, with 1,030 rems of **Plutonium₂₃₉**, which was 41.2 times the total amount of radiation that a typical individual would receive in a lifetime. Cade had become the first patient out of 18 –not all of whom the DOE has completely identified– to be thus injected.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

(Dr. Robert S. Stone would get all upset and concerned when he learned later that his patient had survived both the auto accident injuries and his injection, and had left the hospital without the doctor’s having had the opportunity to conduct follow-up tests on bodily **Pt₂₃₉** levels.)

SECRET MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS

The image is a composite graphic with an orange background. In the top left, there is a small periodic table with the text "Periodic Chart" above it. In the bottom left, there is a "KEY:" section with a diagram of an element card for Sodium (Na). The key labels are: Atomic Number (11), Name (Sodium), Symbol (Na), and Atomic Mass (22.990). The diagram shows the atomic number 11, the name "Sodium", the symbol "Na", and the atomic mass "22.990". To the right of the key, the electronic configuration "2 8 1" is shown with arrows pointing to the corresponding parts of the element card. The main part of the image is a large, stylized element card for Plutonium. It features the atomic number "94" in the top left, the name "Plutonium" in the center, the symbol "Pt" in large letters below the name, and the mass number "~239" at the bottom. On the right side of the card, the electron shell configuration "2 8 18 32 24 8 2" is listed vertically.

US Army troops supported by naval bombardment and carrier aircraft land on Tsuken Shima, off east coast of Okinawa.



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

United States naval vessels damaged in operations against [Japanese](#) forces in the Okinawa area:

- Motor minesweeper YMS-96, by collision, 26 degrees 3 minutes North, 127 degrees 48 minutes East
- Submarine chaser SC-661, by grounding, 26 degrees 11 minutes North, 127 degrees 55 minutes East
- LST449, by coastal defense gun, 26 degrees 14 minutes North, 127 degrees 57 minutes East

United States naval vessels damaged, Okinawa area:

- Battleship *Missouri* (BB-63), by [Japanese](#) Kamikaze, 26 degrees 0 minutes North, 130 degrees 0 minutes East
- Aircraft carrier *Enterprise* (CV-6), by [Japanese](#) Kamikaze, 26 degrees 0 minute North, 128 degrees 0 minutes East
- Aircraft carrier *Essex* (CV-9), by dive bomber, 26 degrees 50 minutes North, 130 degrees 30 minutes East
- Destroyer *Trathen* (DD-530), accidentally by United States naval gunfire, 27 degrees 13 minutes North, 130 degrees 15 minutes East
- Destroyer *Hale* (DD-642), by dive bomber, 26 degrees 0 minute North, 120 degrees 0 minutes East
- Destroyer *Bullard* (DD-660), by [Japanese](#) Kamikaze, 26 degrees 0 minute North, 130 degrees 0 minutes East
- Destroyer *Kidd* (DD-661), by [Japanese](#) Kamikaze, 26 degrees 0 minute North, 130 degrees 0 minutes East
- Destroyer *Hank* (DD-702), by aerial strafing, 27 degrees 0 minute North, 130 degrees 0 minutes East
- Destroyer escort *Manlove* (DE-36), by aerial strafing, 26 degrees 12 minutes North, 127 degrees 20 minutes East
- Destroyer escort *Samuel S. Miles* (DE-183), by [Japanese](#) Kamikaze, 26 degrees 12 minutes North, 127 degrees 20 minutes East
- Attack transport *Berrien* (APA-61), by collision, 26 degrees 22 minutes North, 127 degrees 43 minutes East
- Attack cargo ship *Leo* (AKA-60), accidentally by United States naval gunfire, 26 degrees 21 minutes North, 127 degrees 43 minutes East
- LST399, by grounding, 26 degrees 20 minutes North, 127 degrees 45 minutes East

WORLD WAR II



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

June 4, Monday: At Los Alamos, some nuclear workers were experimenting to determine what would be actually (rather than theoretically) the critical mass for their particular mix of isotopes of [enriched uranium](#). The fissile materials were inside a polyethylene box, but some water leaked into it that altered somewhat the dynamics of the lump. Three of them received non-fatal doses of radiation.²⁰⁹

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

American troops landed on Oroku Peninsula, [Okinawa](#) and attacked Naha airfield. United States Patrol vessel YP-41 was damaged by operational casualty in the vicinity of Okinawa, at 26 degrees 18 minutes North, 127 degrees 52 minutes East. [Japanese](#) submarine chaser #112 was sunk by Army aircraft in the Java Sea, at 5 degrees 0 minute South, 116 degrees 4 minutes East.

In an election broadcast, British Prime Minister [Winston Churchill](#) asserted that a Labour government would require “some kind of Gestapo” to enforce its manifesto. Fifteen people were killed by two explosions at the US military police headquarters in Bremen, [Germany](#).

Friend [Agnes Carol Zens Kellam](#) wrote from Washington DC to her husband, Friend [John R. Kellam](#), who was being held in a federal penitentiary for having refused to participate in the killing:

Johnny Dearest:

Just a short note to thee. I'm so tired I just have to go to bed early, even though I know I haven't written to thee since May 30. I was worried about not hearing from thee for so long. I didn't know whether thee was getting my letters and I was getting thine, and I didn't want to write for public consumption only, and besides, working keeps me tired - I'll be quitting at the end of this month and can take a rest in the mornings and afternoons, as I'm supposed to. Today I was very happy to receive thy letter of May 28, with nothing erased except its number (which was erased on the envelope too). This letter told me of the label they had put on thy cage, and of the thoughts brought out in thee by thy group meeting concerning the importance of the mind and the spirit and the unimportance of the body as a means of coercion. Thee has wonderful thoughts, and thee's right. But so many people can't or aren't taught to control their bodies so as to bring themselves true happiness. They find it so much easier to put their bodies to destructive use. It's up to thee, and people like thee, to show by example how much more satisfaction and real living we can get from life when we live for ideals instead of bodily comfort. Then the body cannot be used for punishment, whether by incarceration or torture or mere hampering of movement....

To go back to bodies, I really regard mine with an exaggerated sense of importance, no doubt, these days when there is a child developing in it. Well-born children should be a country's greatest asset, and a country should strive to see that its children are well-born, and, if they were worthy of the trust of their citizens, should see that children in the whole world over are well born, instead of starving them and dropping fire bombs on them....

All my love, dearest from, Carol

WORLD WAR II

209. There have been in the nuclear industry, to date, some 70 such criticality excursions and some 21 resultant fatalities, but –so far at least– there hasn't been a single bomb-like nuclear detonation! (Keep on keeping your fingers crossed.)



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December 9: The International Organizations Immunities Act.

[George Smith Patton, Jr.](#) suffered a neck injury in an automobile accident near Mannheim, [Germany](#).

[WORLD WAR II](#)
[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December 21: While [George Smith Patton, Jr.](#) was being driven around Germany, his military chauffeur got in an accident. Here is his command car — except that it has now been repaired, and all restored and cherried out and polished:

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



Unfortunately, after the accident Patton died from an embolism at the 130th Station Hospital in Heidelberg.

WORLD WAR II

The Kingdom of Iraq and the Republic of Ecuador ratified the United Nations Charter.

Back from Fascist Italy in Washington DC, a district court, considering him unfit to stand trial for treason, committed the 60-year-old [Ezra Pound](#) to the Howard Hall of Saint Elizabeth's Hospital for the Criminally Insane.²¹⁰



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December 23: [George Smith Patton, Jr.](#) was buried in the American Military Cemetery at Hamm, Luxembourg. Here is a poem which he had composed, probably during this last year of his life:

Duty

Duty that armed Abraham's hand
And nerved the blade of Antony
Thy lambent light n'er brighter burned
Than in this bloody war today.

It steadies in its darkest hour
The wavering heart of woman-hood
It makes the boy to sacrifice
His life, his all for country's good.

Oh! mighty soul, uplifting thought
That did inspire the great of yore
Thou hast returned into our midst
Pray God thou ne'er shall leave us more.

WORLD WAR II
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1946

May 21: By this point, the Soviet evacuation of Iran was complete.

Almost two months after 400,000 coal miners had gone on strike, [President Harry S Truman](#) ordered the seizure of the coal mines.

At Los Alamos, Louis Slotin made a serious mistake in the course of a [criticality experiment](#). His reflexes were swift enough to save the lives of seven nearby colleagues but he himself would die in nine days.²¹¹

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

210. Following protests by influential figures, he would be transferred to the hospital's more humane Chestnut Ward facility. Pound's wife Dorothy would take a room nearby and his visitors would include a number of longtime friends, including the literary figures T.S. Eliot, e.e. cummings, Robert Lowell, and William Carlos Williams. During his dozen years under commitment the poet would produce some of his most personal and powerful work, including ROCK DRILL, LXXXV-ICV, and THRONES, ICVI-CIX. A few more fragments of cantos would appear over the following decade but by 1962 such work would be abandoned, so that the CANTOS remain unfinished. Pound would comment to Allen Ginsberg that nothing made sense to him anymore and that the worst mistake he'd made was "that stupid suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism."

211. There have been in the nuclear industry, to date, some 70 such criticality excursions and some 21 resultant fatalities, but—so far at least—there hasn't been a single atomic blast! Cross your fingers.

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1948

November: An unidentified Chinese troopship evacuating Nationalist troops from Manchuria sank near Yingkow, drowning an estimated 6,000.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



December 3: The Kiangya, a Chinese passenger ship carrying refugees who were fleeing from the Communists during the civil war, struck an old mine off Shanghai, drowning an estimated more than 3,000.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS





SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1949

September 17: A Canadian Great Lakes cruise ship, the *Noronic*, burned while docked at Toronto, killing about 130.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.



"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

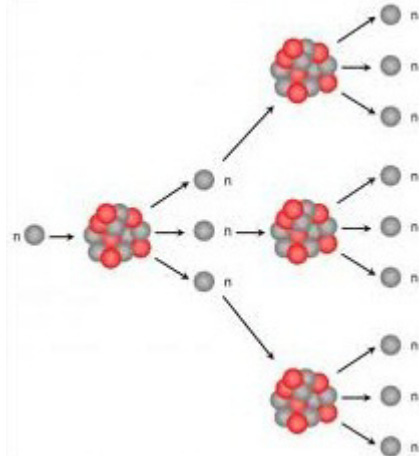
- A.J.P. Taylor



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December: For the 2d time in the history of our nuclear program, at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, some fissile material went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before a nuclear blast.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

To date there have been a couple of dozen such incidents. Not to worry, we are told — a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “**dirty**” bomb —which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect— except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, —we never need read of another. One is enough.

SURPRISE!

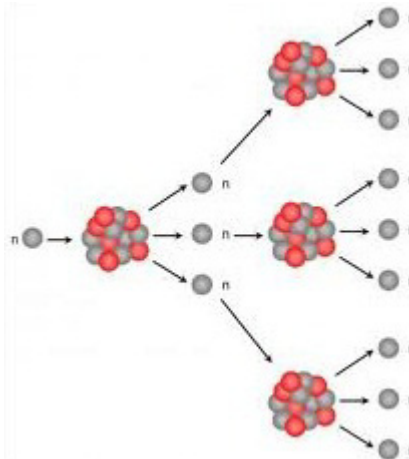
SURPRISE!

1951

February 1: The United Nations voted to bring the [Korean](#) conflict to an end and the People’s Republic of [China](#) was labeled an “aggressor.”

KOREAN WAR

For the 3d time in the history of our nuclear program, at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, some fissile material went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

To date there have been a couple of dozen such incidents. Not to worry, we are told — a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “**dirty**” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

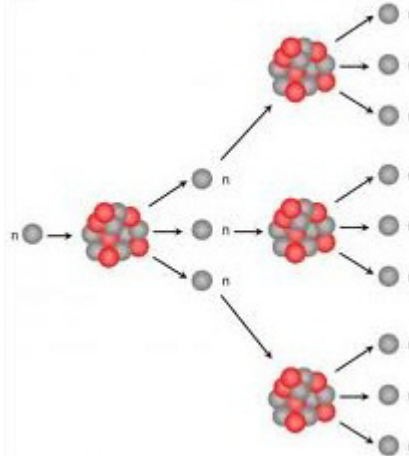
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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1952

April 18: For the 4th time in the history of our nuclear program, at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, some fissile material went beyond criticality into prompt-criticality, the final stage before an atomic explosion.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

To date there have been a couple of dozen such incidents. Not to worry, we are told — a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “dirty” bomb —which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect— except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 26, night: The American destroyer USS *Hobson*, a minesweeper, was sailing in formation 700 miles west of the Azores, while the new aircraft carrier *Wasp* was carrying out aircraft deck landing exercises. When the carrier turned into the wind the *Hobson* attempted to cross its bow. This was a mistake. Its skipper, Lieutenant Commander W.J. Tierney, and 175 others died as the destroyer tore in two.²¹²

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



June 2: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej replaced Petru Groza as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Romania.

In the case of *Youngstown v. Sawyer*, the US Supreme Court ruled that [President Harry S Truman](#)'s seizure of the steel industry was unconstitutional. The president immediately ordered the steel industry returned to its owners and steel workers immediately went on strike.

Dr. Harry Grundfest of Columbia University, Chairman of the American Medical Advisory Board to Hebrew University and the Hadassah Medical School, was denied a passport to travel to Israel because that "would not be in the best interests of the US."

For the 5th time in the history of our nuclear program, at the Argonne National Laboratory some fissile

212. At a first order of approximation there seems to be a remarkable similarity between fighting at sea and feeding fish.

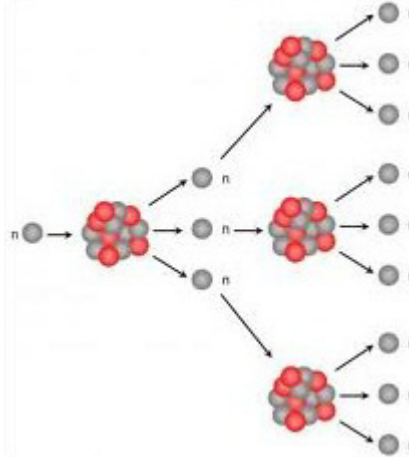


"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

material went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Although this was the second one in the same year, to date there have been only a couple of dozen such incidents. Not to worry, we are told — a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “**dirty**” bomb —which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect— except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

[WALDEN](#): If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, —we never need read of another. One is enough.

December 12: Technicians mistakenly pulled 4 of the 12 control rods out of the fuel core of the experimental NRX [nuclear reactor](#) at Atomic Energy of Canada’s Chalk River Laboratories, 180 kilometers northwest of Ottawa. There was a power surge, partial loss of coolant, and [partial core meltdown](#), followed by an explosion, in which the core was rendered unusable and 4,000,000 liters of radioactive water flooded the building’s basement. Junior officer Jimmy Carter, who had served on surface ships and on diesel-electric submarines in the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, was sent from Schenectady by Captain Hyman G. Rickover to take charge of a 6-month cleanup. He and other members of his team, attired in the usual protective gear, would be lowered individually and momentarily into the reactor, to use hand tools to loosen bolts, remove nuts, and otherwise complete this disassembly process.²¹³

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Concerto for harp and chamber orchestra by Ernst Krenek was performed for the initial time, in Philadelphia.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1953

January 9: The end of the world, according to Agnes Carlson, founder of a Canadian cult called "Sons of Light."

MILLENNIALISM

(January 9th actually was the end of the world for at least 249 people. Off Pusan, a South Korean ferry, the *Chang Tyong-Ho*, foundered and we know that at least that many had been aboard.)



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

January 31: A British ferry, the *Princess Victoria*, sank in the Irish Sea, and 133 were lost.

LOST AT SEA



WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

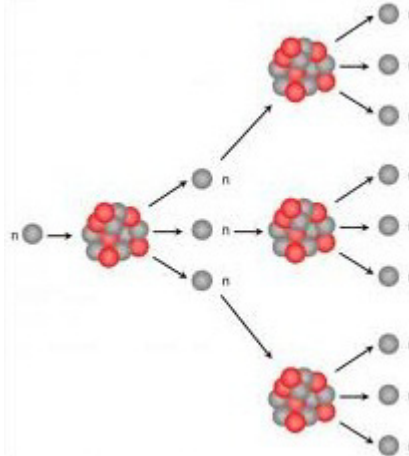
213. Former President Carter would reveal that it had been this experience at Chalk River that caused him to discontinue our project for a **neutron bomb**. Since this is precisely the experience I would have in the late 1970s at GE's GETR test reactor in Pleasanton, California (with the exception that the task I was required to perform when lowered by a crane into position atop the core while standing on a block of lead would be to tighten, rather than to loosen, bolts), I can counter by revealing that my experience at the GETR was in part what caused me (when I suspected the forging of quality documents having to do with the X-ray validation of welding of surface irregularities on the Mark I pressure vessel) to make my abortive telephone attempt to contact the Nuclear Regulatory Commission — an attempt which was followed immediately by my being threatened with imprisonment for having delayed by some ten days before attempting that phonecall, and with my instant processing for termination "due to lack of work."

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1954

May 26: For the 5th time in the history of our nuclear program, at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory some fissile material went beyond criticality into prompt-criticality, the final stage before an atomic explosion.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Not to worry, to date there have been only a couple of dozen such incidents. We are told that a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff in the “Elephant’s Foot” formation in the basement failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “dirty” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 tons of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

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The case of the US Army in the Army-McCarthy hearings was completed after 21 days of testimony.

17 Puerto Rican nationalists were indicted by a federal grand jury in New York for seditious conspiracy (the indictments were a result of the March 1st attack in the Congress).

String Quartet no.4 by Ralph Shapey was performed for the initial time, in Kaufman Auditorium of the 92d Street Y, New York.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

September 26, day: 1,168 died when the *Toya Maru*, a commercial ferry, sank in the Tsugaru Strait off Hokkaido, [Japan](#) in a typhoon.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



This typhoon also killed about 500 other people.

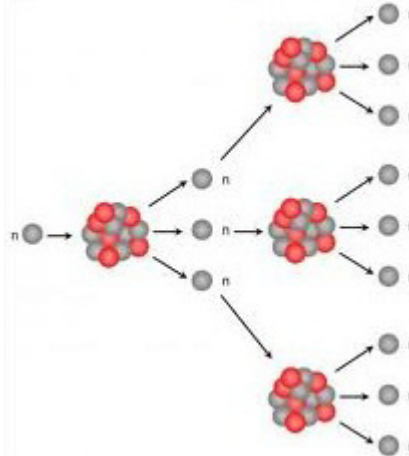
Diego Rivera was readmitted to membership in the Communist Party of [Mexico](#) (he had been expelled in 1929 as a Trotskyite).

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1956

February 1: For the 7th time in the history of our nuclear program, at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory some fissile material went beyond criticality into prompt-criticality, the final stage before an atomic explosion.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

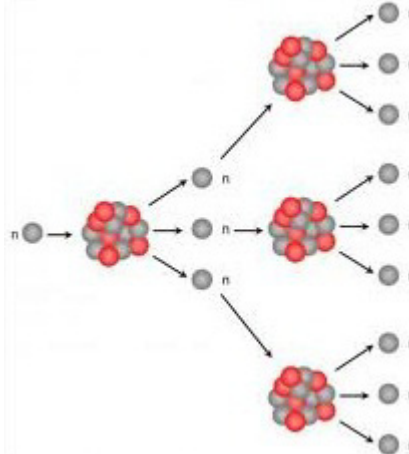
Not to worry, to date there have been only a couple of dozen such incidents. We are told that a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff in the “Elephant’s Foot” formation in the basement failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “dirty” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

July 3: For the 8th time in the history of our nuclear program, at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory some fissile material went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Although it was the second time this year that this sort of thing had happened, not to worry, for to date there have been only a couple of dozen such incidents. We are told that a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff in the “Elephant’s Foot” formation in the basement failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “**dirty**” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

July 25: Shortly before midnight in a dense fog 70 kilometers south of Nantucket Island, the *Andrea Doria*, an Italian liner, collided with the Swedish liner *Stockholm*.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Contempt citations were brought against 8 individuals by the [Un-American Activities Committee](#) for their refusal to cooperate. Among those honored were playwright Arthur Miller, folk singer Pete Seeger, and actors Elliot Sullivan and George Tyne (none of the citations would pass court scrutiny; no contempt citation would be brought against the Hollywood director Don Siegel, who in this year was creating the paranoid classic "Invasion of the Body Snatchers.")



July 26: Off Nantucket Island, the *Andrea Doria* sank with at least 52 dead or unaccounted for.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

[Adin Ballou](#)'s "Thoreau's Concord River," an "after reading Thoreau" sonnet, appeared in the New York [Herald Tribune](#).



Israel charged before the UN Security Council that Jordan had been guilty of 101 border violations since April

In Alexandria, [Egypt](#) President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the nationalization of the [Suez Canal Company](#) and a plan to use the revenue to build a high dam at Aswan on the Nile River, precipitating an international crisis. A Marine battalion from the US Sixth Fleet evacuated US nationals and other civilians from Alexandria.

USMC

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1957

Accidental venting of extraction wastes by a Soviet [Plutonium](#) factory near Kyshtym, Russia forced a 20-year evacuation of nearly 500 square miles of Western Siberia. United States Air Force efforts to monitor this event would be responsible for the U-2 overflight that would eventuate in the capture of Francis Gary Powers.

The graphic contains three main components:

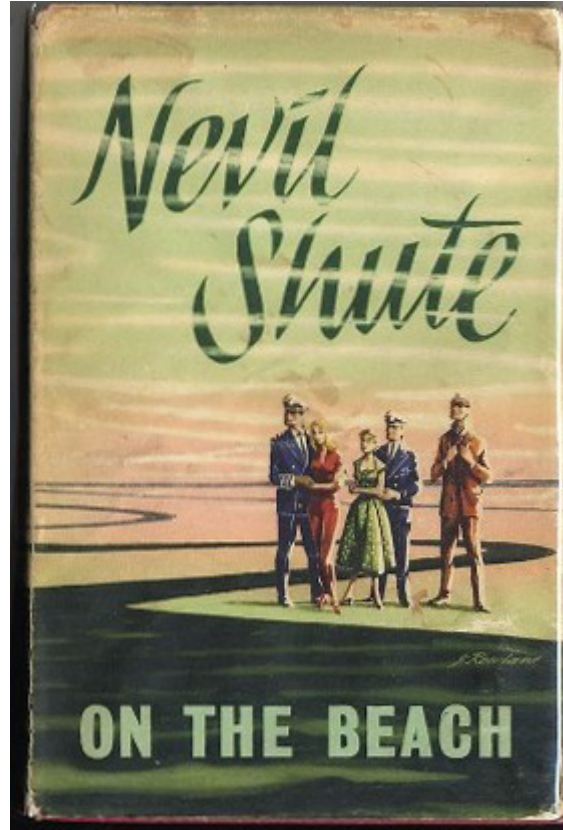
- Periodic Chart:** A simplified periodic table with a small black square highlighting the position of Plutonium (atomic number 94) in the actinide series.
- KEY:** A diagram showing the layout of an element card for Sodium (Na) with labels:
 - Atomic Number: 11
 - Name: Sodium
 - Symbol: Na
 - Atomic Mass: 22.990
 - Electronic Configuration: 2, 8, 1
- Plutonium Card:** A large card for Plutonium (Pt) with the following information:
 - Atomic Number: 94
 - Name: Plutonium
 - Symbol: Pt
 - Atomic Mass: ~239
 - Electronic Configuration: 2, 8, 18, 32, 24, 8, 2

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Nevil Shute's novel of the nuclear apocalypse, [On the Beach](#). Read it and weep.



The American Medical Association had in 1847 promulgated a code of ethics, one item of which called for physicians to care for infectious patients “even at the jeopardy of their own lives.” The code of ethics of course had no teeth, and there were never any studies to discover whether it was having an impact upon the conduct of doctors. In this year this item of the physician’s code of ethics was stricken. (Something that may have escaped your notice might very well be relevant in this context: a physician is not in general a person suffering from a martyr complex, but instead in general is a fee professional. This item of the code of ethics would be reinstated in 1989 — yet no studies have given us reason to believe that American physicians were behaving in any unusual manner in the period between the striking and the reinstatement. For instance, while working at the Kansas City plant run for the AEC by Bendix, in this year, Dotte Troxell was involved in a serious radiation accident. When symptoms of [acute radiation syndrome](#) such as hair loss, nausea, purpura, and hemorrhaging began to appear, she was sent to the Lovelace Clinic in New Mexico, a clinic established by the AEC for developing treatments for radiation injury. Because she was thought to be near death, and presumably because she had been exposed to a Cobalt₆₀ calibration source that allowed the dose to her organs to be

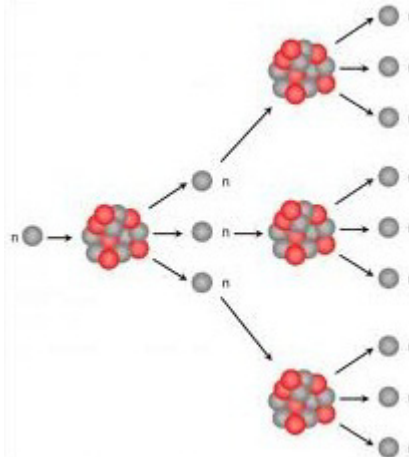
SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

precisely determined, what the doctors at Lovelace did was perform exploratory surgery, taking tissue biopsies from her internal organs. Probably, they did this not to help her live but so that when she died they would be able to know exactly how much radiation it had taken to kill her in exactly that number of days. When she awoke after this surgery the doctors told her that for reasons of “national security” they would not be able to say what they had done inside her body. She would suffer radiogenic cataracts in both eyes and, for related or unrelated reasons, would give birth to a son with congenital diabetes. There is no reason to believe, however, that the manner in which she was treated was in any way influenced by the American Medical Association’s code of ethics. Had she been injured and treated in the previous year, 1956, while the full code of ethics was still in place, there is no reason to believe that she would have received any better treatment than she did receive in 1957!)

SECRET MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

February 12: For the 9th time in the history of our nuclear program, at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory some fissile material went beyond **criticality** into **prompt-criticality**, the final stage before an **atomic explosion**.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Although it was the second time this year that this sort of thing had happened, not to worry, for to date there have been only a couple of dozen such incidents. We are told that a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff in the “Elephant’s Foot” formation in the basement failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “dirty” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

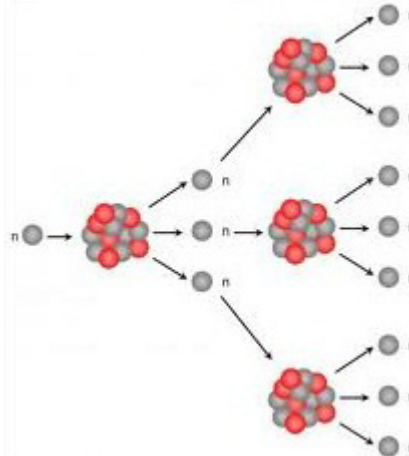
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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1958

January 2: For the 10th time in the history of our nuclear program, this time at the Mayak Production Association, some fissile material went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Not to worry, however, for in the more than half century of our nuclear era there have been only a couple of dozen such incidents, that we know of. We are told that a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff in the “Elephant’s Foot” formation in the basement failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “dirty” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

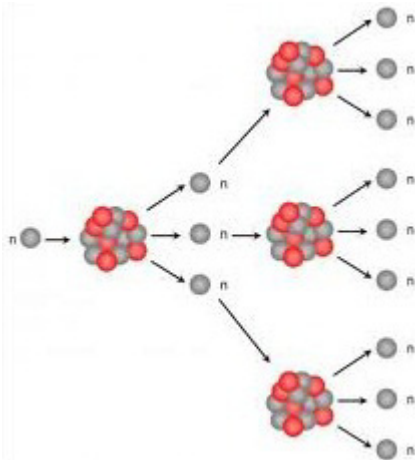
May 24: There was an [uranium-processing-related criticality](#) at the Y-12 Plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Unknowingly, during a routine leak test, a fissile solution was draining into a 55-gallon drum! No, no! –not the assembly of a critical mass! What were they thinking? Were they thinking? The excursion went on for about 20 minutes and 8 people were affected, fortunately, none of them mortally — 5 would be in the hospital for 44 days, but eventually all 8 would be back on the job.²¹⁴

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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June 16: There was a 2d accident at Atomic Energy of Canada’s Chalk River Laboratories, one considerably more serious than the [partial core meltdown](#) of an experimental NRX reactor that had occurred there in 1952. A damaged uranium fuel rod being pulled from the core caught fire and came apart. Radioactive combustion products would need to be cleaned from the interior of the reactor building and surrounding laboratory site (some members of the military contingent assigned to perform this cleanup would apply for disability pensions due to long term health impact, but find that they were unable to prove their case).

Meanwhile, on this same day, it is possible that at our Oak Ridge Y-12 plant in Tennessee, where on May 24th there had already been one [criticality](#) accident, for the 11th time in the history of our nuclear program, some fissile material went beyond this into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Not to worry, however, for in the more than half century of our nuclear era there have been only a couple of

214. There have been in the nuclear industry, to date, some 70 such criticality excursions (not counting the multiple criticalities and radiation surges that have recently been occurring in the basements of the melted-down reactors at Fukushima Daichi, in their liquid pools of “corium,” because the statistics of how many criticalities have been occurring there have not yet been released to the public) and some 21 resultant fatalities, but –so far at least– there hasn’t been a single “atomic fizzle” blast! Not one! Cross your fingers.



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

dozen such incidents, that we know of. We are told that a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff in the “Elephant’s Foot” formation in the basement failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “dirty” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

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October 15: There was a [criticality excursion](#) at the heavy water RB reactor at the Vinca Nuclear Institute in Vinča, Yugoslavia. One person died. Others who had been irradiated would be taken to Europe for bone marrow transplants, so that they would be able to continue to make white blood cells (due to incompatibility rejection, all five of these would also die).²¹⁵

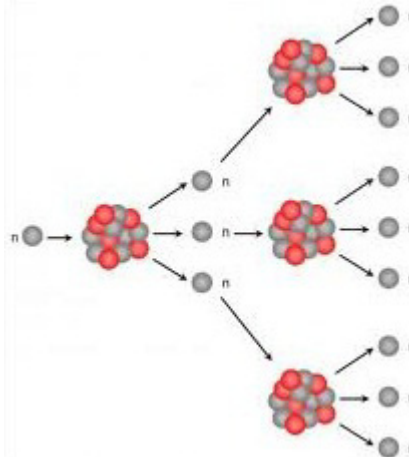
215. There have been in the nuclear industry, to date, some 70 such criticality excursions and some 21 resultant fatalities, but –so far at least– there hasn’t been a single atomic blast! Cross your fingers.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December 30: At the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Cecil Kelley, a chemical operator, switched on the stirrer of a large mixing tank. The tank contained an organic solvent in which some plutonium had been dissolved. The purpose of stirring was to create a vortex in the middle of the tank so that the plutonium atoms, exceedingly heavy, would concentrate toward the center. However, there had been a mixing error and the mixture contained far too much dissolved plutonium, a total of 3.27 kilograms. For about 200 microseconds the vortex reached **criticality**, there was a flash of light, and Kelley received 3,900 to 4,900 rads. When other operators found him he was going “I’m burning up! I’m burning up!” It took him 35 hours to die.

This was the 3d time this year²¹⁶ that fissile material had gone beyond **criticality** into **prompt-criticality**, the final stage before an **atomic explosion**.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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216. And, the 12th time in the history of our nuclear program.

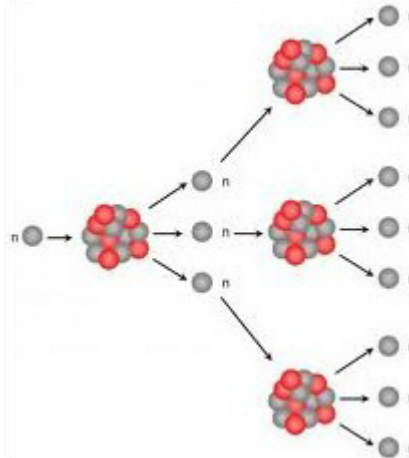
SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1961

January 3: The United States of America and Cuba severed diplomatic and consular relations. The United States turned over the handling of its affairs to the Swiss embassy while the Cuban government referred its affairs to the embassy of Czechoslovakia. The 3,000-3,500 US citizens involved were urged to leave the island promptly.

Three people died as a result of a [nuclear reactor](#) accident at the [SL-1](#) facility near Idaho Falls, Idaho ([improper removal of control rods](#) had induced a steam explosion). For the 13th time in the history of our nuclear program, fissile material had unexpectedly gone beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

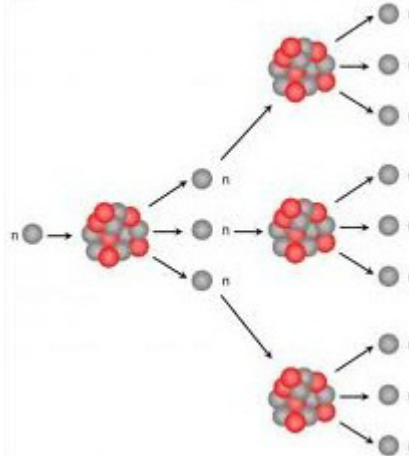
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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

January 25, day: For the 14th time in the history of our nuclear program and the 2d time this month, this time at the Idaho Chemical Processing Plant, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond **criticality** into **prompt-criticality**, the final stage before an **atomic explosion**.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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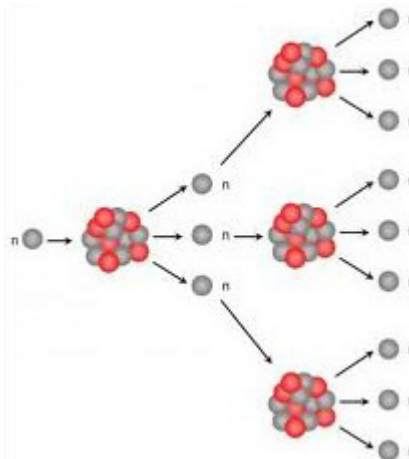
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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1962

December 11: For the 15th time in the history of our nuclear program, this time at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond criticality into prompt-criticality, the final stage before an atomic explosion.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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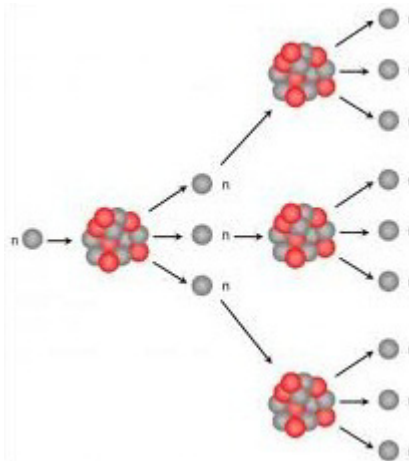
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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1963

March 11: For the 16th time in the history of our nuclear program, this time at the Sarov (Arzamas-16) facility, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond criticality into prompt-criticality, the final stage before an atomic explosion.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 10: The [nuclear submarine](#) USS *Thresher* experienced difficulties with its atomic power plant and went to the bottom of the North Atlantic, taking with it its crew of 129.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



For having printed allegations that he had had an affair with Christine Keeler, an Italian magazine apologized to John Profumo and paid him damages.

In New York, Sonata for clarinet and piano by Francis Poulenc was performed for the 1st time, by Benny Goodman and Leonard Bernstein.

Variations on a Medieval Tune for band by Norman Dello Joio was performed for the 1st time.

May 4: A United Arab Republic ferry capsized in the upper Nile, with over 200 deaths.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1964

What had happened in the 16th Century to Jean-François de Galoup was confirmed by the find and search of the shipwreck of the *Boussole*. Both ships had been wrecked on the reefs, the *Boussole* first.

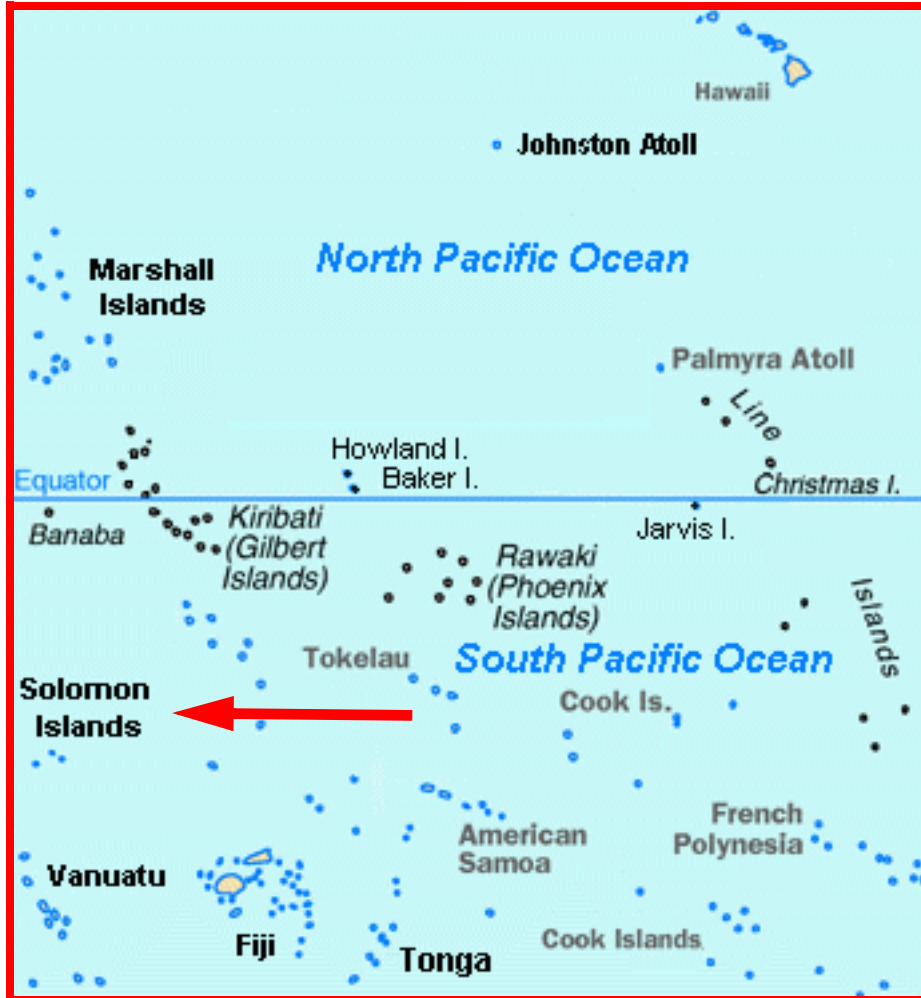
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

The *Astrolabe* had been unloaded and taken apart. A group of men, probably the survivors of the *Boussole*, were massacred by the local inhabitants. Others built a small boat from the wreckage of the *Astrolabe*, and left westward about 9 months later. Apparently this boat then shipwrecked somewhere, possibly in the Solomon Islands.

WALDEN: I have always endeavored to acquire strict business habits; they are indispensable to every man. If your trade is with the Celestial Empire, then some small counting house on the coast, in some Salem harbor, will be fixture enough. You will export such articles as the country affords, purely native products, much ice and pine timber and a little granite, always in native bottoms. These will be good ventures. To oversee all the details yourself in person; to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter; to buy and sell and keep the accounts; to read every letter received, and write or read every letter sent; to superintend the discharge of imports night and day; to be upon many parts of the coast almost at the same time; -often the richest freight will be discharged upon a Jersey shore;- to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking all passing vessels bound coastwise; to keep up a steady despatch of commodities, for the supply of such a distant and exorbitant market; to keep yourself informed of the state of the markets, prospects of war and peace every where, and anticipate the tendencies of trade and civilization, -taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements in navigation;- charts to be studied, the position of reefs and new lights and buoys to be ascertained, and ever, and ever, the logarithmic tables to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier, -there is the untold fate of La Perouse;- universal science to be kept pace with, studying the lives of all great discoverers and navigators, great adventurers and merchants, from Hanno and the Phoenicians down to our day; in fine, account of stock to be taken from time to time, to know how you stand. It is a labor to task the faculties of a man, - such problems of profit and loss, of interest, of tare and tret, and gauging of all kinds in it, as demand a universal knowledge.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!



July 23: At the Wood River Junction facility in Charlestown, [Rhode Island](#), a plant for recovery of uranium from scrap material left over from fuel element production, a worker accidentally dropped a concentrated uranium solution into an agitated tank containing sodium carbonate and there was a [criticality](#). The operator received a fatal dose of some 10,000 rad (100 Gy). Ninety minutes later a plant manager returned to the building and attempted to turn off the agitator, but this caused another smaller [criticality](#) from which he and another administrator received doses of up to 100 rad (without immediate ill effect).²¹⁷

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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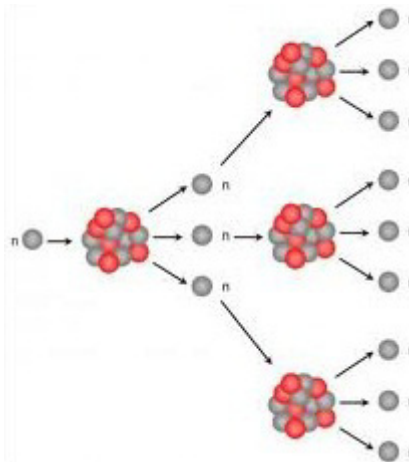
217. There have been in the nuclear industry, to date, some 70 such criticality excursions and some 21 resultant fatalities, but –so far at least– there hasn’t been a single atomic blast! Cross your fingers.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1965

May 28: For the 17th time in the history of our nuclear program, this time at the [White Sands Missile Range](#) in New Mexico, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

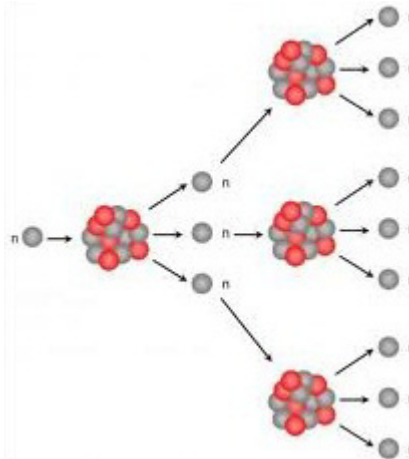
1967

July 29: Aboard the USS *Forestall* in the Gulf of Tonkin, in the worst naval accident since World War II, a fire resulting from an accidentally punctured fuel tank killed 134 US crewmen.

VIETNAM
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1968

January 30: For the 18th time in the history of our nuclear program, this time at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond criticality into prompt-criticality, the final stage before an atomic explosion.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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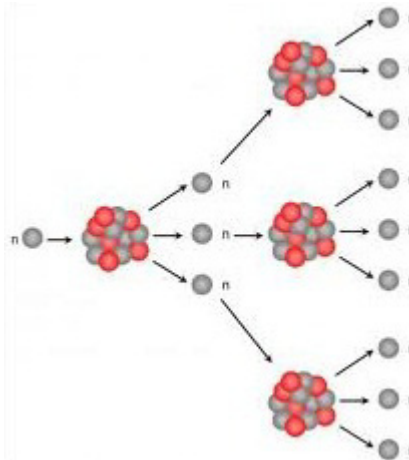
North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces began a major offensive against [Saigon](#) and 30 other cities. Taking place on the [Chinese](#) New Year, this would forever be known as the Tet Offensive. The heaviest fighting took place in Saigon and Hué.

Polish authorities closed down a production of the play *Dziady* by Poland’s greatest romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz, due to an anti-Russian tone they were able to detect.

Spring: When within a 3-day period 7 inches of rain fell on eastern Massachusetts, the milldam of the Damondale industrial area –a structure which had originated in the bog iron smelting of the year 1660– finally gave way at its right side.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

April 5: For the 19th time in the history of the nuclear agenda and the 2d time this year, this time at the Chelyabinsk-70 secret town in Chelyabinsk Oblast, Russia, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Late May: The *Scorpion*, a nuclear submarine, sank in the Atlantic 400 miles S.W. of the Azores, with its crew of 99.



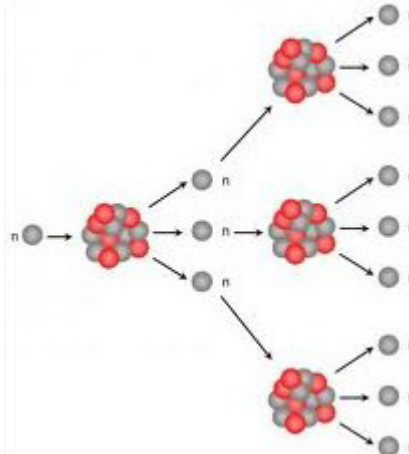
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

September 30: The 900th US aircraft was shot down over [North Vietnam](#). (Curiously, not one of these shot-down aircraft were of the only type that our lucky [George](#) would be being trained to fly. This is one of those coincidences that make our historical trajectory so fascinating. It is almost as if this American boy were being reserved for some higher purpose.)

For the 20th time in the history of the nuclear agenda and the 3d time this year, this time at the Aberdeen Proving Ground, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

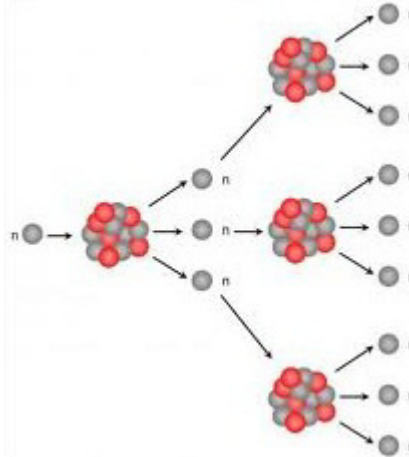
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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December 10: For the 21st and 22d times in the history of the nuclear agenda (and the 4th and 5th times this year), this time at the Mayak Production Association in Russia, a nuclear fuel processing complex, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

The Russkis were experimenting with plutonium purification techniques. In an improvised and unapproved operation, a couple of the workers had been pouring a plutonium organic solution into what would later be characterized as an “unfavorable geometry vessel” when there was a flash of light and heat. “Startled, the operator dropped the bottle, ran down the stairs, and from the room.” After evacuating the complex, the shift supervisor and the radiation control supervisor had together returned to the building. The shift supervisor entered the room in which the event had occurred and perhaps attempted to deceive the radiation control supervisor. He poured the solution down a floor drain. Unfortunately, what this did was produce a second, larger event from which the shift supervisor received a fatal dose of radiation.

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SURPRISE!

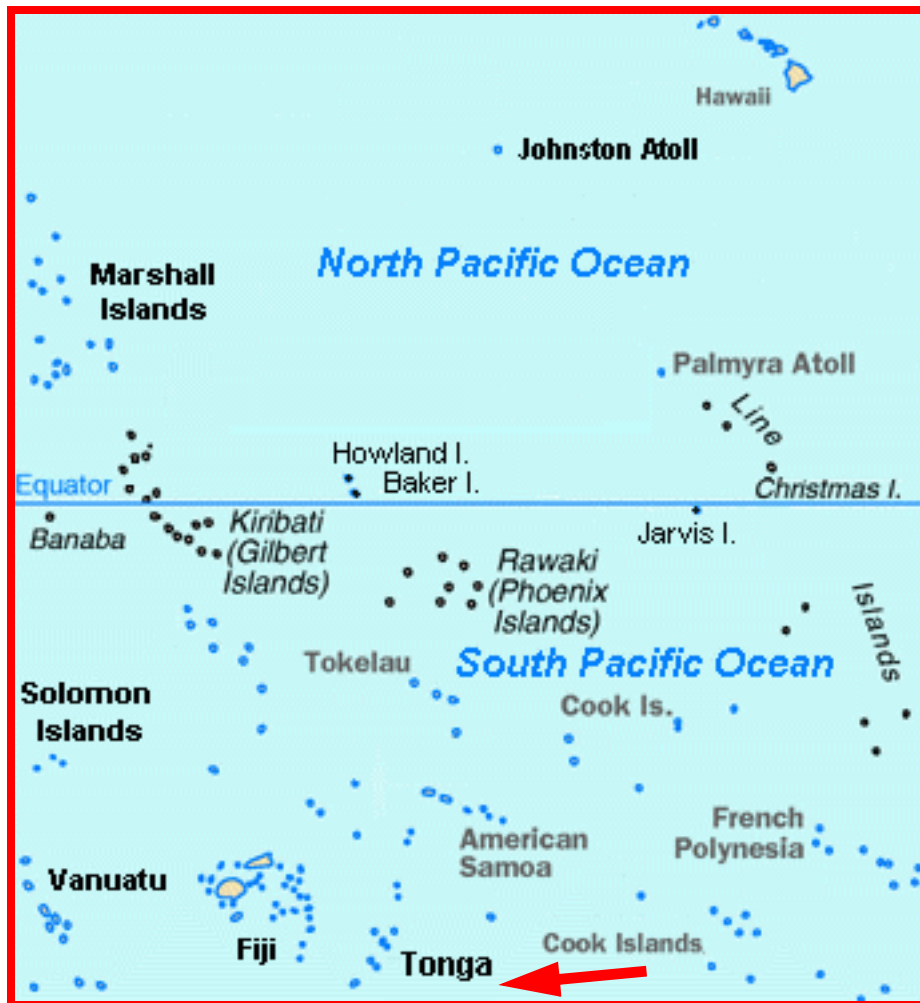
SURPRISE!

1970

April 17: "Houston, you have a problem." The [SNAP-27 radioisotope thermoelectric generator](#) used on the Apollo-13 mission "was successfully targeted to deposit intact in the Tonga Trench in the South Pacific, where it is effectively isolated from man's environment," according to page 205 of the FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE ULYSSES MISSION (TIER 2), issued by the Office of Space and Applications, Solar Systems Exploration Division, NASA, in June 1990.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Which is to say, 5.5 pounds of [3.9 kilograms of Plutonium-238](#) are now lying in a lump on the ocean floor, allegedly south of the island of Fiji at a depth of 3 1/2 miles (repeated requests of the US government, that it provide access to the factual observations and reports upon which this allegation has ostensibly been based, have been ignored, and thus we have never had any way to evaluate the truthfulness of this interested claim).



The canister of this device had not been designed to withstand seawater and the material that it encloses will emit radiation for approximately two millennia.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

December 15: When a ferry in the Korean Strait capsized, 261 were lost.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1971

February 15: The [Saigon](#) government claimed to have cut the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Great Britain and Ireland switched to a decimal system for currency.

[Egypt](#) told UN mediator Gunnar Jarring that it would sign a peace treaty with Israel if the Israelis would withdraw from all occupied territories.

The Polish government announced a roll-back of the increases in food prices that had created such unrest in December.

Lassus ricercare for ten instruments by Betsy Jolas was performed for the initial time, in Paris.

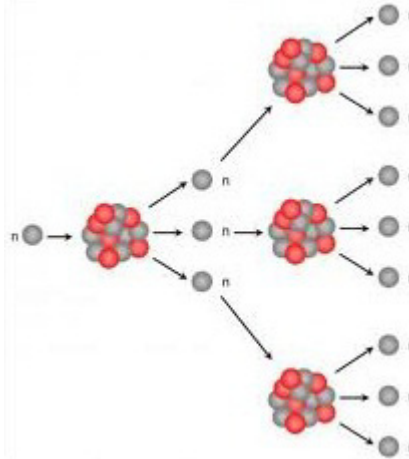
Mise en musique du Corticalart by Pierre Henry and Roger Lafosse was performed for the initial time (this was an attempt to turn brain waves into art).

For the 23d time in the history of the nuclear agenda, this time at the [Kirchatov Institute](#) in Russia, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic](#)

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

explosion.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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1972

An accidental re-entry of an experimental US reactor caused the entire spacecraft to vaporize. This single incident was later calculated to contribute about 10% of the total amount of plutonium fallout produced by all the world’s atmospheric tests (the incident has been written up by Michio Kaku, physics professor at the City University of New York).

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

June: During an air strike conducted by [Vietnamese](#) pilots in US aircraft, US-supplied napalm and white phosphorus was accidentally used on South Vietnamese civilians, including children. Of course, despite these having been our planes and our munitions, we were blameless. Unfairly, an enduring image of the war would be a little girl who had stripped off her burning clothing, fleeing the destruction of the hamlet of Trang Bang.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

The US soldiers in the rear of the photograph would attempt to pour water from their canteens onto bits of burning white phosphorus embedded in little Kim Phúc's flesh, but as we all know, when it's white phosphorus (termed in the military profession "Willie Peter"), water doesn't help a whole lot.²¹⁸

218. Kim Phúc has survived. We have more recently gone back to this village and interviewed her. Her scars have of course had a determining impact upon her life trajectory — for instance, a series of 17 operations. Now more recently she has escaped from Vietnam and has become a peace activist. She has this to offer us:

Napalm is the most terrible pain you can imagine. Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius. Napalm generates temperatures of 800 to 1,200 degrees Celsius.



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1973

July 3: Design of the USSR's Tupolev Tu-144 supersonic transport had been accelerated because Russian intelligence had been able to copy the engineering design of the Concorde from the French. Because of this, at the Paris Air Show the plane was being referred to sarcastically as the *Concordski*. Although the pilot had not been made aware of this, a French Mirage fighter was to shadow the Russian plane during its maneuvers, photographing the movements of its new canards (small wing-like structures just behind the cockpit). While the Tu-144 was preparing for takeoff, air traffic control informed its pilot that his display time had been cut in half. When he took off, therefore, he put the plane into a steep climb. Suddenly glimpsing the Mirage aircraft nearby on what seemed a collision course, he shoved so hard on the control column that all four of the engines of the Concordski stalled. By pushing the plane over into a low-altitude dive, he succeeded in getting his engines restarted, but then in pulling up to avoid the ground, the plane broke apart in front of the audience of 200,000, killing 13 persons, everyone on board plus people in a village near the airport. Unable to prove French interference, fearing that the accident would be blamed on mechanical problems, the USSR would silently go along with an official coverup.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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November 26: Rose Mary Woods, President [Richard Milhous Nixon](#)'s personal secretary, told a federal court she had accidentally erased over eighteen minutes of a "Watergate tape" made June 20th.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1976

October 20: When the *George Prince*, a Mississippi River ferry, was rammed by the Norwegian tanker *Frosta* near Luling, Louisiana, 77 were lost.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



1978

There was an unexpected criticality at the Fukushima Daiichi facility of Tokyo Electric Power Company (they would be attempting to conceal this for years and years).²¹⁹

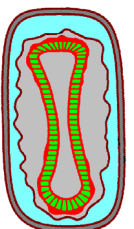
TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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The initial test tube baby was born, in England.

Janet Parker, a worker on the floor above a lab where the remaining samples of the small pox virus were being stored in Birmingham, England, contracted smallpox and died. The virus had apparently gotten through an air duct between the two floors. She infected her mother, who survived, but in the meanwhile her father was so alarmed that he had a fatal heart attack. The lab director then committed suicide.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



219. There have been in the nuclear industry, to date, some 70 such criticality excursions and some 21 resultant fatalities, but –so far at least– there hasn’t been a single atomic blast! Cross your fingers.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

January 24, day: At 11:53AM Greenwich Mean Time, a Cosmos-954 satellite that had been tracking our [nuclear submarines](#) plunged into the earth's atmosphere over the Great Slave Lake region of Canada, distributing 68 pounds of U235 from an onboard [nuclear reactor](#). Although 50 large fragments and approximately 4,000 smaller particles would be collected from smoking potholes in the tundra, approximately 75% of the radioactive material, or 51 pounds, had evidently been vaporized. By recounting only the record for US rockets in its publications and omitting what it knows about rockets from the USSR, NASA has managed not to take into consideration the long-term contamination, despite the fact that this accident has left 124,000 square kilometers of Canada's surface contaminated with [plutonium](#) long-term

The image is a composite graphic with an orange background. In the top left, there is a small periodic table labeled "Periodic Chart". In the bottom left, there is a "KEY:" section for element symbols, using Sodium (Na) as an example. It shows the atomic number (11), name (Sodium), symbol (Na), and atomic mass (22.990), with arrows pointing to these elements. The electronic configuration (2, 8, 1) is also shown. The main part of the image is a large, stylized element card for Plutonium (Pt). The card is yellow with a black border and contains the atomic number 94, the name "Plutonium", the symbol "Pt", and the mass number "~239". To the right of the card, the electron shell configuration is listed vertically: 2, 8, 18, 32, 24, 8, 2.

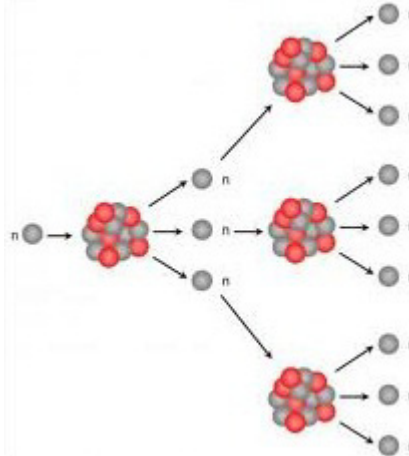
(the USSR eventually would share in the [radwaste cleanup](#) to the extent of 3,000,000 Canadian dollars).

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

October 17: For the 24th time in the history of the nuclear agenda, this time at the Idaho Chemical Processing Plant, some fissile material unexpectedly went **critical** and came very close to **prompt-criticality**, the final stage before an **atomic explosion**.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Not to worry, however, for in the more than half century of our nuclear era there have been only a couple of dozen such incidents that we know of. We are told that a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff in the “Elephant’s Foot” formation in the basement failed to go off like a bomb). Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “dirty” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1979

Soviet émigrés reported that some 66 people had died suddenly in an outbreak of pulmonary [anthrax](#) in the city of Sverdlovsk, Siberia. While the Central Intelligence Agency would venture that this was the result of an accident at a huge secret Soviet biowarfare research lab, the Soviets would attempt for awhile to blame it all on citizens selling contaminated meat on the black market.



GERM WARFARE



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

March 28: The one-year-old [Three Mile Island nuclear power plant Unit 2 \(TMI-2\)](#) near Harrisburg/Middletown, Pennsylvania raised eyebrows, when it seemed that it might conceivably vent and release radioactive cesium.



Local authorities were not alerted until three hours after the event. As the accident turned out, it didn't vent, or not very much — but the core did melt down and the investment was a total loss, or worse than that because of the extreme costs of dismantlement and cleanup. Radioactive gases would escape into the atmosphere for the following 13 days, and radioactive water would be released into the Susquehanna River. (This is our worst one, so far. It could have turned into a Chernobyl but we got lucky.)

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

The government of British Prime Minister James Callaghan lost a vote of confidence by one vote. Queen Elizabeth dissolved Parliament and called for new elections.

The first version of Chorale from a Toy Shop for flute, oboe/clarinet, clarinet/english horn, horn, trombone and trombone/tuba by Harrison Birtwistle was performed for the first time, in the All Saints Church of Lewes.



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

March 30: Airey Neave, M.P. was killed when an Irish National Liberation Army bomb exploded in his car outside the House of Commons, London.

Ilie Verdet replaced Manea Manescu as Prime Minister of Romania.

The Irish government cut the links between its currency and the British pound in order to meet the requirements of the new European Monetary System.

Governor Richard Thornburgh of Pennsylvania closed 23 schools around [Three Mile Island](#) and called on small children and pregnant women to be evacuated.

The Immurement of Antigone for mezzo-soprano and orchestra by John Tavener to words of McLarnon was performed for the first time, in Royal Festival Hall, London.

1983

Second Sunday in May: A coupling split on one of the big pumps at Deer Island, filling the first two stories of the treatment facility with 2,000,000 gallons of raw sewage. Scuba divers would be taken to the location inside the building in a rowboat, to repair the break in conditions –of course– of zero visibility.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Now take a shower with disinfectant, and guys, be sure to tell your moms you were thinking of their cooking on Mother's Day.



"The only lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history."

– A.J.P. Taylor



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

May 25th, the 10th of Ramadan: When a Nile steamer caught fire and sank in Lake Nasser near Aswan, there were 272 deaths, plus 75 missing.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



September 23: At the Centro Atomico Constituyentes, Buenos Aires, Argentina, moderating water had been poured into a RA-2 research reactor in an operation to alter the configuration of fuel rods, but there was a [criticality](#). One operator received 3,700 rads (37 Gy) and died, and two others were injured.²²⁰

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1986

April 25, Friday: At the Chernobyl [nuclear pile](#) in the Ukraine (then part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), 1:06AM local time, the reactor was running at full power with normal operation and steam power was being directed to both turbines of the power generators. Slowly, the operators began to reduce power in order to make a scheduled test. The purpose of this test was to verify that in the event of a local power failure, one of the two turbines would be able to supply sufficient power to operate the feedwater pumps, until standby diesel generators could be brought on line.

At 1:05PM local time, twelve hours after this power reduction had been initiated, the reactor reached 50% power. What this meant was that only one of the two turbines of the power generators was needed to take in the decreased amount of steam and that the other turbine could be switched off.

At 2:00PM local time, under the normal procedures of such a test, the reactor would have reached 30% power. However, Soviet electricity authorities insisted that there was a demand for electricity in the power grid and would not permit the plant operators to reduce the power all the way down to 30% — and the result was that the reactor would be held at 50% power for another 9 hours.

April 26, Saturday: At the Chernobyl [nuclear pile](#) in the Ukraine (then part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), 12:28AM local time, staff received permission to resume the reactor power reduction from 50% to 30%. At this point one of the control room workers made a mistake. When the reactor reached 30% he neglected to reset a controller. Water was continuing to fill the core, something that makes a core unstable, levels of xenon, a neutron absorber, were building up — and reactor power plummeted to 1%. The reactor had not been designed to operate at such low power and there was not enough steam to turn the turbines of the generator.

1:00-1:20AM local time, the operator in the control room forced the reactor up to 7% power by violating procedure and removing all but 6 of its control rods. The operator tried to take manual control over the flow of the water which was returning from the turbine, a difficult thing to attempt because small temperature changes can cause large power fluctuations, and the attempt was not successful. Because a shutdown would have aborted the test, the operator then disabled emergency shutdown procedures.

1:22AM local time, trusting that they had achieved the most stable conditions, the control room workers elected to begin the test. They blocked automatic shutdown on low water level and the loss of both turbines, because of a fear that a shutdown would abort the test and they would be forced to restart it.

1:23AM local time, the remaining turbine was shut down and the test began.

1:23:40AM local time, power in the reactor began gradually to rise due to the reduction in water flow caused by the turbine shutdown, and this produced an increase in boiling. The operator initiated manual shutdown, which due to the control rod design led to a quick power increase.

1:23:44AM local time, the reactor reached 120 times its full power, all the radioactive fuel disintegrated, and pressure from the excess steam, which was supposed to go to the turbines, broke every one of the pressure tubes.

1:23:58AM local time, a steam explosion blew off the entire top shield of the reactor. This would release a



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

plume of radioactive debris that would drift over parts of the western Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Scandinavia. Large areas of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia would be contaminated, resulting in the evacuation and resettlement of roughly 200,000 people. About 60% of the radioactive fallout would land in Belarus. Although the brave souls who initially responded to this incident are all long dead of radiation poisoning, the now-separate nations of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus are continuing to struggle with substantial ongoing costs for decontamination and health care. The next item on the agenda will be to construct a great arched cover over the pile, at an additional cost of some \$1,400,000,000.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

April 26: A major accident occurred at the [Chernobyl nuclear power station](#) in the town of Pripjat near Chernobyl, 100 kilometers north of Kiev. Because of human error, the cooling system of reactor number four had failed. The core began to melt down and the buildup of gases blew the top off the building. Two people had been killed in the initial explosion. A radioactive cloud was spreading over the western USSR, eastern Europe, and Scandinavia.

April 27: The evacuation of 40,000 people living near the [Chernobyl nuclear power plant](#) began.

Child Alice for amplified soprano and orchestra by David Del Tredici was performed completely for the first time, in Carnegie Hall, New York.

April 28: Technicians in Scandinavia discovered abnormally high radiation levels and a study of wind patterns suggested the USSR as the source. Swedish inquiries to the USSR were going unanswered. In the evening, Soviet television announced, “An accident has taken place at the [Chernobyl power station](#) and one of the reactors was damaged.”

The first story about an arms-for-hostages deal with Iran appears in the American press.

April 29: The Soviet Union released a further statement about [Chernobyl](#), that a couple of people had been killed but the situation was under control.

The Polish government banned the sale of milk from grass-fed cows and restricted the sale of fresh vegetables. All children were required to take iodine to counter possible thyroid cancer.

A Birthday Bouquet for orchestra by Jacob Druckman was performed for the first time, in Avery Fisher Hall, New York.



SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

April 30: Indian military forces raided the Golden Temple of Amritsar again, wresting control of it from Sikh extremists. Sikh violence against Hindus began almost immediately.

Photographs by American spy satellites showed that the [Chernobyl nuclear reactor](#) was still active. Above-normal radiation readings in Austria caused officials to warn parents to keep their children inside. Italy reported radiation levels almost twice normal. Sweden reported radiation levels ten times normal in the northern part of the country.

Libya ordered over 100 European workers out of the country.

The government of Conservative Prime Minister Kaare Willoch of Norway was defeated in a vote of confidence.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1987

Wang Yufeng, an 18-year-old transient laborer in the national forest of China whose carelessness with his brush cutter touched off the enormous Black Dragon fire—a fire far larger than the two-thousand-square-mile fire of October 12, 1918 → near Duluth, Minnesota which had taken nearly 400 lives— was shown on television at his trial, sitting in a little wood-barred cage with his hands manacled. For refueling the motor while it was overheated, and thus starting a fire which consumed an area, along the border between China and Russia, the size of Ireland, he would be serving six and a half years in prison.²²¹



FIRE

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

221. Salisbury, Harrison E. THE GREAT BLACK DRAGON FIRE: A CHINESE INFERNO. Boston MA: Little, Brown, 1989.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

March 9: A British ferry capsized after leaving the Belgian port of Zeebrugge with 500 aboard, and 134 drowned. Water rushing through an open bow is believed to have been the probable cause.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS
LOST AT SEA



WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

December 20: More than 4,000 died when the passenger ferry *Dona Paz* collided with the oil tanker *Victor* off the island of Mindoro, 110 miles south of Manila in the Philippines.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



LOST AT SEA

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1990

April 7: In Skagerrak Strait off Norway, a fire suspected of having been set by an arsonist aboard a Danish-owned North Sea ferry, the *Scandinavian Star*, resulted in the deaths of at least 110 passengers. When a double-decker ferry sank in the Gyaing River in Myanmar (Burma) during a storm, it is believed that some 215 persons drowned.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1991

December 14: When a ferry carrying 569 passengers hit a coral reef in the Red Sea off the coast of Safaga, [Egypt](#), more than 460 people are believed to have drowned.

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TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1993

February 17: When a triple-deck ferry, the *Neptune*, capsized during a squall off the southern peninsula of Haiti, more than 1,000 were believed to have drowned. There were about 300 floaters, who made it to shore under their own power or were picked out of the water by other boats.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1994

September 28: When the *Estonia*, a passenger ferry, capsized in the stormy Baltic Sea off the coast of southwest Finland, only about 140 of its estimated 1,040 passengers survived.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

1996

January 21: When the ferry *Gurita*, considerably overloaded, sank off the coast of northern Sumatra, 340 perished.

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TIMELINE S




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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

May 11: An old twin-engine DC9, ValuJet flight 592 crammed to the gills with low-rent tourists, crashed onto the location in the Everglades Holiday Park along canal L67, near the Tamiami Trail, at which, in February 1841,  213 Black Seminoles had chosen mass suicide in order to avoid being put into coffles by the US Army and led off into enslavement on Southern plantations. –A new pile of anonymous bones, atop an old pile.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1997

June 17: In cooperation with the United States National Arboretum, cuttings were taken from the documented surviving [Japanese](#) Yoshino cherry trees from the 1912 shipment to Washington DC in order to ensure preservation of the trees' genetic lineage. The trees resulting from these cuttings will used for replacement plantings, to preserve the genetic heritage of the grove.

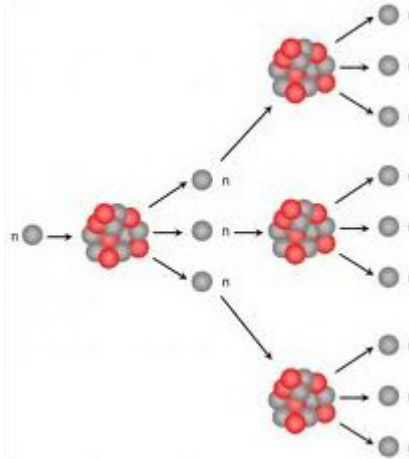


For the 25th time in the history of the nuclear agenda, this time at the Sarov (Arzamas-16) facility in Russia, some fissile material unexpectedly went beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

[atomic explosion.](#)



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

1999

February: When the *Harta Rimba* sank in the South China Sea, about 325 passengers died. This ship had not been licensed for passenger use.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

September 30: Russia began to reoccupy Chechnya.

Masato Yokoyama, a member of Aum Shinrikyo, was sentenced to death for his part in the release of nerve gas into the Tokyo subway system in 1995, that had resulted in 12 deaths.

Beyond Autumn for horn and orchestra by Joseph Schwantner was performed for the first time, in Eugene McDermott Concert Hall, Dallas.

At an [uranium reprocessing facility](#) in Tokaimura, [Japan](#), the JCO Fuel Fabrication Plant, workers put a uranyl nitrate solution into a precipitation tank not designed for this and produced a critical event in which 55 workers were dosed (one or two of whom would die).²²²

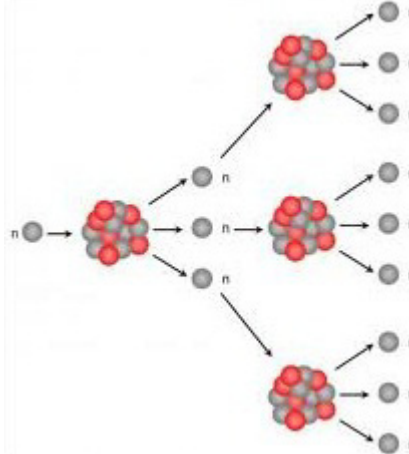
WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

222. There have been in the nuclear industry, to date, some 70 such criticality excursions and some 21 resultant fatalities, but -so far at least- there hasn't been a single atomic blast! Cross your fingers.

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

For the 26th time in the history of the nuclear agenda, fissile material had unexpectedly gone beyond [criticality](#) into [prompt-criticality](#), the final stage before an [atomic explosion](#).



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Not to worry, however, for in the more than half century of our nuclear era there have been only a couple of dozen such incidents that we know of. We are told that a full A-bomb nuclear-weapon-like blast is a real engineering success story and very difficult to create, and therefore it is really really unlikely that any such prompt-criticality incident will ever produce a full A-bomb nuclear weapon-like blast without our really having intended for that to happen (even at Chernobyl the molten “corium” stuff in the “Elephant’s Foot”

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

formation in the basement failed to go off like a bomb).



Just about the worst thing that might happen in a prompt-criticality situation is that the nuclear material in question goes off like what one might term a big “**dirty**” bomb –which is not at all in the same ballpark in terms of blast-effect although it is in the same ballpark in terms of contamination-effect– except that we must bear in mind that at the Fukushima Daiichi site, unfortunately, there are some 2,000 **tons** of such materials available within a few thousands of yards, in the six reactor cores and seven cooling pools.

I am unable myself to do the calculation. In a worst-case Fukushima Daiichi excursion, if there were a prompt-criticality in a melt pile of corium and there were enough fissile materials, closely assembled enough, to generate the sort of protoatomic blast that the test engineers denominate a “fizzle,” what would then happen in the fireball, with some 2,000 tons of fissile materials in the immediate area of said fireball? Would the shock waves traveling through that fireball reassemble fissile materials into the geometry necessary for further prompt-criticality to sparkle? Would this convert enough mass into energy to create MOADB, the mother of all dirty bombs? Would that be enough to sterilize the northern hemisphere? Certainly I cannot calculate this, certainly I do not know the answer. The only thing of which I am certain is that, the over-riding concern being to prevent panic, we are not really being told by our government or by our corporations what the worst-case scenario for Fukushima Daiichi is. When we are being presented, in the public media, with supposed worst-case scenarios — the purpose of all that overt honesty and openness is merely to distract us from what really is the worst-case scenario (whatever that might be).

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

November 24: When the *Dashun*, a ferry carrying more than 300 passengers, caught fire and sank, there were more than 150 confirmed dead and another 140 persons were missing.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

2000

June 29: When the *Cahaya Bahari*, a ferry carrying mostly Christian refugees from the island of Halmahera, sank approximately 40 miles off the coast of Sulawesi, not one of the 492 persons on board survived.



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

July 21: Scientists at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory near Chicago announced the first concrete evidence of the Tau Neutrino, one of the last undetected subatomic particles.

August 12: The Russian nuclear submarine *Kursk* sank in the Barent Sea. All 118 crew members died. Several bodies have been recovered but the exact cause of this sinking is still unknown.

WALDEN: If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -we never need read of another. One is enough.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

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2001

January 16, Tuesday: At a circus performance in Paris, Mme Cathy Jamet was shot in the face with a crossbow arrow by her husband M Alain Jamet:



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

William Tell Shoots His Wife

A CIRCUS star shot his wife through the head with a crossbow – as 5,000 people watched in horror. Hundreds of children were in the crowd when Alain and Cathy Jamet's [William Tell](#) act ended in disaster.

Alain, 43, had been aiming to hit an apple 35ft away on Cathy's head – a feat he had been doing for 14 years.

But the bolt from his high-powered bow smashed into her face less than an inch beneath her eye. Cathy, 39, was last night critically ill in hospital.

But incredibly she has already pledged to carry on with the act when she recovers.

A spokesman for the Pinder-Jean Richard circus in Paris –where the accident happened– said: "The first thing she said was she had to get back to work as soon as possible.

"She knew the risk she was taking and she said this will not stop her performing again – even if she loses the sight in one eye."

Circus boss Gilbert Edelstein added: "They've got that routine down to the nearest thousandth of a millimetre.

"But that's circus life. Sometimes there is a catastrophe but the show must go on."



SURPRISE!

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2004

March: A sad initiation accident occurred in the basement of a Masonic Lodge on Long Island, where the script called for William James, being initiated into the Masons, to be shot at with blanks at close range in order to impress him with the seriousness of the event or the chanciness of life or some silly thing like that. Wouldn't you know, the appointed shootist, Mason Albert Eid, who was an elderly dude who normally packed heat, made the understandable mistake of yanking the wrong sidearm out of the wrong pocket. When he fired off what was supposed to be a blank, he shot the initiate full in the face, killing him. (One is instantly reminded of the incident that had transpired on September 12, 1826 in Fort Niagara, that led to the disappearance of William Morgan and the formation of an Antimasonic political party. Sometimes these strange things happen, and it doesn't necessarily mean that anyone contemplated beforehand that anything as strange as that would happen.)

Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

– Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST





SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

Prepared: May 31, 2013

SURPRISE!

SURPRISE!

*ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT
GENERATION HOTLINE*



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



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SURPRISE!

Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology - but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary "writerly" process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.