

THE SUBLIME FALLS — *HENRY DIDN'T GO THERE*



February 12, Wednesday: ... There is something more than association at the bottom of the excitement which the roar of a cataract produces. It is allied to the circulation in our veins. We have a waterfall which corresponds even to Niagara somewhere within us.

It is astonishing what a rush & tumult a slight inclination will produce in a swollen brook. How it proclaims its glee –its boisterousness –rushing headlong in its prodigal course as if it would exhaust itself in half an hour – how it spends itself– I would say to the orator and poet Flow freely & *lavishly* as a brook that is full –without stint –perchance I have stumbled upon the origin of the word lavish. It does not hesitate to tumble down the steepest precipice & roar or tinkle as it goes, –for fear it will exhaust its fountain.– The impetuosity of descending waters even by the slightest inclination! It seems to flow with ever increasing rapidity.

It is difficult to believe what Philosophers assert that it is merely a difference in the form of the elementary particles, as whether they are square or globular –which makes the difference between the steadfast everlasting & reposing hill-side & the impetuous torrent which tumbles down it....

THE SCARLET LETTER: There was one thing that much aided me in renewing and re-creating the stalwart soldier of the Niagara frontier – the man of true and simple energy. It was the recollection of those memorable words of his –“I’ll try, Sir”– spoken on the very verge of a desperate and heroic enterprise, and breathing the soul and spirit of New England hardihood, comprehending all perils, and encountering all. If, in our country, valour were rewarded by heraldic honour, this phrase – which it seems so easy to speak, but which only he, with such a task of danger and glory before him, has ever spoken– would be the best and fittest of all mottoes for the General’s shield of arms.

The Niagara cataract is divided into the American Falls, the Bridal Veil Falls, and the Canadian or Horseshoe Falls. The American Falls spills its water 800 feet onto rocks the size of houses. No one has ever gone over the American Falls and lived (and perhaps there is something about that that is somewhat sublime). Then there is Luna Island, and then the Bridal Veil Falls, and then Goat Island, and then the Canadian or Horseshoe Falls, at the base of which there are surge pools that are free of fallen rock, and we know of at least 15 cases in which someone has gone over this section of the lip and been retrieved downriver bodily intact, more or less. –But Horace enjoined it to be the “last effort of philosophical fortitude, to behold the immense and glorious fabric of the universe ... without terror and amazement.” –And Thoreau experienced the sublime not at Niagara, but on Ktaadn.

**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1535

Since we're always interested in anything that a white man gets around to finding out about for the first time: French explorer Jacques Cartier heard of curative waters to be found in the future Saratoga Springs, New York area, while exploring the St. Lawrence River. He may also have heard tell at this point of a great falls ([Niagara Falls](#)) to the west.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1603

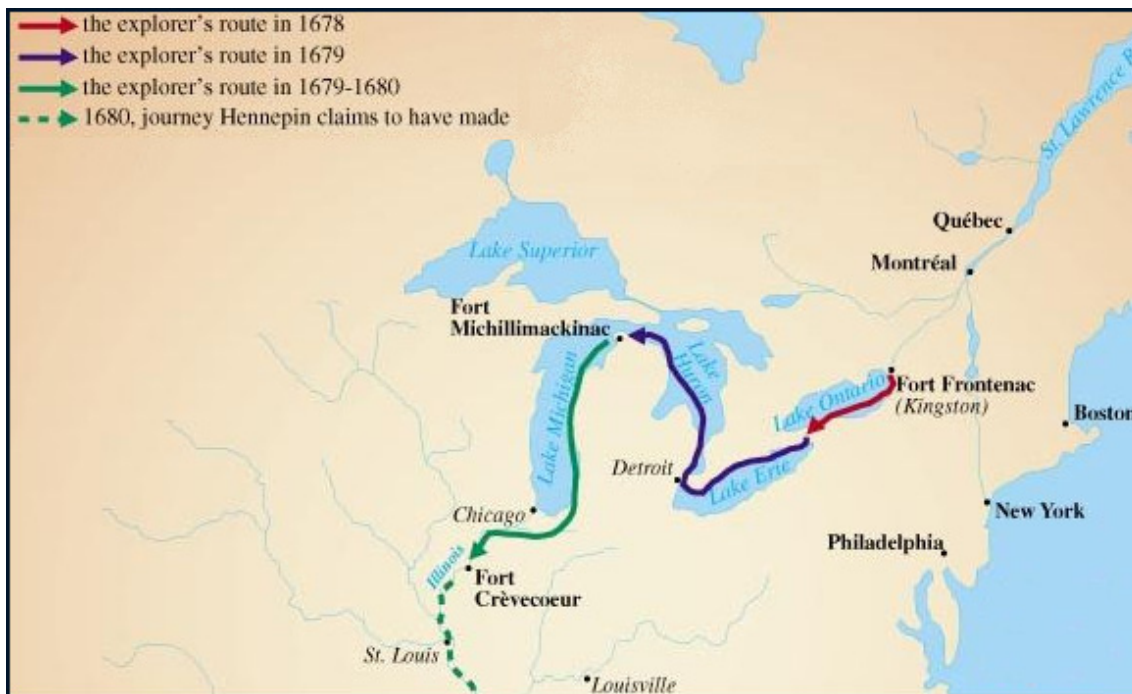
Captain Samuel de Champlain heard that there was a great waterfall “Onguiaahara” ([Niagara Falls](#)) at the western end of Lake Ontario.



DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

1679

[Père Louis Hennepin](#) reached the [Niagara Falls](#). The first shipyard on the Great Lakes was created on the banks of Cayuga Creek, in the future Buffalo, [New York](#) area. [René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle](#) launched *Le Griffon* on Cayuga Creek above the falls. This was the 1st sailing vessel on the Great Lakes, and the expedition would be using it to explore Lake Erie and the western shore of Lake Michigan.



KEY: existing white settlements in boldface, future white settlements in italics

[Hennepin](#) was 39 when he sailed with LaSalle on *Le Griffon* from New France through the Great Lakes to explore the unknown western region of [Canada](#).

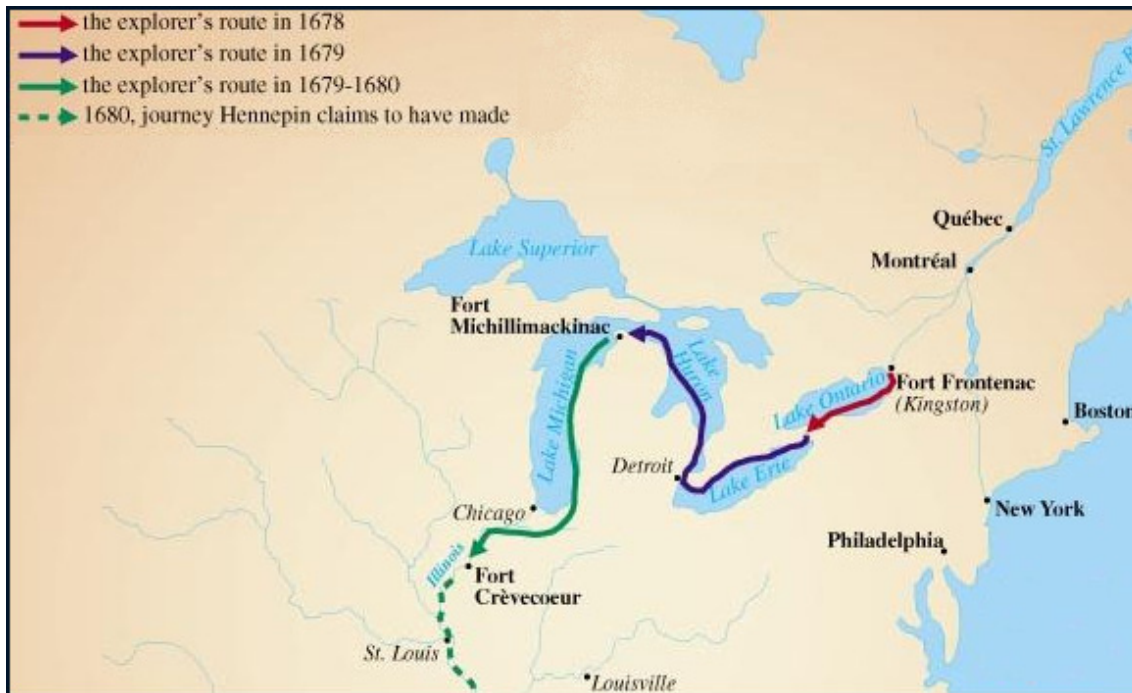
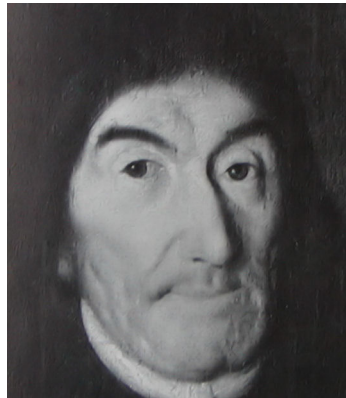


ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1684

[Father Louis Hennepin](#), in *DESCRIPTION DE LA LOUISIANE, NOUVELLEMENT DECOUVERTE AU SUD'OUEST DE LA NOUVELLE FRANCE, PAR ORDRE DU ROY. AVEC LA CARTE DU PAYS: LES MŒURS & LA MANIERE DE VIVRE DES SAUVAGES, DEDIEE À SA MAJESTÉ PAR LA R. P. LOUIS HENNEPIN, MISSIONAIRE RÉCOLLET & NOTAIRE APOSTOLIQUE*, published in Paris, reported having viewed a giant waterfall between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario in [New York](#) — [Niagara Falls](#).



KEY: existing white settlements in boldface, future white settlements in italics



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

War broke out again between the Five Nations and France, in western [New York](#). Mr. de la Barre made an unsuccessful inroad into the territories of the Five Nations; this was settled by the peace of September 5th, at Famine Cove, on Lake Ontario, and De la Barre with his whole army returned to [Montréal](#).

CANADA

NO-ONE'S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE



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ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1697

[Father Louis Hennepin](#)'s *NOUVELLE DECOUVERTE D'UN TRÈS GRAND PAYS SITUÉ DANS L'AMÉRIQUE, ENTRE LE NOUVEAU MEXIQUE, ET LA MER GLACIALE, AVEC LES CARTES, & LES FIGURES NECESSAIRES, & DE PLUS L'HISTOIRE NATURELLE ET MORALE, & LES AVANTAGES QU'ON EN PEUT TIRER PAR L'ÉTABLISSEMENT DES COLONIES. LE TOUT DEDIE À SA MAJESTÉ BRITANNIQUE, GUILLAUME III* (Utrecht: Guillaume Broedelet) included the first illustration, ever, of [Niagara Falls](#):

*NOUVELLE DÉCOUVERT ...*

“HUCKLEBERRIES”: Father Hennepin – who writes in 1697 – says that his captors, Naudowessi (the Sioux!), near the falls of St. Anthony, feasted on wild-rice seasoned with blueberries, ‘which they dry in the sun during the summer, and which are as good as raisins of Corinth’ – [that is, the imported currants].

FATHER LOUIS HENNEPIN



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

It was at this point that Hennepin began to prevaricate, mentioning something he had not mentioned before, that he had traversed not only the upper but the lower Mississippi and had traced the course of the stream to its outlet in the Gulf of Mexico. In fact it would be implausible between the date when Hennepin left the country of the Illinois and the date upon which he was captured by the Issati to effect a canoe voyage from Fort Crève-coeur to the mouth of the Mississippi and then upstream to a point near the present southern boundary of Mississippi — the guy would have needed a jet-ski! The “Nouvelle Découverte” would be followed by another book coming from the press at Utrecht in the year 1698, entitled “Nouveau Voyage.” Almost simultaneously, English translations of the two last-mentioned works appeared in London.¹ Both the French and the English versions would be dedicated to William III, King of England, for at that time Hennepin had lost the favor of the French monarch — the archives contain an order from King Louis XIV directing the governor of New France to arrest Hennepin should he make an appearance there and send him home.

1. A NEW DISCOVERY OF A VAST COUNTRY IN AMERICA, EXTENDING ABOVE FOUR THOUSAND MILES BETWEEN NEW FRANCE & NEW MEXICO: WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE GREAT LAKES ... (London: H. Bonwicke, 1699)



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1726

The “Castle,” a stone fortification, was built on the [Niagara River](#) (this would become the nucleus of [Fort Niagara](#)).

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1749

July: Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Bienville and his party, traveling across the western part of backwoods [New York](#), reached [Fort Niagara](#). They would proceed to the Ohio Valley via Chautauqua Lake, depositing lead (not tin?) sheets carrying the French coat-of-arms at each important river mouth.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1750

[Peter Kalm](#) witnessed bored French soldiers push whole trees into the rapids above [Niagara Falls](#), in order to watch them disappear over the brink.



WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF



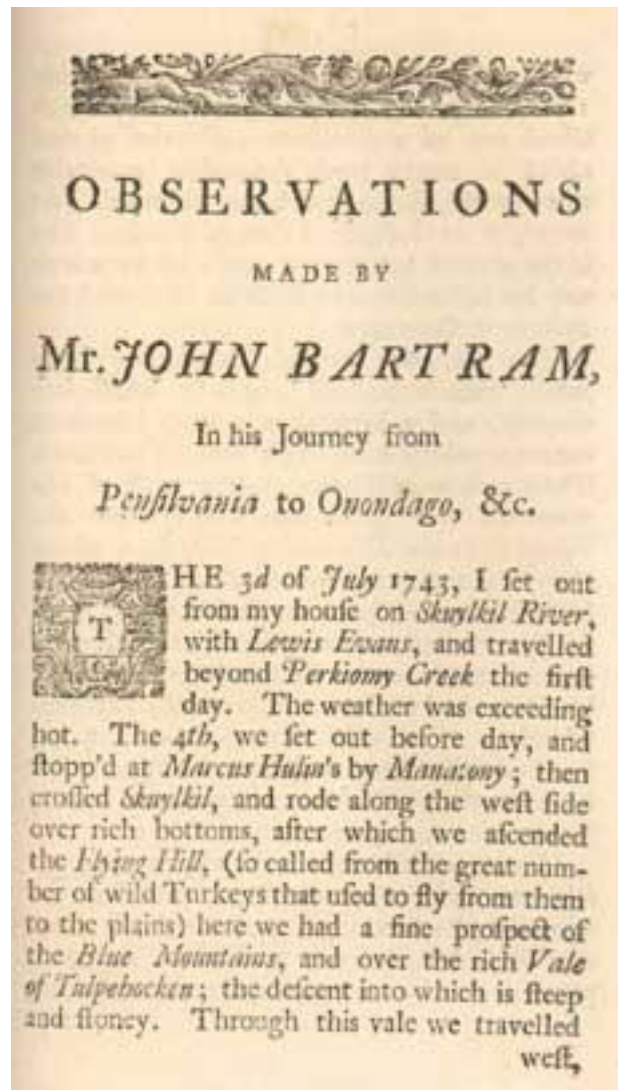
THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1751

J. Whiston & B. White of Fleet-Street in London published the results of Friend [John Bartram](#)'s trip to Lake Ontario as OBSERVATIONS ON THE INHABITANTS, CLIMATE, SOIL, RIVERS, PRODUCTIONS, ANIMALS, AND OTHER MATTERS WORTHY OF NOTICE MADE BY MR. JOHN BARTRAM, IN HIS TRAVELS FROM *PENSILVANIA* TO *ONONDAGO*, OSWEGO AND THE LAKE ONTARIO, IN CANADA: TO WHICH IS ANNEX'D A CURIOUS ACCOUNT OF THE CATARACTS AT NIAGARA BY MR. [PETER KALM](#), A SWEDISH GENTLEMAN WHO TRAVELLED THERE.

NIAGARA FALLS



(Thus was initiated the scientific and literary writing about nature in America.)

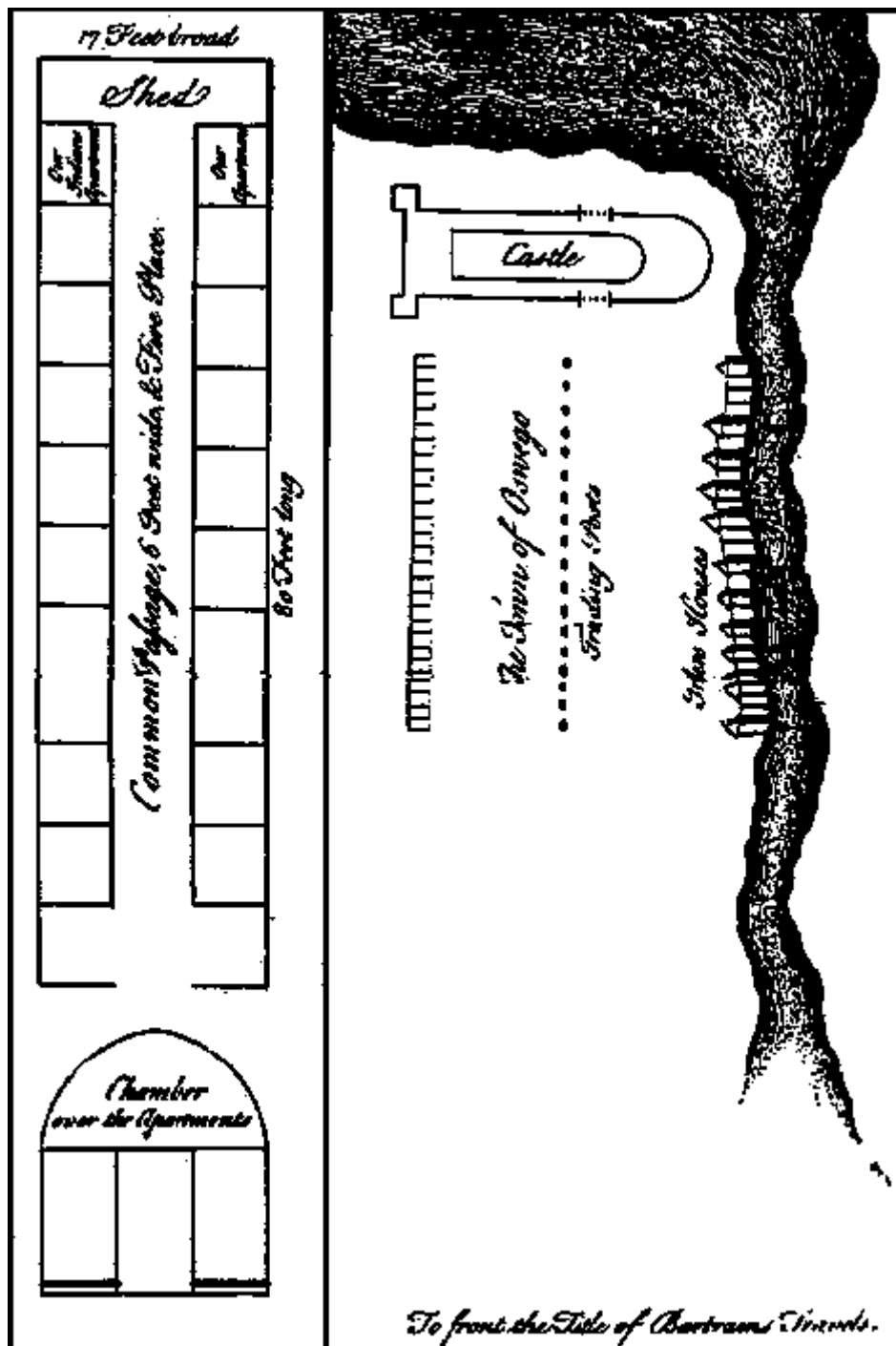
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THE SUBLIME



Bartram's diagram of an Iroquois longhouse and the town of Oswego.

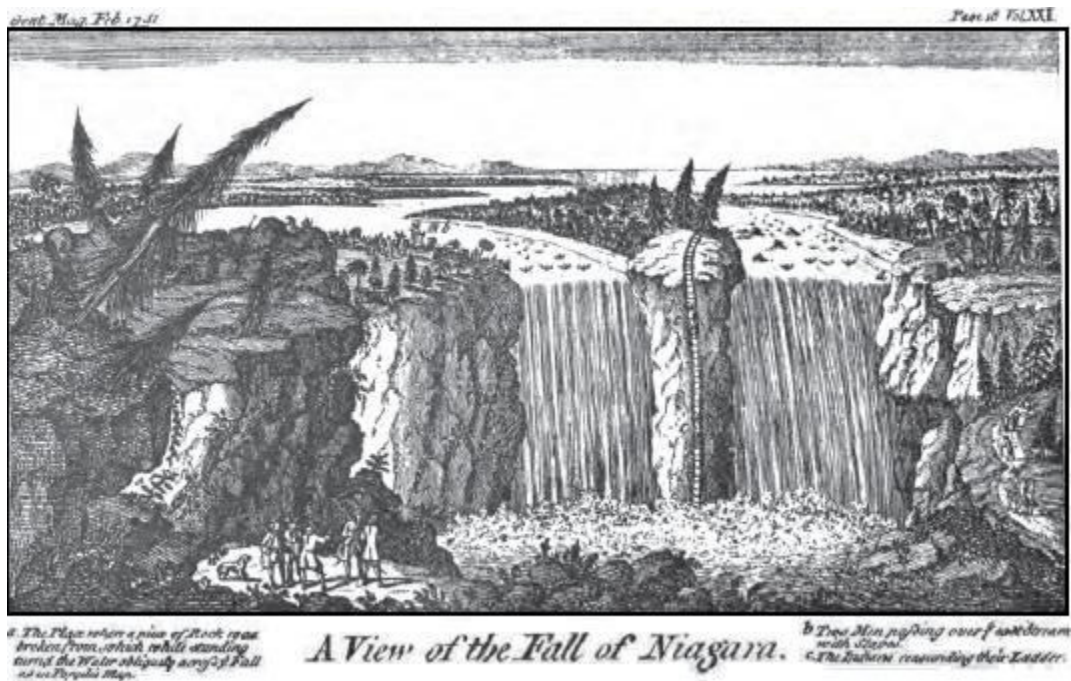


THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

JOHN BARTRAM'S BOOK



THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

The Niagara and the concept of the Sublime

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ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

February (1750, Old Style): [Peter Kalm](#)'s version of the [Niagara Falls](#), with the [Niagara River](#) in the background, appeared in the [Gentlemen's Magazine](#):



(On the following screen appears what the [Niagara River](#) would be depicted as looking like, at another time by another artist.)





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1757

Edmund Burke and a kinsman, William Burke, prepared AN ACCOUNT OF THE EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS IN AMERICA.

He also published his A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS OF THE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL WITH SEVERAL OTHER ADDITIONS, a work that examined the cause of love, raising issues that would be foregrounded throughout the Romantic period — a work which has been said to be “simply the most influential tract on aesthetics ever published in the AngloSaxon world.”²



Power speaks to Truth

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1759

[Edmund Burke](#) issued an expanded version of his 1757 treatise, A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS OF [THE SUBLIME](#) AND BEAUTIFUL WITH SEVERAL OTHER ADDITIONS.



2. Yes, Virginia, this world does belong to us Anglo-Saxons. We are, you see, capable of appreciating it. The qualities of the London sublime which most impress us turn out to be:

Astonishment

Terror

Obscurity

Power

Privation, consisting of:

- Vacuity,
- Darkness,
- Solitude,
- and Silence

Vastness

Infinity

Succession and Uniformity

Magnificence

Light

Colour

Magnitude in Building

Difficulty



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

April 21, Saturday: With his agenda being to rally the Iroquois to attack the French at [Fort Niagara](#), Sir William Johnson, Baronet, convened an Indian council at Canajoharie, [New York](#). The Seneca, some of them from Ganuskago otherwise known as Dansville –people who were dependent on the British for ammo and trade goods– would agree to such an alliance.

NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE APRIL 21, 1759 AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFFY AT BEST).

June 30, Saturday: Colonel John Prideaux and Sir William Johnson left Fort Oswego by boat to prepare the invasion of [Fort Niagara](#).

The Marrano³ Jacob Rodrigues Rivera, and two Ashkenazi [Jews](#), Moses Levy and Isaac Hart, of [Newport](#), purchased a small parcel of land for £1500 in [Rhode Island](#) currency, on what was then Griffin Street, from Ebenezer Allen of Sandwich, Massachusetts.

TOURO SYNAGOGUE

July 1, Sunday: American, British and Indian forces embarked at Oswego for an invasion of [Fort Niagara](#).

July 6, Friday: [Joshua Barney](#) was born in [Maryland](#).

British forces under Colonel John Prideaux and Sir William Johnson landed four miles from [Fort Niagara](#).

July 7, Saturday: The French in [Fort Niagara](#) spotted the British forces.

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

The Niagara and the concept of the Sublime

3. Marrano = a Spanish or Portuguese Jew of the late Middle Ages who converted to Christianity, especially one forcibly converted but adhering secretly to Judaism.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

July 10, Tuesday: Little [Fort Niagara](#), an outpost, was destroyed by its French troops.

July 17, Tuesday: British forces began firing on [Fort Niagara](#).

July 20, Friday: When Colonel John Prideaux was killed by an explosion, Sir William Johnson took charge.

[NEW YORK](#)
[FORT NIAGARA](#)

July 22, Sunday: A multi-pronged attack was being launched to force the French to pull Montcalm and his forces back to defend the main cities of New France against some 9,000 soldiers under Wolfe who were sailing up the St. Lawrence River to attack Québec City. Leaving only a small force of 2,300 men to fend off invasion from the south, Montcalm retired to Québec to meet the British under Wolfe. A massive British force under General Jeffrey Amherst was sailing from the southern shores of Lake George against Carillon. His superiors being preoccupied with defense of the capitol city, Brigadier Chevalier de Bourlamaque, who had come to be in command of Carillon, knew very well that no relief would be available for such frontier fortresses. On this day the army of General Jeffrey Amherst disembarked on the eastern shore of Lake George, nearly opposite the former landing place of Abercrombie. As the British force advanced from the south, Bourlamaque would retire from Carillon to St. Frédéric at Crown Point, leaving behind a small force of 400 men of the La Reine regiment under Hebecourt to delay the attackers and destroy Carillon behind them.

July 23, Monday: While General Jeffrey Amherst was preparing for a siege at Carillon, Brigadier Chevalier de Bourlamaque, the French commander, retired from Carillon to St. Frédéric at Crown Point, leaving behind a force of 400 men of the La Reine regiment under Hebecourt to delay the attackers and destroy Carillon behind them.

July 24, Tuesday: Outside [Fort Niagara](#), the British forces defeated French relief forces under François de Ligneris, and also beat off a party sent out from the fort.

July 25, Wednesday: The French forces of François Pouchot surrendered [Fort Niagara](#) to British and colonial forces (subsequently they would abandon, also, Fort Rouillé).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1769

The earliest date on a carved inscription at [Niagara Falls](#) is for this year.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1780

The Council House at Caneadea was built for the Seneca, by British troops from [Fort Niagara](#).

Joseph Brant and his prisoner Captain Alexander Harper passed through the Genesee Valley on their way from Schoharie to the [Niagara River](#).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1781

A 4-mile strip of land along the [Niagara River](#) was purchased from the Mississauga and Chippewa. This was the 1st purchase of native land for white settlement in what is now Ontario.

CARTOGRAPHY





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1787

At a conference in Hartford, Connecticut, the western boundary of Indian lands was set one mile east of the [Niagara River](#), between lakes Ontario and Erie. Rights to this “Mile Strip” were reserved for [New York](#).

Idle British soldiers sent a damaged boat over the [Niagara Falls](#).



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1789

On the trail between the Genesee Valley and [Fort Niagara](#) in upstate [New York](#), Gilbert R. Berry opened an inn at what was then called Hartford and is now called Avon.

By this point the [Nicholites](#) near Deep River, [North Carolina](#) had erected a meetinghouse of their own and no longer needed to utilize the local meetinghouse of the [Quakers](#).

Closing out his affairs in [North Carolina](#) (presumably this would have meant, in part, the selling off of his slaves), [Elkanah Watson](#) relocated to Albany, [New York](#). There he would become a successful businessman, found the Bank of Albany, and become the chief promoter for an [Erie Canal](#).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1790

The Viscount de Chateaubriand visited the [Niagara River](#) area of upstate [New York](#).

The situation of [Fort Niagara](#) changed drastically as US soldiers took possession. The fort's original purpose had been to dominate the mouth of the river and control the portage, and suddenly it had become a border fortification but 600 yards away from a potential enemy. The fortifications had been designed to guard against a land attack and now faced in the wrong direction. The former British garrison had withdrawn, but only just across the river, while the nearest supporting American position was 150 miles to the east at Oswego. The portage around the [Niagara Falls](#) was nevertheless as significant to the Americans as it had been for the French and the British. The fort was still positioned to protect the beginning of the carrying place. The old portage route on the east bank was taken over by the Americans. Anticipating the arrival of United States soldiers, the British had at this point established a new road on the west side of the river. Throughout the early years of the nineteenth century the two portages would operate opposite each other.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1791

The Duke of Kent (Queen Victoria's father) visited the [Niagara Falls](#): "The Royal Party alighted [from horseback] and partaking of such refreshments as the house afforded, followed an Indian path through the woods to the Table Rock overlooking the Horseshoe Falls."



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1793

May 17, Friday: The commissioners to the native Americans, Colonel Timothy Pickering and Beverly Randolph, had been journeying west across upstate [New York](#) on Williamson's road to treat with the tribes at the [Niagara River](#). They had been joined en route by General Israel Chapin and his interpreters from Canandaigua. General Benjamin Lincoln was conveying presents for the tribes across the state by water. On this day Pickering and Randolph arrived at the [Niagara River](#) so as to observe British negotiations with the Indian tribes.



1794

November 4, Tuesday: Russian forces demolished all Polish resistance in the “Massacre at Praga” in which somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 Polish civilians were slaughtered. Maastricht surrendered to the French.

Giovanni Paisiello’s *dramma per musica* *Didone abbandonata* to words of Metastasio was performed for the initial time, in the Teatro San Carlo of [Naples](#).

Upon the fall of Robespierre, in response to a belated appeal by American minister to France James Monroe, [Thomas Paine](#) was released from French prison — but he would go back to America harboring an enormous grudge against President [George Washington](#) for having previously neglected to intercede in France at a diplomatic level on his behalf, when he had the status of an American citizen being endangered by a foreign government.⁴



The understanding of Colonel Timothy Pickering, commissioner to the Native Americans, was that he had succeeded in soothing Indian feelings over the issues of Presque Isle and land along the [Niagara River](#) in upstate [New York](#).

4. Because he would go public with his complaint about the unfaithful conduct of the “father of our country,” who was because the ceremonial head of the nation was immune to all possibility of censure, Paine would be roundly excoriated and condemned by the American news media, for the remainder of his life, as a “dirty little atheist” —he was not, nor had he ever been, an atheist— and in fact he would be shot at in his own home in the countryside, from which danger and exposure he would need to flee to the anonymity of a city-flat hideout in New-York.

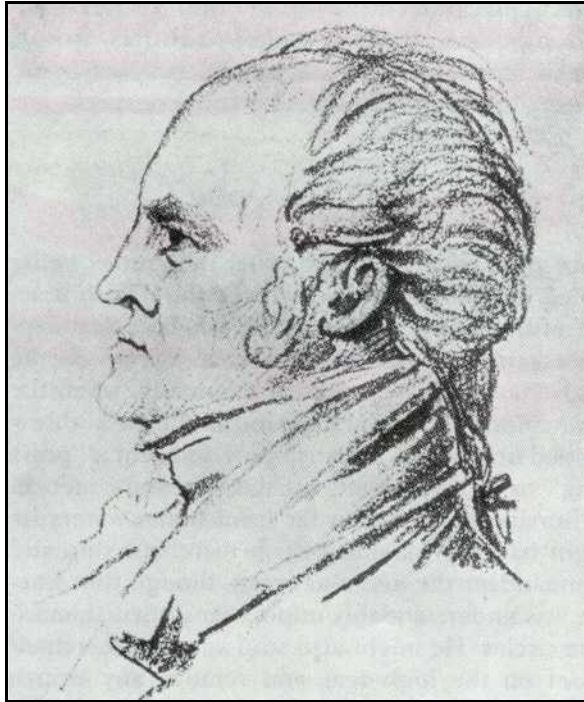
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ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1795

US senator Aaron Burr, his daughter Theodosia, and her husband Joseph Alston traveled to [Niagara Falls](#). Burr left his party at Canawagus and traveled to the falls of the Genesee River at what would become Rochester, New York, where he stayed overnight with settler Peter Shaeffer at Wheatland.





THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1796

June: In upstate [New York](#), the English left [Fort Niagara](#) and Fort Oswego.



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THE SUBLIME

1798

Native Americans in the Mile Strip along the [Niagara River](#) granted Horatio Jones and Jasper Parrish two square miles of land north of Scajaquada Creek, near the northern city limit of today's Buffalo, [New York](#).

A [Niagara Canal Company](#) was incorporated to dig a [canal](#) between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie.

Construction began on the [German Flats Canal](#).

2d report of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company.

ERIE CANAL

April 6, Friday: The [New York](#) Legislature called for the surveying of a mile-long reservation along the [Niagara River](#), to be set aside for the Alleghany Indians.

[James Pierson Beckwourth](#) was born in Frederick County, Virginia either on this day or more likely on April 6, 1800 (as an adult he would sport a silver dollar coined in 1800 on a string around his neck), sired by [Sir Jennings Beckwith](#) upon a mulatto woman known to us only as "[Miss Kill](#)." (Please note that this was not a short-term or casual relationship but a caring one, and it seems there would eventually be some 13 biracial children of this couple's enduring union.)

Some things need to be said about the white preponderance of this lad's ancestry. He might not exactly be what this American society regards as lily-white and worthy, but Elizabeth Jennings Beckwith, grand-daughter of Peter Jennings, had been the sister of Edmund Jennings, who was Attorney General of the Virginia colony in 1684, Secretary of State in 1701, and President of the Council and Acting Governor in 1710.



The Beckwiths of Virginia allege that their ancestor was Sir Hugh de Malebisse, a knight serving Duke William at the Battle of Hastings. In the Year of Our Lord 1226 a descendant of this knight, Sir Hercules de



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

Malebisse, acquired the name “Beckworth” by marriage to Lady Beckwith Bruce, heiress to the Beckwith estate. Elizabeth Jennings Beckwith’s son Sir Marmaduke Beckwith would establish his home “Belvoin” a few miles north of Warsaw, Virginia, and would beget as his 2d son Sir Jonathan Beckwith, and then Sir Jonathan would beget Sir Jennings Beckwith, and then Sir Jennings of Richmond County, Virginia would beget, upon a mulatto or quadroon known to us only as “[Miss Kill](#)” (such a name might have originated as a misreading of a handwritten record), James Pierson Beckwith, AKA [James P. Beckwourth](#). This “Miss Kill,” if that was indeed her monicker, had presumably the status of a slave, since her son’s father would need to appear repeatedly in court to assert that indeed there existed papers in his boy’s manumission. One might suppose that on some planet other than our own, this fine lady Elizabeth Jennings Beckwith pictured above would have been considered to be, therefore, Jim Beckwourth’s great-great-grandma.

November 5, Monday: The chief surveyor for the Holland Land Company project, Joseph Ellicott, instructed Seth Pease on surveying the [Niagara River](#) of upstate [New York](#).

November 6, Tuesday: The chief surveyor for the Holland Land Company project, Joseph Ellicott, instructed Seth Pease on laying out [New York](#)’s reserved lands along the [Niagara River](#) and making a map of the lands, and calculating the contents of the water in Chautauqua Lake for Robert Morris.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1799

The American soldiers consolidated their hold on the [New York](#) side of the [Niagara River](#) the British soldiers across the river from [Fort Niagara](#) constructed a wooden fortress which they called Fort George, just south of today's village of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Of course they positioned their new fort on higher ground where its guns could dominate the older position. Relations between the two garrisons were for the time being cordial, with the officers eager to socialize among one another. Personnel of the American garrison for instance were known to attend divine services on the British side of the river. Also, during the absence of the American surgeon British doctors filled in, caring for the soldiers of [Fort Niagara](#). Unfortunately, this situation would not endure as the British refused to acknowledge that America had won its Revolutionary War and disregarded American neutrality and disregarded American maritime rights — and as Americans developed plans for the future of [Canada](#).

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THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1801



[George Heriot](#) painted the village of Chippawa near the falls of the [Niagara River](#).





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1802



[New York](#) purchased a mile-wide strip of land along the [Niagara River](#) from the Seneca nation. This would be termed the “Mile Strip.”



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1803



The American garrison of [Fort Niagara](#) did not remain isolated for long. In the early 19th Century the lands on the [New York](#) side of the [Niagara River](#) were surveyed and rapidly began to fill with settlers. By the end of the 1st decade of the century thriving villages would be being established along the frontier at Youngstown, Lewiston, Manchester, Schlosser (both Manchester and Schlosser now being within the city of Niagara Falls), Black Rock (now within Buffalo), and Buffalo, which the garrison of [Fort Niagara](#) was of course expected to protect. Work details out of the fort hacked out a military road from the top of the escarpment of the [Niagara River](#) at Lewiston to Black Rock (this road still exists as New York Route 265).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1804



Fall: [Alexander Wilson](#) hiked from his home in southern Pennsylvania to the [Niagara Falls](#).⁵

5. Refer to his THE FORESTERS; A POEM, DESCRIPTIVE OF A PEDESTRIAN JOURNEY TO THE FALLS OF NIAGARA, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1804 (Pennsylvania: Joseph Painter, 1838)



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1805



July: [Alexander Wilson](#), who had just hiked from Gray's Ferry, Pennsylvania to the [Niagara Falls](#) while birdwatching, wrote to [William Bartram](#).

I dare say you will smile at my presumption when I tell you that I have seriously begun to make a collection of drawings of the birds to be found in Pennsylvania, or that occasionally pass through it: twenty-eight, as a beginning, I send for your opinion.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1806



June 16, Monday: There is one reliably datable event, in [Austin Steward](#)'s later account of his life as a teenage [slave](#) in upstate [New York](#), and that date is the great [eclipse](#) that occurred on this day. We will therefore need to insert here –for lack of a better position at which to place this material in the general chronology– his autobiographical reminiscences of this period of his life:

Capt. Helm finally concluded to sell his plantation and stock, except the slaves, and remove to the Genesee Country, where he designed to locate his future residence.

The plantation and stock (retaining the slaves) were advertised for sale, and on a certain day named, all would be disposed of at a public sale, or to the highest bidder.

When the day of sale arrived, there flocked from all parts of the surrounding country the largest assemblage of people I ever saw in that place. A large number of wealthy and respectable planters were present, whose gentlemanly behavior should have been an example to others.

The majority of that vast crowd, however, were a rough, quarrelsome, fighting set, just such as might be expected from slave-holding districts. There were several regularly fought battles during the first day of the sale.

One Thomas Ford, a large, muscular, ferocious-looking fellow, a good specimen of a southern bully and woman-whipper, had been victorious through the day in numerous fights and brawls; but he had to pay dear for it when night came. Some one or more of the vanquished party, took advantage of the dark night to stab him in both sides. The knife of the assassin had been thrust into his thigh, tearing the flesh upward, leaving a frightful and dangerous wound; but what is most singular, both sides were wounded in nearly the same manner, and at the same time, for so quickly was the deed committed that the offenders made their escape, before an alarm could be raised for their detection; nor have I ever heard of any one being arrested for the crime.

Ford's groans and cries were painful to hear, but his brother acted like a madman; rushing hither and thither, with a heavy bludgeon in his hand, with which he indiscriminately beat the fences and whatever came in his way, crying "Oh my brother, my poor brother! Who has murdered my poor brother?"

Physicians came to the aid of the wounded man who at first thought he might recover, but in a climate like that of Virginia it was impossible. His friends did all they could to save him, but the poor wretch lingered a few days and died. Thus ended the life of a bad man and a hard master.

... The sale continued for several days, during which there was no such thing as rest or sleep or one quiet moment on the premises. As was customary in that State, Capt. Helm provided the food and drink for all who came, and of course a great many came to drink and revel and not to buy; and that class generally



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took the night time for their hideous outbreaks, when the more respectable class had retired to their beds or to their homes. And many foul deeds and cruel outrages were committed; nor could the perpetrators be detected or brought to justice. Nothing could be done but to submit quietly to their depredations.

One peaceable old slave was killed by having his head split open with an ax. He was found in the morning lying in the yard, with the bloody instrument of death by his side. This occasioned some excitement among the slaves, but as the white people paid but little attention to it, it soon passed off, and the sorrowful slaves put the old man's remains in a rough box, and conveyed them to their last resting-place.

After the sale was over, the slaves were allowed a holiday, with permission to go and visit their friends and relatives previous to their departure for their new home in a strange land.

The slaves generally on Capt. Helm's plantation looked upon this removal as the greatest hardship they had ever met; the severest trial they had ever endured; and the separation from our old home and fellow-slaves, from our relatives and the old State of Virginia, was to us a contemplation of sorrowful interest. Those who remained, thought us the most unfortunate of human beings to be taken away off into the State of New York, and, as they believed, beyond the bounds of civilization, where we should in all probability be destroyed by wild beasts, devoured by cannibals, or scalped by the Indians. We never expected to meet again in this life, hence our parting interviews were as solemn as though we were committing our friends to the grave. But He whose tender mercies are over all his creatures, knew best what was for our good.

Little did Capt. Helm think when bringing his slaves to New York that in a few short years, they would be singing the song of deliverance from Slavery's thralldom; and as little thought he of the great and painful change, to be brought about in his own circumstances. Could any one have looked into futurity and traced the difficult path, my master was to tread, — could any one have foreseen the end to which he must soon come, and related it to him in the days of his greatness and prosperity, he would, I am certain, have turned from such a narrator of misfortune in a greater rage than did Namaan when the man of God told him "to go and dip seven times in the Jordan."

He could not have believed, nor could I, that in a few years the powerful, wealthy slaveholder, living in luxury and extravagance, would be so reduced that the **necessaries** of life even, were beyond his means, and that he must be supported by the town!

But I anticipate. Let us return to the old plantation which seems dearer than ever, now that we are about to leave it forever.

We thought Capt. Helm's prospects pretty fair, and yet we shuddered when we realized our condition as slaves. This change in our circumstances was calculated to awaken all our fears that had been slumbering, and bring all the perilous changes to which we might be subjected most vividly to mind.



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We were about to leave the land of our birth, the home of our childhood, and we felt that untried scenes were before us. We were slaves, it is true, but we had heart-felt emotions to suppress, when we thought of leaving all that was so familiar to us, and chose rather to "bear the ills we had, than to fly to those we knew not of." And oh, the terrible uncertainty of the future, that ever rests on the slave, even the most favored, was now felt with a crushing weight. To-day, they are in the old familiar cabin surrounded by their family, relatives and friends; to-morrow, they may be scattered, parted forever. The master's circumstances, not their own, may have assigned one to the dreadful slave-pen, and another to the distant rice-swamp; and it is this continual dread of some perilous future that holds in check every joyous emotion, every lofty aspiration, of the most favored slave at the South. They know that their owners indulge in high living, and they are well aware also that their continual indulgences engender disease, which make them very liable to sudden death; or their master may be killed in a duel, or at a horse-race, or in a drunken brawl; then his creditors are active in looking after the estate; and next, the blow of the auctioneer's hammer separates them perhaps for life.

... After the sale of the plantation, Capt. Helm was in possession of quite a large sum of money, and having never paid much attention to his pecuniary interests, he acted as if there could be no end of it. He realized about forty thousand dollars from the sale of his estate in Virginia, which would have been a pretty sum in the hands of a man who had been accustomed to look after his own interests; but under the management of one who had all his life lived and prospered on the unrequited toil of slaves, it was of little account. He bought largely of every thing he thought necessary for himself or the comfort of his family, for which he always paid the most extravagant prices. The Captain was not as well qualified to take care of himself and family as some of his slaves were; but he thought differently, and so the preparations for leaving the old plantation for a home in the wilds of New York, went on under his direction, and at last we bade a final adieu to our friends and all we held dear in the State of Virginia.

All things having been prepared for our departure, our last "Good-bye" spoken, and our last look taken of the old plantation, we started, amid the sobs and prolonged cries of separating families, in company with our master, the overseer and another white man named Davis, who went with us to take back the five-horse "Pennsylvania team," which was provided for the conveyance of the food for the slaves, and what little baggage they might have, and also that of the overseer.

Capt. Helm had determined to leave his family until he could get his slaves settled in their future quarters, and a home provided for himself, when they were expected to join him.

We traveled northward, through Maryland, Pennsylvania, and a portion of New York, to Sodus Bay, where we halted for some time. We made about twenty miles per day, camping out every night, and



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reached that place after a march of twenty days. Every morning the overseer called the roll, when every slave must answer to his or her name, felling to the ground with his cowhide, any delinquent who failed to speak out in quick time.

After the roll had been called, and our scanty breakfast eaten, we marched on again, our company presenting the appearance of some numerous caravan crossing the desert of Sahara. When we pitched our tents for the night, the slaves must immediately set about cooking not their supper only, but their breakfast, so as to be ready to start early the next morning, when the tents were struck; and we proceeded on our journey in this way to the end. At Sodus Bay there was then one small tavern, kept by a man named Sill.

The bay is ten miles in length and from a half to two miles in breadth, and makes an excellent harbor. The surrounding country then was almost an unbroken wilderness.

After Capt. Helm had rested a few days at Sodus, he went six miles up the bay and purchased a large tract of land lying on both sides of that beautiful sheet of water, and put his slaves on to clear and cultivate it. Then came the "tug of war." Neither the overseer nor the slaves had the least knowledge of **clearing** land, and that was the first thing to be done. It was useless to consult the Captain, for he knew still less about matters of that kind. To obviate this difficulty, our master bought out a Mr. Cummings, who had some cleared land on the west side of the bay. On this he put the overseer and a part of the slaves, and then hired a Mr. Herrington to take charge of the remainder. Herrington and his gang of slaves was sent to the east side to chop down the heavy timber and clear the land for cultivation, all of which had first to be learned, for we knew nothing of felling trees, and the poor slaves had rather a hard time of it. Provisions were scarce and could not be procured for cash in that section. There was no corn to be had, and we had but little left. We had no neighbors to assist us in this trying time, and we came near starvation. True, the wild, romantic region in which we were located abounded in game, — elk, deer, bear, panther, and wolves, roamed abroad through the dense forest, in great abundance, but the business of the slaves was not hunting or fishing, but clearing the land, preparatory to raising crops of grain the coming season.

At last Capt. Helm chartered a boat, and manned it to go to the mouth of the Genesee River to buy corn. They embarked under favorable auspices, but soon there came on such a tremendous storm, that the boat could no longer be managed, and the crew in despair threw themselves on the bottom of the boat to await their inevitable destruction, when one of their number, a colored man named Dunbar, sprang to the helm, and with great difficulty succeeded in running her safely into a Canadian port, where they were obliged to part with every thing in their possession to obtain the means to return to their families in Sodus, who had given them up as lost. But, to the great joy of all, they came back at last with their lives, but with nothing



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for the famishing slaves. Before another boat could be sent for our relief, we were reduced to the last extremity. We became so weak we could not work, and it was difficult to drag ourselves about, as we were now obliged to do, to gather up all the old bones we could find, break them up fine and then boil them; which made a sort of broth sufficient barely to sustain life. This we drank, and merely existed, until at last, the long looked for boat returned, loaded with provision, which saved us from starvation and gave us strength to pursue our labor.

About this time two slaves who were laboring in the forest, instead of returning to their cabin as was expected, got lost, and wandered eight days in the dense forest without provision, except what they could procure from roots and the bark of trees. Great exertion was made to find them; guns were fired, horns blown, and shouts raised, but all to no purpose. Finally, we gave them up, supposing they had starved to death or had been killed by wild beasts. One of them was an elderly man, named Benjamin Bristol, and the other, Edmund Watkins, a lad of about eighteen years of age. They wandered in an easterly direction, a distance of some sixty or seventy miles, through an unbroken wilderness, vainly trying to find their way home. On the eighth day, to their inexpressible joy, they came out on the shore of Lake Ontario, near Oswego; but young Watkins was so completely exhausted that he declared himself incapable of further exertion, and begged to be left to his fate. Bristol, however, who chewed tobacco, which it was supposed kept him from sinking so low as his companion, took him on his back, and carried him home, which they reached in a famished state and reduced to skeletons. All were thankful for the preservation of their lives, and, with the best we could do for them, they soon recruited and became strong as ever.

One day, two others and myself thought we saw some animal swimming across the bay. We got a boat and went out to see what it was. After rowing for some time we came near enough to perceive it was a large bear. Those who watched us from the shore expected to see our boat upset, and all on board drowned, but it was not so to be; the bear was struck on the nose with a blow that killed him instantly, and he was hauled ashore in great triumph.

While these things were transpiring on the east side of the bay, the overseer on the west side determined to punish one of the slaves who worked on the east side. The name of the slave was Williams; a strong, athletic man, and generally a good workman, but he had unfortunately offended the overseer, for which nothing could appease his wrath but the privilege of flogging him. The slave, however, thought as he was no longer in Virginia, he would not submit to such chastisement, and the overseer was obliged to content himself with threatening what he would do if he caught him on the west side of the bay.

A short time after, the overseer called at the cabin of one of the slaves, and was not a little surprised to find there the refractory slave, Williams, in company with three other men. He



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immediately walked up to him and asked him some question, to which Williams made no reply. Attended, as he always was, by his ferocious bull-dog, he flourished his cowhide in great wrath and demanded an instant reply, but he received none, whereupon he struck the slave a blow with the cowhide. Instantly Williams sprang and caught him by the throat and held him writhing in his vise-like grasp, until he succeeded in getting possession of the cowhide, with which he gave the overseer such a flogging as slaves seldom get. Williams was seized at once by the dog who endeavored to defend his brutal master, but the other slaves came to the rescue, and threw the dog into a huge fire which was near by, from which, after a singeing, he ran off, howling worse than his master when in the hands of Williams. He foamed and swore and still the blows descended; then he commanded the slaves to assist him, but as none obeyed, he commenced begging in the most humble manner, and at last entreated them as "gentlemen" to spare him; but all to no purpose. When Williams thought he had thrashed him sufficiently, he let him go and hurried to his boat and rowed down the bay, instead of crossing it. The overseer no sooner found himself at liberty than he ran out, calling to a servant girl to bring his rifle, which was loaded. The rifle was brought, but before he could get to the bay, Williams had gone beyond his reach; but unfortunately another boat was at this moment crossing the bay, which he, mad with rage, fired into. The men in the boat immediately cried out to him not to repeat the shot, but he was so angry that he swore he would shoot somebody, and sent another bullet after them. No one was hurt, however, but the brave overseer was vanquished. Crest-fallen and unrevenged, he shortly after called on Capt. Helm for a settlement, which was granted, and bidding a final adieu to the "Genesee Country," he departed for Virginia, where he could beat slaves without himself receiving a cow-hiding. No one regretted his absence, nor do I think any but the most heartless would cordially welcome his return to the land of Slavery.

Capt. Helm went to Virginia for his family, and returning with them, concluded to locate his future residence in the village of Bath, Steuben County. He purchased a large tract of land near the village, a large grist mill, and two saw mills; also, two farms; one called the "Maringo," east of the village; and the other, called "Epsam," north of it; and a fine house and lot in the village. He also kept a distillery, which in those days was well patronized, for nearly every body drank whisky; and with Capt. Helm it was a favorite beverage.

The slaves were removed to Bath, where our master was well suited, and was everywhere noted for his hospitality. He had a great deal of land to cultivate, and carried on a multiplicity of business.

Soon after we were settled at Bath, Capt. Helm's eldest daughter, Jenny, was married to Mr. John Fitzhugh, her cousin, who had come from Virginia to claim his bride.

The wedding was a splendid affair. No pains were spared to make



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it more imposing than any thing that had ever happened in that country. Never before had the quiet village of Bath seen such splendor. All that wealth, power and ambition could do, was done to make the event one of great brilliancy. Europe contributed her full proportion; Turkey, the Indias, East and West, were heavily taxed to produce their finest fabrics to adorn the bride and bridal guests; and contribute delicacies to add elegance to the festal scene. Two days previous to the wedding, the invited guests began to arrive with their retinue of servants, and on the evening of the marriage the large mansion was thrown open, and there was the most magnificent assemblage I ever beheld. In the drawing-room, where the ceremony took place, every thing was surpassingly elegant. Costly chandeliers shed their light on the rich tapestry, and beautiful dresses glittering with diamonds, and the large mirrors everywhere reflecting the gay concourse. While the servants were preparing supper it was announced that the hour had arrived for the ceremony to commence. The bridal pair took their place in the center of the apartment. Pearls, diamonds, and jewelry glittered on the bride with such luster, that it was almost painful to the eye to look upon her.

The minister, after asking God to bless the assembled guests, and those he was about to unite in the holy bonds of wedlock, proceeded in a very solemn and impressive manner with the marriage service. The ceremony concluded, and good wishes having been expressed over the sparkling wine, the man of God took his leave, two hundred dollars richer than when he came. The company were all very happy, or appeared so; mirth reigned supreme, and every countenance wore a smile. They were seated at tables loaded with luxuries of every description, and while partaking, a band of music enlivened the scene.

All business was suspended for several days, the wedding party making a tour of ten days to [Niagara Falls](#). After a while, however, affairs assumed their usual aspect, and business took its regular routine.

The grist mill belonging to the Captain was the only one for many miles around, and was a source of great profit to him; the saw mills also, were turning out a large quantity of lumber, which was in good demand; and the distillery kept up a **steaming** business. It yielded, however, a handsome income to Capt. Helm, who was now, for the first time since I knew him, overseeing his affairs himself, dispensing altogether with the service of a regularly installed overseer.

The oldest son of our master had been absent from home for sometime, nor did he return to attend his sister's grand wedding. He had sought and obtained a commission in the United States service as a Lieutenant. This had been his own choice; he had preferred the service and hardships of a soldier, to a plantation well stocked with slaves, and the quietude of domestic life. He had cheerfully given up his friends and prospects as a planter, and entered the service of his country. Frank Helm, the second son, soon followed the example of his older brother, Lina. He obtained a like commission, but he did



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not, like his brother, get along quietly. His prospects as an officer were soon blighted, and all hope of being serviceable to his country vanished forever.

Lina Helm was an easy, good-natured, clever fellow; but his brother Frank was his opposite in nearly every thing; proud, fractious and unyielding. As might be expected, Frank, soon after entering the army, got into an "affair of honor," according to the duelist's code of laws. He was not, however, the principal in the difficulty. One of his friends and a brother officer, had a quarrel with a gentleman whom he challenged to mortal combat. Frank was the bearer of his friend's challenge, and on presenting it, the gentleman refused to accept it, saying that the challenger "was no gentleman." Then, according to the rules of dueling, no alternative was left for Frank, but to take his brother officer's place, and fight. This he did and came from the bloody field disabled for life. In consequence of his lameness, he was under the necessity of resigning his commission in the army, which he did, and came home a cripple, and nearly unfitted for any kind of business whatever....

After the return of the wedding party, Mr. Fitzhugh purchased a tract of land near that of Capt. Helm, on which the newly-married couple commenced keeping house. They, however, became dissatisfied with their location, and soon after sold their possessions and returned to the South.

Capt. Helm still continued to take the oversight of his slaves, and was out every day, superintending his business, just as his overseer used to do.

About this time a man named Henry Tower came to Bath to hire "slave boys," as we were called. The Captain hired to him Simon and myself, and a Mr. Baker also hired to him one slave named Vol. McKenzie. We three started for Dresden, Ontario County, where we arrived in due time.

Mr. Tower had just bought a tract of land, three miles this side of the village of Lyons, on the Canandaigua outlet. Here Mr. Tower contemplated making great improvements, building mills, opening stores &c. This tract of land was comparatively wild, there being but a small frame house for a dwelling, one for a store, and another for a blacksmith shop. Mr. Tower had two brothers; James, the eldest, who took charge of the store, and John, the younger, who took charge of the hands who worked on the farm; Henry himself superintending the building of the mills. This firm had a great number of men in their employ that year. I was kept busy helping the women about the cooking and house-work. And here, for the first time in my life, I had a comfortable bed to sleep on, and plenty of wholesome food to eat; which was something both new and strange to me.

The Towers were thorough-going business-men; they built a large grist mill, with four run of stone, and also a distillery. In those days it was customary for nearly all classes to drink spirituous liquors; hence, the distilleries were sources of great pecuniary interest to those who owned them. But having lived to see the dreadful evils which the drinking of alcoholic



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beverages have produced on community, I can hardly speak of distilleries in the favorable light in which they were then regarded.

The Towers, with commendable enterprise, cleared a great number of acres of land during the first year I lived with them, besides doing a heavy business in the mill, store and distillery.

It was customary then for men to assemble at some public place for the purpose of drinking whisky and racing horses.

One Saturday afternoon there was to be a race, and all was excitement. Being young, I wished to go with the rest. I hurried through my work as fast as possible, and then, with a trembling heart, set off in search of my master, fearing lest he would refuse me the simple request. But he happened to be in uncommon good humor, and readily gave his consent; and away I went, "as happy as a lark." When I reached the race-ground, they were just preparing to run the horses. Seeing me, they knew me to be a poor friendless little slave boy, helpless and unprotected, and they could therefore do with me as they pleased, and have some fine sport at my expense.

When I was asked to ride one of the fast horses, I felt proud of the honor conferred, and was assisted to mount, feeling highly elated with the lofty position I had gained.

The word "go," was shouted, and the horse whirled off, and it seemed to me as if he flew with the speed of lightning. My hat fell off the first thing; and there I was, clinging with might and main to the neck of the fiery animal, my head bare, my feet bootless, and my old stripped shirt blown from my back, and streaming out behind, and fluttering like a banner in the breeze; my ragged pants off at the knees, and my long legs dangling down some length below; and at the same time crying "Whoa! whoa!" as loud as I could. Nor was this all; frightened as I was, nearly to death, I cast a despairing look behind me, and the loud, derisive laugh of the bystanders rung in my ears. Ludicrous as I must have appeared, this was too much, — I felt a giddiness coming over me, my brain reeled, my hold relaxed, and the next instant I had fallen to the ground, where all consciousness left me. When I came to my senses I was lying in bed, surrounded by all the appurtenances of a dying person.

The first thing I heard was Mr. Tower scolding the men who put me on the horse, and threatening them with a law-suit for presuming to do such a thing without his permission. Mr. Tower considered himself holden to Capt. Helm for my safe return, and was therefore justly indignant at their placing my life in such peril. It was indeed a narrow escape, for the horse was running with all his speed when I fell. My bones were unbroken, however, and I suppose it must have been the tremendous jar I got when I fell that rendered me unconscious; nor do I think it impossible that the fright may not have contributed somewhat to the catastrophe.

... I continued to live with the Towers; and in the fall of that year, I had the misfortune to cut my foot badly. While chopping fire wood at the door, I accidentally struck my ax against a



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post, which glanced the blow in such a manner that it came down with sufficient force to nearly sever my great toe from my left foot, gashing upward completely through the large joint, which made a terrible wound. Dr. Taylor was immediately called, and sewed the flesh together, taking two stitches on the upper, and one on the under, side of the foot, before it began to swell; but when the swelling came on, the stitches on the upper side gave way, which occasioned the toe to fall over so much, that I have been slightly lame from that day to this. For several weeks I was unable to be moved, and was regularly attended by Dr. Taylor, but as soon as it could be done without danger, I was taken back to Capt. Helm's, where I found things in much the same condition as when I left them over a year before.

... I managed to purchase a spelling book, and set about teaching myself to read, as best I could. Every spare moment I could find was devoted to that employment, and when about my work I could catch now and then a stolen glance at my book, just to refresh my memory with the simple lesson I was trying to learn. But here Slavery showed its cloven foot in all its hideous deformity. It finally reached the ears of my master that I was learning to read; and then, if he saw me with a book or a paper in my hand, oh, how he would swear at me, sending me off in a hurry, about some employment. Still I persevered, but was more careful about being seen making any attempt to learn to read. At last, however, I was discovered, and had to pay the penalty of my determination. I had been set to work in the sugar bush, and I took my spelling book with me. When a spare moment occurred I sat down to study, and so absorbed was I in the attempt to blunder through my lesson, that I did not hear the Captain's son-in-law coming until he was fairly upon me. He sprang forward, caught my poor old spelling book, and threw it into the fire, where it was burned to ashes; and then came my turn. He gave me first a severe flogging, and then swore if he ever caught me with another book, he would "whip every inch of skin off my back," &c.

... About this time Capt. Helm began to sell off his slaves to different persons, as he could find opportunity, and sometimes at a great sacrifice. It became apparent that the Captain, instead of prospering in business, was getting poorer every day.

... I was one afternoon at a neighbor's house in the village, when I was suddenly taken so violently ill with pain in my head and side, that I had to be carried home. When we arrived there, I was allowed a pallet of straw to lie on, which was better than nothing. Day after day, my disease increased in violence, and my master employed a physician to attend me through my illness, which brought me very low indeed. I was constantly burning with fever, and so thirsty that I knew not what I would have given for a draught of cold water, which was denied me by the physician's direction. I daily grew weaker until I was reduced to helplessness, and was little else than "skin and bones." I really thought my time had come to die; and when I had strength to talk, I tried to arrange the few little business affairs I had, and give my father direction concerning them. And then I



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began to examine my own condition before God, and to determine how the case stood between Him and my poor soul. And "there was the rub." I had often excused myself, for frequent derelictions in duty, and often wild and passionate outbreaks, on account of the hardness of my lot, and the injustice with which I was treated, even in my best endeavors to do as well as I knew how. But now, with death staring me in the face, I could see that though I was a friendless "slave-boy," I had **not** always done as well as I knew how; that I had **not** served God as I knew I ought, nor had I always set a good example before my fellow-slaves, nor warned them as well as I might, "to flee the wrath to come." Then I prayed my Heavenly Father to spare me a little longer, that I might serve Him better; and in His mercy and gracious goodness, He did so; though when the fever was turning they gave me up; and I could hear them say, when they came to feel my pulse, "he is almost gone," "it will soon be over," &c., and then inquire if I knew them. I did, but was too weak to say so. I recollect with gratitude, the kindness of Mrs. H.A. Townsend, who sent me many delicacies and cooling drinks to soften the rigor of my disease; and though I suppose she has long since "passed away" and gone to her reward, may the blessing of those who are ready to perish, rest upon the descendants of that excellent woman.

Capt. Helm was driving on in his milling, distillery and farming business. He now began to see the necessity of treating his slaves better by far than he had ever done before, and granted them greater privileges than he would have dared to do at the South. Many of the slaves he had sold, were getting their liberty and doing well.

While I was staying with my master at Bath, he having little necessity for my services, hired me out to a man by the name of Joseph Robinson, for the purpose of learning me to drive a team. Robinson lived about three miles from the village of Bath, on a small farm, and was not only a poor man but a very mean one. He was cross and heartless in his family, as well as tyrannical and cruel to those in his employ; and having hired me as a "slave boy," he appeared to feel at full liberty to wreak his brutal passion on me at any time, whether I deserved rebuke or not; nor did his terrible outbreaks of anger vent themselves in oaths, curses and threatenings only, but he would frequently draw from the cart-tongue a heavy iron pin, and beat me over the head with it, so unmercifully that he frequently sent the blood flowing over my scanty apparel, and from that to the ground, before he could feel satisfied.

These kind of beatings were not only excessively painful, but they always reminded me of the blows I had so often received from the key, in the hand of Mrs. Helm, when I was but a little waiter lad; and in truth I must say that the effect of these heavy blows on the head, have followed me thus far through life; subjecting me to frequent and violent head-aches, from which I never expect to be entirely free. Even to this day I shudder at the thought, when I think how Robinson used to fly at me,



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swearing, foaming, and seeming to think there was no weapon too large or too heavy to strike me with.

He and I were at one time logging with a yoke of oxen, which it was my business to drive. At that time rattle-snakes were numerous, and a great terror to the inhabitants. To be bitten by one of these poisonous reptiles was certain and almost instant death; hence, the greatest caution and constant vigilance was necessary to avoid them while at work. I had been sent with the oxen to draw a log to the pile, and when I came up to it, I observed that it appeared to be hollow; but stepping forward, with the chain in my hand, ready to attach it to the log, when, oh, horror! the warning rattle of a snake sounded like a death knell in my ears, proceeding from the log I was about to lay hold of. I was so much frightened by the sound, that I dropped the chain as though it were red hot, left my team, and ran with all the speed in my power, screaming "murder, murder!" as loud as I could.

This proceeding, which was the fearful impulse of the moment, offended Robinson, and gave him another opportunity to beat me most cruelly. He was himself as much afraid of rattle-snakes as I; but he was the master and I the "slave boy," which made a vast difference. He caught hold of me, and, with horrid oaths, beat me with his fist again and again; threatening me with awful punishment if I did not instantly return and bring the log to the desired spot. I never can forget the mortal agony I was in, while compelled by his kicks and blows to return and fasten the chain around the log containing the deadly serpent. I, however, succeeded with trembling hands, and drove the oxen, but keeping myself at the farthest possible distance from them and the log. When I finally arrived at the pile, Mr. Robinson and some other men, cut a hole with an ax in the log, and killed the large, venomous rattle-snake that had occasioned me so much alarm and such a cruel beating. Nor was the uncontrollable and brutal passion of Robinson his only deficiency; he was mean as he was brutal.

He had, at one time, borrowed a wagon of a neighbor living two miles distant, through a dense forest. On the day of the total eclipse of the sun, it entered his head that it would be fine sport, knowing my ignorance and superstition, to send me, just as the darkness was coming on, to return the borrowed wagon. I accordingly hitched the ox-team to it and started. As I proceeded through the wood, I saw, with astonishment and some alarm, that it was growing very dark, and thought it singular at that hour of the day. When I reached the place of my destination it was almost total darkness, and some persons, ignorant as myself, were running about, wringing their hands, and declaring that they believed the Day of Judgment had come, and such like expressions.

The effect of all this was, however, very different from what my master had expected. I thought, of course, if the judgment day had come, I should be no longer a slave in the power of a heartless tyrant. I recollect well of thinking, that if indeed



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all things earthly were coming to an end, I should be free from Robinson's brutal force, and as to meeting my Creator, I felt far less dread of that than of meeting my cross, unmerciful master. I felt that, sinful as I had been, and unworthy as I was, I should be far better off than I then was; driven to labor all day, without compensation; half starved and poorly clad, and above all, subjected to the whims and caprices of any heartless tyrant to whom my master might give the power to rule over me. But I had not much time for reflection, I hurried home; my mind filled with the calm anticipation that the end of all things was at hand; which greatly disappointed my expectant master, who was looking for me to return in a great fright, making some very ludicrous demonstration of fear and alarm. But after a few months more of hardship I was permitted to return to Capt. Helm's, where I was treated much better than at Robinson's, and much, better than the Captain used to treat his slaves.

Capt. Helm, not having demand for slave labor as much as formerly, was in the practice of hiring out his slaves to different persons, both in and out of the village; and among others, my only sister was hired out to a **professed** gentleman living in Bath. She had become the mother of two or three children, and was considered a good servant.

One pleasant Sabbath morning, as I was passing the house where she lived, on my way to the Presbyterian church, where I was sent to ring the bell as usual, I heard the most piteous cries and earnest pleadings issuing from the dwelling. To my horror and the astonishment of those with me, my poor sister made her appearance, weeping bitterly, and followed by her inhuman master, who was polluting the air of that clear Sabbath morning, with the most horrid imprecations and threatenings, and at the same time flourishing a large raw-hide. Very soon his bottled wrath burst forth, and the blows, aimed with all his strength, descended upon the unprotected head, shoulders and back of the helpless woman, until she was literally cut to pieces. She writhed in his powerful grasp, while shriek after shriek died away in heart-rending moanings; and yet the inhuman demon continued to beat her, though her pleading cries had ceased, until obliged to desist from the exhaustion of his own strength. What a spectacle was that, for the sight of a brother? The God of heaven only knows the conflict of feeling I then endured; He alone witnessed the tumult of my heart, at this outrage of manhood and kindred affection. God knows that my will was good enough to have wrung his neck; or to have drained from his heartless system its last drop of blood! And yet I was obliged to turn a deaf ear to her cries for assistance, which to this day ring in my ears. Strong and athletic as I was, no hand of mine could be raised in her defence, but at the peril of both our lives; – nor could her husband, had he been a witness of the scene, be allowed any thing more than unresisting submission to any cruelty, any indignity which the master saw fit to inflict on **his wife**, but the other's **slave**.

Does any indignant reader feel that I was wanting in courage or



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brotherly affection, and say that he would have interfered, and, at all hazards, rescued his sister from the power of her master; let him remember that he is a **freeman**; that he has not from his infancy been taught to cower beneath the white man's frown, and bow at his bidding, or suffer all the rigor of the slave laws. Had the gentlemanly woman-whipper been seen beating his horse, or his ox, in the manner he beat my poor sister, and that too for no fault which the law could recognize as an offence, he would have been complained of most likely; but as it was, she was but a "slave girl," – with whom the slave law allowed her master to do what he pleased.

... The Captain sold my aunt Betsy Bristol to a distinguished lawyer in the village, retaining her husband, Aaron Bristol, in his own employ; and two of her children he sold to another legal gentleman named Cruger. One day Captain Helm came out where the slaves were at work, and finding Aaron was not there, he fell into a great rage and swore terribly. He finally started off to a beach tree, from which he cut a stout limb, and trimmed it so as to leave a knot on the but end of the stick, or bludgeon rather, which was about two and a half feet in length. With this formidable weapon he started for Aaron's lonely cabin. When the solitary husband saw him coming he suspected that he was angry, and went forth to meet him in the street. They had no sooner met than my master seized Aaron by the collar, and taking the limb he had prepared by the smaller end, commenced beating him with it, over the head and face, and struck him some thirty or more terrible blows in quick succession; after which Aaron begged to know for what he was so unmercifully flogged.

"Because you deserve it," was the angry reply. Aaron said that he had ever endeavored to discharge his duty, and had done so to the best of his ability; and that he thought it very hard to be treated in that manner for no offence at all. Capt. Helm was astonished at his audacity; but the reader will perceive that the slaves were not blind to the political condition of the country, and were beginning to feel that they had some rights, and meant to claim them.

Poor Aaron's face and head, however, was left in a pitiable condition after such a pummeling with a knotty stick. His face, covered with blood, was so swollen that he could hardly see for some time; but what of that? Did he not belong to Capt. Helm, soul and body; and if his brutal owner chose to destroy his own property, certainly had he not a right to do so, without let or hindrance? Of course; such is the power that Slavery gives one human being over another.

And yet it must be confessed that among the poor, degraded and ignorant slaves there exists a foolish pride, which loves to boast of their master's wealth and influence. A white person, too poor to own slaves, is as often looked upon with as much disdain by the miserable slave as by his wealthy owner. This disposition seems to be instilled into the mind of every slave at the South, and indeed, I have heard slaves object to being sent in very small companies to labor in the field, lest that



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some passer-by should think that they belonged to a poor man, who was unable to keep a large gang. Nor is this ridiculous sentiment maintained by the slaves only; the rich planter feels such a contempt for all white persons without slaves, that he does not want them for his neighbors. I know of many instances where such persons have been under the necessity of buying or hiring slaves, just to preserve their reputation and keep up appearances; and even among a class of people who profess to be opposed to Slavery, have I known instances of the same kind, and have heard them apologize for their conduct by saying that "when in Rome, we must do as the Romans do."

Uncle Aaron Bristol was one of Capt. Helm's slaves who had a large amount of this miserable pride; and for him to be associated with a white man in the same humble occupation, seemed to give him ideas of great superiority, and full liberty to treat him with all the scorn and sarcasm he was capable of, in which my uncle was by no means deficient.

At this time the Captain owned a fine and valuable horse, by the name of *Speculator*. This horse, groomed by uncle Aaron, stood sometimes at Bath and sometimes at Geneva; and at the latter village another horse was kept, groomed by a white man. The white groom was not very well pleased with Aaron's continual disparagement of the clumsy animal which my uncle called "a great, awkward plow-horse;" and then he would fling out some of his proud nonsense about "**poor white people** who were obliged to groom their own old dumpy horses," &c.

Well, things went on in this unpleasant manner for several weeks, when at last the white groom and Aaron met at Geneva, and the horse belonging to the former, designedly or accidentally, escaped from his keeper, and came with full speed, with his mouth wide open, after *Speculator*. When the fiery fellow had overtaken uncle Aaron he attempted to grasp the wethers of *Speculator* with his teeth, instead of which he caught Aaron on the inside of his thigh, near the groin, from whence he bit a large piece of flesh, laying the bone entirely bare; at the same moment flinging Aaron to the ground, some rods off; and the next instant he kicked *Speculator* down a steep embankment Aaron was taken up for dead, and Dr. Henry sent for, who dressed his wounds; and after several months' confinement he finally recovered. It is probable that the biting and overthrow of Aaron saved his life, as he must have otherwise been killed in the encounter of the two horses.

A while after his recovery, uncle Aaron succeeded in procuring a team and some kind of vehicle, in which he put his wife and children, and between two days, took "French leave" of his master as well as of the lawyer to whom his wife belonged.

The lawyer, however, was far from being pleased when he missed his property, and immediately set his wits to work to reclaim her. All was kept secret as possible, but it was whispered about that it was to be done by a State's warrant, for removing the clothing and furniture they had taken, and so, being thus arrested, "Madam Bristol" would be glad to return to her work in the lawyer's kitchen. But Aaron was a smart, shrewd man, and



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kept out of their reach, where he soon found friends and employment, and could go where he pleased, without having an infuriated master to beat and disfigure him with a knotted stick, until his clothes were bespattered with blood. They appreciated their liberty, and lived and died in peace and freedom.

Capt. Helm continued his old manner of treating slaves, dealing out their weekly allowance of corn or meal; but living as we now did, so much more intimately with white inhabitants, our condition was materially improved. The slaves became more refined in manners and in possession of far greater opportunities to provide for themselves, than they had ever before enjoyed, and yet it was **Slavery**. Any reverse in the fortunes of our master would be disadvantageous to us. Oh, how this fearful uncertainty weighed upon us as we saw that our master was not prospering and increasing in wealth; but we had not the dismal fears of the loathsome slave-pen, rice swamps, and many other things we should have to fear in Virginia. We were still **slaves**, and yet we had so much greater chance to learn from the kind, intelligent people about us, so many things which we never knew before, that I think a slave-trader would have found it a difficult task to take any one of us to a Southern slave market, if our master had so ordered it.

The village of Bath is rather an out-of-the-way place, hemmed in on all sides by mountains of considerable height, leaving an opening on the north, through a pleasant valley, to the head of Crooked Lake. Produce of every kind, when once there, met a ready sale for the New York market.

In the first settlement of the country this was the only outlet for the country produce, which was transported in rude boats or vessels called **arks**, built during the winter season to await the spring freshet; then they loaded them with wheat or other produce, and sent them to Baltimore or elsewhere. They used also to obtain great quantities of fine lumber, and floated it through the same rivers every spring; but it was attended with great loss of life and property.

Bath assumed a warlike appearance during the last war with Great Britain; the public square was dotted all over with officers, marquees, and soldiers' tents. Some of these soldiers were unprincipled and reckless men, who seemed to care very little what they did.

One evening I was walking around the encampment in company with a Mr. James Morrison, a clerk in the land office, looking at the soldiers, until we came near a sentinel on duty. He kept his gun to his shoulder until we came near enough, and then he attempted to run me through with his bayonet. Young Morrison sprang forward, and seizing the musket, told me to run; I did so, which probably saved my life.



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1809

 Nuttall sent Barton 43 specimens gathered during a trip to the salt marshes of Delaware Bay. He also toured the Nanticoke River on the Chesapeake Bay, and afterward went to [Niagara Falls](#).

BOTANIZING

 May 5, Friday: F.A.P. Barnard was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts to the attorney Robert F. Barnard and his wife Augusta Porter Barnard. They named their infant for his mother's brother, Frederick Augustus Porter, who had just been killed at [Niagara Falls](#).

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

6th day 5th of 5th M / This Morning our dear Sister Joanna was comfortably Put to Bed with a fine boy, which has in measure put an end to anxiety on her account, I am glad yea thankful on hers & brothers Davids account as they are connections to whom I feel united by a very tender tie About two OClock this Afternoon our friends all returned from [Greenwich](#) safely, & say they have had a comfortable time & that Anne Greene & Abigail Robinson were much favord in public testimony – Father R was the bearer of a message of love to me & my dear H from J Casey & wife to our family – E Earle & Sister Mary spent the evening with us –



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1810



As families and friends watched helplessly, a local salt boat and its crew got sucked over the [Niagara Falls](#).



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1811



Spring: A canoe with three men went over the [Niagara Falls](#).

Now, this may seem to be totally unrelated to the above, but with the prior consent of his father Doctor Peter Bryant, and for the definite purpose of entering [Yale College](#), [William Cullen Bryant](#) abandoned his Sophomore year at [Williams College](#), returning to the family homestead at Cummington, Massachusetts (wait just a little, before you judge whether this bore any resemblance to going over Niagara in a canoe).



1812

 June 18, Thursday: Franz Schubert begins instruction in counterpoint with Antonio Salieri in Vienna.

Unaware of course that Great Britain had already rescinded its offending actions two days before, President [James Madison](#) signed the joint congressional Declaration of War. This 2d war of the United States of America upon Great Britain, which would take place over a number of years, is now denominated in our history books the “[War of 1812](#)” (evidently we spare ourselves embarrassment when we do not give this war an accurate name).⁶ –Not that any of this makes any difference (only a fool would suppose that nations go to war for the reasons they proffer)!

Upstate [New York](#) was woefully unprepared. [Fort Niagara](#) had deteriorated during the decade after 1800 as its garrison had become increasingly smaller. Many of the old buildings, some of them dating to the French occupation, had disappeared. The walls on the land side remained in place, but there was never a large enough workforce to keep them in good condition. At the outbreak of hostilities the Americans could muster only 150 soldiers to man this strongpoint. However, the British preparedness was not much better. The Napoleonic Wars in Europe had been sucking up all of England’s attention, with [Canada](#) on the back burner at best, so there were in this year only a couple of thousand of British regular soldiers in all of what is today the province of Ontario. The United States Army although far larger was composed mostly newly organized units consisting of untrained recruits. The Americans were confident, but without justification. Some of the bloodiest fighting would occur along the [Niagara River](#). Captain Nathaniel Leonard would do what he could to improve his defensive readiness, while the corresponding enemy commander likewise concentrated on organizing a defense. Much of the summer would be spent in preparation as units of the state militia were activated and moved toward the Niagara Frontier. In order to keep the regular army and the militia well separate and diminish friction, the militia camp was established at Lewiston, six miles away upriver.

At some point during this period of intermittent scattered hostilities, [John Thoreau](#) would become the commissary for⁷ Fort Independence on Castle Island in Boston Harbor. Thoreau would make a note of this in his journal in 1850:



After October 31, 1850: ... My father was commissary at Fort Independence in the last war. He says that the baker whom he engaged returned 18 ounces of bread for 16 of flour, and was glad of the job on those terms. ...

HENRY’S RELATIVES

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

5th day 18 of 6th M 1812/// Our Meeting was very large. Anne Greene was concern’d in supplication, then Micajah Collins in

6. Interestingly, the federal government of the USA stated that one of the reasons why it was declaring war on Britain was the British embargo on [hemp](#). After the Brits had lost this one, the analysis made by the [Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington](#) would be that their forces had suffered from a lack of command discipline: “They wanted this **iron fist** to command them.”

CANNABIS

7. This is what we would consider similar to “running the PX” at a smallish current military base.



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an acceptable testimony, then David Sands in a very extensive & powerful testimony

In the last (Preparative) David had a few close remarks on the subject of Rainess [?]

At 5 OClock a meeting was appointed for the people of colour, many attended but not all of them by a very considerable - D Sands was by far the greatet laborer amongst them, Anne Willis Hannah Dennis & James Hazard had small testinnies to bear. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



August 16, Sunday: The summer and early fall had been quiet on the Niagara Frontier, such as at [Fort Niagara](#), with local American and British commanders having agreed upon a local truce while they each attempted to strengthen their respective positions. During the truce, however, the British took an opportunity to transfer some of their soldiers westward, and on this day they achieved an important victory at Detroit. The US commanding general, William Hull, would find himself being courtmartialed.

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

1st day 8M 16 / In our forenoon meeting Father Rodman had a few words to communicate - then Hannah Dennis, & then D Buffum. I thought it was a very good meeting. The sap of life seemed to circulate without much obstruction. -

In the Afternoon Father R was concerned in supplication. This Afternoon Mother Rodma & John went to [Portsmouth](#) to see Sister Eliza who has been there some time & on 6th day was taken ill of a bilous complaint but is now better. - After Meeting visited the work & Alms houses with D R

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



October: There had been a local truce on the Niagara Frontier, such as at [Fort Niagara](#), and the British forces had turned this to their advantage by moving troops toward the west and capturing Detroit. At this point the truce expired with the British forces back in their Niagara positions and, although outnumbered, well prepared for a defensive action. They would not need to wait very long.



October 13, Tuesday: Samuel Hoar got married with Sarah Sherman, daughter of the Honorable Roger Sherman of New Haven, Connecticut. The couple would have six children and would reside in Concord at what is now 158 Main Street.

US military forces began crossing the [Niagara River](#) at Lewiston, New York by occupying the village of Queenstown Heights, [Canada](#) and killing the commander of the British forces there, General Isaac Brock. However, the state militiamen were refusing to leave the territory of the United States of America, and so, when the British forces counterattacked, the federal troops who had made the crossing to the Canadian bank, unsupported, out on a limb, found it necessary to surrender. The garrison of [Fort Niagara](#) attempted to divert enemy attention with a bombardment of Fort George on Queenston Heights. Fort George returned the cannon



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fire and, because of their higher position, were able to drive the American gunners away from their weapons. The American fort, its guns silenced, was then abandoned. Its garrison huddled outside its walls. Realizing that under these conditions the British would be able to simply walk in and occupy the American position, the American officers called for volunteers and reoccupied the fort. (In the lull that would follow this fighting, United States Engineers would attempt to improve the old fortifications by strengthening the exposed river side of the fort with temporary walls. To compensate somewhat for the fact that the batteries of Fort George could fire down on Fort Niagara, the Engineers removed the roofs of the two redoubts and the “French Castle” and remounted their cannon on the upper floors to gain every possible bit of extra elevation.)

On the following day, Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) would write this in his journal:

3rd & 4th days / Have passed much as usual, & nothing has occur'd worth inserting. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



November 21, Saturday: Alterations to [Fort Niagara](#), [New York](#) had been made just in time. The US forces there and the British at Fort George on the far side of the [Niagara River](#) found themselves engaged in an artillery duel. The action produced a heroine: when, at the height of the battle, a cannon mounted on the roof of the French Castle lost one of its crewmen, a soldier's wife, Betsy Doyle, stepped in to help keep the cannon in operation.

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

7th day 21 of 11 M / The day has passed with the usual rounds. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



Winter: Active operations along the [Niagara River](#) frontier were discontinued pending the return of fighting weather the following spring. The garrison of [Fort Niagara](#) would be laboring to improve their fortifications, and would create five new emplacements for heavy cannon along the riverbank upstream where they could best fire upon Fort George.



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1813

→ Spring: William Jones of Pennsylvania replaced Paul Hamilton as US Secretary of the Navy. The American Navy had the strongest squadron on Lake Ontario. With the return of campaigning weather along the Niagara Frontier, the United States forces went on the offensive. With Kingston regarded as too heavily defended by the British forces, the American campaign would concentrate on the capture instead of the weakly defended town of York. They would hard press the British forces in Upper [Canada](#).

FORT NIAGARA

→ April 27, Tuesday: The campaign on Lake Ontario had begun earlier this month when United States naval vessels sailed from Sackets Harbor on the eastern end of the lake. On board the men-of-war was an army commanded by Major General Henry Dearborn. On this day Brigadier General Zebulon Montgomery Pike and General Dearborn took York ([Toronto](#)), capital of Upper [Canada](#). The defender, Roger Hale Sheaffe, blew his ammunition depot, killing General Pike and 13 other invaders, and retreated to Kingston. The US troops then torched a number of the public buildings.

The squadron would cross Lake Ontario to the mouth of the [Niagara River](#), link up with the troops already assigned to the Niagara Frontier, and prepare for an attack on Fort George.

→ May 25-26: The American cannon of [Fort Niagara](#) and its new detached batteries, assisted by gunfire from the fleet, silenced the batteries of Fort George. The British fort, a wooden structure, burned to the ground.

→ May 27, morning: The American fleet was at anchor off the mouth of the [Niagara River](#). After a final cannon bombardment, boats filled with troops headed for the shoreline. By the end of the day they were in possession of the smoldering remains of Fort George and the remnants of the British forces were in full retreat westward along the shore of Lake Ontario. For the first time the river mouth had fallen entirely into American hands. (The American forces would fail to follow up on this advantage, and the British forces would be regrouped to fight another day.)

→ June 6, Sunday: At Stoney Creek, the American invaders of [Canada](#) were attacked and defeated by British forces. 50 American soldiers and 400 Indians were taken prisoner. The American troops would soon be buttoned up in the forts at the mouth of the [Niagara River](#).

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

1st day 6 of 6 M 1813 / Our Meetings were silent except a few words from a friend in the Afternoon - After tea took a pleasant Walk round the hill with D Rodman & on my return was informd of the Arrival in the Harbour of Uncle Stanton in the Ship Pacific from Lisbon I immediately came down Street & found him at Mothers & was very glad to see him. I went with him to the Ship & spent an hour for the first time I was ever on board a Ship that



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floated. —

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



June 19, Saturday: The United States of America declared war upon Great Britain. On this auspicious occasion [James Duncan Graham](#) became a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point.



In a long career of service in the military he would make himself so useful that he would never have a shot fired at him in anger.

Count von Metternich of Austria, Baron Karl Hardenberg and Wilhelm von Humboldt of Prussia, and Count Nesselrode of Russia worked out in a stormy session at Ratiborzitz what would be the 3d Treaty of Reichenbach — which on June 27th they would all sign.



June 24, Thursday: Henry Ward Beecher was born in Litchfield, Connecticut (8th of the Reverend Lyman Beecher's 13 children, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe).

At Beaver Dams in Ontario, the American invaders of [Canada](#) were again attacked and defeated by British forces. The American troops would soon be buttoned up in the forts at the mouth of the [Niagara River](#).

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

5th day 24th of 6thM / This Mornng took Chaise & rode with my dear wife & little son to [Portsmouth](#) to attend the Moy [Monthly] Meeting. left John at Anne Anthonys & went to Meeting A Sherman H Dennis Obadiah Davis & Parker Halls wife were concernd in testimony & a precious Meeting it was to me. We had much Buisness in the last Meeting some of which worked unpleasantly to my mind we dined at Anne Anthonys & came home early & found Uncle & Aunt Stanton had Arrived last eveng from [Providence](#). — I can best remark that in riding to [Portsmouth](#) this mornng in



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*observing the fields in a very flourishing state & the Clover
yealting a rich perfume my mind was humbled under a sense of the
Goodness of God & the small returns poor rebellious man is making
for the Beauties received at his hand - I thought did but our
conduct arise in as sweet insense before him as does his
inanimate part of the creation in what a different stall would
our minds be in How sweet & clean would they be - On observing
large fields of Whiteweed [?] I could but breath forth the
Prayer "Oh Lord keep thy fields White unto harvest" I remember
Anne Greene expressed those words in Supplication in our Meeting
some Years ago & they particularly struck my Mind at the time &
the feelings were sweetly renew'd this Morning*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



Fall: The American forces at [Fort Niagara](#) and its surrounding emplacements had been depleted by a transfer of troops to the eastern end of Lake Ontario. The defense of the [Niagara River](#) frontier was being left largely to the [New York](#) militia.



December 18, Saturday: [Moses Prichard](#) and [Jane Tompson Hallet Prichard](#) of Boston filed in the town of [Concord](#) a notice of intention of Marriage.

Most of the [New York](#) Militia, since their contracted terms of service had expired, had returned to their homes. British forces from [Canada](#) drove away the [New York](#) militiamen under General George McClure and recaptured the terrain of their Fort George, with anything still of value on that site being destroyed by the retreating Americans. For good measure General McClure ordered that the adjacent town of Newark (or Niagara-on-the-Lake) also be destroyed. The Canadian civilians of that district were to be left entirely without winter shelter. The militia regrouped on the [New York](#) side of the [Niagara River](#), at [Fort Niagara](#) and Buffalo.



December 18, Saturday night: The new Teatro Re in Milan opened with a performance of Tancredi by Gioachino Rossini.

A British assault force of 562 crossed to the [New York](#) shore, invading the United States at a place called Five Mile Meadows. After a silent march down the River Road, at the village of Youngstown, they found the American pickets for the garrison inside local homes, sheltering from the cold. The British were able to make them all prisoners without the firing of a shot. [Fort Niagara](#) was only one more mile. There, the fort's commander, Captain Nathaniel Leonard, was away with his family in Lewiston, New York, and most of the garrison was asleep. The British, silently approaching the gate of the fort, saw it opening to allow a sentry detail to pass through. A British sergeant was able to leap forward and wedge the gate open with his body, and in a few moments the attackers were in possession of the gate. The attack was so sudden and so unannounced that only a few Americans of the "Red Barracks," and the 65-man guard detail manning the South Redoubt, were able to mount an organized resistance. First the Red Barracks was cleared at the point of the bayonet, then the British soldiers broke down the door of the South Redoubt and fought their way up two flights of stairs to finish the job. Out of [Fort Niagara](#)'s garrison of 433 soldiers, 65 had been killed and 15 wounded.



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December 19, Sunday morning: Captain Nathaniel Leonard arrived at the gate of [Fort Niagara](#) only to be surprised to encounter there British sentries rather than American ones (only his being a prisoner of war in [Canada](#) would prevent a courts martial). The British sallied out of the fort, torched the village of Youngstown, [New York](#), and continued up the River Road to drive away an American detachment at Lewiston, New York and torch that village as well (by the end of the year the British troops would have also put Manchester, Schlosser, Black Rock, and Buffalo to the torch).

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

1st day 19 of 12 M / I staid from meeting this forenoon to give my H an opportunity of going - In the Afternoon I went but had a rather a dry meeting - however It has been a day of no small favor - life has been near & my mind has been expanded in a manner a little uncommon on the subject of War as being inconsistent with the pure spirit of Christianity

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



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1814



January 1, Saturday: On the [New York](#) side of the [Niagara River](#), Youngstown, Lewiston, Manchester, Schlosser, Black Rock, and Buffalo had been put to the torch. By holding [Fort Niagara](#) the British were in control not only of the mouth of the river but also of a safe haven for their warships and supply vessels.

The Emperor [Napoléon I](#) replied favorably to the allied offer of December 15th.

[Hung Hsiu Ch'üan](#) 洪秀全 was born. After being disappointed in the Confucian civil service examinations, he would have visions and come to the conclusion that he must be [Jesus Christ](#)'s younger brother on a mission to redeem China (don't laugh, 25,000,000 [Chinese](#) are going to die rancid deaths on account of this fantasizing).⁸

CHINESE CIVIL WAR

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

7th day 1st of 1st M 1814 / Recd this eveng a leter from my beloved friend Micajah Collins Dated 12 M 23rd - which was a very agreeable NewYears gift.—⁹

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

8. For all that he was JC's little brother, this guy wouldn't actually have much use for anything peculiar to the New Testament — such as for instance kindness, or forgiveness, or redemption. Instead his [Christianity](#) was going to be long on obedience, and proper worshipfulness, and his dad was to be construed as a God of vengeance. But the *Tai-p'ings* did have a useful list of prohibitions: there was to be no prostitution in their Kingdom of Heaven, or even divorce, there was to be no enslavement or even foot-binding, there was to be no recreational use of [opium](#) or [wine](#) or [tobacco](#) — and of course there was to be no gambling! Both the Chinese Communists of the PRC (People's Republic of China, on the mainland) and the Chinese Nationalists of the ROC (Republic of China, on Taiwan) now claim that they originated as this nativist resistance movement against the Manchu overlords in Beijing.

9. Stephen Wanton Gould Diary, 1812-1815: The Gould family papers are stored under control number 2033 at the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections of Cornell University Library, Box 7 Folder 11 for July 1, 1812-August 20, 1815; also on microfilm, see Series 7

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THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA



Summer: People were sending each other to Heaven and Hell near [Niagara Falls](#) in upstate [New York](#).

BATTLE OF CHIPPAWA.
*Extract of a letter from Gen. Brown, of the 17th Inf.,
to the Secretary of War.*

"The enclosed reports were made by order. I desired that the distinguished gallantry of the corps, and the individuals engaged in the battle of the 5th, should be well understood by you and the nation. I have ascertained that the enemy had ~~more~~ regular troops engaged in this action than we had, and that his loss exceeds 500 men.

I feel myself under great obligations to Capt. Kennedy, of the Navy, for his prompt attention to my communications. He has afforded, and is disposed to afford me, all the assistance that is in his power to render."

QUEENSTOWN, U. C. July 15th, 1864.

Sir—By the general order of the 15th inst. a methodical and detailed report is called for, designating the names of such persons, whether commissioned officers or others, who, in the action of the 5th, contributed in a particular manner, to the successful result of that day.

I am not asked for an account of the dispositions made of the troops under my command, during the action: I will, therefore, confine myself strictly to the general order.

A severe action has been fought and a signal victory gained. The general order of the 5th



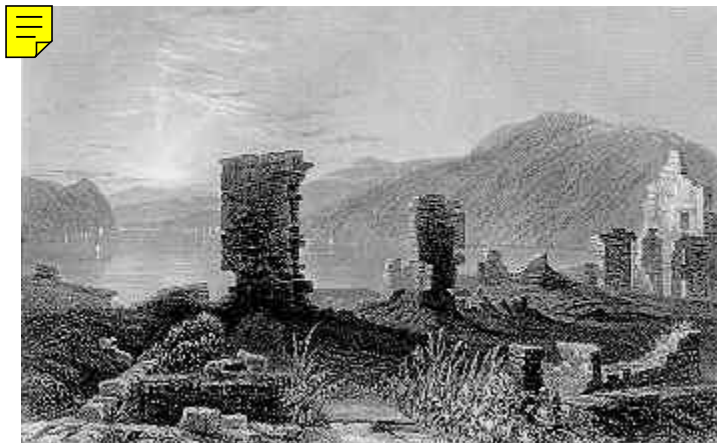
ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

The more deadly of their struggles would be known as “Chippewa” and “Fort Erie.”

THE SCARLET LETTER: To observe and define his character, however, under such disadvantages, was as difficult a task as to trace out and build up anew, in imagination, an old fortress, like Ticonderoga, from a view of its grey and broken ruins. Here and there, perchance, the walls may remain almost complete; but elsewhere may be only a shapeless mound, cumbrous with its very strength, and overgrown, through long years of peace and neglect, with grass and alien weeds. ... What I saw in him -as evidently as the indestructible ramparts of Old Ticonderoga, already cited as the most appropriate simile- was the features of stubborn and ponderous endurance, which might well have amounted to obstinacy in his earlier days; of integrity, that, like most of his other endowments, lay in a somewhat heavy mass, and was just as unmalleable or unmanageable as a ton of iron ore; and of benevolence which, fiercely as he led the bayonets on at Chippewa or Fort Erie, I take to be of quite as genuine a stamp as what actuates any or all the polemical philanthropists of the age. He had slain men with his own hand, for aught I know -certainly, they had fallen like blades of grass at the sweep of the scythe before the charge to which his spirit imparted its triumphant energy- but, be that as it might, there was never in his heart so much cruelty as would have brushed the down off a butterfly's wing. I have not known the man to whose innate kindliness I would more confidently make an appeal. ... All merely graceful attributes are usually the most evanescent; nor does nature adorn the human ruin with blossoms of new beauty, that have their roots and proper nutriment only in the chinks and crevices of decay, as she sows wall-flowers over the ruined fortress of Ticonderoga.

THE RUINS OF FORT TICONDEROGA



God knows what they were thinking about.



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July 25, Monday: Tsar Alyeksandr arrived back in St. Petersburg from London. He had banned any secular celebrations of his return.

West of [Niagara Falls](#), British and American forces clashed fiercely at the inconsequential Battle of Lundy's Lane.

Charles Dibdin, who in the previous year had had a stroke, died.

BILLY BUDD: It was the summer of 1797. In the April of that year had occurred the commotion at Spithead followed in May by a second and yet more serious outbreak in the fleet at the Nore. The latter is known, and without exaggeration in the epithet, as the Great Mutiny.... The event converted into irony for a time those spirited strains of Dibdin -as a song-writer no mean auxiliary to the English Government at the European conjuncture- strains celebrating, among other things, the patriotic devotion of the British tar:

"And as for my life, 'tis the King's!"



December 24, Saturday: [George Gordon, Lord Byron](#) and Hobhouse left London.

In Stockholm, Muzio Clementi was elected to the Royal Academy of Music.

A convention of New England states, meeting at the State House in Hartford, Connecticut, called for changes in defense and federal taxation and issued its list of proposed constitutional amendments.

The territorial government in Kaskaskia (Illinois) authorized a prize of \$50 for any "Indian" scalp, or any captured female or child "Indian."

American sailors being held in the prison complex on the Devonshire moor near Plymouth, England received their long-awaited [Christmas](#) present when John Quincy Adams, James Asheton Bayard, Henry Clay, Jonathan Russell, and [Albert Gallatin](#) as commissioners on the part of the United States of America set their signatures to a Treaty of Ghent officially terminating the [War of 1812](#). Almost all territory was returned status quo ante, with other issues being either put off or ignored — but as it would turn out, the free enterprise USA would be in no great hurry to send ships to repatriate any such low-income, low-status naval laborers. They were definitely worthy enough to serve as a pretense for the war, as a "cause" — but definitely not worthy enough actually to be worth the bother of arranging such personal assistance.

(Among the prisoners to be eventually freed was [Uriah Phillips Levy](#). Upon his return to the United States, he would become second master aboard the USS *Franklin*, a 74-gun ship of the line, flagship to the Pacific Squadron of the US Navy.)

It was agreed by all that if there had been anything that the war had been about, definitely it had not been about

CRIMPING



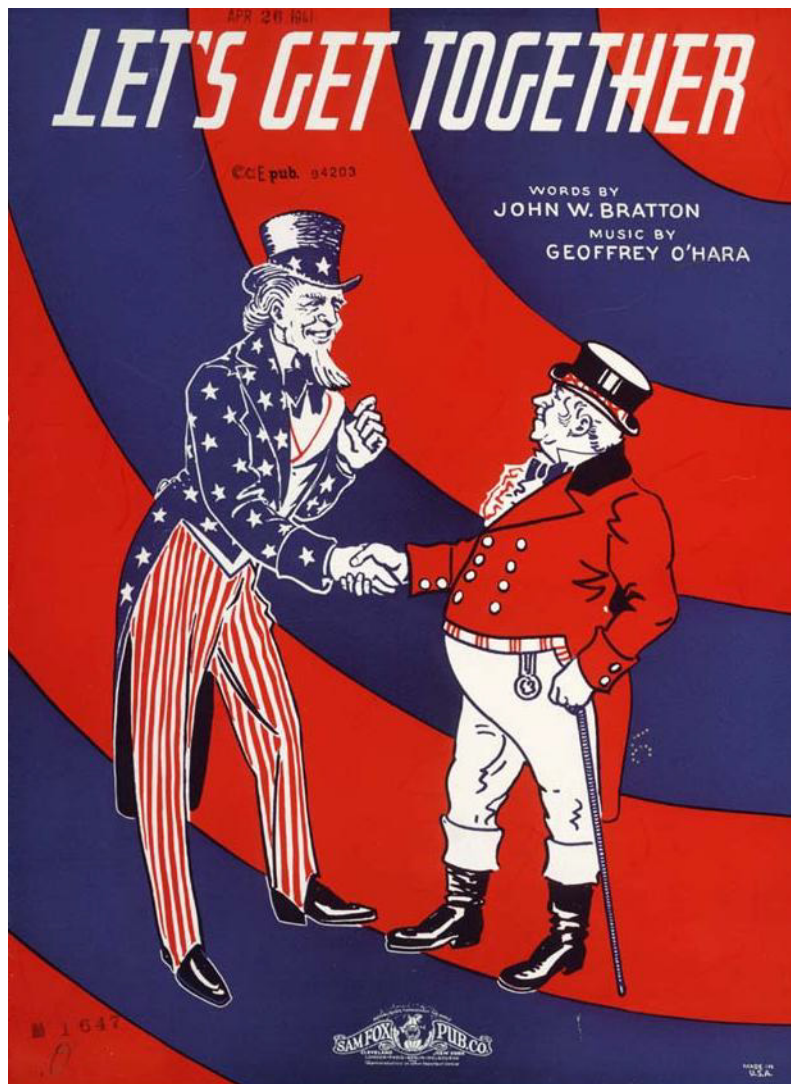
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freedom for any former slaves, who were immediately to be remanded to their bondage:

All ... possessions whatsoever taken by either party from the other during the war ... shall be restored without delay and without causing any destruction or carrying away any ... Slaves or other private property....

Adams, one of the American commissioners who had negotiated this agreement, had pretended to commit the United States “to use their best endeavors” to assist the British fleet in bringing the Atlantic slave trade to an end.



Two White Men Shaking Hands

Actually this [international slave trade](#) would be expanding as the clipper ships built in the shipbuilding yards of [Baltimore](#) and of [Rhode Island](#) would become able to outdistance the ponderous British men-of-war on



THE SUBLIME

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guard off the coast of Africa, to deliver their cargoes of slaves to ports in the New World. As secretary of state and as president, Adams would have something of greater moment on his mind. He would consistently oppose any British search of these American slave vessels as a violation of the vital principle of freedom of the seas. When asked in 1824 by the British minister to Washington if he could think of a greater evil than the slave trade, he would reply that there was indeed a greater evil of which he could think, for to grant that right of search on the high seas would be to “make slaves of ourselves” — and that would be an even greater evil than continuation of the trade in black [slaves](#).¹⁰

LA AMISTAD

His father John Adams evaluated the proceedings:

Nothing was adjusted, nothing was settled, nothing of substance but an indefinite suspension of hostilities was agreed to.



The British forces had, during the 17 months that they held [Fort Niagara](#), made a number of improvements and repairs to the position. The terms and conditions of the Treaty of Ghent between the United States of America and Great Britain now called for a return to the “status quo ante bellum” — and so these troops were going to need to march away from their conquest.

THE TREATY OF GHENT

10. Remember that in 1783 John Quincy Adams had visited the British Museum in London to view the seal of his ancestor Saer de Quincy upon the original parchment of the Magna Carta. He would come to consider his representing the blacks of the [La Amistad](#) as of the greatest importance only because the *Amistad* had been seized by the *USS Washington* without warrant, in a “gross violation” by the US government of a principle underlying this foundational document which his eponymous ancestor had helped to create. In other words, he wasn’t defending the black defendants at all, but was defending instead the historical significance of his alleged white ancestor Saer de Quincy.



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THE SUBLIME

1815

➡ In upstate [New York](#), three old gunboats were sent over the [Niagara Falls](#) with a British officer offering a reward for the largest piece recovered. The winner offered something about a foot long (it just shows t'go ya').

➡ April: In this month or the next William Apess “mustered himself out” of the US military and went to Montréal, and then farther along into Canada — to [Fort Niagara](#), to the Bay of Quinte, and to Kingston. He worked at odd jobs and was able to spend some time with other native Americans of eastern Ontario.



➡ May 22, Monday: United States forces peacefully reoccupied [Fort Niagara](#), very much the worse for wear, as British forces retired once again to their old position at Fort George, which had become nothing but a ruin, and to a new post, Fort Mississauga, that they had in 1814 begun at the mouth of the [Niagara River](#).

Prince Leopoldo di Bordone of Salerno, younger brother of King Ferdinando IV of Naples, entered Naples accompanied by Austrian generals, and the king was restored to the throne.

Austrian troops captured Rome.

King Friedrich Wilhelm ordered that a commission be empaneled to draw up a constitution for Prussia.

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

*2nd day 22 of 5 M / Our kind & dear young friend Mary Briggs
spent the day with us assisting my H in her sewing preparatory
to our Yearly Meeting*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

➡ September: Ship owner Jacob Townsend and his son Sheldon C. Townsend sail from Oswego, [New York](#), late in the month, to [Fort Niagara](#), aboard the schooner *Genesee Packet*, commanded by Captain Obed Mayo.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA



October 6, Friday: Great Britain annexed Ascension Island in the South Atlantic.

The *Genesee Packet* arrived at [Fort Niagara](#), [New York](#).

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

6th day 6 of 10 M ? / This forenoon went over to Avis Knowles to carry Lydia Tucker a few things sent by Aunt A Carptneter for her comfort - found Lydia low & wearing out fast. - as I was returning in Washington street I met with Our old neighbor Saml Vinson who asked me to walk with him further up as he had a mind to view the ravages of the late Storm & visit the place where he served his time which is now The Goddards shop, in walking round it, he related many Anecdotes of his youth with his usual pleasantry - we then took a turn as far up as the North Battery & home thro' the street that lead by the Alms house & parted on the parade. Some of his conversation was edifying. he spoke particularly as we passed our Meeting house of his feelings in it when he was a lad & once of latter years on hearing John Casey preach - he said when he reflected now far John had deviated from morality in his Youth & how firmly established & fervent he was now in the Cause of Truth, the consideration was humbling & affecting to his mind

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1816



As part of an investment project to develop power from the 50-foot cascade of water above the lip of [Niagara Falls](#) for use in “a thousand mills,” Goat Island was purchased by Peter and Augustus S. Porter.

A posthumous edition of [Pierre-Louis-Georges Du Buat](#)’s work on hydraulics, as *PRINCIPES D’HYDRAULIQUE ET DE PYRODYNAMIQUE VÉRIFIÉS PAR UN GRAND NOMBRE D’EXPÉRIENCES* (Paris: Firmin Didot; the 1st volume analytical, the 2d experimental, and the 3d volume described as “Pyrodynamique,” that he had authored during his exile).

DU BUAT, VOLUME I

DU BUAT, VOLUME II

DU BUAT, VOLUME III



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1818



Peter Buell Porter and Augustus S. Porter, managers of a general store in the town of Niagara in upstate [New York](#) offering food and clothing, liquors, grain, candles, hardware, lumber and leather goods, working with Parkhurst Whitney, owner of a hotel near [Niagara Falls](#), had a stairway erected to take guests over the rocks to the base of the falls where they could pretend to their companions that they had gone, or persuade themselves that they had gone, “behind the cataract.” Above the falls, meanwhile, they constructed a bridge to Goat Island, on which, evidently, buried in the woods, there was a tiny log cabin that had been abandoned by a previous pioneer family.



1820



There was at this point not even a wall along the river side of [Fort Niagara](#), and the interior of the post was completely exposed to fire from Fort Mississauga. Peace was its only prayer, and the 1820s would in fact be a time of peace along the [Niagara River](#). The garrison of the fortress was small, only sufficient to guard the portage route around [Niagara Falls](#). A similar garrison served the British for a similar purpose on the opposite shore.

Peter and Augustus S. Porter instituted a ferry service across the [Niagara River](#), and for tourists a series of gardens, walks, bridges, and staircases from which [the sublimity](#) of the scenery might best be appreciated.

In this year two American whiskey smugglers went over the [Niagara Falls](#) (but not, apparently, on purpose). During this decade the “fashionable” tour, for Americans, was a string of attractive venues that followed quite closely the path of our most rapid economic development, up the grand Hudson lined with cliffs and with stately homes from New-York to Albany and the glamorous Saratoga and Ballston watering-holes of “the springs” and then west along the route of the [Erie Canal](#) to an experience of [the sublime](#) at [Niagara Falls](#).¹¹ This was referred to as “the northern route.”



Since the 1820s, fashionable [tourists](#) had used their travels to stake a claim to status. But scenic tourism made the most powerful claim of all: not about money, but about gentility. In that sense, the cult of scenery was indeed a kind of “conspicuous aesthetic consumption,” as Raymond Williams termed it.... [I]ts most powerful offer was internal: the assurance that one truly deserved the social authority awarded to the “refined and cultivated” classes.

During this decade the Crawford brothers would be monopolizing the tourist business to and through Crawford Notch in the White Mountains of [New Hampshire](#). Initial publication of [Salma Hale](#)’s textbook THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FROM THEIR FIRST SETTLEMENT AS COLONIES TO THE CLOSE OF THE WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN IN 1815, employing as author identification “A Citizen of Massachusetts.”

[Alvan Fisher](#) depicted the great horseshoe falls at “Niagara Falls.”





THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1821



Three people moving some furniture in a boat went over the [Niagara Falls](#).
A couple of weeks later, two boats carrying four men went over.

11. There is a very extensive literature on the 19th-Century aesthetic of the sublime. Steady yourself before you consult it by watching baseball games on TV until you are utterly bored out of your mind, then begin with Edmund Burke's *A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS OF THE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL*. To study our changing attitudes toward the landscape, consult Paul Shepard's *MAN IN THE LANDSCAPE: A HISTORIC VIEW OF THE ESTHETICS OF NATURE* (NY: Knopf, 1967) and Elizabeth McKinsey's *NIAGARA FALLS: ICON OF THE AMERICAN SUBLIME* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985).



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THE SUBLIME

1822



A pocket-size guide was published in Saratoga Springs, New York, Gideon M. Davison's THE FASHIONABLE TOUR OR, A TRIP TO THE SPRINGS, NIAGARA, QUEBECK [*sic*], AND [BOSTON](#), IN THE SUMMER OF 1821 (also put out as THE FASHIONABLE TOUR FOR THE SUMMER OF 1822).

NIAGARA FALLS



"The vagabond, when rich, is called a tourist."

— Paul Richard, French diplomat,
AU JAPON





THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1823



June 26, Thursday: [Henry C. Wright](#) and Elizabeth LeBreton Stickney were wed by the Reverend Luther Dimmick and set off for a honeymoon at romantic [Niagara Falls](#). He was 26, she 43. They took along with them on their honeymoon the bride's youngest, her 7-year-old Mary.



The groom found “she wishes not to be caressed by me, nor do I by her.”



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1824



Two guys ferrying apples and cider went over the [Niagara Falls](#) (miraculously, one of their barrels of cider would be found to have survived the plunge).



November 30, Tuesday: The sod began to be turned in Ontario, [Canada](#), for the initial of four canals to bypass [Niagara Falls](#) ([Welland Canal](#) would open for a trial run exactly 5 years later to the day).



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1825



In this year American workers struck, for a 10-hour workday.

Orlando Allen's The [Erie Canal](#) Gun-Telegraph.

John Rutherford's FACTS AND OBSERVATIONS IN RELATION TO THE ORIGIN AND COMPLETION OF THE [ERIE CANAL](#) was published by N. B. Holmes in New-York.

Engineer James Geddes surveyed the route for a Chemung Canal, to connect the Southern Tier, at Elmira, with the [Erie Canal](#) via Seneca Lake.

Two entrepreneurs purchased the remains of Silver Creek's giant tree, and took it on a tour via the [Erie Canal](#).

Cadwallader D. Colden's FROM THE ATLANTIC TO BUFFALO, BY CANAL: FACTS AND OBSERVATIONS IN RELATION TO THE ORIGIN AND COMPLETION OF THE [ERIE CANAL](#): A MEMOIR PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, AND PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR OF THE CITY, AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE NEW YORK CANALS.

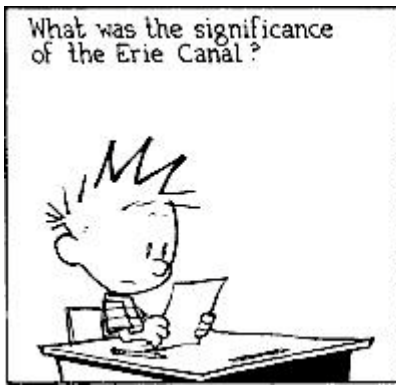
The [Erie Canal](#) Aqueduct at Rochester was completed. The locks at Lockport were opened to traffic. After years of construction the [Erie Canal](#) was providing a direct connection between the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean, by way of Buffalo. The new canal was utterly superseding nearly two centuries of commercial

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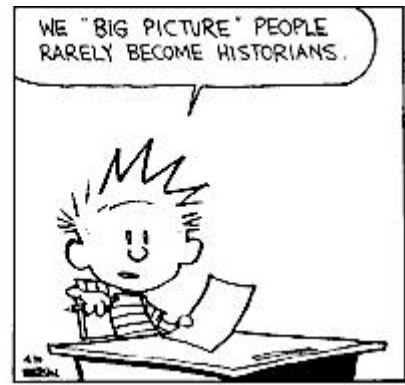
ONGUIAAHARA

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through traffic along the Niagara River. This not only impacted the business of the merchants of Youngstown and Lewiston, and the operators of the portage path around [Niagara Falls](#), but also did away with the US Army's chief reason for maintaining a post at the mouth of this river. Within the year the army would decide to abandon Fort Niagara. The troops would be withdrawn and the buildings and fortifications placed in the hands of a caretaker.



IN THE COSMIC SENSE,
PROBABLY NIL.



Theodore Dwight, Jr., 1st edition, *THE NORTHERN TRAVELLER; CONTAINING THE ROUTES TO NIAGARA, QUEBEC, AND THE SPRINGS*. (The author was a nephew of the Reverend Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, and a great-grandson of the Reverend [Jonathan Edwards](#). This is the man who is suspected of authoring 1836's inflammatory anti-Catholic tract *AWFUL DISCLOSURES OF THE HÔTEL DIEU NUNNERY OF MONTRÉAL*.)



Per Bernhard Karl's *THIS WAS AMERICA*, this was the [Erie Canal](#):

The canal is no more than four feet deep, so that only ships and barges expressly built for it can navigate it. The vessel that brought us to Albany today was 70 feet long, 14 wide, and drew 2 feet of water. It was covered, including a roomy salon and a kitchen, and was very neatly maintained. On account of the numerous locks on the way, progress was very slow; our ship did only three miles an hour, since passage through each lock took four minutes. The craft was drawn by a three-horse team which plodded along a narrow path parallel to the canal, even under the frequent bridges. These bridges, about 300 between Albany





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and Utica, are made of wood and are very coarsely built; generally they belong to farmers, and serve to connect the fields on either side.



May: At this point [Fort Niagara](#) became the venue for a much-recorded event in medical history. When Army Surgeon William Beaumont arrived from Fort Mackinac in the Michigan Territory to take charge of the post hospital, he was accompanied by a French Canadian voyageur named Alexis St. Martin who had three years earlier received a shotgun blast to his torso. St. Martin had somehow survived this trauma, and remained Dr. Beaumont's patient, since the wound to his stomach had not closed. While treating the man, Beaumont was able to directly observe the process of human digestion.

Batavia newspaper owner Oran Follett moved to Buffalo, New York, leaving his younger brother Frederick as publisher of the Spirit of the Times.

Bricklayer William Morgan was made a Royal Arch Mason, in Le Roy, New York.



July 17, Sunday: In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

1st day 17th of 7 M / Our Meetings were both small & to me dry seasons, but I expect some thought there was some favour as we had preaching in both, but none of it of a stamp that stood very high in my mind. –

Took tea at D Buffums, who is complaining & not at Meeting he appears to have some fever, but better

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

[Daniel Webster](#) wrote from [Niagara Falls](#):

My dear Mrs. Blake,

Before leaving here I wish to say an additional word or two on the subject of the Falls, by way of explaining or correcting some things in my letter.

In the first place I said, I think, that Goat Island was midway of the Rapids. This may lead to an erroneous opinion. The Rapids in fact, commence precisely at the head of Goat Island, We may stand at the head of the island, and look up and see a mild and even surface. The shore is level to the water, and we may amuse ourselves by throwing in sticks, and speculating on their course, either to the British or American Fall.

In the next place, I am convinced that I over-estimated both the breadth of the stream and the amount of water on the American side. I think the stream is not more than one fourth as wide as on the other side; and the proportion of water still less.

In the last place, when saying that the rock over which the river falls is limestone, I ought to have added that this limestone constituted but a part of the bank or wall. The first, or upper fifty feet, is limestone, lying in regular strata, as I have mentioned; the next hundred feet is a soft slate stone, which yields in some measure to the action of air, frost, and water.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

It comes off in small parcels, and is easily picked out of the sides of the bank. I pulled off a piece six feet long, as straight as a walking stick, and not much larger. As these pieces fall down they become pulverized, and turn to a sort of earth. The wearing away of this slate stone necessarily lets fall the limestone from above. Table Rock is the projecting platform of limestone.

The slate stone underneath it is already worn away a great depth into the bank; and Table Rock will one day doubtless precipitate itself into the river.

At the bottom of this course of slate stone, just about even with the surface of the river, commences another kind of stone. It seems to be a red sandstone, lying in very thin layers. It is of so bright a color that it may sometimes be seen, forming the bottom of the river, where the water is very deep.

You will excuse me, my dear Mrs. Blake, for adding these remarks to my long and tedious letter. It is doubtful whether I shall ever see the Falls again. You will be here at some time, and I hope soon. I will not promise myself, that, as you view the scene, you will find any great correspondence between the view itself and my account of it; but I trust you will call to mind those who have been over the spot before you, and be willing to remember even this unsuccessful attempt to describe it to you by
Your affectionate and faithful,

D. WEBSTER.

P. S. We set out this morning for home.



Late Summer: At the post hospital of [Fort Niagara](#), Army Surgeon William Beaumont began a series of tests on the open stomach of Alexis St. Martin. He would continue conducted at other posts during the 1830s. Eventually, publication of the first detailed observations on the functioning of the human stomach would earn Dr. Beaumont and patient St. Martin a place in medical history.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1826



Three boatmen capsized in the rapids above the [Niagara Falls](#) and only one made it to the bank.



May 19, Friday: Professor [Amos Eaton](#)'s Rensselaer field expedition arrived at Manchester, [New York](#), encountering 200 US troops en route from Sackets Harbor to Green Bay, Michigan. Several were under guard for desertion and disobedience. A prisoner count revealed one missing. He was soon spotted and recaptured. The Rensselaer party pressed on along the [Erie Canal](#) to view [Niagara Falls](#). [Asa Fitch](#)'s expectations had been too great, and at the actual thingie he found himself underimpressed — some rocks above the falls were needed, in order to frame the scene more artistically. They descended the steps to the base of the cataract, and toured Goat Island.



September 12: William Morgan of Batavia, [New York](#), becoming disillusioned with Freemasonry, had published the secrets of the order in a booklet. He was in the protective custody of the police in Canandaigua when he was abducted by a gang of his fellow Masons and taken to Fort Niagara near [Niagara Falls](#), which had recently been abandoned by the US Army and where the caretaker and its only other resident, a ferryman, were both active Masons. The renegade was locked in an empty powder magazine while they debated whether they needed to kill him. While this discussion was going on, Morgan disappeared from the magazine — and would not be again heard from. Anti-Masons suspected that the Masons had indeed murdered him. According to Jasper Ridley, “They took him out on to the River Niagara in a boat, fastened metal weights to his feet and threw him into the river, where he drowned.” The Masons countered that the renegade may well have been bribed to leave the country. (This incident would lead to greatly focused paranoid fears of a general conspiracy, and to the formation of an Antimasonic Party. One is, however, instantly reminded of the initiation accident that occurred in March 2004 on Long Island, where the script called for the person being initiated into the Masons to be shot at with blanks at close range in the lodge basement, in order to impress him with the seriousness of the event, and the gun contained live rounds and William James was shot in the face by Albert Eid and killed. Sometimes these strange things happen, and it doesn't necessarily mean that anyone contemplated beforehand that anything strange like that would happen.)

Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1827



September 8, Saturday: [Egyptian](#) ships landed troops at Navarino to help put down the rebellion in Greece.

A big charity concert in honor of Franz Schubert took place in the Landstandisches-Theater, Graz, organized by the Styrian Musical Society, of which he was an honorary member (the proceeds go to help recent flood victims).

William Forsyth of the Pavilion Hotel, John Brown of the Ontario House, and General Parkhurst Whitney of the Eagle Hotel in [Niagara Falls, New York](#) had reconfigured an old lake schooner, the *Michigan*, to the appearance of a pirate ship, sorta. Aboard it they had placed an effigy of Blue Beard, along with effigies of other [buccaneers](#) and politicians. They had loaded the ship with live animals such as a buffalo, a small bear from the US and one also from Canada, two raccoons, a dog and a goose (some reports had two foxes, fifteen geese, and a tethered eagle). The event had been advertised in the papers as the “*Michigan* Descent” and as “INFERNAL NAVIGATION, OR A TOUCH OF THE SUBLIME!”

The pirate Michigan with a cargo of ferocious wild animals will pass the great rapids and falls of Niagara – 8th September 1827 at 6 o'clock The Michigan has long braved the bellows of Erie, with success, as a merchant vessel: but having been condemned by her owners unfit to sail long proudly “above”; her present proprietors, together with several public spirited friends, have appointed her to carry a cargo of Living Animals of the Forest, which surround the upper lakes, through the white tossing and deep rolling rapids of Niagara and down its great precipice, into the basin “below.” The greatest exertions are being made to procure animals of the most ferocious kind, such as Panthers, Wild Cats and Wolves; but in lieu of these, which it may be impossible to obtain, a few vicious or worthless dogs, such as may possess strength and activity, and perhaps a few of the toughest of the lesser animals will be added to, and compose the cargo.... Should the vessel take her course through the deepest of the rapids, it is confidently believed that she will reach the Horse Shoe unbroken;¹² if so she will perform her voyage to the water of the Gulf beneath which is of great depth and buoyancy, entire, but what her fate will be the trial will decide. Should the animals be young and hardy and possessed of great muscular power and joining their fate with that of the vessel, remain on board until she reaches the water below, there is a great possibility that many of them will have performed the terrible jaunt, unhurt!

12. Although the water that goes over the Horseshoe Falls nowadays is only about three to five feet thick at the lip, this is due to diversion of water through hydroelectric tunnels, and back then the lip of the falls in this season was nearly twenty feet thick.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

Most of the spectators were locals, and there was a reason for that. These fall festivals that attracted the local yokels and farmers to Niagara were planned by the hotelkeepers and saloonkeepers in such a manner as to extend their operating season beyond the touristy summer rush. Captain James Rough of the paddle steamer *Chippawa* towed the *Michigan* from Black Rock to Navy Island and pointed it toward the Falls. At approximately 6PM he released this hulk into the rapids. Its hull tore and the two bears made it to Goat Island, there to be shot for somebody's supper. At the base of the falls the goose, still living, would be recovered by a Mr. Duggan and, undoubtedly, would also do service as somebody's supper. 10,000 to 50,000 people were watching as this stunt ship went over the Horseshoe Falls. A good time was had by all (except perhaps the animals), and we must imagine that the local [prostitutes](#) did a handsome business that night.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1828

➡ Despite the negligible military significance of [Fort Niagara](#), the post was at this point re-garrisoned. The troops stationed there would be performing routine drills and chores until 1837 — when all hell would break loose again due to a rebellion being fomented in [Canada](#).

➡ Winter: A boat ran afoul of some ice above the [Niagara Falls](#), and went over. Later that winter a hunter, attempting to retrieve an eagle he had shot, fell from nearby cliffs to his death.



→ Spring: Some hunters drove a deer over the [Niagara Falls](#), and then, in attempting to retrieve its carcass from the icy chasm, nearly lost their lives.

→ June: [Francis Abbott](#) moved into the tiny log cabin, that had been abandoned by a previous pioneer family, in the woods of Goat Island above the “horseshoe” of [Niagara Falls](#). He had with him a guitar, a violin, and some flutes, and lived with a dog and a cat. He would be in the habit of entertaining tourists by doing hours-long balancing acts on a wooden pier leading to Terrapin Tower that ended in a 12-foot beam 10 inches in width that projected above the rim of the falls. He would hang off the end of this beam for perhaps 15 minutes, kicking his feet into the plunging torrent. (Presumably he would leave a hat on the bridge to be filled by coins by the tourists?) He was said to write in Latin although the papers that would be found in his abode would be entirely blank. The locals would report that before making of himself such a tourist-trade “[hermit](#)” they supposed him to have toured Egypt, Palestine, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France. After his eviction from the island by Peter and Augustus Porter, power investors, he would construct for himself another such cabin below the falls.

→ October 7, Wednesday, and October 17, Saturday,: The 22-year-old [Sam Patch](#) had traded the name “The Jersey Leaper” for “The Yankee Leaper.” He was traveling with a pet bear cub on a chain and a pet fox on a rope. It was more fun than working in a [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#) factory! This first of the [Niagara Falls](#)’s many daredevils planned to make his drop from a platform at the top of a 125-foot ladder chained to the cliff wall opposite the Cave of the Winds, below Goat Island — not into the Bridal Veil Falls itself but into the swirling aerated waters of the Niagara below it.¹³ There was a reason why this event was taking place in October. These fall festivals at the Falls were designed by the hotelkeepers and saloonkeepers to attract local yokels and farmers and thus extend their operating season after the crowds of fashionable touristy swells had departed. A couple of years before, 10,000 to 50,000 had witnessed a shipfull of animals go over the Horseshoe Falls to their deaths. The drop into the waters below Table Rock would pay Sam Patch \$75. To get to his platform, he needed to go out to the Table Rock and then descend the Biddle Stairs for 80 feet. His platform was constructed from the scaffolding that had recently been utilized during the erection of the Biddle Stairs, and leaned out about 40 feet from the cliff face. The platform was 120 feet above the surface of the river below the falls. On the platform with him was a US flag. He would stand on the platform for ten minutes or so before kissing the flag and taking his plunge. The platform would vibrate as he leaped, and he would seem to be having difficulty maintaining his balance. He would enter the water with one knee bent. Would the assembled audience get what they had hoped they would get, that is, would they witness a death? Despite the fact that Patch would not die

13. There were a number of such crowd-pleasing events. For instance, the schooner *Superior* was sent over the falls, only to hang up unspectacularly on the rocks near Goat Island. The locals were in the habit of setting off black powder charges to blast sections of the cliff face into the gorge. At one point there was a plan to blast away a quarter of Table Rock, for the sheer spectacle of it, although local authorities interfered because they feared the course of the river would be changed so much that the Welland Canal would be drained.

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a reasonably good time would be had by all, and we may hope that the local prostitutes were able to secure an adequate business. He was delayed a day in his arrival, and then on the day he made his jump, bad weather limited the size of the crowd. Scheduled to perform his act of daring at noon, he was delayed because a chain broke and the top part of his ladder fell. At 4PM he dropped from the 98-foot mark of the ladder, accomplishing a 120-foot plunge. A boat was circling his entry point — but he did not appear. Finally the crowd spotted him pulling himself onto the rocks of the shore. He announced that he would make the jump again, and on Saturday the 17th a crowd of 10,000 would gather to witness him accomplish this, dropping this time a few feet farther.

He was making himself into the “Evel Knievel” of the 19th Century.



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

*4th day 7 of 10 M / Our frd Rowland Greene attended our Meeting
at the Institution & had good service among us.*

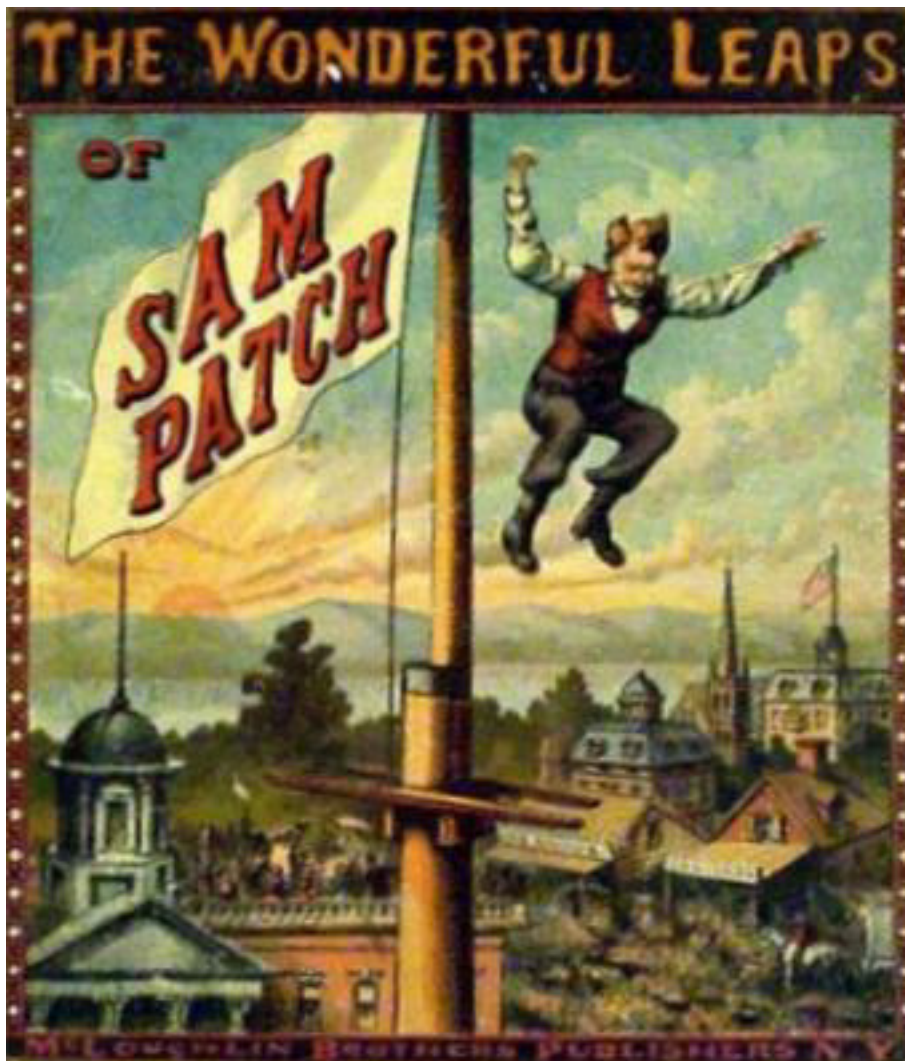
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



November 30, Monday: The first journeys were completed on Canada's new [Welland Canal](#), connecting Lake Ontario with Lake Erie by allowing vessels to pass around the falls of the [Niagara River](#).

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➡ February: The Berkshire Journal typically printed a poem on page 1, column 1. In this issue Seba Smith published Major Jack Downing's poem "Biography of Sam Patch," a poem in which "a maggot in his head" alerted him to the fact that "if he could do nothing else, / Most surely he could jump."



[Sam Patch](#) of [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#) having become for a short while a celebrated person, by making very high jumps into bodies of water, and having on November 13th, 1829 perished during "one more"



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

such feat,

Sam Patch. — We deem a suitable notice of his life and death, both useful and proper. — It will deter others from jumping from the same heights that Sam did: and in these times of political excitement, why may not politicians derive a useful moral from the same, and learn to jump with moderation? They should be cautious of the cheerings and shoutings of warm partisans, for verily in politics, as well as in perpendicular heights, there are some jumps which are fatal.

it is likely that Thoreau extracted from this journalistic poem on the front page of the Berkshire Journal, reprinted on the following screens, the trope he recycled about having a maggot in one's head:

WALDEN: I sometimes despair of getting any thing quite simple and honest done in this world by the help of men. They would have to be passed through a powerful press first, to squeeze their old notions out of them, so that they would not soon get upon their legs again, and then there would be some one in the company with a maggot in his head, hatched from an egg deposited there nobody knows when, for not even fire kills these things, and you would have lost your labor.

SAM PATCH

Biography of Sam Patch

Pawtucket is a famous place,
Where cotton cloth is made,
And hundreds think it no disgrace
To labor at the trade,

Among the spinners there was one,
Whose name was Samuel Patch;
He moped about and did his stent—
Folks thought him no great scratch.

But still a maggot in his head
Told Sam he was a ninny,
To spend his life in twirling thread,
Just like a spinning Jenney.

And if he would become renown'd,
And live in song or story,
'Twas time he should be looking round
For deeds of fame and glory.

'What shall I do?' quoth honest Sam;
There is no war a brewing;
And duels are but dirty things,
Scarce worth a body'd doing.

And if I would be President,
I see I'm up a tree
For neither prints, nor Congressmen,
Have nominated me.

But still that maggot in his head
Told Sam he was a gump,
For if he could do nothing else,
Most surely he could jump.

Aye, right, quoth Sam, and out he went,
And on the bridge he stood,
And down he jumped full twenty feet,
And plunged into the flood.

And when he safely swam to land,
He stood there like a stump,
And all the gaping crowd cried out,
'O what a glorious jump.'

New light now shone in Samuel's eyes,
His heart went pit a pat:
'Go bring a ladder here,' he cries;
I'll jump you more than that.

The longest ladder in the town,
Against the factory was rear'd
And Sam clomb up, and jump'd down,
And loud and long the gapers cheer'd.

Besides the maggot in his head,
Sam's ear now felt a flee [sic];
I'll raise some greater breezes yet —
What's this dull town to me?

And off he went on foot, full trot,
High hopes of fame his bosom fired,
At Patterson in Jersey State,
He stopt a while, for Sam was tired.

And there he mounted for a jump,
And crowds came round to view it,
And all began to gape and stare.
And cry 'how dare you do it?'

But Sam ne'er heeded what they said,
His nerves want made to quiver,
And down he jumped some fifty feet,
And splashed into the river.

'Hoo-rah,' the mob cried out amain,
'Ho-rah,' from every throat was
pouring.
And echo cried 'hoo-rah' again,
Like a thousands lions roaring.

Sam's fame now spread both far and
wide,
And brighter grew from day to day,
And wheresoe'er a crowd convened,
Patch was the lion of the play.

From shipmasts he would jump in sport,
And spring from highest factory
walls;
And proclamation soon was made,
That he would leap Niagara Falls.

'What for?' inquired an honest Hodge,
'Why scare to death our wives &
mothers?'
To show that some things can be done,'
Quoth Sam, 'as well as others.'

Ten thousand people thronged the shores,
And stood there all agog,
While Same approached those awful
falls,
And leapt them like a frog.

And when they saw his neck was safe,
And he once more stood on his feet,
They set up such a deafening cheer,
Niagara's roar was fairly beat.



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Patch being but a scurvy name,
The solemnly did they enact;
That he henceforward should be call'd
‘Squire Samuel O’Cataract.’

And here our hero should have stopt;
And husbanded his brilliant fame;
But ah, he took one leap too much,
And most all heroes do the same.

Napoleon’s great battle proved
His dreadful overthrow,
And Sam’s last jump was a fearful one,
And in death it laid him low.

’Twas at the falls of Genessee,
He jumped down six score feet and five,
And in the waters deep he sunk,
And never rose again alive.

The crowd, with fingers in their mouths,
Turned homeward one by one,
And oft with sheepish looks they said,
Poor Sam’s last job is done.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1831



In this year or possibly in the preceding one, Thomas Cole painted the [Niagara Falls](#) being foregrounded by a couple of Indians in the Wilderness:



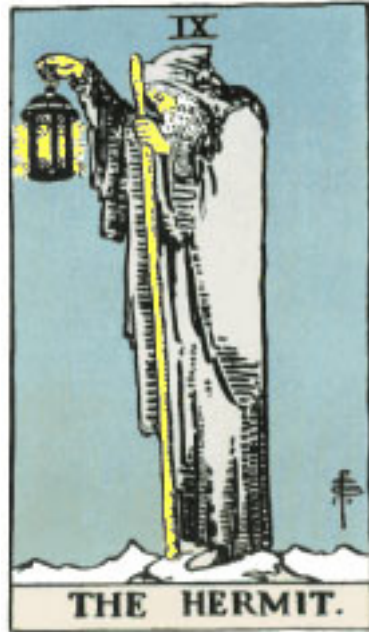
Were the Indians sublimed by the experience? The painting does not tell us.

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(It's really unfortunate that the painter hadn't foregrounded instead [Francis Abbott](#), who lived in a log cabin near the famous falls and was generally regarded as the "hermit of the falls" — because dying is even more associated with these famous falls than wildness, and while bathing during this year, the [hermit](#) drowned or committed suicide at about the age of 28.)



May 30, Monday: Frances Trollope set out for [Niagara Falls](#).

Francesca di Foix, a melodramma by Gaetano Donizetti to words of Gilardoni after Favart and Saint-Amans, was performed for the initial time, in Teatro San Carlo, [Naples](#).



June 10, Friday: When Field Marshal Baron Ivan von Diebitsch, commander of Russian forces in Poland, died of cholera, this temporarily halting the Russian advance.

At about 2PM a passing ferryman witnessed [Francis Abbott](#), "[hermit of Niagara Falls](#)," enter the water below the American Falls. He appeared to be bathing, but after he went beneath the surface of the water, the ferryman did not again see him. His clothing would be found neatly folded.

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

6th day engaged in preparing for Y Meeting - In the Steam Boat came passengers our English friends Jonathon & Hannah Backhouse - who took quarters at David Buffums Elisha Bates & Doctor William Carey took quarters at Our house as we shared[?] with Aunt Nancy Carpenter & have the use of the rooms of the part of the house we hire of her & occupy when in [Newport](#). Jeremiah Hubbard & his wife went to Job Shermans- & found all who came got quarters pretty readily which considering the state of



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things was a favour. –

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



THE SUBLIME

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In New-York, Alexis de Tocqueville met with community leaders and had a conversation with [Albert Gallatin](#) concerning the ideals of American men and women in regard to chastity and adultery:

I. Is it true, as I am told, that morals are pure?

He. Conjugal fidelity is admirably kept. It's not always thus with virtue before marriage. It very often happens in the country (not in our cities) that the extreme liberty enjoyed by the young people of both sexes has its drawbacks. The savage peoples who surround us carry disregard for chastity before marriage even further. They do not regard it as a moral obligation.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME



ALBERT GALLATIN



June 21, Tuesday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

3rd day 21 of 6 M / Engaged pretty much as yesterday, & among others we had the company of our interesting young friend Sarah H Jenkins from Hudson who being an acquaintance of our Son John we took the opportunity of writing to him by her & forwarding a few things which will be interesting to him. –

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



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The body of [Francis Abbott](#), “hermit of [Niagara Falls](#),” came to the surface on the eastern bank of the Niagara River at the point where it debouches into Lake Ontario near Fort Niagara. The corpse would be placed in Oakwood Cemetery (later, the Porter brothers who had evicted him from Goat Island would also find their way to this cemetery, although not to the section reserved for indigents). On a piece of the dolomitic limestone of tiny Luna Island between Bridal Veil Falls and American Falls, possibly chiseled by him, would be found the following inscription:

**ALL IS CHANGE
ETERNAL PROGRESS
NO DEATH**



August: The family of a teacher named Johann Adam Tracht had come from Darmstadt, Germany, the vicinity of the ruin of the Frankenstein castle, to the United States, and here the family had promoted itself into the subnobility by adopting the surname Frankenstein. In this month’s issue of HARPER’S MONTHLY MAGAZINE two of the sons of Johann Adam Frankenstein, George and Godfrey, got their 15 minutes of fame because they had painted a thousand-foot-by-eight-foot panorama of [Niagara Falls](#) which they were unrolling on stage to the accompaniment of music and commentary. This has been called the first motion picture! Did this make them role models for Hollywood’s the “Mad Scientist”? —Well, no, not really.

On August 10/11, in the vicinity of Barbados, occurred one of the more violent Caribbean hurricanes of Thoreau’s lifespan (refer to following screen). Some 1,500-2,500 people were killed. Also damaged were the islands of St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Puerto Rico. The town of Auz Cayes on the island of Haiti was nearly destroyed, as was the town of St. Jago de Cuba, and the city of Havana. The island of Martinique more or less escaped most of this fury.



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THE 40 DEADLIEST ATLANTIC HURRICANES OF ALL TIME

November 1590	Gulf of Mexico	1,000 dead (34th deadliest)
1601	Veracruz, Mexico	1,000 dead (38th deadliest)
1605	Offshore Nicaragua	1,300 dead (30th deadliest)
September 1622	Florida Straits	1,090 dead (33rd deadliest)
October 1644	Cuba, Florida Straits	1,500 dead (28th deadliest)
August 1666	Guadeloupe, Martinique	2,000 dead (25th deadliest)
September 1694	Offshore Barbados	1,000 dead (35th deadliest)
July 1715	Florida Straits, Bahamas	1,000 dead (36th deadliest)
August 1767	Martinique	600 dead (26th deadliest)
October 1768	Cuba	1,000 dead (37th deadliest)
September 1775	Newfoundland Banks	4,000 dead (8th deadliest)
September 1776	Guadeloupe	6,000 dead (7th deadliest)
October 1780	Barbados, St. Eustatius, Martinique	20,000-22,000 dead (deadliest)
October 1780	Eastern Gulf of Mexico	2,000 dead (22nd deadliest)
October 1780	Jamaica, Cuba	1,115 dead (32nd deadliest)
1781	Offshore Florida	2,000 dead (20th deadliest)
September 1782	Central Atlantic offshore	3,000 dead (12th deadliest)
June 1791	Cuba	3,000 dead (15th deadliest)
August 1813	Martinique	3,000 dead (13th deadliest)
July 1825	Guadeloupe, Puerto Rico	1,300 dead (29th deadliest)
August 1831	Barbados	1,500 dead, 2,500 missing (16th deadliest)
October 1870	Cuba	1,000-2,000 dead (23rd deadliest)
August 1893	South Carolina, Georgia	2,000-2,500 dead (21st deadliest)
October 1893	Louisiana	1,800 dead, 2,000 missing (24th deadliest)
August 1899	Puerto Rico, Carolinas	3,063 dead, 3,433 missing (9th deadliest)
September 1900	Galveston,	8,000-12,000 dead (3rd deadliest)
August 1909	Mexico	1,000 dead, 1,500 missing (27th deadliest)



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September 1928	Martinique, Guadeloupe, Puerto Rico, Turks and Caicos, Florida	3,375 dead, 4,075 missing (10th deadliest)
September 1930	Dominican Republic	2,000-8,000 dead (5th deadliest)
September 1931	Belize	1,500 dead, 2,500 missing (17th deadliest)
November 1932	Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Cuba	2,500 dead, 3,107 missing (11th deadliest)
June 1934	El Salvador, Honduras	2,000-3,006 dead (14th deadliest)
October 1935	Haiti, Jamaica, Honduras	1,000-2,168 dead (18th deadliest)
October 1954	Hazel, Grenada, Haiti, USA, Canada	1,000 dead (39th deadliest)
October 1963	Flora, Haiti, Cuba	8,000 dead (6th deadliest)
September/ October 1966	Inez, Caribbean, Mexico	1,000 dead (40th deadliest)
September 1974	Fifi, Honduras	8,000-10,000 dead (4th deadliest)
September 1979	David, Dominica, Dominican Republic, United States	2,063 dead, 2,068 missing (19th deadliest)
November 1994	Gordon, Costa Rica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Florida	1,145 dead (31st deadliest)
October 1998	Mitch, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize	9,086 dead, 9190 missing (2nd deadliest)



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THE SUBLIME





THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA



August 18, Thursday: Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont arrived at the [Niagara Falls](#) after touring to the west.



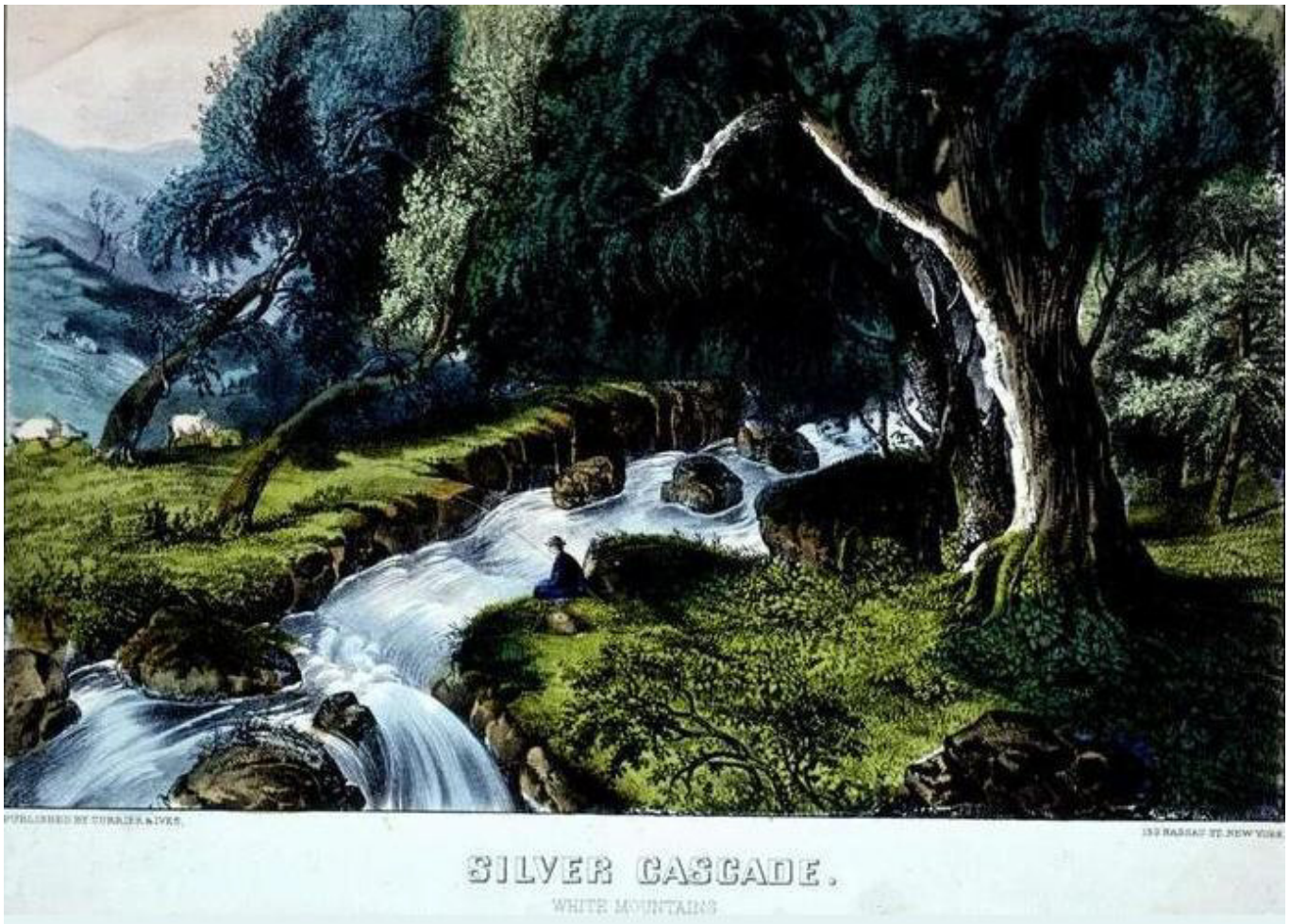
BELOW TABLE ROCK, NIAGARA FALLS



Prince von Metternich told the Austrian ambassador in Rome to beware of [Hector Berlioz](#), a “young follower of the Saint-Simonian doctrine.” He further ordered that Berlioz was not to be allowed in Austrian territory, and that the Vatican was to be alerted.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**ONGUIAAHARA****THE SUBLIME****1832**

September 16, Sunday: [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) wrote his mother in Salem from Burlington, Vermont, after visiting the White Mountains of New Hampshire (known as the time as “the [Switzerland](#) of the United States” and a contemporary landscape symbol of our local virtues of freedom and independence).



He had visited Crawford Notch. At this point he was considering going on north into Canada — and in fact for all we know he may have made it as far as Montréal before turning back and heading along the [Erie Canal](#)



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route for [Niagara Falls](#) in his search for the picturesque and/or sublime.



Between this date and September 28th [Hawthorne](#) would pass through Rochester, New York, where he would be informed by locals that [Sam Patch](#) was alive, having hidden behind the Genesee waterfall after his leap. To obtain proper atmosphere, he would arrange to view these famous deadly falls at dusk and alone:

How stern a moral may be drawn from the story of poor Sam Patch! Why do we call him a madman or a fool, when he has left his memory around the falls of the Genesee, more permanently than if the letters of his name had been hewn into the forehead of the precipice? Was the leaper of cataracts more mad or foolish than other men who throw away life, or mispend it in pursuit of empty fame, and seldom so triumphant as he? That which he won is as invaluable as any except the unsought glory, spreading like the rich perfume of richer fruit from various and useful deeds.

Thus musing, I lifted my eyes and beheld the spires, warehouses, and dwellings of Rochester.



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

1st day 16 of 9 M / My dear wife attended the Morning Meeting but found herself so unwell that she did not think best to attempt it in the Afternoon & Dr Tobey was called in. - She seemed better in the eveng

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME



September 28, Friday: A printed certificate handed out after a tour under Table Rock of the [Niagara Falls](#) informs us that on this date [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) “passed behind the Great Falling Sheet of Water to Termination Rock.” The rock platform overhead, which once projected out 50 feet over the cliff-base path, had



previously collapsed,¹⁴ and so, although it was still possible to pass behind the water, it really was no longer possible for the intrepid lip-walker overhead to “feel as if suspended in the open air.” Hawthorne was viewing the location at which [Sam Patch](#) the Yankee jumper had made his famous death-defying leaps, prior to going on to his death in an attempt to similarly survive a leap down the Genesee Falls in Rochester, New York. In Hawthorne’s semi-autobiographical “My Visit to Niagara,” the narrator purchases a twisted cane made by a member of the Tuscarora tribe and adorned with images of a snake and a fish. Since he refers to this walking stick as his “pilgrim’s staff,” and since our author evidently wasn’t all that impressed by this culmination to his westering journey, Elizabeth McKinsey, commenting in *NIAGARA FALLS: ICON OF THE AMERICAN SUBLIME* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985, page 192), considers that such a staff might have been “suggestive of a knowledge of good and evil” as it “might facilitate a fall from the innocence of anticipation into experience and knowledge.” (Huh? I have **no idea** what she is talking about. Personally, I’d rather aim this analysis in the direction of [Henry Thoreau](#)’s parable of the stick/stock of the Artist of Kouroo, since there is every possibility that back home in [Concord](#) later, Thoreau would be informed of the history of this curiosity walking stick/pilgrim’s staff.)¹⁵

14. According to Vanderwater’s *THE TOURIST* guidebook, preserving intact (of course) the sensational memory of a projection no longer in actual existence, “Table Rock, which projects about 50 feet, is generally considered the most eligible place for viewing the falls on the Canada side. The descent from the rock is by circular steps, which are enclosed; at the foot of these stairs commences the passage under the great sheet of water where visitants are supplied with dresses and a guide. The farthest approachable distance is Termination Rock, 153 feet from Table Rock.”

15. Presumably [Hawthorne](#) had gotten to Niagara by continuing along the route of the [Erie Canal](#), and presumably this is about as far west as he would get in his search for the picturesque/sublime. We are, however, lacking in evidence for these travels, other than what we can extrapolate from various comments at various points in his fictions and in his semi-autobiographical jottings.



THE SUBLIME

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1833

➡ Walter Henry commented on the dangerous attractiveness of [Niagara Falls](#) to our [tourists](#): “There are others so constituted as to be fascinated by the spectacle to such a dangerous and overpowering extent, as to feel a strong desire to throw themselves into the abyss.”¹⁶

SUICIDE

➡ May 19, Sunday: At 9:30AM, [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) observed a beautiful rainbow from the British side of [Niagara Falls](#).

➡ November 12, Tuesday: Alyeksandr Porfiryevich Borodin was born in St. Petersburg, an illegitimate son of Prince Luka Stepanovich Gedianov (Gedianishvili) by Avdotya Konstantinovna Antonova, daughter of a soldier from Narva. According to common practice the infant was registered as the son of one of the Prince's serfs, Porfiry Ionovich Borodin.

This would be the night of the birth of meteor astronomy. With [David Henry Thoreau](#) 16 years old and [John Shepard Keyes](#) 12 years old, a spectacular [meteor](#) shower during the wee smalls of the early morning hours was witnessed by numerous observers at various places on the eastern seaboard of the North American continent. For four hours the pre-dawn sky was lit with meteors. We don't know that Henry himself saw it; presumably he was asleep, although there were newspaper reports that many people were awakened by the flashes of light cast on the walls of dark bedrooms by the fireballs, and in the towns many people were awakened by the shouts and cries of neighbors. Keyes would report that:

I slept in a chamber with an easterly window and happening by some unusual circumstance to be waked very early perhaps by the flashes of light I laid in bed for an hour or two watching and trying to count the bright streams of fire that shot so incessantly and madly across the sky. At last thoroughly roused by the sight I got up and pulling the bed clothes over my shoulders sat at the window till the day light hid the display. In my ignorance of the cause I almost concluded that the stars set or went out like that every morning and wondered I had never been told of it or seen it before. On coming down to breakfast I told the family that I saw hundreds of shooting stars that morning and was soundly taken to task for exaggeration, and scolded so that I held my tongue about it. But in a day or two when the accounts were in all the papers and everybodys mouth, I had an even worse scolding for not calling up the others to see the sight. It was grand splendid and magnificent beyond any thing I have ever seen since. The only picture I have ever seen that at all comes up to the scene is the one in the bulky volume of the one hundred memorable events of the first century of the U.S. It literally for all that hour or two rained stars with their long trails of sparks rocket like, in all directions

16. One may speculate that there must have been some sort of linkage between the 19th-Century concept of [the sublime](#) and repressed forbidden thoughts of [suicide](#). Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain their great preoccupation with the sublime.

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across the heavens, mainly starting from a point in front of my window, and varying in sheer directions and colors to any extent.

J.S. KEYES AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The United States Telegraph of [Washington DC](#) suggested that “The strong southern wind of yesterday may have brought a body of electrified air, which, by the coldness of the morning, was caused to discharge its contents towards the earth.” The Charleston Courier suggested that the sun had caused gases to be released from plants recently killed by frost. These gases, the most abundant of which was believed to be hydrogen, “became ignited by electricity or phosphoric particles in the air.” [Yale College](#)’s professor of natural philosophy, Denison Olmstead, however, in collecting and collating these various reports, would note that the apparent point of origin for these thousands upon thousands of streaks, regardless of the point of observation, had been a stationary radiant position in the neck of the constellation Leo. (This is why we now term them the Leonids, meaning “children of Leo.”) A historian of Philadelphia would write the following description of the event:

The meteors of the 13th of November, 1833, were the most remarkable ever witnessed. A beholder says, he was sitting alone in a well lighted apartment at 4 AM., when he suddenly saw through the window a shower of sparks falling past it on the outside. He supposed the house was on fire, and rushing to the door, to his extreme amazement, he found the entire atmosphere filled with flakes of fire, (for they fully resembled flakes of snow of a stellated or radiated form) of a pale rose red, seemingly of an inch diameter, falling in a vertical direction, as thick as he ever saw snow! Intermingled with the smaller stars, were a larger kind, equal to one in a hundred of the others, of an intense sapphire blue, seemingly of three to four inches diameter. This shower continued up to broad day light. They were seen all over the United States, and have been variously described, but all agreeing that they surpassed all other known cases.

SKY EVENT



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A woodcut of the times, which would be recycled in color as below in Edmund Weiss's 1892 volume *BILDER-ATLAS DER STERNENWELT*, displays the sublime falling-star spectacle as it had been experienced above the magnificent sublime gloom and drifting sublime vapors of the [Niagara Falls](#).¹⁷

LEONID METEOR SHOWER



The Reverend [William Miller](#) and his followers interpreted these falling stars as a sure sign of The End.

MILLENNIALISM

This display would lead to the first formulation of a theory on the origin of [meteors](#).

...a tempest of falling stars broke over the Earth.... The sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs. At Boston, the frequency of meteors was estimated to be about half that of flakes of snow in an average snowstorm. Their numbers ... were quite beyond counting; but as it waned, a reckoning was attempted, from which it was computed, on the basis of that much-diminished rate, that 240,000 must have been visible during the nine hours they continued to fall.

17. Whether such a [Leonid meteor shower](#) is spectacular or not varies from year to year and from region to region. The best one of this century has come and gone in 1966, with up to 100,000 [meteors](#) an hour having been visible. The last chance of this millennium to see a potentially enticing Leonid will come in 1999, but to view this during the hours of darkness you will need to travel to Europe. If you miss it you'll need to wait another century or more for the next one expected to be spectacular, at least until the year 2098 and perhaps until the year 2131. Yep, it just ain't fair.



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This Leonid storm was of course observed on the Great Plains by a number of bands of Dakota and appears in any number of “winter counts” painted on animal skin. Von Del Chamberlain of the Smithsonian has tabulated the astronomical references in 50 such Dakota records and found that 45 of the 50 made reference to the meteor shower of 1833/1834. The journal of Alexander M. Stephen records a meeting with Old Djasjini of the Hopi group on December 11, 1892. Old Djasjini is recorded as having said “How old am I? Fifty, maybe a hundred years, I can not tell. When I was a boy of so big (eight or ten years) there was a great comet in the sky and at night all the above was full of shooting stars — ah! that was a very long time ago, maybe a hundred years, maybe more.” During the probable lifetime of Old Djasjini there had been two such events which we know of, the great Leonid storm of 1833 followed by the sungrazing [comet](#) 1843 I. The Pawnee remember a Pahokatawa was of the opinion that when meteors were seen falling in great numbers it was not a sign that the world would end. Thus when the Pawnee witnessed the Leonid shower of 1833, when “the stars fell upon the earth,” they were able to say to one another “Remember Pahokatawa” and overcome their fear.

SKY EVENT

In this year, as in 1866 and in 1966, observers might see “waterfalls” of shooting stars flowing down all sides of their sky. There might well on occasion be more than 8,000 flashes per minute.

The Leonids of this year generated numerous accounts of meteors that made a swishing noise, meteors that made a whooshing noise — and one that “resembled the noise of a child’s pop-gun.”

DO THE METEORS SING TO US?



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1834



Harriet Beecher Stowe at the Table Rock of [Niagara Falls](#):

Oh, it is lovelier than it is great, it is like the Mind that made it: great, but so veiled in beauty that we gaze without terror. I felt as if I could have gone over with the waters; it would be so beautiful a death; there would be no fear in it.



April 24, Thursday: The [New York State](#) Legislature granted a charter to the Paumanok Long Island Railroad.

The Lockport & [Niagara Falls](#) Rail Road was incorporated, capitalized at \$175,000. This entity would later merge with the New York Central Rail Road.



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1836



Harriet Beecher married the Reverend Calvin Ellis Stowe of Lane Theological Seminary, where her father the Reverend Lyman Beecher was director. Six of this couple's seven children would be born in Cincinnati, Ohio, but first there was the little detail of a honeymoon to get over with. The newlyweds [toured](#) to [Niagara Falls](#) and the bride (this was not her first visit) commented "I felt as if I could have **gone over** with the waters; it would be so beautiful a death; there would be no fear in it." T.R. Preston commented "I could not regard the Falls for many minutes together in an erect posture, without succumbing to an attracting influence, which I can compare only to the fascination exercised by the lodestone or the eye of the rattle-snake."¹⁸

SUICIDE

At this point Benjamin Rathbun had become so enormously wealthy, that he actually was the owner of the Niagara Falls.

18. One may speculate that there must have been some sort of linkage between the 19th-Century concept of [the sublime](#) and repressed forbidden thoughts of [suicide](#). Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain their great preoccupation with the sublime.



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1837



A Staffordshire China sugar bowl was crafted that commemorated [hockey](#) being played on the ice in Britain.

In [Canada](#) by this point, ice-[skating](#) had become a recognized pastime. However, there were some people in Canada who had more substantial and dangerous, and less graceful, agendas. For instance, in this year William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861) presented his plan to overthrow the government. The Canadian rebels sought arms, assistance and sanctuary in the United States. Since this political leader was running his Canadian rebellion out of the Eagle Tavern in Buffalo, New York, obviously the federal government of the United States of America did not suppose its national objectives to be hindered by unrest in this neighbor country. The British Parliament passed a Coercion Bill and then seized the treasury of Lower Canada. Obviously there was going to be tension along the Niagara Frontier, so the British strengthened their garrisons and defenses along the [Niagara River](#). With the walls of [Fort Niagara](#) having fallen into decrepitude, the Americans finally would need to do something to the old post.

During the Lower Canada Rebellion a mandate of arrest was issued against [Dr. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan](#) and he sought refuge initially at Saint-Denis, then by crossing the United States border with his friend and political ally Louis-Joseph Papineau.





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Seba Smith went bankrupt and his wife Elizabeth Oakes Smith began writing professionally. (The 1st novel of this wife from whom financial security had fled as if it had wings, published in the following year, would bear the intriguing title RICHES WITHOUT WINGS.)



The Reverend [Alexander Young](#) joined [Harvard College](#)'s Board of Overseers (he would serve until 1853).

At [Harvard](#)'s commencement this year, [Waldo Emerson](#), who earlier in the year had commented in his journal that "[t]he land stinks with [suicide](#)," would speak of "young men of promise," some of whom in response to the economic hardship of the times were offing themselves. (Emerson explained that he considered this a poor response to the situation.) One of the graduating seniors, without mentioning suicide as an alternative, would invent an intriguing image of fatality to represent the many bankruptcies of this year — the very temple of commerce, Thoreau's classmate Charles Wyatt Rice would declare, had caught fire due to the intensity of the flame of the sacrifice upon the altar, and the dome of this temple had fallen "crackling and clashing upon the head of the zealous votary, and burie[d] him in its ruins."



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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 SEVERAL 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

In his college essay on "Sublimity" Thoreau would quote from this book by Burke: "terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime" but then alter the basic element of the sublime from terror to reverence: "I would make an inherent respect or reverence, which certain objects are fitted to demand, that ruling principle; which reverence, as it is altogether distinct from, shall it outlive, that terror to which [Burke] refers, and operate to exalt and distinguish us, when fear shall be no more." Although the infinite, the sublime, seizes upon the soul and disarms it, according to this college essayist it does not terrorize it (fast forward to this college essayist's experience atop Ktaadn).

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:

Observe that part of a beautiful woman where she is perhaps the most beautiful, about the neck and breasts; the smoothness; the softness; the easy and insensible swell; the variety of the surface, which is never for the smallest space the same; the deceitful maze, through which the unsteady eye slides giddily, without knowing where to fix or whither it is carried. Is not this a demonstration of that change of surface, continual, and yet hardly perceptible at any point, which forms one of the great constituents of beauty? It gives me no small pleasure to find that I can strengthen my theory in this point, by the opinion of the very ingenious Mr. Hogarth; whose idea of the line of beauty I take in general to be extremely just.



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[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.—*

[RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS](#)



March 31, Friday: [John Constable](#) died.

[David Henry Thoreau](#)'s essay on his [Harvard College](#) assignment "Examine this theory [that various dreadful natural phenomena derive their dread sublimity from Death]." In the course of this essay he made reference not only to the aesthetic theory found in [Edmund Burke](#)'s A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS OF [THE SUBLIME](#) AND BEAUTIFUL. ... WITH SEVERAL OTHER ADDITIONS

7TH EDITION, OF 1773

(London, Printed for J. Dodsley, in Pall-mall. 1770, 6th edition) but also to the [Rev. Archibald Alison](#)'s ESSAYS ON THE NATURE AND PRINCIPLES OF TASTE.

REV. ARCHIBALD ALISON

Here, then, is what Thoreau turned in for satisfaction of this class assignment:

"The thunder's roar, the Lightning's flash, the billows' roar, the earthquake's shock, all derive their dread sublimity from Death."

"The Inheritance," chapter 56.

Examine this theory.

"Whatever," says Burke, "is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime." — "Indeed, terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the Sublime." Hence Obscurity, Solitude, Power, and the like, in so far as they are fitted to excite terror, are sources of the sublime. This is a theory far more satisfactory than that which we are about to examine. He does not make death the source of terror, but rather pain, using the word in its broadest sense. Death itself is sublime. It has all the attributes of sublimity



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– Mystery, Power, Silence – a sublimity which no one can resist; which may be heightened, but cannot be equalled, by the thunder's roar, or the cannon's peal. But yet, though incomparably more awful, this is the same sublimity that we ascribe to the tumult of the troubled ocean, the same in kind, though different in degree, depending for its effect upon the same principles of our nature, though affecting us more powerfully and universally. To attribute the two to different principles, is not only unphilosophical, but manifestly unnecessary.

We shrink with horror from attributing emotions so exalted and unearthly, and withal so flattering to our nature, to an abject fear of death. We would fain believe that the immortals, who know no fear, nor ever taste of death, can sympathize with us poor worldlings in our reverence for the sublime, – that they listen to the thunder's roar, and behold the lightning's flash, with emotions similar to our own. We do believe it; we have so represented it. The sublimity of the conflict on the plains of Heaven, between the rebel angels and the Almighty's loyal bands, as described by Milton, was not lost upon the *spirits* engaged in it. Raphaël, who recounts the particulars of the fight to our forefather Adam, describes the Messiah as riding *sublime* "on the wings of cherub,"

"On the crystalline sky, in sapphire thron'd,
Illustrious far and wide;" –

Nor could he have been entirely unconscious of the emotion in question, when he compared the combat between Satan and Michael, to the meeting of two planets. "As if", to use his own expression,

"Among the constellations war were sprung,
"Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
"Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
"Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound."

–Who can contemplate the hour of his birth, or reflect on the obscurity and darkness from which he then emerged into a still more mysterious existence, without being powerfully impressed with the idea of sublimity? Shall we derive this sublimity from death? Nay, further, can anything be conceived more sublime than that second birth, the resurrection? It is a subject which we approach with a kind of reverential awe. It has inspired the sublimest efforts of the poet and the painter. The trump which shall awake the dead is the creation of poetry; but to follow out the idea, will its sound excite in us no emotion, or will the blessed, whom it shall summon to forsake the mouldering relics of mortality, and wing their way to brighter and happier worlds, listen with terror, or indifference? Shall he who is acknowledged while on earth to have a *soul* for the sublime and beautiful in nature, hereafter, when he shall be all soul, lose



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this divine privilege? Shall we be indebted to the body for emotions which would adorn heaven? And yet there are some who will refer you to the casting off of this "mortal coil", as the origin, and, I may add, the consummation of all this.

We can hardly say that fear is a source of the sublime; it may be indispensable, it is true, that a certain degree of awe should enter into the admiration with which we listen to the billow's roar, or the howling of the storm. We do not tremble with fright, but the calm which comes over the soul, is like that which precedes the earthquake. It is a pleasure of the highest kind, to behold a mighty river, rolling impetuously, and, as it were, blindly onward to the edge of the precipice, where, for successive ages, it plunges headlong to the bottom, roaring and foaming in its mad career, and shaking the solid earth by its fall, but it is not joy that we experience, it is pleasure, mingled with reverence, and tempered with humility. Burke has said that "terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime." Alison says as much, and Stewart advances a very different theory. The first would trace the emotion in question to the influence of pain, and terror, which is but an apprehension of pain. I would make an inherent respect, or reverence, which certain objects are fitted to demand, that ruling principle; which reverence, as it is altogether distinct from, so shall it outlive, that terror to which he refers, and operate to exalt and distinguish us, when fear shall be no more.

Whatever is grand, wonderful, or mysterious, *may* be a source of the sublime. Terror inevitably injures, and if excessive, may entirely destroy its object. To the coward, the cannon's peal, the din and confusion of the fight, are not sublime, but rather terrible, the calm and self-collected alone, are conscious of their sublimity. Hence, indeed, are they inspired with courage to sustain the conflict. To fear is mortal, angels may reverence. The child manifests respect ere it had experienced terror. The Deity would be revered, not feared.

Hence it is, that the emotion in question is so often attended by a consciousness of our own littleness; we are accustomed to admire what seemeth difficult or beyond our attainment. But to feel conscious of our own weakness is not positively unpleasant, unless we compare ourselves with what is incapable of commanding our respect or reverence and consequently is not a source of the sublime.

Grandeur, of some kind or other, must ever enter into our idea of the sublime. Niagara would still retain her sublimity, though her fall should be reduced many feet, but the puny mountain stream must make up in depth of fall, for what it lacks in volume. What is more grand than mystery? The darker it is, the grander it grows. We habitually call it great. Burke has well remarked that divisibility of matter is sublime, its very infinity makes it so. Infinity is the essence of sublimity.

Whatever demands our admiration or respect is, in a degree, sublime. It is true, nothing could originally demand our



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respect, which was not, at the same time, *capable*, in a greater or less degree, of exciting our fear, but this does not prove fear to be the source of that respect. Nothing, on the other hand, of which we stand in awe, is an object of our contempt; yet the source of our contempt is not, surely, indifference, or a feeling of security. It will be enough, merely to advert to the immense influence which the association of ideas exerts.

Burke's theory would extend those emotions which the sublime excites, to the brute creation. They suffer pain – they experience terror – they possess the faculty of memory, and philosophers have ascribed to them imagination and judgment. Why may not, then, the brute hearken with rapture to the thunder's peal, or, in the deep of the forest, enjoy the grandeur of the storm? Man's pride will not admit it. It savors of Immortality. But the brute knows not that peculiar reverence for what is grand, whether in nature, or in art, or in thought, or in action, which is the exclusive birthright of the lord of creation. There is an infinity in the mystery, the power, and grandeur, which concur in the sublime, the abstract nature of which is barely recognized, though not comprehended, by the human mind itself. Philosophers, it is true, have ascribed to brutes "devotion, or respect for superiors", but, so to speak, this is a respect grounded on experience, it is practical or habitual, not the fruit of abstract reflection, nor does it amount to the recognition of any moral superiority.

But to some it may appear, that this reverence for the grand, if I may so style it, is not an original principle of our nature, – that it originates in fear. I answer, *if* this is not, neither is fear. Nay more, the former is a principle more universal in its operation, more exalting and ennobling in its influence, and is, besides, so superior to, and at variance with fear, that we cannot for a moment derive it from the latter.

The philosopher sees cause for wonder and astonishment in everything, in himself, and in all around him, he has only to reflect, that he may admire. Terror avoids reflection, though reflection alone can restore to calmness and equanimity. How regard, respect, reverence, can grow out of fear, is, I must confess, incomprehensible.

We reverence greatness, moral and intellectual, the giant intellect is no sooner recognized, than it demands our homage. Moral greatness calls for the admiration of the depraved even. The emotion excited by the sublime is the most unearthly and godlike we mortals experience. It depends for the peculiar strength with which it takes hold on and occupies the mind, upon a principle which lies at the foundation of that worship which we pay to the Creator himself. And is fear the foundation of that worship? is fear the ruling principle of our religion? Is it not, rather, the mother of superstition? Yes, that principle which prompts to pay an involuntary homage to the infinite, the incomprehensible, the sublime, forms the very basis of our religion. It is a principle implanted in us by our Maker, a part of our very selves, we cannot eradicate it, we cannot resist it;



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fear may be overcome, death may be despised, but the infinite, the sublime, seize upon the soul and disarm it. We may overlook them, or, rather, fall short of them, we may pass them by, but so sure as we meet them face to face, we yield.



May 20, Saturday, or 21, Sunday: In the midst of this economic malaise, [Waldo Emerson](#) confided to his Journal:

The land stinks with suicide.





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December 29, Friday: The Canadian and American rebels had obtained some cannonballs by way of an American steamboat, the *Caroline*, and had fired them off across the river above the [Niagara Falls](#). Well, it was a gesture, or a stunt. After this, the Royal Navy came across to where the *Caroline* was at dock on the American island in the river, and set it on fire to teach these rebels a lesson.



The ship burned and broke up in the rapids of the Niagara, and eventually of course the worthless wreck was



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allowed to go over the falls.



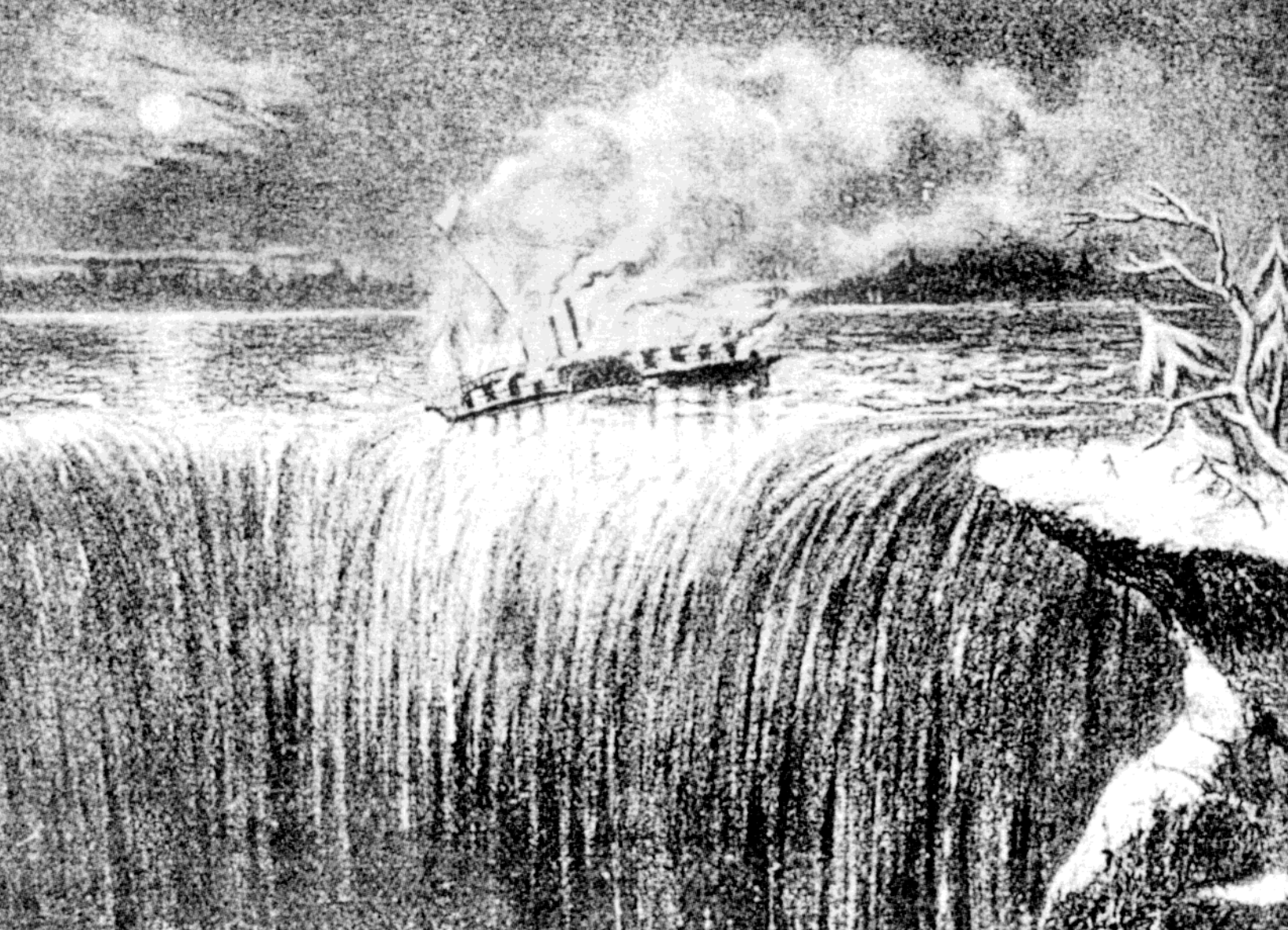
Although one man was killed during this farcical episode, you would not have been able to tell that from

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reading the American newspapers, which were full of stories about victims being swept over the falls:



(In the Year of Our Lord 2002, Condoleezza Rice of the Bush administration would use words about preemptive response, uttered by Daniel Webster in regard to this incident — to justify its agenda to bomb Iraq back to the Stone Age with or without the cooperation of the UN.)



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1838

[Alexander Wilson](#)'s THE FORESTERS; A POEM, DESCRIPTIVE OF A PEDESTRIAN JOURNEY TO THE FALLS OF NIAGARA, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1804 (Pennsylvania: Joseph Painter).

NIAGARA FALLS



THE SUBLIME

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1839

A foreign [tourist](#) named Captain Frederick Marryat commented about [Niagara Falls](#) in his DIARY IN AMERICA: “For about half an hour more I continued to watch the rolling waters and then I felt a slight dizziness and a creeping sensation come over me – that sensation arising from strong excitement, and the same, probably, that occasions the bird to fall into the jaws of the snake. This is a feeling which, if too long indulged in, becomes irresistible, and occasions a craving desire to leap into the flood of rushing waters. It increased upon me every minute; and retreating from the brink, I turned my eyes to the surrounding foliage, until the effect of the excitement had passed away.”¹⁹

SUICIDE

Between this year and 1843, the US Army Corps of Engineers would be directing a remake of [Fort Niagara](#). A heavy stone wall would be put along the riverside to shield the interior of the American fortification from the gun emplacements of Fort Mississauga. A seawall would be put in to arrest years of erosion by Lake Ontario. There would be new emplacements for heavy guns, there would be a shot furnace, the land side earthworks would be given new timber revetments, and old stone buildings would be upgraded. The fortification would never again house a substantial force, but it would once again possess a certain style.

July 25, Thursday: In upstate [New York](#), at the [Niagara Falls](#), a carpenter working on a tourist bridge to Goat Island fell into the rapids. Myron Chapin had gone in about 500 feet before the curl of the always-deadly American Falls, and as the current pulled him along he managed to swim so as to collide with a pile of rocks about 90 feet from the curl. After about half an hour of handwaving from the rocks and from the shore of the island, Joel Robinson tipped a light skiff into the waters at the lower end of Bath Island and rowed from an eddy behind one rock to an eddy behind another rock, resting in each eddy while plotting out his next dash across the torrent. After one mishap in which he almost lost control of his skiff, he made it to the eddy downstream of Chapin’s pile. With Chapin aboard, Robinson made his way back from eddy to eddy to the safety of Goat Island. Chapin, clambering out of the skiff safe and sound, embraced his wife and children. Someone began a cash collection among the onlookers in honor of Robinson’s courage and selflessness, and the crowd put Robinson and Chapin back into the skiff and marched to town as a triumphal procession — carrying the skiff with the two men in it on their shoulders.



July 25. There is no remedy for love but to love more.

19. One may speculate that there must have been some sort of linkage between the 19th-Century concept of [the sublime](#) and repressed forbidden thoughts of [suicide](#). Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain their great preoccupation with the sublime.



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September 16, Monday: The dashing Thoreau brothers, just back from their excellent adventure, heard that the Reverend Edmund Quincy Sewall, Sr. and Mrs. Edmund Quincy Sewall were vacationing at [Niagara Falls](#), and so dashing brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) promptly dashed off to Scituate in order to be able to visit Miss Ellen Devereux Sewall in her home — while she was without adult supervision (George and Edmund, her younger brothers, were the only chaperonage). Meanwhile the younger brother, [Henry Thoreau](#), left behind in Concord, worked furiously at his essay on bravery, at his essay on friendship, at his translation of Æschylus's PROMETHEUS BOUND, and at his essay on the satirist Aulus Persius Flaccus:

*The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous,
for he lives out of an eternity which includes all
time.*

*All questions rely on the present for their solution.
Time measures nothing but itself.*

December 7, Saturday: [Horace Greeley](#)'s [New-Yorker](#) magazine featured an article on “Remarkable Suicides.”

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1841

Phineas Taylor Barnum purchased Scudder's American Museum, a collection of curiosities that had been being exhibited for an admissions fee, that was on sale for an asking price of \$15,000 because under its current management the exhibition had been losing rather than making money. By catering to the lowest common denominator of credulity among the American public, he would be able to transform this exhibition into one of New-York's major tourist attractions. He would boast that he had added to the collection "educated dogs, industrious fleas, automatons, jugglers, ventriloquists, living statuary, tableaux, gipsies [*sic*], Albinos, fat boys, giants, dwarfs, rope-dancers, live Yankees, pantomime, instrumental music, singing and dancing in great variety, dioramas, panoramas, models of [Niagara Falls](#), Dublin, Paris, and Jerusalem; Hannington's dioramas of the Creation, the Deluge, Fairy Grotto, Storm at Sea; the first English Punch and Judy in this country, Italian Fantoccini, mechanical figures, fancy glass-blowing, knitting machines, and other triumphs in the mechanical arts; dissolving views, American Indians who enacted their warlike and religious ceremonies on the stage — these, among others, were all exceedingly successful."



February: In an article "The Unrest of the Age" in the magazine *Arcturus*, Cornelius Mathews offered that to refer to this period as "The Era of the Self-Made Man" was no longer appropriate, because due to the severe economic catastrophe that had befallen the nation, beginning in 1837, "Ours is the age of suicide and mysterious disappearances."



THE SUBLIME

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November 22, Monday: A real pipe organ was purchased for \$1,050 for [Concord](#)'s parish church.

Returning to Concord from a business trip to Boston, [Waldo Emerson](#) found [Lidian Emerson](#) with [Edith Emerson](#), born at 5PM. He wrote to William and Susan Haven Emerson:

Be it known unto you that a little maiden child is born unto this house this day at 5 o clock this afternoon; it is a meek little girl which I have just seen, & in this short dark winter afternoon I cannot tell what color her eyes are, and the less, because she keeps them pretty closely shut: But there is nothing in her aspect to contradict the hope we feel that she has come for a blessing to our little company. Lidian is very well and finds herself suddenly recovered from a host of ails which she suffered from this morning. Waldo is quite deeply happy with this fair unexpected apparition & cannot peep & see it enough. Ellen has retired to bed unconscious of the fact & of all her rich gain in this companion. Shall I be discontented who had dreamed of a young poet that should come? I am quite too much affected with wonder & peace at what I have and behold & understand nothing of, to quarrel with it that it is not different.

(Not only little Edith, but also [Henry Thoreau](#) joined the Emerson household on this day.)

At some point along in here some events would occur, that later, approaching a lamentable 20th anniversary on January 17, 1862, [Waldo Emerson](#) would muse about in his journal:

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

WALLIE EMERSON

Long ago I wrote of "Gifts," & neglected a capital example. John Thoreau Jr. one day put up a bluebird's box on my barn fifteen years ago, it must be – and there it is still with every summer a melodious family in it, adorning the place, & singing his praises. There's a gift for you which cost the giver no money, but nothing he could have bought would be so good. I think of another quite inestimable. John Thoreau, Junior, knew how much I should value a head of little Waldo, then five years old. He came to me, & offered to carry him to a daguerreotypist who was then in town, & he, Thoreau, would see it well done. He did it, & brought me the daguerre which I thankfully paid for. In a few months after, my boy died, and I have ever since had deeply to thank John Thoreau for that wise & gentle piece of friendship.



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[Bluebird, Eastern  *Sialia sialis*]

At 9PM, John York and Jehiel Kinney set out from Port Day for Hudson's Tavern, two miles above Chippawa on the [Niagara River](#) above the falls, with a load of six barrels of whiskey. They would be caught in the rapids and go over the always-deadly American Falls.

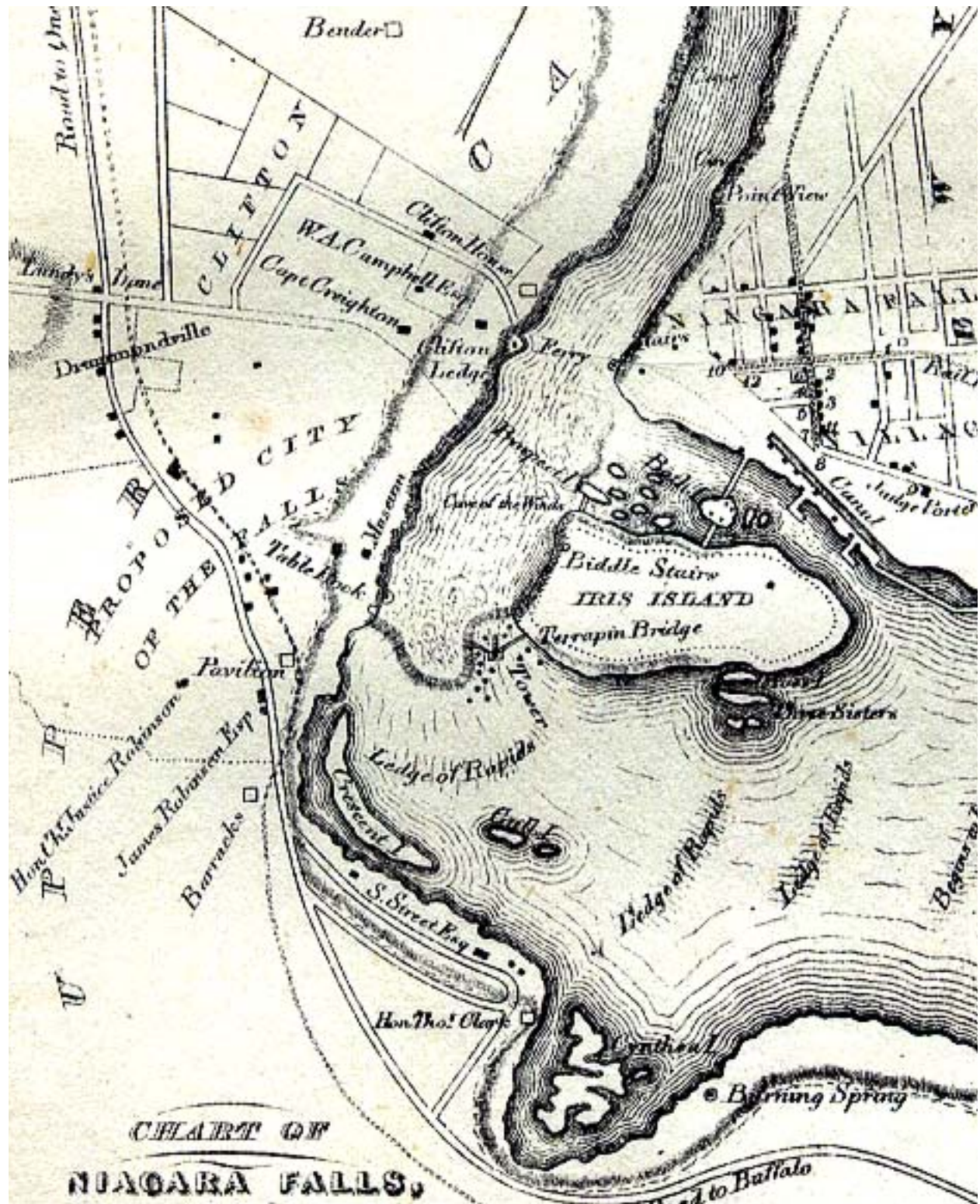
In the night, Mahomed Akber Khan, second son of the late Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, arrived in Cabul, [Afghanistan](#) from Bameean.



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1842

In this year opened the first permanent wire-cable suspension bridge in the USA, the Fairmont Suspension Bridge over the Schuylkill in Philadelphia. Charles Ellet, Jr. created this suspension bridge to replace Lewis Wernwag's "Colossus" of 1812, which at 340 feet had been the longest timber span in the US of A but which in 1838 had burned.

Charles Dickens came to across the pond attempt to interdict American copyright piracy of his stuff, and to view [Niagara Falls](#) and the [Eastern State Penitentiary](#). He would write "The System is rigid, strict and hopeless solitary confinement, and I believe it, in its effects, to be cruel and wrong...."



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June: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dickens had traveled on a steamboat on the Mississippi River



I trust never to see the Mississippi again except in dreams and nightmares.



and had viewed [Niagara Falls](#).



It was a miserable day; chilly and raw; a damp mist falling; and the trees in that northern region quite bare and wintry. Whenever the train halted, I listened for the roar; and was constantly straining my eyes in the direction where I knew the Falls must be, from seeing the river rolling on towards them; every moment expecting to behold the spray. Within a few minutes of our stopping, not before, I saw two great white clouds rising up slowly and majestically from the depths of the earth. That was all. At length we alighted: and then for the first time, I heard the mighty rush of water, and felt the ground tremble underneath my feet.

The bank is very steep, and was slippery with rain, and half-melted ice. I hardly know how I got down, but I was soon at the bottom, and climbing, with two English officers who were crossing and had joined me, over some broken rocks, deafened by the noise, half-blinded by the spray, and wet to the skin. We were at the foot of the American Fall. I could see an immense torrent of water tearing headlong down from some great height, but had no idea of shape, or situation, or anything but vague immensity.

When we were seated in the little ferry-boat, and were crossing the swollen river immediately before both cataracts, I began to feel what it was: but I was in a manner stunned, and unable to comprehend the vastness of the scene. It was not until I came on Table Rock, and looked -Great Heaven, on what a fall of bright-green water!- that it came upon me in its full might and majesty.... Niagara was at once stamped upon my heart, an image of beauty, to remain there changeless and indelible, until its pulses cease to beat forever.



In this month they passed into [Canada](#) and arrived at [Montréal](#)'s most acceptable accommodation, Rosco's Hotel. Moving downriver from there, when they arrived at [Québec](#) they were the guest of [John Charlton Fisher](#).

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Above, below, where'er the astonished eye
Turns to behold, new opening wonders lie.



With uproar hideous first the Falls appear,
The stunning tumult thundering on the ear.

This great overwhelming work of awful Time
In all its dread magnificence sublime.

Rises on our view amid a crashing roar
That bids us kneel and Time's great God adore.



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1843

The US Army Corps of Engineers completed the renovation of [Fort Niagara](#). A heavy stone wall had been put along the riverside to shield the interior of the American fortification from the gun emplacements of Fort Mississauga. A seawall had been put in to arrest years of erosion by Lake Ontario. There were new emplacements for heavy guns, there was a shot furnace, the land side earthworks had been given new timber revetments, and old stone buildings had been upgraded. The fortification would never again house a substantial force, but it once again possessed a certain style.

June 10, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Waldo Emerson](#). The letter would be posted with a note added on the 15th.

Concord, 10 June 1843

Dear Henry,

It is high time that you had some token from us in acknowledgment of the parcel of kind & tuneful things you sent us, as well as of your permanent rights in us all. The cold weather saddened our gardens & our landscape here almost until now but todays sunshine is obliterating the memory of such things. I have just been visiting my petty plantation and find that all your grafts live excepting a single scion and all my new trees, including twenty pines to fill up interstices in my "Curtain," [Emerson had had a shield of pines planted in the angle of the roads to the east of his home, to protect it from prevailing winds.] are well alive. The town is full of Irish & the woods of engineers with theodolite & red flag singing out their feet & inches to each other from station to station. Near Mr. Alcott's [this was the Hosmer Cottage] the road is already begun. [The Fitchburg railroad was crossing the highway near that point.]— From Mr A. & Mr Lane at Harvard we have yet heard nothing. They went away in good spirits having sent "Wood Abram" & Larned & Wm Lane before them with horse & plough a few days in advance of them to begin the spring work. Mr Lane paid me a long visit in which he was more than I had ever known him gentle & open, and it was impossible not to sympathize with & honour projects that so often seem without feet or hands. They have near a hundred acres of land, which they do not want, & no house, which they want first of all. But they account this an advantage, as it gives them the occasion they so much desire of building after their own idea. In the event of their attracting to their company a carpenter or two, which is not impossible, it would be a great pleasure to see their building which could hardly fail to be new & beautiful. They have 15 acres of woodland with good timber. El-lery Channing is excellent company and we walk in all



directions He remembers you with great faith & hope thinks you ought not to see Concord again these ten years, that you ought to grind up fifty Concords in your mill & much other opinion & counsel he holds in store on this topic. Hawthorne walked with me yesterday P.m. and not until after our return did I read his “Celestial Railroad” which has a serene strength which one cannot afford not to praise,—in this low life.

Our Dial thrives well enough in these weeks. I print W.E.C.’s “Letters” or the first ones, [an unfinished Youth of the Poet and Painter which praised the scenery of the Merrimac River and the Artichoke River near Newbury, while satirizing Cambridge and Boston.] but he does not care to have them named as his for a while. They are very agreeable reading, & their wisdom lightened by a vivacity very rare in the D.— [S. G.] Ward [at that time a Boston banker] too has sent me some sheets on architecture, whose good sense is eminent. I have a valuable manuscript — a sea voyage, from a new hand, which is all clear good sense, and I may make some of Mr Lane’s graver sheets give way for this honest story, otherwise I shall print it in October. I have transferred the publishing of the Dial to Jas. Munroe & Co. Do not, I entreat you, let me be in ignorance of any thing good which you know of my fine friends Waldo & Tappan Tappan writes me never a word. I had a letter from H. James, promising to see you, & you must not fail to visit him. I must soon write to him, though my debts of this nature are perhaps too many. To him I much prefer to talk than to write. Let me know well how you prosper & what you meditate. And all good abide with you!

R.W.E.

15 June— Whilst my letter has lain on the table waiting for a traveller, your letter & parcel has safely arrived. I may not have place now for the Winter’s Walk in the July Dial which is just making up its last sheets & somehow I must end it tomorrow — when I go to Boston. I shall then keep it for October, subject however to your order if you find a better disposition for it.— I will carry the order to the faithless booksellers [Bradbury & Soden]. Thanks for all these tidings of my friends at N. Y. & at the Island.— & love to the last. I have letters from Lane at “Fruitlands” & from Miss Fuller at Niagara. Miss F. found it sadly cold & rainy at the Falls.

[Margaret Fuller](#) later, in SUMMER ON THE LAKES, IN 1843, attributed some thoughts about the [Niagara Falls](#) to this date:

Niagara, June 10, 1843.

Since you are to share with me such foot-notes as may be made on the pages of my life during this summer’s wanderings, I should not be quite silent as to this magnificent prologue to the, as yet, unknown drama. Yet I, like others, have little to say, where



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the spectacle is, for once, great enough to fill the whole life, and supersede thought, giving us only its own presence. "It is good to be here," is the best, as the simplest, expression that occurs to the mind.

We have been here eight days, and I am quite willing to go away. So great a sight soon satisfies, making us content with itself, and with what is less than itself. Our desires, once realized, haunt us again less readily. Having "lived one day," we would depart, and become worthy to live another.

We have not been fortunate in weather, for there cannot be too much, or too warm sunlight for this scene, and the skies have been lowering, with cold, unkind winds. My nerves, too much braced up by such an atmosphere, do not well bear the continual stress of sight and sound. For here there is no escape from the weight of a perpetual creation; all other forms and motions come and go, the tide rises and recedes, the wind, at its mightiest, moves in gales and gusts, but here is really an incessant, an indefatigable motion. Awake or asleep, there is no escape, still this rushing round you and through you. It is in this way I have most felt the grandeur, — somewhat eternal, if not infinite.

At times a secondary music rises; the cataract seems to seize its own rhythm and sing it over again, so that the ear and soul are roused by a double vibration. This is some effect of the wind, causing echoes to the thundering anthem. It is very sublime, giving the effect of a spiritual repetition through all the spheres.

When I first came, I felt nothing but a quiet satisfaction. I found that drawings, the panorama, &c. had given me a clear notion of the position and proportions of all objects here; I knew where to look for everything, and everything looked as I thought it would.

Long ago, I was looking from a hill-side with a friend at one of the finest sunsets that ever enriched, this world. A little cowboy, trudging along, wondered what we could be gazing at. After spying about some time, he found it could only be the sunset, and looking, too, a moment, he said approvingly, "That sun looks well enough"; a speech worthy of Shakespeare's Cloten, or the infant Mercury, up to everything from the cradle, as you please to take it.

Even such a familiarity, worthy of Jonathan, our national hero, in a prince's palace, or "stumping," as he boasts to have done, "up the Vatican stairs, into the Pope's presence, in my old boots," I felt here; it looks really *well enough*, I felt, and was inclined, as you suggested, to give my approbation as to the one object in the world that would not disappoint.

But all great expression, which, on a superficial survey, seems so easy as well as so simple, furnishes, after a while, to the faithful observer, its own standard by which to appreciate it. Daily these proportions widened and towered more and more upon my sight, and I got, at last, a proper foreground for these sublime distances. Before coming away, I think I really saw the full wonder of the scene. After a while it so drew me into itself



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as to inspire an undefined dread, such as I never knew before, such as may be felt when death is about to usher us into a new existence. The perpetual trampling of the waters seized my senses. I felt that no other sound, however near, could be heard, and would start and look behind me for a foe. I realized the identity of that mood of nature in which these waters were poured down with such absorbing force, with that in which the Indian was shaped on the same soil. For continually upon my mind came, unsought and unwelcome, images, such as never haunted it before, of naked savages stealing behind me with uplifted tomahawks; again and again this illusion recurred, and even after I had thought it over, and tried to shake it off, I could not help starting and looking behind me.

As picture, the falls can only be seen from the British side. There they are seen in their veils, and at sufficient distance to appreciate the magical effects of these, and the light and shade. From the boat, as you cross, the effects and contrasts are more melodramatic. On the road back from the whirlpool, we saw them as a reduced picture with delight. But what I liked best was to sit on Table Rock, close to the great fall. There all power of observing details, all separate consciousness, was quite lost.

Once, just as I had seated myself there, a man came to take his first look. He walked close up to the fall, and, after looking at it a moment, with an air as if thinking how he could best appropriate it to his own use, he spat into it.

This trait seemed wholly worthy of an age whose love of *utility* is such that the Prince Puckler Muskau suggests the probability of men coming to put the bodies of their dead parents in the fields to fertilize them, and of a country such as Dickens has described; but these will not, I hope, be seen on the historic page to be truly the age or truly the America. A little leaven is leavening the whole mass for other bread.

The whirlpool I like very much. It is seen to advantage after the great falls; it is so sternly solemn. The river cannot look more imperturbable, almost sullen in its marble green, than it does just below the great fall; but the slight circles that mark the hidden vortex seem to whisper mysteries the thundering voice above could not proclaim, — a meaning as untold as ever.

It is fearful, too, to know, as you look, that whatever has been swallowed by the cataract is like to rise suddenly to light here, whether uprooted tree, or body of man or bird.

The rapids enchanted me far beyond what I expected; they are so swift that they cease to seem so; you can think only of their beauty. The fountain beyond the Moss Islands I discovered for myself, and thought it for some time an accidental beauty which it would not do to leave, lest I might never see it again. After I found it permanent, I returned many times to watch the play of its crest. In the little waterfall beyond, Nature seems, as she often does, to have made a study for some larger design. She delights in this, — a sketch within a sketch, a dream within a dream. Wherever we see it, the lines of the great buttress in



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the fragment of stone, the hues of the waterfall copied in the flowers that star its bordering mosses, we are delighted; for all the lineaments become fluent, and we mould the scene in congenial thought with its genius.

People complain of the buildings at Niagara, and fear to see it further deformed. I cannot sympathize with such an apprehension: the spectacle is capable of swallowing up all such objects; they are not seen in the great whole, more than an earthworm in a wide field.

The beautiful wood on Goat Island is full of flowers; many of the fairest love to do homage here. The Wake-robin and May-apple are in bloom now; the former, white, pink, green, purple, copying the rainbow of the fall, and fit to make a garland for its presiding deity when he walks the land, for they are of imperial size, and shaped like stones for a diadem. Of the May-apple, I did not raise one green tent without finding a flower beneath.

And now farewell, Niagara. I have seen thee, and I think all who come here must in some sort see thee; thou art not to be got rid of as easily as the stars. I will be here again beneath some flooding July moon and sun. Owing to the absence of light, I have seen the rainbow only two or three times by day; the lunar bow not at all. However, the imperial presence needs not its crown, though illustrated by it.

General Porter and Jack Downing were not unsuitable figures here. The former heroically planted the bridges by which we cross to Goat Island and the Wake-robin-crowned genius has punished his temerity with deafness, which must, I think, have come upon him when he sunk the first stone in the rapids. Jack seemed an acute and entertaining representative of Jonathan, come to look at his great water-privilege. He told us all about the Americanisms of the spectacle; that is to say, the battles that have been fought here. It seems strange that men could fight in such a place; but no temple can still the personal griefs and strifes in the breasts of its visitors.

No less strange is the fact that, in this neighborhood, an eagle should be chained for a plaything. When a child, I used often to stand at a window from which I could see an eagle chained in the balcony of a museum. The people used to poke at it with sticks, and my childish heart would swell with indignation as I saw their insults, and the mien with which they were borne by the monarch-bird. Its eye was dull, and its plumage soiled and shabby, yet, in its form and attitude, all the king was visible, though sorrowful and dethroned. I never saw another of the family till, when passing through the Notch of the White Mountains, at that moment glowing before us in all the panoply of sunset, the driver shouted, "Look there!" and following with our eyes his upward-pointing finger, we saw, soaring slow in majestic poise above the highest summit, the bird of Jove. It was a glorious sight, yet I know not that I felt more on seeing the bird in all its natural freedom and royalty, than when, imprisoned and insulted, he had filled my early thoughts with



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HERMIT

FRANCIS ABBOTT

the Byronic "silent rages" of misanthropy.

Now, again, I saw him a captive, and addressed by the vulgar with the language they seem to find most appropriate to such occasions, — that of thrusts and blows. Silently, his head averted, he ignored their existence, as Plotinus or Sophocles might that of a modern reviewer. Probably he listened to the voice of the cataract, and felt that congenial powers flowed free, and was consoled, though his own wing was broken.

The story of the Recluse of Niagara interested me a little. It is wonderful that men do not oftener attach their lives to localities of great beauty, — that, when once deeply penetrated, they will let themselves so easily be borne away by the general stream of things, to live anywhere and anyhow. But there is something ludicrous in being the hermit of a show-place, unlike St. Francis in his mountain-bed, where none but the stars and rising sun ever saw him.

There is also a "guide to the falls," who wears his title labelled on his hat; otherwise, indeed, one might as soon think of asking for a gentleman usher to point out the moon. Yet why should we wonder at such, when we have Commentaries on Shakespeare, and Harmonies of the Gospels?

And now you have the little all I have to write. Can it interest you? To one who has enjoyed the full life of any scene, of any hour, what thoughts can be recorded about it seem like the commas and semicolons in the paragraph, — mere stops. Yet I suppose it is not so to the absent. At least, I have read things written about Niagara, music, and the like, that interested *me*. Once I was moved by Mr. Greenwood's remark, that he could not realize this marvel till, opening his eyes the next morning after he had seen it, his doubt as to the possibility of its being still there taught him what he had experienced. I remember this now with pleasure, though, or because, it is exactly the opposite to what I myself felt. For all greatness affects different minds, each in "its own particular kind," and the variations of testimony mark the truth of feeling.²⁰

I will here add a brief narrative of the experience of another, as being much better than anything I could write, because more simple and individual.

"Now that I have left this 'Earth-wonder,' and the emotions it excited are past, it seems not so much like profanation to analyze my feelings, to recall minutely and accurately the effect of this manifestation of the Eternal. But one should go to such a scene prepared to yield entirely to its influences, to forget one's little self and one's little mind. To see a miserable worm creep to the brink of this falling world of waters, and watch the trembling of its own petty bosom, and fancy that this is made alone to act upon him excites — derision? No, — pity."

As I rode up to the neighborhood of the falls, a solemn awe

20. "Somewhat avails, in one regard, the mere sight of beauty without the union of feeling therewith. Carried away in memory, it hangs there in the lonely hall as a picture, and may some time do its message. I trust it may be so in my case, for I *saw* every object far more clearly than if I had been moved and filled with the presence, and my recollections are equally distinct and vivid." Extracted from Manuscript Notes of this Journey left by Margaret Fuller. — ED.



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imperceptibly stole over me, and the deep sound of the ever-hurrying rapids prepared my mind for the lofty emotions to be experienced. When I reached the hotel, I felt a strange indifference about seeing the aspiration of my life's hopes. I lounged about the rooms, read the stage-bills upon the walls, looked over the register, and, finding the name of an acquaintance, sent to see if he was still there. What this hesitation arose from, I know not; perhaps it was a feeling of my unworthiness to enter this temple which nature has erected to its God.

At last, slowly and thoughtfully I walked down to the bridge leading to Goat Island, and when I stood upon this frail support, and saw a quarter of a mile of tumbling, rushing rapids, and heard their everlasting roar, my emotions overpowered me, a choking sensation rose to my throat, a thrill rushed through my veins, "my blood ran rippling to my fingers' ends." This was the climax of the effect which the falls produced upon me, — neither the American nor the British fall moved me as did these rapids. For the magnificence, the sublimity of the latter, I was prepared by descriptions and by paintings. When I arrived in sight of them I merely felt, "Ah, yes! here is the fall, just as I have seen it in a picture." When I arrived at the Terrapin Bridge, I expected to be overwhelmed, to retire trembling from this giddy eminence, and gaze with unlimited wonder and awe upon the immense mass rolling on and on; but, somehow or other, I thought only of comparing the effect on my mind with what I had read and heard. I looked for a short time, and then, with almost a feeling of disappointment, turned to go to the other points of view, to see if I was not mistaken in not feeling any surpassing emotion at this sight. But from the foot of Biddle's Stairs, and the middle of the river, and from below the Table Rock, it was still "barren, barren all."

Provoked with my stupidity in feeling most moved in the wrong place, I turned away to the hotel, determined to set off for Buffalo that afternoon. But the stage did not go, and, after nightfall, as there was a splendid moon, I went down to the bridge, and leaned over the parapet, where the boiling rapids came down in their might. It was grand, and it was also gorgeous; the yellow rays of the moon made the broken waves appear like auburn tresses twining around the black rocks. But they did not inspire me as before. I felt a foreboding of a mightier emotion to rise up and swallow all others, and I passed on to the Terrapin Bridge. Everything was changed, the misty apparition had taken off its many-colored crown which it had worn by day, and a bow of silvery white spanned its summit. The moonlight gave a poetical indefiniteness to the distant parts of the waters, and while the rapids were glancing in her beams, the river below the falls was black as night, save where the reflection of the sky gave it the appearance of a shield of blued steel. No gaping tourists loitered, eyeing with their glasses, or sketching on cards the hoary locks of the ancient river-god. All tended to harmonize with the natural grandeur of the scene.



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I gazed long. I saw how here mutability and unchangeableness were united. I surveyed the conspiring waters rushing against the rocky ledge to overthrow it at one mad plunge, till, like toppling ambition, o'er-leaping themselves, they fall on t' other side, expanding into foam ere they reach the deep channel where they creep submissively away.

Then arose in my breast a genuine admiration, and a humble adoration of the Being who was the architect of this and of all. Happy were the first discoverers of Niagara, those who could come unawares upon this view and upon that, whose feelings were entirely their own. With what gusto does Father Hennepin describe "this great downfall of water," "this vast and prodigious cadence of water, which falls down after a surprising and astonishing manner, insomuch that the universe does not afford its parallel. 'Tis true Italy and Swedeland boast of some such things, but we may well say that they be sorry patterns when compared with this of which we do now speak."



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1844

[Margaret Fuller](#) recollected [Francis Abbott](#) some 13 years after he had drowned near his log cabin below [Niagara Falls](#) while bathing, observing that “there is something ludicrous in being the [hermit](#) of a show-place.” (Come on, Margaret — what’s the point in being a hermit if you can’t get the tourists to look at you?)



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1846

April: From [Mexico](#), [Josiah Gregg](#) initiated a correspondence with Dr. George Engelmann of St. Louis, Missouri.²¹ He would be providing plant specimens quite new to Botany — such as the night-blooming cactus *Cereus greggii*.

The end of the Canadian Rebellion had eased border tensions without the new redoubts of [Fort Niagara](#)'s ever having needed to be tested. Troops stationed there had often been called away for other duties elsewhere. The United States government had been becoming more and more reluctant to pay the expenses of a garrison to man this old fortification. At this point the post was once more abandoned, in favor of something that seemed much more important, to wit, making this War on Mexico.



"War is God's way of teaching Americans geography."

— Ambrose G. Bierce



US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

The New England [Yearly Meeting](#) of Friends would declare that what the US was attempting by violence to bring about in Mexico was to "reestablish slavery where it had already been abolished."

Back on his plantation in South Carolina, surrounded by his slaves, retired government official and private citizen Joel Roberts Poinsett opposed this war. In Mexico, meanwhile, an American soldier found a Mexican girlfriend. Then he discovered his officer on top of her and made the serious mistake of threatening this man. Perhaps this officer was one of those who had been trained in Secretary of War Poinsett's vastly improved West Point academy. His comrades were drawn up into a standard three-sided square for his execution, but although he urged them to shoot straight and not make him suffer —and although, as under normal circumstances, one or two of the muskets to be used by the firing squad had been loaded randomly with powder but no ball in order to make it easier for the soldiers to commit this act— evidently his comrades were reluctant to aim at him. So, after the volley he was still conscious. The officer, rather than dispatch the condemned as per usual with his own pistol applied to the back of the neck, had two of the enlisted men recharge their muskets and fire at short range directly into their comrade's head as he lay on the ground. One of the men wrote home, that this time they really blew his head apart. —It must have looked like a poinsettia. The record does not indicate what happened to the Mexican, where she spent her next *Noche Buena*. We do not have a record which indicates what impact there was on the war against Mexico, that former Minister to Mexico, former Secretary of War Poinsett, on his plantation in South Carolina surrounded by his slaves, was counseling against it.

21. Dr. George Engelmann (1809-1884) of Frankfort on the Main, Germany had emigrated to St. Louis as a physician and botanist, and in 1856 would organize the St. Louis Academy of Science.



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"[A nation is] a group of people united by a mistaken view about the past and a hatred of their neighbors."

— E. Renan, *QU'EST-CE QU'UNE NATION?*
March 11, 1882



May 24, Sunday: [Keturah Green Wiley](#) died.

Forces under General Zachary Taylor captured [California](#), California.

Many [tourists](#) of this era were making a pilgrimage to [Niagara Falls](#), and many of them were publishing about the experience. What follows is three days from the journal of Thomas Swann Woodcock,²² one of the people who took this tour.

Left New York in the Steam Boat Albany at 7 0 Clock A.M. for the City of Albany the Distance is 145 Miles and the fare is \$3 Meals extra. there are two lines of Boats up the River, one being a day and the other a Night line, the night line leaves at 5 O'Clock and is fitted up with elegant Berths for sleeping and is certainly the most convenient way of travelling, unless as in my case the Traveller has not previously been up the river, and is desirous of seeing, its highly picturesque scenery. Our Boat though not the swiftest and most elegant of the line, is still a very handsome affair, she is upwards of 200 feet long, and has an Engine of 200 horse power, she has boilers on both sides of her, the quantity of Wood consumed in a trip is enormous, and being pine, seems to burn as fast as it can be put in, unlike the steam Boats in the Irish channel, her Machinery is all on deck, and ascending a flight of steps, there is another deck called the promenade Deck, it is supported by pillars, and has an awning spread over it to keep off the rays of the Sun, as she has her Machinery on Deck, it allows her to have a cabin the whole of her length, for though some of her Machinery must

22. Woodcock had been born in Manchester, England in 1805 and had come to New-York about 1830. We know that in 1834 he did an engraving of Andrew Jackson by use of a ruling machine. After working in Philadelphia, from about 1840 to 1846 he was in Brooklyn, established as an engraver and print publisher. While there he was a director of the Brooklyn Apprentices Library. His portrait, painted by George Woodward, is in the Brooklyn Museum. In this year, coming into an inheritance, he was vacationing in American tourism and would then return to England to enjoy his inheritance.



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unavoidably come through it is so boxed up as to be no detriment to her appearance, in the forward part, is a bar room where Gentlemen can obtain refreshments, and lounge on the settees, as it is against the rules of the Boat to lounge in the Dining Cabin, the Cabin immediately aft is the Ladies Saloon or retiring room, next is the Ladies Cabin, in which Gentlemen in Company with Ladies, may enjoy their society, the Dining Cabin which is very large fills the rest of the space, this is well fitted up. Between the windows in this Cabin are some large and very respectable oil pictures, by Native Artists, contrary to the custom prevailing in Europe the helmsman is forward instead of aft, which enables him to have a better lookout, he has a small room elevated above the Deck and entirely separate [sic] from the passengers, the helmsman or Pilot has three assistants the wheel being double and requiring two men to each wheel. After leaving New York, the first object worthy of notice is the Palisades a remarkable range of steep rocks, of the kind called by Geologists Trap, the height varies from 15 feet to 550 and extends up the River for a distance of 20 Miles. at the commencement of the highest of these rocks once stood Fort Lee, elevated above 300 feet from the River, after Washington evacuated N. Y. he drew off his Army to this place, which he had also to evacuate after the loss of the Garrison of Fort Washington, which is situated about 2 Miles higher up on the opposite Bank, and 12 Miles distant from the City of New York. Tarry Town is 27 Miles, near this place Andre the Spy was taken, he was afterwards executed at Tappan a small Village on the opposite Side of the River, the Banks of the River thus far are sprinkled with Gentlemens Houses, and all being painted white, are very much relieved by the vast profusion of trees which surround them, at the distance of 33 Miles is situated the village of Sing-sing or Mount pleasant, this is the location of the State Prison, it is plainly seen from the Steam Boat, being only a few feet from the shore, it is built of white marble and has a very handsome appearance, prisoners sent here are not allowed to converse with each other, and although they work together are not allowed to communicate even by signs, they are lodged separate [sic] and take their meals in their cell. at 43 Miles is situated the village of Peekskill, on the east side, this is the entrance to the High lands, the river is here so locked in by the land that a stranger cannot tell in what direction the River runs, the true Channel is by far the narrowest, in the war of the Revolution, a British Ship took the creek for the River and did not find her mistake until she got aground, at the top of the ___ Creek and about 2 Miles from the River Thos. Wallace has his Wire Mill. We now enter the High Lands by a narrow passage called the Horse race, the scenery is here very beautiful, the Mountains are very lofty and completely covered with trees, here and there may be observed flats very little elevated above the present level of the river, and at no very remote period have been channels of the River, we pass an elevated Rock called St. Anthony's nose.



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The next point of attraction is the West Point Military Academy, it is situated on a level plot of. Ground and elevated about 188 feet above the River and is completely surrounded by Mountains, at this season of the year it is a most lovely spot though very cold in the Winter, the distance is 53 Miles. Newburgh is the next Town, and is a very thriving place, it is the first landing after passing through the high lands, and as none other is practicable it must be the Depot for the Country produce, the impossibility of a competetor [sic] rising up, is on account of the formidable barrier presented by Nature, it is situated on the declivity of a hill, sloping gradually to the shore. I could perceive many new buildings springing up, opposite to this place is Fishkill Landing and up the Creek is the Matteawan Factory. it is distant 68 Miles from N. Y. After passing Many Villages, we arrive at Catskill, behind which is the celebrated Mountains, one of the Peaks of which is elevated about 3,000 feet above the River, there is an Hotel upon it and it is a place of resort during the Summer Months, the landing is 112 Miles from New York. about 6 Miles further up is the City of Hudson. behind this City, "Marshalls" of Manchester have a large Calico printing Establishment, this is the highest point to which Ships can go, a Whaling Compy [sic] fits out Ships from this place. after passing here, the River becomes thickly studded with small islands, which though very picturesque render the navigation difficult.

The Overslaugh 3 Miles from Albany has so many sand bars that Steam Boats often get aground, at 8 O'Clock P. M. we arrived at Albany. it was now quite dark, consequently we could not judge of its appearance, particularly as there are no lamps in the Streets, our passage it will be perceived was about 13 hours, a long one, as it has frequently been done in 10 hours. Albany is the Capital of the State. The State House or Capitol occupies a very elevated and commanding situation, the assembly were in session but we had not time to listen to their discussions, the City is built on a declivity but with the exception of the public Buildings there is nothing particular to admire.



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May 25, Sunday: The wagon train of the Graves family from Marshall County, [Illinois](#), crossed the Missouri River at St. Joseph. From this day until the 29th, the wagon train of the Russell family would be held up by high water at the Big Blue River near present-day Marysville, Kansas. Levinah Murphy and her extended family joined this wagon train.

[Waldo Emerson](#)'s 43d birthday.



Louis-[Napoléon](#) Bonaparte escaped imprisonment in Ham in France and made his way toward London.

Now follows the second day's observations I am copying from the journal of Thomas Swann Woodcock, one of the [tourists](#) who took the popular tour of this decade to the [Niagara Falls](#).

Left Albany at 9 O'Clock by the Railway for Schenectady, a distance of 17 Miles, for which 62.5 cents is charged, we were drawn by Horses about 2 Miles, being a steep ascent, we then found a Steam Engine waiting for us (built by Stephenson and called the John Bull) the road is then quite level for 14 Miles through the poorest Country I ever saw, the sand banks are so loose that trees have been cut down and laid upon them, to promote vegetation and prevent the sand from drifting, the sides of the Road are plentifully strewn with wild flowers, amongst which I perceived the blue lupin in great abundance, we at length stop to have our carriages attached to a stationary Engine which lets us down an inclined plane, from the top of which we have a fine view of Schenectady and part of the Valley of the Mohawk. it is chiefly built of Bricks and is in a low flat situation, and I think a place of no great importance, we arrived at this place at half past 10. from the cars we proceeded to enter our names for the Packet Boat, these boats are about 70 feet long, and with the exception of the Kitchen and bar, is occupied as a Cabin, the forward part being the ladies Cabin, is seperated [sic] by a curtain, but at meal times this obstruction is removed, and the table is set the whole length of the boat, the table is supplied with every thing that is necessary and of the best quality with many of the luxuries of life, on finding we had so many passengers, I was at a loss to know how we should be accomodated [sic] with berths, as I saw no convenience for anything of the kind, but the Yankees ever awake to contrivances have managed to stow more in so small a space than I thought them capable of doing, the way they proceed is as follows - The Settees that go the whole length of the Boat on each side unfold and form a cot bed. the space between this bed and the ceiling is so divided as to make room for two more, the upper berths are merely frames with sacking bottoms, one side of which has two



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projecting pins, which fit into sockets in the side of the boat, the other side has two cords attached one to each corner, these are suspended from hooks in the ceiling, the bedding is then placed upon them, the space between the berths being barely sufficient for a man to crawl in, and presenting the appearance of so many shelves, much apprehension is always entertained by passengers when first seeing them, lest the cords should break, such fears are however groundless, the berths are allotted according to the way bill the first on the list having his first choice and in changing boats the old passengers have the preference, the first Night I tried an upper berth, but the air was so foul that I found myself sick when I awoke, afterwards I choose an under berth and found no ill effects from the air, these Boats have three Horses, go at quicker rate and have the preference in going through the locks, carry no freight, are built extremely light, and have quite Genteel Men for their Captains, and use silver plate. the distance between Schenectady and Utica is 80 Miles the passage is \$3.50 which includes board, there are other Boats called Line Boats that carry at a cheaper rate, being found for half of the price mentioned, they are larger Boats carry freight have only two horses, and consequently do not go as quickly, and moreover have not so select a company, some Boats go as low as 1 cent per Mile the passengers finding themselves. The Bridges on the Canal are very low, particularly the old ones, indeed they are so low as to scarcely allow the baggage to clear, and in some cases actually rubbing against it, every Bridge makes us bend double if seated on anything, and in many cases you have to lie on your back. the Man at the helm gives the Word to the Passengers. "Bridge" "very low Bridge" "the lowest in the Canal" as the case may be, some serious accidents have happened for want of caution, a young English Woman met with her death a short time since, she having fallen asleep with her head upon a box had her head crushed to pieces, such things however do not often occur, and in general it affords amusement to the passengers who soon immatate [sic] the cry, and vary it with a command, such as "All Jackson men bow down." after such commands we find few Aristocrats, an anecdote is told of one man, who after travelling on the Canal got under the bed in his sleep, and when partially awake durst not lift up his head. a man who slept near me, got up early in the Morning and going to his comrades berth drew his hand gently over his face, at the same time calling out "Bridge" when he suddenly started up amidst the laughter of the passengers. The Canal was within sight of the Mohawk River, in some cases only the towing path being between, the wall rising from the Channel of the river and being elevated 20 or 30 feet. This is the Valley of the Mohawk. so narrow is it in some places that there seems scarcely room for the River the Road and the Canal which pass through it, the scenery is not unlike that of the Valley of the Wye in Derbyshire. the land is perfectly flat and of a fine alluvial soil, said to be the richest in the State, it is held almost exclusively by persons of German extraction who preserve



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the language and customs of their ancestors, this level region is called the German Flats, and is so famous for its fertility that nothing can induce the Germans to sell, it is valued at \$200 per acre, though the uplands can be bought for \$40. these Germans are enemies to all improvement, are very industrious, but not very cleanly in their habits, in the broad parts of the Valley there are some Dutch Villages which have a very neat appearance, at Frankfort 10 miles from Utica we commence on the long level which is 69.5 miles without a lock, we arrived in Utica at about half 8 O'Clock AM. I had resolved to stay at this place and visit Trenton Falls, but owing to the unfavourable [sic] state of the Weather I concluded to proceed, our Boat went close alongside the Packet for Rochester, so we had only to step out of one onto the other, which as soon as we had done she immediately sailed, we paid \$6.50 each the distance being 160 Miles, our living was first rate, we passed through Utica, which seemed to be a large and important place, we could see five Rows of Brick Stores, and the place had an appearance of prosperity, at this place we took on several passengers who had come by stage, having left the Railway Station at the same time we did, they certainly got in about 5 hours before us but the roads were so bad that they complained of sore bones, and preferred the boat which though not the quickest, is decidedly the most pleasant way of travelling, one of these was a Liverpool Lumber Merchant on his way to Canada, but who was going out of his route to see the "Falls." Three Miles West of Utica we pass through the Village of Whitesboro' [Whitestown] where Marshalls Weaving Factory is located, the Mill can be seen at a distance, surrounded by small cottage Houses, there was a person of the Name of John Harper who left Manchester about 3 years before I did who settled in this place. It was my Intention to have called upon him, as however I could not do so, I jumped off the Boat near the bridge ran into a store and enquired if he still lived there, after ascertaining that fact I got on board again, this is a most beautiful village, and is called an Old Settlement, but you will judge of its age when I tell you that it was a Wilderness in 1785. it is called after White a native of Connt [sic] who was the first settler. here is a manual labour [sic] school which is in successful operation, the student paying his own expenses by the sweat of his brow, after passing through various settlements with high sounding names of Indian and Classical origin we arrived at Syracuse, famous for its Salt Manufactories. the vats for the evaporation of the Water from the Salt by the suns rays may be seen on both sides of the Canal on the Western extremety [sic] of the village, light wooden roofs are kept ready to slide over these vats in bad weather, and the salt is taken out once in two or three days. Salina is about 1.5 Miles from Syracuse, and as its name indicates, is a Salt establishment, the mode of evaporation here is that of boiling. Liverpool is about 6 Miles distant on the edge of the Lake (which is about 6 Miles long and 2 broad), these and other villages are solely employed in the Manufacture of Salt, there



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is a canal here that runs to Oswego on Lake Ontario, which had I have known at the time, I would have taken as the best route to the "falls," as I should then have touched at Toronto the Capital of U.C. We then pass through Palmyra, and over the Grand Embankment 72 feet high and extending 2 Miles, we at length arrived at Rochester at Eleven O Clock P.M. and went immediately to the Clinton Hotel where we staid for the Night, this City is elevated 500 feet above the Hudson River, from which place it is distant 270 Miles, it was first settled in 1812, and in 1827 contained 10,818 Inhabitants, the Genesee River runs through the City, the Canal being carried over by means of an aquaduct [sic]. it consists of ten arches of stone. the water rushes under with fearful rapidity, so much as to force itself up the battlements of the bridge, the water power is estimated at 38,400 horses, the whole river supplies 20,000 cubic feet a Minute; and the combined height of the falls of Rochester and Carthage is 280 feet, the water of course is so rapid as to prevent navigation. After getting breakfast we proceeded to the Village of Brighton in order to find out David Miller an acquaintance [sic] of G Woodwards. it is situated about 3 Miles from the City. when we arrived there we found he had removed 3 or 4 Miles to the Northward, and accordingly shaped our course that way, after taking the wrong road for about 2 Miles, we had to retrace our Steps, proceeding in our right course we soon got into the Woods, which are now for the first time thought worth the time to subdue, everything here is new but the Forests, log houses of all grades from the Whitewashed, neatly fenced in, to the black looking, mud-surrounded hovel. the roads are of the kind called corderoy [sic] consisting of logs of Wood rolled together. I have for the first time observed the practise of Girdling that is cutting the bark all around the tree so as to prevent the rising of the sap. Capt Basil Hall calls them the Banquos of the Forest. I have seen few large trees, in that I have been disappointed, but here they certainly attain their full growth, but they are so closely packed together that they cannot send out side shoots but run towering up to a great height, when left standing by themselves the wind soon blows them down, it is also next to impossible to pass through these woods, on account of the vast quantities of decayed matter, the trees of former Generations lie in vast heaps in all the stages of decomposition, you may observe the prostrate trunk of some deceased Monarch that is apparantly [sic] sound, but if you but step upon it, it crumbles to dust, the rays of the sun cannot penetrate these recesses, consequently there is no grass or underwood, it is only in the thinly wooded country that cattle can find pasture. still when this land is cleared, it yields enormous crops. We at length reached the house of David Miller, for house it was, and the only one near, the rest being merely log huts, on making enquiries at the door we learned that he had that Morning gone to the State of Michigan, to see his Father who was lying dangerously ill, we found his daughter at home who desired us to walk in and be seated. without asking us any



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questions she proceeded to get us some refreshments ready, and very soon placed them on the table, this from a girl not over 13 years of age, was what I should not have suspected. I found her to be very intelligent, it seems she was left the sole housekeeper, with a small child to take care of, we had some of the best bread served up that I ever tasted, and on asking whether it was not mixed up with milk instead of water, found that was the case, and a young Man her Uncle, who afterwards came in told me he never saw any other kind, it seems that Miller sold his other farm for \$30 per acre, it was on the banks of the canal, but had not a good house, he bought the present farm 2 years ago for \$37 with an excellent House upon it worth \$500. it consists of 51 acres, it was partially improved, he has cut down more since and has got a crop upon it, he now considers it worth with the crop as it now stands \$62. this land you must bear in mind though called cleared has an immense number of stumps upon it which will take years to eradicate, a person of the name of Pipkin has bought 200 acres of beautiful really clear land, with a Mansion upon it, for \$200 per acre, a person opposite him bought 4 acres with an house upon it for which he paid \$300 per acre, this land he told me had been worked for 20 years without putting anything upon it. Returned to Rochester in the Afternoon, took a survey of the flour Mills, which are fine stone Building of an immense size, at 5 0 Clock went on board the Canal Boat, the distance to Buffaloe [sic] is 93 Miles, 63 of which is on a level, the fare was \$3.50 but owing to opposition is now reduced to \$1.50. night soon coming on prevented me from seeing much of the Country, the next morning we found ourselves in the Neighbourhood of Lockport. at this place there are five double locks of excellent workmanship which elevate us 60 feet, we are therefore 560 above the Hudson and have attained the same elevation as the "falls" from which place we are only distant about 12 Miles. The following inscription I copied from the stone work on entering the lock. Erie Canal- "Let posterity be excited to perpetuate our free Institutions, and to make still greater efforts, than their Ancestors, to promote Public Prosperity by the recollection that these works of Internal Improvement were achieved by the spirit and perseverance of Republican Freemen." after going through the deep cutting immediately following the locks we arrive at Pendleton, the Entrance to the Tonawanda creek, which I think is very unwisely used for navigation their being a strong current after Rains which must greatly impede the Boats that are coming up, this Creek is used for 12 Miles, we then arrive at Tonawanda, and obtain the first glimpse of Canada and the Niagara River which now is only seperated [sic] from the Canal by an embankment, we here only see one half of the River, Grand Island being in the centre, this Island is about 12 Miles long and is covered with Oak timber, a Boston Company have Steam Saw Mills erected for the purpose of sawing it up into plank, two Ships have just been built here, the first that have been built for the Lake Trade. It was on this Island that Major Noah of New



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York wished to collect the scattered tribes of Israel. We next arrive at Black Rock, from which place we can distinctly see the buildings on the Canada Side, one large Building had written upon it in large letters "Cloth Establishment", the reason is obvious. John Bull can sell Cloth to his Brother Jonathan Free of duty, consequently he crosses the river for his clothes. Jonathan in turn accomodates [sic] John by letting him have his tea duty free, at half past 2 0 Clock we arrived at Buffaloe [sic], and proceeded to the Mansion House where we put up. Buffaloe is a lake Port. Steam Boats run from here to the far West, a few years ago and this was considered as such, but now nothing short of the Pacific Ocean can be considered such, from the description I had read of this place by Capt. Basil Hall, I had expected to find it a thriving though a small place, and the buildings to be chiefly of wood, but instead of this I found Main Street to be entirely of brick and the Stores really splendid, fine brick buildings were springing up in all directions, at the foot of Main Street there was 17 Brick Stores nearly finished and I was told that they were all ready rented at \$700 a year, how these rents are to be paid I really cannot tell as the Port must be closed 5 Months in the year, the streets were most abominably muddy, they not being paved, a circumstance not to be Wondered at when we find that they cannot speculate in paving stones. I observed that Gentlemen wore their Pantaloon inside their boots to protect them from the mud, this is the place for speculation, the people are all going mad, in the bar rooms of the Hotels plans of intended Towns are stuck up in the same style that play bills are stuck up in Manchester. these plans look very pretty indeed, the lots are laid out quite regular, and every thing cut and dried. a parcel of these lots are put up at Auction, terms so much per cent, say 10 at the day of sale 30 per cent in 2 Months the rest on Bond and Mortgage [sic]. the buyer gets a title, they are then puffed off in the newspapers and the individuals go round peddling them, sells them for an advance, pockets the difference and speculates again, sensible men agree that these places will not be settled upon during the present Generation but it serves to speculate upon and for all use full purposes land in the Moon would do just as well, in this way Chicago has been got up, but they have managed to build some houses there, it is 1,000 Miles from Buffaloe, and lots sell for from \$70 to 250 dollars a foot, that is, if a lot of Ground is 25 feet by 100 or so it would be called 25 feet, now this Buffalo is a most corrupt place as regards money matters, the whole of these fine buildings being build upon Credit, should an alteration in the value of money take place, and it most assuredly will, then these men cannot pay their Mortgages, the Banks will then claim them and as I firmly believe the Banks cannot redeem their paper now how will it be then? there is a person here by the name of Rathbun who they say has built up the place, he is the greatest builder, the Greatest Stage Contractor in fact he is at the head of everything and I see by the papers has lately offered Niagara Falls for sale for



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Manufacturing purposes, now this man is admitted on all hands to be unable to pay his debts and yet his notes pass current for money, the people declaring that they dare not let him break as it would ruin the whole place. a law has been passed in this state to prevent the circulation of small notes, ones and twos are at present uncurrent and illegal and 3s after next August, yet ones are quite in common circulation and those too of other States, none of which are legal under \$5. to sum up the matter it is a fine place, a splendid pyramid, but it is based on a peg. in looking out from my bed room Window I observed that the chimneys had all stages to support them and on paying attention to this circumstance I found that it was to protect them from the violence of the Gales from the Lake which I am told blow with great violence, the waves from the lake last fall made a complete breach in the canal wall and washed sand onto the bank on the other side, in fact in coming along the canal I saw plenty of evidence of the violence of the Wind in the fact of so many trees lying prostrate the roots completely torn out of the Ground. here I also found great numbers of emigrants ready to embark for the West. great numbers of poor Germans and also many Wealthy Yankees who having sold excellent farms to the Eastward were going into a Wilderness because the land was so very rich. these persons take with them their families, and as the land is so very rich and requires so little cultivation, they become a set of idle vagabonds and but one step removed from the Indians. I have however been told that many of these families are actually suffering from want, they are on the land but the land wants clearing and untill [sic] that is done they have to buy their food and I am told that pork is selling at 2 shillings per lb. and flour at \$15 per barrel.

May 30, Friday: Peter Carl Fabergé was born.

Now follows the third day's observations I am copying from the journal of Thomas Swann Woodcock,²³ one of the [tourists](#) who took the popular tour of this decade to the [Niagara Falls](#).

Left Buffaloe [sic] for the "Falls" on board the steam boat Victory, the distance is about 20 Miles and the fare 75 cents this includes the Stage from Chipewa [sic] to the falls, we passed on the American side of Grand Island, on going down the River the Rapidity of the current evidently increased, when we got to the end of the island we made for the American Side and landed some of our passengers, we then crossed over to the British side, in doing so I found the current so strong that I saw if any accident should happen to our Machinery we should go down the River and over the falls, but on inspecting the boat I found she had good Anchors and chain cable, so that there was no danger, we were then about 3 Miles from the rapids, and when in the Middle of the river I discovered the vapour [sic] rising from the "falls," but as yet could hear no noise. I forgot to

23. After this vacation in American tourism, the heir Woodcock would return to England and would reside in Manchester until his death in 1863.



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state that our Liverpool friend who left us at Rochester joined us again on board the Steam Boat at Buffalo. at Chipewa a creek of that Name runs into the River but as it runs in the direction of the falls, the current of the River has become too strong to make headway against it, accordingly a canal has been cut inclining up the River which intersects the Creek and allows the Steam Boat to easily get into the creek, we took stage at this place for the Pavillion [sic] which we reached about 10 Clock. the rapids run for about two Miles, these we did not hear until we got to them, but we could not hear the noise of the fall until we were within half a Mile of it, this is accounted for by the fact of a strong easterly wind prevailing at the time and we being to the Eastward of the falls. we could however hear the dead sound of the falls distinctly above the rushing of the rapids which now are very violent. I have said that the Rapids run for about 2 Miles but I presume that the actual rapids that is where the stream is intercepted by rocks, only commence here, on arriving at the house we alighted. our Liverpool Friend entered his name at this House but it was too Aristocratic for either G B or myself so we concluded to recross to the American side. However we dined here with our friend and immediately afterwards went to the falls, we went by a footpath down the field in the rear of the Hotel, and soon found ourselves in full view of the Mighty Cataract. we however had to descend a steep brow at foot of which the river rolled when we found ourselves on a flat rock immediately above the falls, but we have to walk a few yards down the river on to what is called Table Rock before we can look down into the boiling cauldron into which the River pours its never failing stream, my first impression was that of disappointment, the falls though immense falling far short of my expectations, this disappointment is occasioned by the great breadth of the river which takes away from the height of the fall, this feeling however soon gave way to that of admiration, which grew upon me every time I turned my attention to it. the fall on the American side if placed by itself would be considered sublime, but when compared with the "Great horse-shoe fall" on the British side it sinks into insignificance, the water of the American was discoloured [sic] from the recent rains having swelled the tributary creeks, but the Great fall still rolled on in its primitive purity, the great body of the water being of a dark blue colour [sic], both sides of which in the shallow water being tinged yellow from the same cause as the other, the dimensions round the curve is estimated at 700 yards, which falls in one unbroken sheet, the height of 174 feet perpendicular, the surface of the rocks is so perfectly flat near the falls that it seems surprising that the place where you stand is not overflown. this flatness continues past table rock which as I have said is below the falls, in fact the strata seems perfectly flat, and if dipping at all does so to the north East, both sides of the River correspond in the strata of the rocks, the water seems only restrained by the force of the current, and the river has evidently cut itself a Channel through the



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Limestone rocks, so flat are the rocks above the fall that I could stand with my heels dry and the River rushing against my toes, after feasting our eyes with the fall from our present site (Table Rock) we proceeded to the House above the Stair case in order to hire dresses and a guide to take us under the sheet, we had to strip ourselves entirely and put on flannel shirts woolen socks canvas trousers Boots an oil case coat and hat, the coat was tied close round our necks and bound round our waists, we had to pay 75 cents each, a Negro Guide then led the way, we descended by a spiral stair case which was supported by a tall mast, the whole being covered in we descend without fear, a rough path way winds along the foot of the precipice, amongst heaps of loose stones, one heap is higher than the rest, from the summit of which we obtain a view of the cavern, on arriving at this point G. B. declared he would not go under, on hearing this the Negro said if he would give him his hand he would pull him under, calling out not to be faint hearted for ladies had been under, on hearing this he concluded to follow. the Negro now told us to hold down our heads and hold our hats on but the noise was so great that he had to speak several times and practically by his signs we at length understood him, grasping hold of Mr. Robinsons hand he dragged him forward. I followed and G. B. brought up the rear, (in order to convey a more accurate idea I copy an engraving of the scene, the only correct one I have yet observed.) we then descended the heap of stones shown in the drawing and encountered the volumes of spray that was driven up by the wind with a force I did not expect, when fairly under the sheet, the force with which the water struck us was sufficient to knock a weakly person down, but further on where I suppose the water came through a crack in the rivers bed the water struck us with still greater force, the path was composed of loose stones and in some places very narrow so much so that I leaned against the rock for more security. The reason was now obvious why the guide told us to hold down our heads, the water coming with such force as to blind us if we did not, we at length got to what is called "termination rock" where there is a sudden descent and the path is no longer practicable, we were now brought to a stand and looking up found a tremendous rock overhanging us forming a projection of 40 feet, the height from Table rock to this point as Measured by Capt Basil Hall is 153 feet, the point where the fall strikes the water in the basin cannot be seen on account of the foam and spray, the guide books advise us not to allow ourselves to be agitated by the sight or the sound of the cataract, but this I think is a quality possessed only by the guide, it is said to be difficult to breathe under the sheet. I did not find it so, though G. B. said he did. I thought of Fanny Kemble at the time and looked out for the eds [sic] she says abound here, but saw none, we now retraced our steps which seemed more difficult than on our entrance. G.B. took the lead the path being so narrow that our Guide could not pass us, the stones are so loose that they give way under our feet, and I walked on the edge of my boots with my shoulder



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against the rock, when getting to that part where the fall is the strongest. G B fell down but soon recovered himself, on seeing him fall I shuddered with horror believing that he would roll into the chasm, it was however merely the work of an instant and we walked rapidly from under the sheet, and proceeded to the staircase, when arrived at the top we found several Ladies and Gentlemen who laughed heartily at our grotesque appearance, we got into the house and threw off our clothes and rubbed our bodies dry, for notwithstanding our coats being tied round our necks the water washed through, we dressed as quickly as we could and then found ourselves quite warm and comfortable, signed our names in the book got certificates from the guide, (his perquisite) we now found ourselves in excellent spirits and journeyed on to the ferry, the road to which winds down the steep rocky bank, here Mr. R. parted with us, and G B. and I crossed in the ferry boat to the American Side. I could not have thought it possible to have gone over so near to the "Falls." our boat was a large one, and the oars made fast so that they could not wash away, the violence of the current certainly pitched and rolled her considerable, and we went so near the fall that the spray fell pretty heavily upon us. I think the finest view is obtained from the Middle of the river, we here see the full extent of both falls. I cannot find words to describe the appearance of this awe inspiring spectacle. I shall therefore not attempt to do so, and so exclaim with Fanny Kemble "Oh! God, it is indescribable." Landed on the opposite side we ascend by another spiral staircase, and walking a few yards we find ourselves in Manchester called so I presume from its having no one feature like it, two Inns and 20 or 30 houses constitute the entire place, perhaps they do intend to make it into a Manufacturing Town, at all events they have advertised the falls for that purpose, but it never will succeed, the fact of its being so far from a Market, would I think prevent it, did not the long and severe Winters present another obstacle. We now proceeded to view the American Cataract from above, there is a communication from the Main land to Goat Island, by means of a Bridge constructed over the rapids, it rests on Wooden Piers sunk with stones, it extends to a Rock about 300 yards from the Shore, and from thence to the Island, so that this fall has only 300 yards uninterrupted current, but even this is broken up by smaller rocks. On the Rock before mentioned a Paper Mill is erected, which is not very likely to be short of Water, there is also a toll house where we have to pay 2 shillings for the season, underneath the bridge the rapids have a frightfull [sic] appearance. Goat Island is thickly Wooded and has a very beautiful walk round it, here I found the Wild Gooseberry and currant, very abundant, this Island is 185 feet above the Gulf. Nicholas Biddle, the Great Bank Man, has at his own expense erected a communication with the base of the Island so that we can walk between the two 'falls.' a flight of stone steps takes us to the Stair case (a spiral one). it is 80 feet high, there is also 88 feet of stone stairs at the Bottom. I went down this



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place, and found a couple of hammers placed at the bottom for the purpose of breaking specimens from the rocks, so I made use of one of them, and got a specimen. There is also another bridge from the Island to a rock immediately above the Great Horse Shoe Fall. on this rock is erected a stone tower which completely overlooks the fall, there has also been a projecting stage quite over the "Fall," but it has got out of order, the guards being broken off and one of the beams nearly broken in two, it was also so slippery with the spray that I would not venture upon it. Mr. R. went out about half way, but turned back. the Evening being now pretty far advanced we shaped our course to our Inn, the next Morning we went over the same rounds again, and afterwards crossed over to the Canadian Side, at the ferry took a waggon [sic] for the Burning Spring about half a mile above the falls, we took the route of Lundy's Lane where a very sharp contest took place during the last War, in that Engagement the British lost 878 and the Americans 860. the Burning Spring is covered with a Shed, which a Man has in charge, and you pay one shilling each for his trouble in showing it. this water is overcharged with sulphurated [sic] hydrogen gas, and smells very disagreeable, the gass [sic] is given out very plentifully and burns with a bright flame. we went to the Village of Chippewa, prior to our embarking again for Buffalo. this place was also the scene of an Engagement, we took leave of his Majestys dominions and proceeded up the River again, we left at half past 2 O'Clock. Slept at the Mansion House, the next Morning walked to the Indian Reserve, and went 3 or 4 Miles into it, this is a strip of Land 30 Miles long and 6 wide, and is entirely occupied by the Indians. they have not the power to sell the land to any persons but those constituting the Government of the U. S. consequently they cannot be easily plundered, these Indians are civilized and have a Church and School, the land is of excellent quality and some of them pretend to cultivate it. we saw one ploughing with a yoke of oxen, and another driving his squaw in a waggon, he had an excellent span of Horses, one of their Houses had a Portico before it, but most of the others were Miserable hovels, we tried to get into conversation with them, but could not succeed, they are a very proud haughty race, and though I wished to have some chat with them, I was glad to see them hold their heads so high. I afterwards saw some specimens in Buffalo that would talk to you as long as you could wish, but they were drunken Vagabonds and so filthy that I would not go near them, the Men can mostly speak the English Language, but will not do so when they can avoid it, the Women or as they are called "Squaws" neither can nor will do so, and pride themselves on their ignorance, they all wear blankets and undergarments, and a kind of pantaloons, some of them tastefully decorated, they also wear hats, though many are without. they are of a dark brown colour with long black hair and a Chinese cast of countenance, some of them had very regular features, and a bright complexion and dressed very neatly, although numbers passed us we could not detect any of them looking at us, but



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passed by us as they would do a post, we saw two or three papooses (or children) one in a kind of basket work strapped upon its Mothers back, the others were in the blanket on their Mothers back, in point of appearance the bulk of the squaws bore the greatest resemblance to Gypseys [sic]. we observed many of them heavily laden taking baskets to Buffalo for sale, the Men are principally occupied in the summer time by fishing, and in the Winter by Hunting, some of them were fine looking, and were generally, dressed like other people, tho some had their blanket made into a coat, they have 17 chiefs and there is about 20 Men to a chief, they have a pension from the U. S. which will prevent them from starving, and if they were industrious might be in affluent circumstances, as each man can enclose as much ground as he thinks proper. their church is a good frame building and the land is cleared round it. I copied the following inscription from a headstone the rest being only marked by sticks

IN MEMORY OF THE "WHITE WOMAN" MARY JAMISON, DAUGHTER OF THOS. JAMISON AND JANE IRWIN, BORN ON THE OCEAN BETWEEN IRELAND AND PHILADELPHIA IN 1742 OR 3. TAKEN CAPTIVE AT MARSH CREEK PENNSYLVANIA IN 1755. CARRIED DOWN THE OHIO, ADOPTED INTO AN INDIAN FAMILY IN 1759. REMOVED TO GENESEE RIVER, WAS NATURALIZED IN 1817. REMOVED TO THIS PLACE IN 1831, AND HAVING SURVIVED TWO HUSBANDS AND FIVE CHILDREN, LEAVING THREE STILL ALIVE, SHE DIED SEPT. 19TH 1833 AGED ABOUT 91 YEARS HAVING A FEW WEEKS BEFORE EXPRESSED A HOPE OF PARDON THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

Returned to Buffaloe and made further enquiries respecting a passage to Port Stanley. found it was quite uncertain when the Steam Boat would arrive. She having broken her beam and gone into Sandusky to repair, and there being only this boat that touched on the Canada shore, owing to an Easterly Wind prevailing no sailing vessels could come down the lake, and all the Port Stanley Craft had left the Port save one, and she was only going 40 Miles up the Lake, consequently I should still be 140 Miles from John Walthew. therefore, much to my regret, I had to make up my mind to submit to the disappointment and make the best of my way home. I therefore made a parcel of what I had for him and left it with a Mr. Ratcliffe to be forwarded when Mr. Mason should arrive, and on the Morning of the 2nd of June I left Buffalo, and arrived in New York safe and sound – taking the same route that I came.

June 13, Sunday: John Murphy, 13 years of age, did odd jobs for a Judge Porter. Sent across the [Niagara River](#) in a canoe to Chippawa on an errand, he badly miscalculated the winds and the current. After struggling with the canoe for some 20 minutes but getting no closer to shore, he abandoned the canoe and attempted to swim to the land. He was within 100 yards of shore when he went over the Horseshoe Falls (while fragments of the canoe would be found, no body parts would be recovered).



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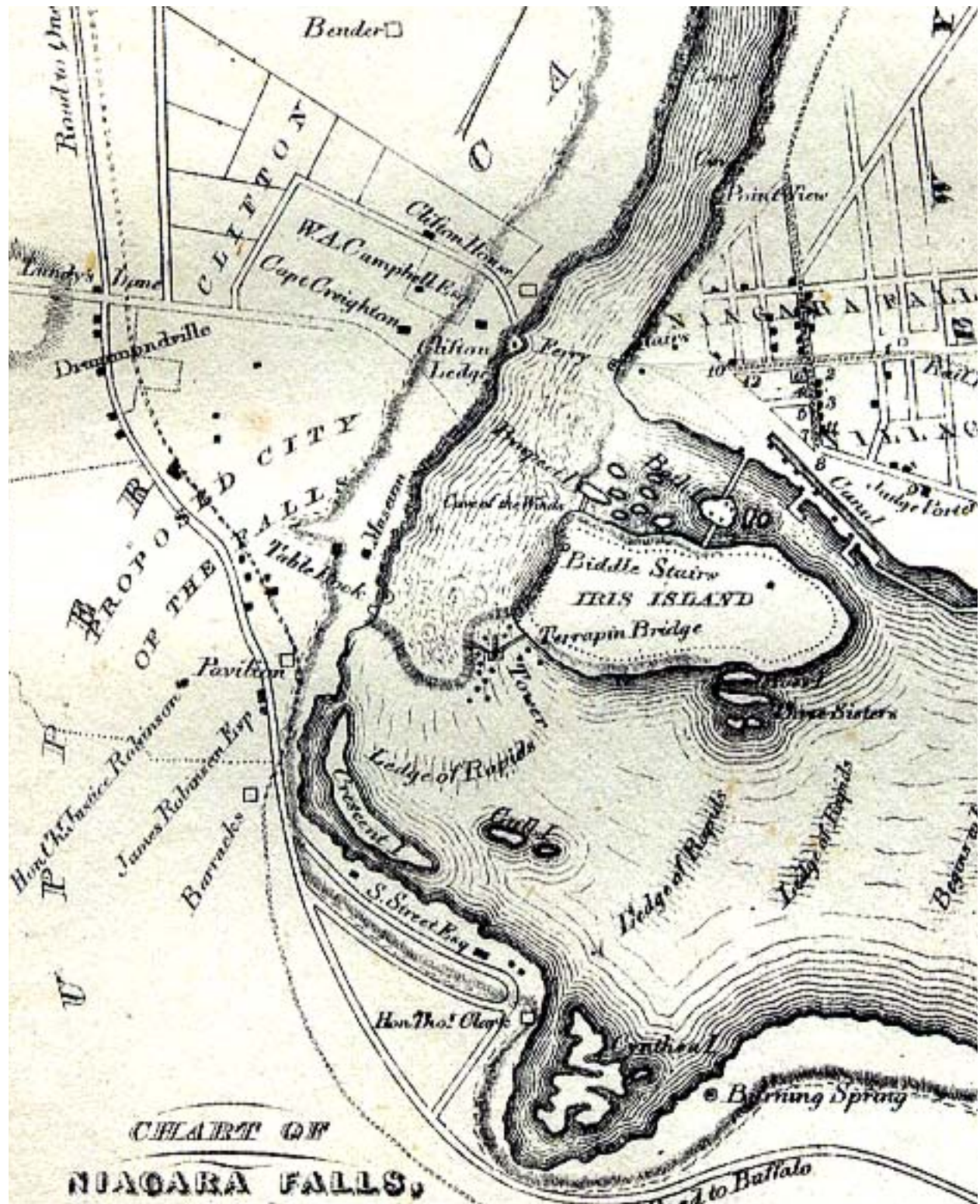


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1848

Walt Whitman visited New Orleans and came to “possess to some extent a personal and saunterer’s knowledge of St. Charles street”:

[NEXT SCREEN]



[NEXT SCREEN]



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"Specimen Days"

THROUGH EIGHT YEARS

In 1848, '49, I was occupied as editor of the "daily Eagle" newspaper, in Brooklyn. The latter year went off on a leisurely journey and working expedition (my brother Jeff with me) through all the middle States, and down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Lived awhile in New Orleans, and work'd there on the editorial staff of "daily Crescent" newspaper. After a time plodded back northward, up the Mississippi, and around to, and by way of the great lakes, Michigan, Huron, and Erie, to [Niagara Falls](#) and lower Canada, finally returning through central New York and down the Hudson; traveling altogether probably 8000 miles this trip, to and fro. '51, '53, occupied in house-building in Brooklyn. (For a little of the first part of that time in printing a daily and weekly paper, "the Freeman.") '55, lost my dear father this year by death. Commenced putting LEAVES OF GRASS to press for good, at the job printing office of my friends, the brothers Rome, in Brooklyn, after many MS. doings and undosings — (I had great trouble in leaving out the stock "poetical" touches, but succeeded at last.) I am now (1856-'7) passing through my 37th year.

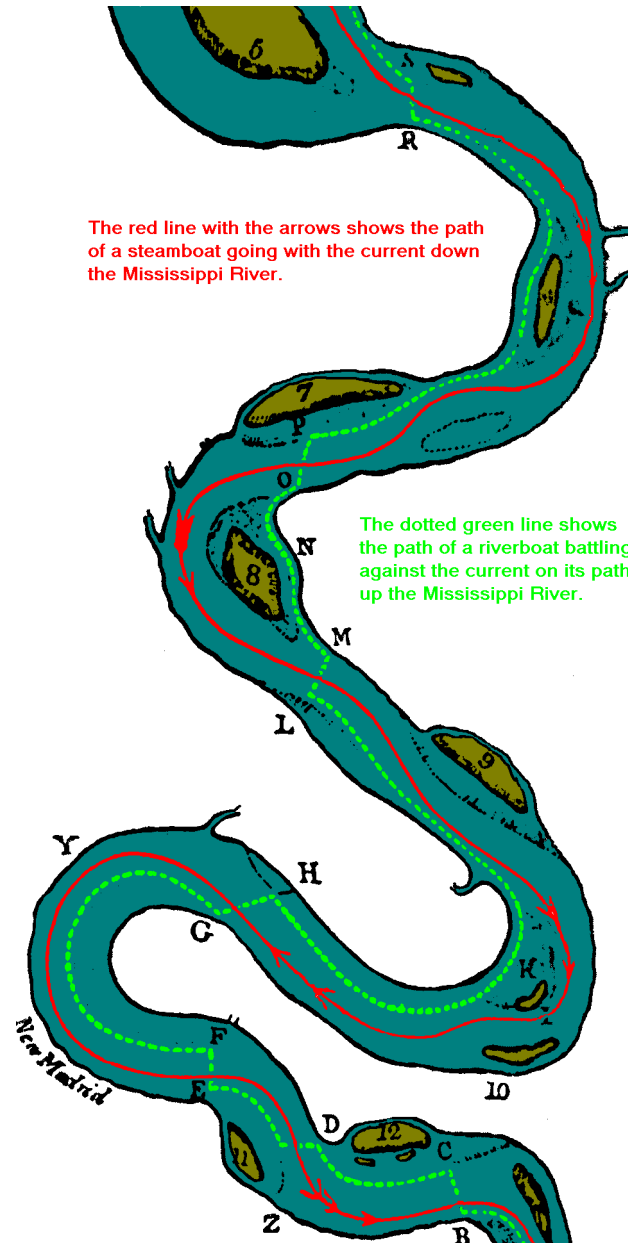
SAILING THE MISSISSIPPI AT MIDNIGHT

Vast and starless, the pall of heaven
Laps on the trailing pall below;
And forward, forward, in solemn darkness,
As if to the sea of the lost we go.
Now drawn nigh the edge of the river,
Weird-like creatures suddenly rise;
Shapes that fade, dissolving outlines
Baffle the gazer's straining eyes.
Towering upward and bending forward,
Wild and wide their arms are thrown,
Ready to pierce with forked fingers
Him who touches their realm upon.
Tide of youth, thus thickly planted,
While in the eddies onward you swim,
Thus on the shore stands a phantom army,
Lining forever the channel's rim.
Steady, helmsman! you guide the immortal;
Many a wreck is beneath you piled,
Many a brave yet unwary sailor
Over these waters has been beguiled.
Nor is it the storm or the scowling midnight,
Cold, or sickness, or fire's dismay —
Nor is it the reef, or treacherous quicksand,
Will peril you most on your twisted way.
But when there comes a voluptuous languor,
Soft the sunshine, silent the air,
Bewitching your craft with safety and sweetness,
Then, young pilot of life, beware.

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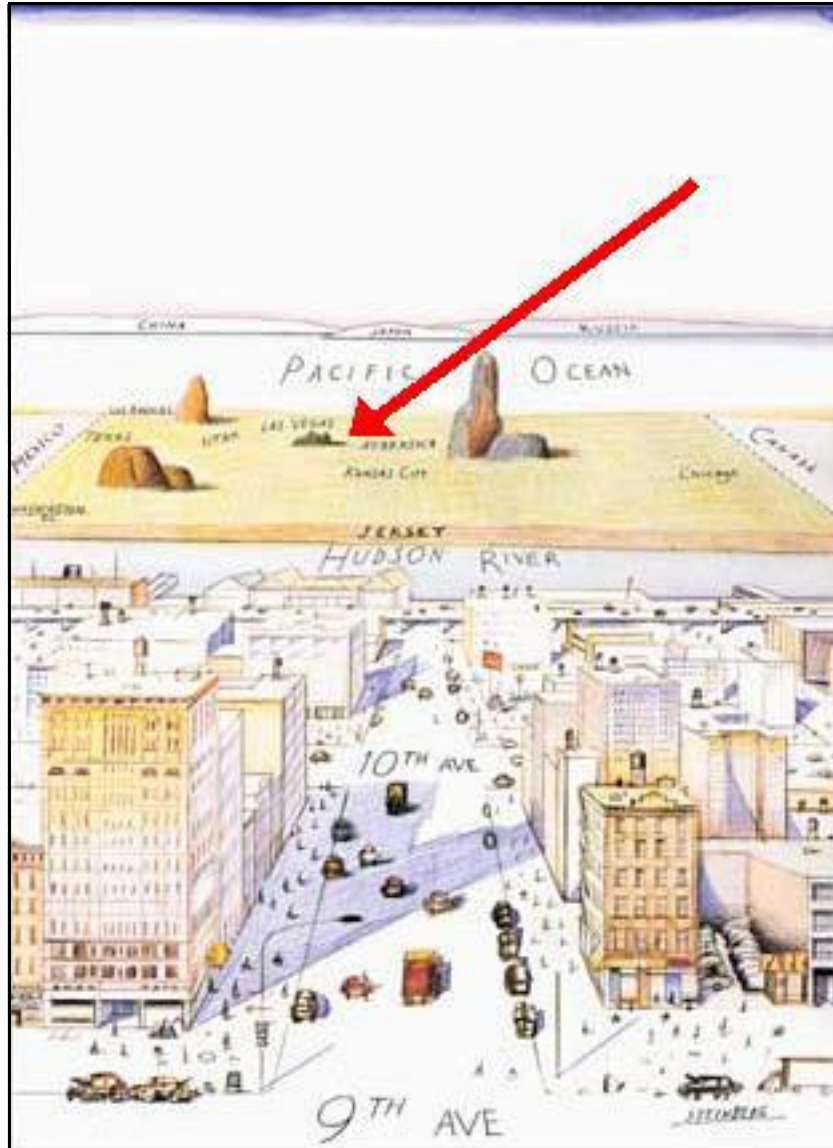


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Since 1846 the US army had been fully involved in the Mexican War, and [Fort Niagara](#) had been standing abandoned. At this point the US Army conquered Mexico City and what would become our Southwest and our [California](#) were ceded. The garrison of this New York border fort would therefore be returning to their duties in the vicinity of the [Niagara Falls](#).



[Mexico](#) was not only fighting a national war against the United States of America, it was fighting a race war against its Maya peoples of the Yucatán peninsula. After the Armistice, a number of US soldiers enlisted in



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the Mexican Army to help it kill off the Maya. They were not, however, as successful as they had anticipated:



It was easy to kill the strange white men, for they were big and fought in line, as if they were marching.... We hid behind trees and rocks wherever we could, that they might not see us, and so we killed them.



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Lecture²⁴

TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS

DATE	PLACE	TOPIC
February 17, Wednesday, 1847, at 7PM	Concord ; Unitarian Church, Vestry	“A History of Myself” (II)
January 3, Monday, 1848, at 7PM	Concord ; Unitarian Church, Vestry	“An Excursion to Ktaadn”
January 14, Friday, 1848	Concord	“Friendship”

24. From Bradley P. Dean and Ronald Wesley Hoag’s THOREAU’S LECTURES BEFORE WALDEN:
AN ANNOTATED CALENDAR.

**Narrative of Event:**

Although minutes of individual meetings of the Concord Lyceum were not recorded during the 1847-48 lecture season, a retrospective summary of the course by the Lyceum secretary, A.G. Fay, lists [Henry Thoreau](#) along with eight other speakers (THE MASSACHUSETTS LYCEUM DURING THE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE, page 163). Thoreau, in fact, lectured three times before the Concord Lyceum during the season, on 3 January, 26 January, and 16 February. On 29 December 1847 he wrote to [Waldo Emerson](#), then traveling in England: “Next week I am going to give an account to the Lyceum of my expedition to Maine. [Theodore Parker](#) lectures tonight — We have had [E.P.] Whipple on Genius — too weighty a subject for him [H.N.] Hudson too has been here with a dark shadow in the core of him, and his desperate wit so much indebted to the surface of him” (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 199). On 12 January 1848, Thoreau reported on his lecture in another letter to Emerson: “I read a part of the story of my excursion to Ktadn to quite a large audience of men and boys, the other night, whom it interested. It contains many facts and some poetry” (CORRESPONDENCE, page 204). Thoreau’s brief description of the lecture’s content belies the seriousness with which he may have regarded this lecture, the first “excursion” he delivered after saying a year earlier in the first of the two “Walden; or, Life in the Woods” lectures he delivered before his neighbors: “I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life ... to drive life into a corner, and ... if it were sublime to know it by experience and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.”²⁵

Advertisements, Reviews, and Responses:

In his diary entry of January 3, 1848, Bronson Alcott also alluded to the success of Thoreau’s lecture: “Evening — Mrs. A. accompanied me to the Lyceum where we heard a lecture from Thoreau on a jaunt of his to Kotarden, the highest mountain in Maine. — The lecture drew a lively picture of these wild scenes and of his adventures in ascending the rivers to reach the summit of Kotarden. — “²⁶ Alcott’s “Kotarden” spelling, if it reflects Thoreau’s pronunciation, suggests the same New England accent that prompted Emerson to seek a name change from Lydia to Lidian for his wife so as to avoid hearing her called “Lidier” by his neighbors. But the spelling may just as well reflect Alcott’s New England ear (compare the New England pronunciation and spelling of “Harvard,” for instance).

Description of Topic:

The relative paucity of surviving leaves from the lecture manuscript, as well as the relatively brief interval between Thoreau’s delivery of the lecture and his submission to [Horace Greeley](#) (early or mid April 1848) of the printer’s copy manuscript for the essay, suggests that Thoreau used most or all of his lecture manuscript in his printer’s copy manuscript.

25. Shanley, THE MAKING OF WALDEN, page 141.

26. Bronson Alcott, MS “Diary for 1848,” entry of 3 January, MH (*59M-308).



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March 29, Wednesday: John Jacob Astor died in New-York, with an estate of \$20,000,000 from which he had designated \$350,000 to found a public library.

Due to an ice jam upriver on the [Niagara](#), for 30 hours local people were presented with a curious image. No water was going over the [Falls](#).

[Arthur Buckminster Fuller](#), after leaving the Cambridge Divinity School of [Harvard College](#), was ordained as pastor of the Unitarian Society in Manchester, [New Hampshire](#).



[Margaret Fuller](#) reported to the [New-York Tribune](#) from Rome on the *revolutions* of that springtime season on the Italian peninsula:

Rome, March 29, 1848.

It is long since I have written. My health entirely gave way beneath the Roman winter. The rain was constant, commonly falling in torrents from the 16th of December to the 19th of March. Nothing could surpass the dirt, the gloom, the desolation, of Rome. Let no one fancy he has seen her who comes here only in the winter. It is an immense mistake to do so. I cannot sufficiently rejoice that I did not first see Italy in the winter.

The climate of Rome at this time of extreme damp I have found



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equally exasperating and weakening. I have had constant nervous headache without strength to bear it, nightly fever, want of appetite. Some constitutions bear it better, but the complaint of weakness and extreme dejection of spirits is general among foreigners in the wet season. The English say they become acclimated in two or three years, and cease to suffer, though never so strong as at home.

Now this long dark dream – to me the most idle and most suffering season of my life – seems past. The Italian heavens wear again their deep blue; the sun shines gloriously; the melancholy lustres are stealing again over the Campagna, and hundreds of larks sing unwearied above its ruins.

Nature seems in sympathy with the great events that are transpiring, – with the emotions which are swelling the hearts of men. The morning sun is greeted by the trumpets of the Roman legions marching out once more, now not to oppress but to defend. The stars look down on their jubilees over the good news which nightly reaches them from their brothers of Lombardy. This week has been one of nobler, sweeter feeling, of a better hope and faith, than Rome in her greatest days ever knew. How much has happened since I wrote! First, the victorious resistance of Sicily and the revolution of Naples. This has led us yet only to half-measures, but even these have been of great use to the progress of Italy. The Neapolitans will probably have to get rid at last of the stupid crowned head who is at present their puppet; but their bearing with him has led to the wiser sovereigns granting these constitutions, which, if eventually inadequate to the wants of Italy, will be so useful, are so needed, to educate her to seek better, completer forms of administration.

In the midst of all this serious work came the play of Carnival, in which there was much less interest felt than usual, but enough to dazzle and captivate a stranger. One thing, however, has been omitted in the description of the Roman Carnival; i.e. that it rains every day. Almost every day came on violent rain, just as the tide of gay masks was fairly engaged in the Corso. This would have been well worth bearing once or twice, for the sake of seeing the admirable good humor of this people. Those who had laid out all their savings in the gayest, thinnest dresses, on carriages and chairs for the Corso, found themselves suddenly drenched, their finery spoiled, and obliged to ride and sit shivering all the afternoon. But they never murmured, never scolded, never stopped throwing their flowers. Their strength of constitution is wonderful. While I, in my shawl and boa, was coughing at the open window from the moment I inhaled the wet sepulchral air, the servant-girls of the house had taken off their woollen gowns, and, arrayed in white muslins and roses, sat in the drenched street beneath the drenching rain, quite happy, and have suffered nothing in consequence.

The Romans renounced the *Moccoletti*, ostensibly as an expression of sympathy for the sufferings of the Milanese, but really because, at that time, there was great disturbance about the



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Jesuits, and the government feared that difficulties would arise in the excitement of the evening. But, since, we have had this entertainment in honor of the revolutions of France and Austria, and nothing could be more beautiful. The fun usually consists in all the people blowing one another's lights out. We had not this; all the little tapers were left to blaze, and the long Corso swarmed with tall fire-flies. Lights crept out over the surface of all the houses, and such merry little twinkling lights, laughing and flickering with each slightest movement of those who held them! Up and down the Corso they twinkled, they swarmed, they streamed, while a surge of gay triumphant sound ebbed and flowed beneath that glittering surface. Here and there danced men carrying aloft *moccoli*, and clanking chains, emblem of the tyrannic power now vanquished by the people; – the people, sweet and noble, who, in the intoxication of their joy, were guilty of no rude or unkindly word or act, and who, no signal being given as usual for the termination of their diversion, closed, of their own accord and with one consent, singing the hymns for Pio, by nine o'clock, and retired peacefully to their homes, to dream of hopes they yet scarce understand.

This happened last week. The news of the dethronement of Louis Philippe reached us just after the close of the Carnival. It was just a year from my leaving Paris. I did not think, as I looked with such disgust on the empire of sham he had established in France, and saw the soul of the people imprisoned and held fast as in an iron vice, that it would burst its chains so soon. Whatever be the result, France has done gloriously; she has declared that she will not be satisfied with pretexts while there are facts in the world, – that to stop her march is a vain attempt, though the onward path be dangerous and difficult. It is vain to cry, Peace! peace! when there is no peace. The news from France, in these days, sounds ominous, though still vague. It would appear that the political is being merged in the social struggle: it is well. Whatever blood is to be shed, whatever altars cast down, those tremendous problems MUST be solved, whatever be the cost! That cost cannot fail to break many a bank, many a heart, in Europe, before the good can bud again out of a mighty corruption. To you, people of America, it may perhaps be given to look on and learn in time for a preventive wisdom. You may learn the real meaning of the words FRATERNITY, EQUALITY: you may, despite the apes of the past who strive to tutor you, learn the needs of a true democracy. You may in time learn to reverence, learn to guard, the true aristocracy of a nation, the only really nobles, – the LABORING CLASSES.

And Metternich, too, is crushed; the seed of the woman has had his foot on the serpent. I have seen the Austrian arms dragged through the streets of Rome and burned in the Piazza del Popolo. The Italians embraced one another, and cried, *Miracolo! Providenza!* the modern Tribune Ciceronacchio fed the flame with faggots; Adam Mickiewicz, the great poet of Poland, long exiled from his country or the hopes of a country, looked on, while Polish women, exiled too, or who perhaps, like one nun who is here, had been



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daily scourged by the orders of a tyrant, brought little pieces that had been scattered in the street and threw them into the flames, – an offering received by the Italians with loud plaudits. It was a transport of the people, who found no way to vent their joy, but the symbol, the poesy, natural to the Italian mind. The ever-too-wise "upper classes" regret it, and the Germans choose to resent it as an insult to Germany; but it was nothing of the kind; the insult was to the prisons of Spielberg, to those who commanded the massacres of Milan, – a base tyranny little congenial to the native German heart, as the true Germans of Germany are at this moment showing by their resolves, by their struggles.

When the double-headed eagle was pulled down from above the lofty portal of the Palazzo di Venezia, the people placed there in its stead one of white and gold, inscribed with the name ALTA ITALIA, and quick upon the emblem followed the news that Milan was fighting against her tyrants, – that Venice had driven them out and freed from their prisons the courageous Protestants in favor of truth, Tommaso and Manin, – that Manin, descendant of the last Doge, had raised the republican banner on the Place St. Mark, – and that Modena, that Parma, were driving out the unfeeling and imbecile creatures who had mocked Heaven and man by the pretence of government there.

With indescribable rapture these tidings were received in Rome. Men were seen dancing, women weeping with joy along the street. The youth rushed to enroll themselves in regiments to go to the frontier. In the Colosseum their names were received. Father Gavazzi, a truly patriotic monk, gave them the cross to carry on a new, a better, because defensive, crusade. Sterbini, long exiled, addressed them. He said: "Romans, do you wish to go; do you wish to go with all your hearts? If so, you *may*, and those who do not wish to go themselves may give money. To those who will go, the government gives bread and fifteen baiocchi a day." The people cried: "We wish to go, but we do not wish so much; the government is very poor; we can live on a paul a day." The princes answered by giving, one sixty thousand, others twenty, fifteen, ten thousand dollars. The people responded by giving at the benches which are opened in the piazzas literally everything; street-peddlers gave the gains of each day; women gave every ornament, – from the splendid necklace and bracelet down to the poorest bit of coral; servant-girls gave five pauls, two pauls, even half a paul, if they had no more. A man all in rags gave two pauls. "It is," said he, "all I have." "Then," said Torlonia, "take from me this dollar." The man of rags thanked him warmly, and handed that also to the bench, which refused to receive it. "No! *that* must stay with you," shouted all present. These are the people whom the traveller accuses of being unable to rise above selfish considerations; – a nation rich and glorious by nature, capable, like all nations, all men, of being degraded by slavery, capable, as are few nations, few men, of kindling into pure flame at the touch of a ray from the Sun of Truth, of Life.



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The two or three days that followed, the troops were marching about by detachments, followed always by the people, to the Ponte Molle, often farther. The women wept; for the habits of the Romans are so domestic, that it seemed a great thing to have their sons and lovers gone even for a few months. The English – or at least those of the illiberal, bristling nature too often met here, which casts out its porcupine quills against everything like enthusiasm (of the more generous Saxon blood I know some noble examples) – laughed at all this. They have said that this people would not fight; when the Sicilians, men and women, did so nobly, they said: "O, the Sicilians are quite unlike the Italians; you will see, when the struggle comes on in Lombardy, they cannot resist the Austrian force a moment." I said: "That force is only physical; do not you think a sentiment can sustain them?" They replied: "All stuff and poetry; it will fade the moment their blood flows." When the news came that the Milanese, men and women, fight as the Sicilians did, they said: "Well, the Lombards are a better race, but these Romans are good for nothing. It is a farce for a Roman to try to walk even; they never walk a mile; they will not be able to support the first day's march of thirty miles, and not have their usual *minéstra* to eat either." Now the troops were not willing to wait for the government to make the necessary arrangements for their march, so at the first night's station – Monterosi – they did *not* find food or bedding; yet the second night, at Civita Castellana, they were so well alive as to remain dancing and vivaing Pio Nono in the piazza till after midnight. No, Gentlemen, soul is not quite nothing, if matter be a clog upon its transports. The Americans show a better, warmer feeling than they did; the meeting in New York was of use in instructing the Americans abroad! The dinner given here on Washington's birthday was marked by fine expressions of sentiment, and a display of talent unusual on such occasions. There was a poem from Mr. Story of Boston, which gave great pleasure; a speech by Mr. Hillard, said to be very good, and one by Rev. Mr. Hedge of Bangor, exceedingly admired for the felicity of thought and image, and the finished beauty of style. Next week we shall have more news, and I shall try to write and mention also some interesting things want of time obliges me to omit in this letter.

ARTHUR FULLER'S BOOK

April 3, Monday: In San Francisco, Thomas Douglas became the 1st public school teacher.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by [Horace Greeley](#) in New-York.

New-York, April 3, 1848.

My Friend Thoreau:

I have but this moment received yours of 31st ult. and was greatly relieved by the breaking of your long silence. Yet it saddens and sur-



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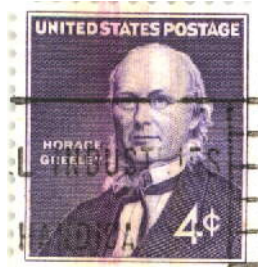
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prises me to know that your article was not paid for by Graham; and, since my honor is involved in the matter, I will see that you are paid, and that at no distant day. I shall not forget the matter, and hope you will not feel annoyed at my interference in the premises. I choose to speak about it, and don't believe Graham will choose to differ with me. Don't fear for my time; I expect to visit Philadelphia on my own business next week, and will have time to look into the matter.

As to "Katahdin and the Maine Woods," I will take it and send you the money if I cannot dispose of it more to your advantage within the week ensuing. I hope I can.

*Yours,
Horace Greeley.*

Thoreau mailed "KTAADN" to Greeley, who would soon succeed in placing it with Sartain's Union Magazine.²⁷



27. Not only Sartain's Union Magazine in five installments (July to November 1848), but also eventually extracts in Greeley's New-York Tribune (November 1848) and in The Student (January 1849).



THE MAINE WOODS: At the end of three miles, we came to the Mattaseunk stream and mill, where there was even a rude wooden railroad running down to the Penobscot, the last railroad we were to see. We crossed one tract, on the bank of the river, of more than a hundred acres of heavy timber, which had just been felled and burnt over, and was still smoking. Our trail lay through the midst of it, and was well nigh blotted out. The trees lay at full length, four or five feet deep, and crossing each other in all directions, all black as charcoal, but perfectly sound within, still good for fuel or for timber; soon they would be cut into lengths and burnt again. Here were thousands of cords, enough to keep the poor of Boston and New York amply warm for a winter, which only cumbered the ground and were in the settler's way. And the whole of that solid and interminable forest is doomed to be gradually devoured thus by fire, like shavings, and no man be warmed by it. At Crocker's log-hut, at the mouth of Salmon River, seven miles from the Point, one of the party commenced distributing a store of small cent picture-books among the children, to teach them to read, and also newspapers, more or less recent, among the parents, than which nothing can be more acceptable to a backwoods people. It was really an important item in our outfit, and, at times, the only currency that would circulate. I walked through Salmon River with my shoes on, it being low water, but not without wetting my feet. A few miles farther we came to "Marm Howard's," at the end of an extensive clearing, where there were two or three log-huts in sight at once, one on the opposite side of the river, and a few graves, even surrounded by a wooden paling, where already the rude forefathers of a hamlet lie, and a thousand years hence, perchance, some poet will write his "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." The "Village Hampdens," the "mute, inglorious Miltons," and Cromwells, "guiltless of" their "country's blood," were yet unborn.

Perchance in this *wild* spot there *will be* laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

THOMAS GRAY

HDT

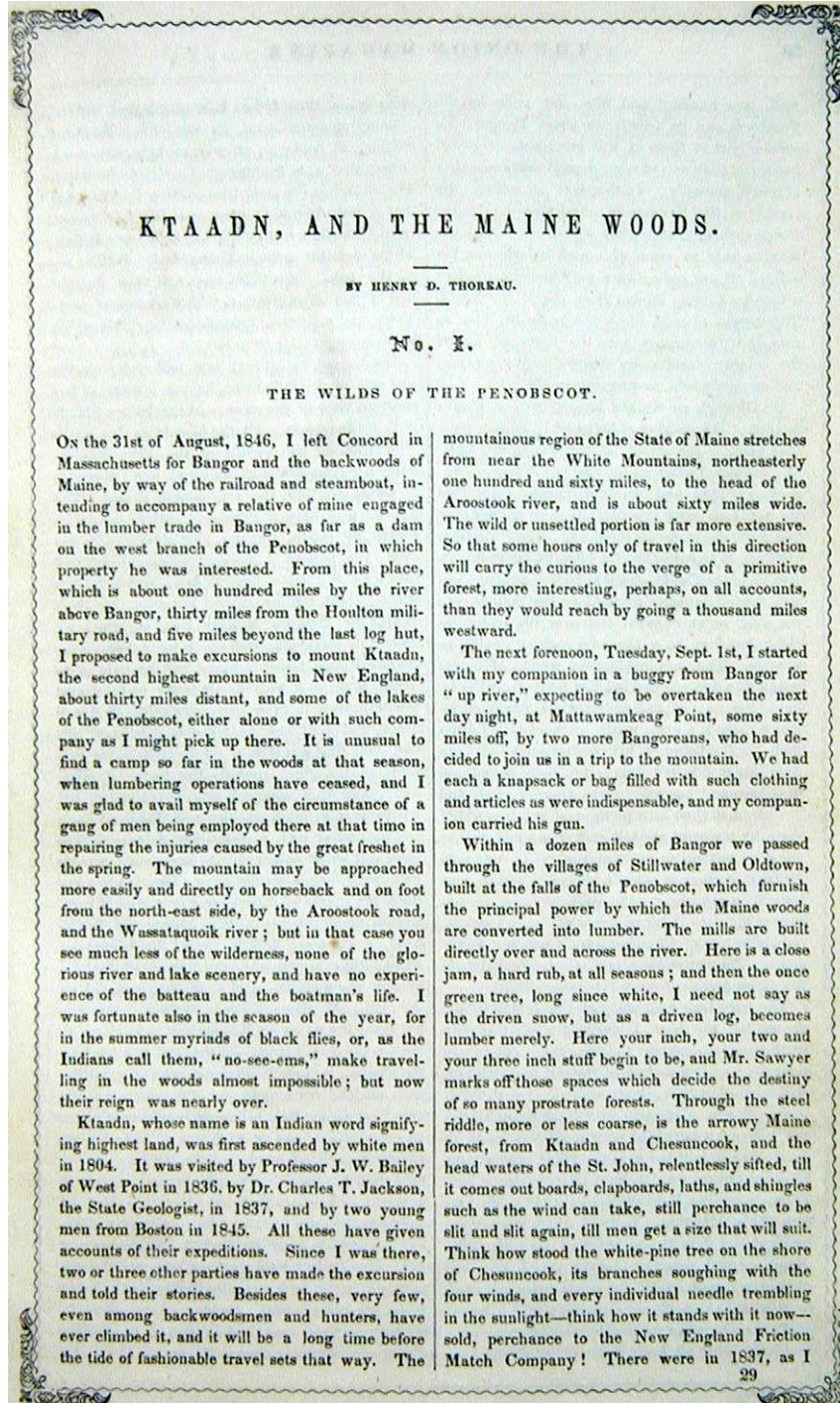
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July: Publication of "[KTAADN](#)" in the Union Magazine:



TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS



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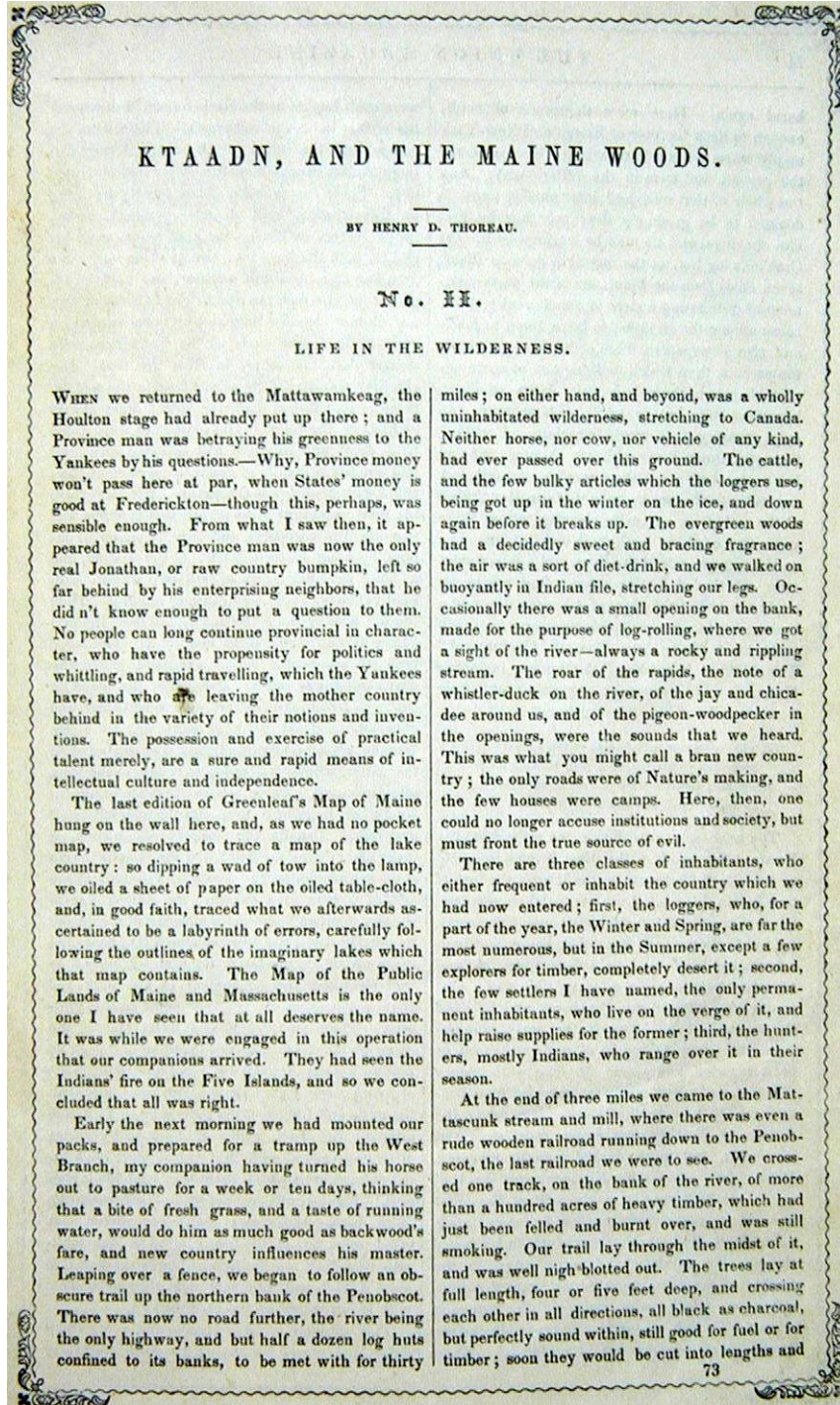
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July 11, Tuesday: "If it Bleeds, it Leads!" This appeared in the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser:

We learn that on Sunday last a little child of Mrs. White, who resides on the bank of the river, near the Falls, about five years old, while playing in a boat upon the shore, was carried out into the current. It was soon discovered by the mother, and she rushed into the stream, but it was too late – the boat and child were beyond her reach, rapidly making the descent toward the Falls, and it was with great effort that she was enabled to reach the shore, when she saw her child near the abyss and make [sic] the fearful leap, and the waters close [sic] over it forever.

NIAGARA FALLS

August: Publication of "[KTAADN](#)" in the Union Magazine:





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August 6, Sunday: The 1st suspension bridge over the [Niagara River](#) in upstate [New York](#), built by Charles Ellett, opened.

HDT

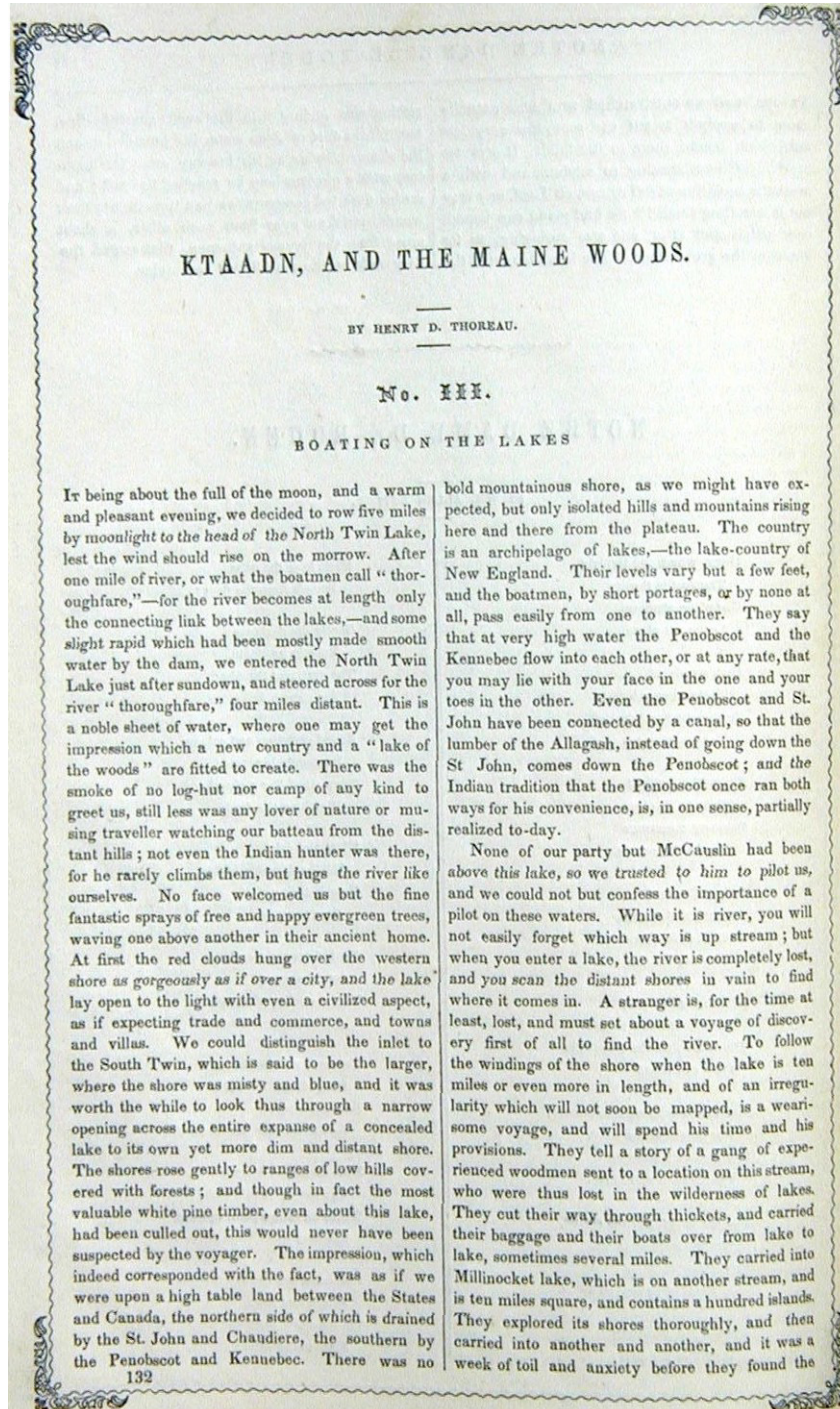
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September: Publication of "[KTAADN](#)" in the Union Magazine:



TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS

[Waldo Emerson](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) were walking together twice a week. Emerson confided the following to



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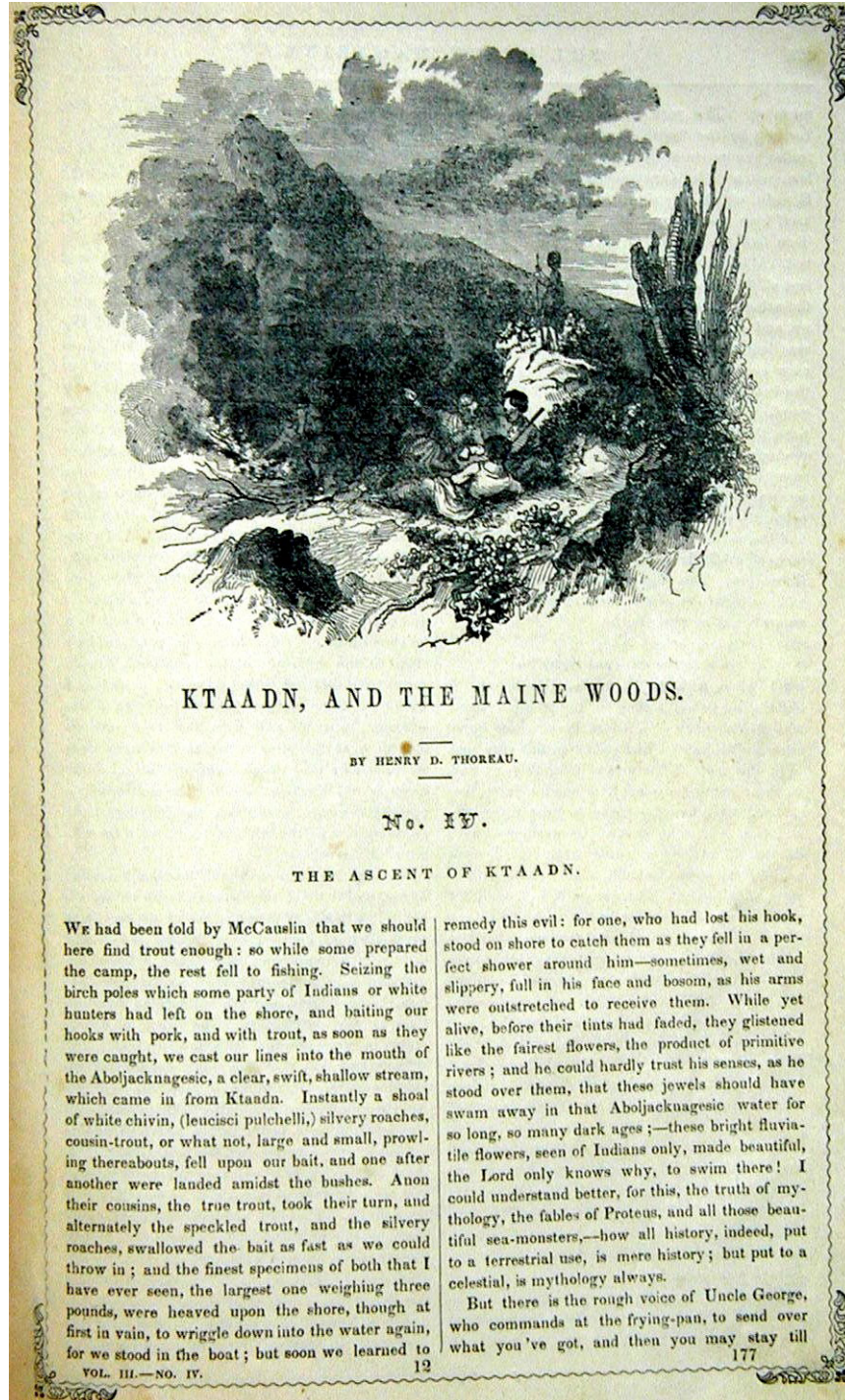
his journal (and here you can see again that the man simply could not grasp what [Henry Thoreau](#) had tried to tell him, or even that Thoreau had tried to tell him something):

I go twice a week over Concord with Ellery, &, as we sit on the steep park at Conantum, we still have the same regret as oft before. Is all this beauty to perish? Shall none remake this sun & wind, the skyblue river, the riverblue sky, the yellow meadows spotted with sacks & sheets of cranberry pickers, the red bushes, the irongray house with just the colour of the granite rock, the paths of the thicket, in which the only engineers are the cattle grazing on yonder hill; the wide straggling wild orchard in which nature has deposited every possible flavour in the apples of different trees. Whole zones & climates she has concentrated into apples. We think of the old benefactors who have conquered these fields; of the old man Moore who is just dying in these days, who has absorbed such volumes of sunshine like a huge melon or pumpkin in the sun – who has owned in every part of Concord a woodlot, until he could not find the boundaries of these, and never saw their interiors. But we say, where is he who is to save the present moment, & cause that this beauty be not lost?



An Austrian-inspired Croat army invaded Hungary and [Lajos Kossuth](#) became head of a Magyar committee of national defense.

October: Publication of "[KTAADN](#)" in the Union Magazine:





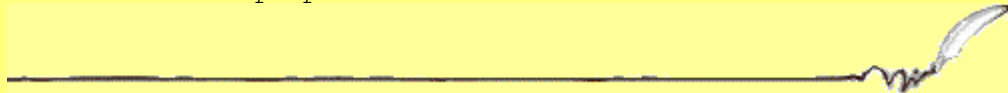
[Waldo Emerson](#) confided to his journal:

*H.T. sports the doctrines of activity: but I say, What do **we**? We want a sally into the regions of wisdom & do we go out & lay stone wall or dig a well or turnips? No, we leave the children, sit down by a fire, compose our bodies to corpses, shut our hands, shut our eyes, that we may be entranced & see truly.*

*There is in California a gold ore in great abundance in which the gold is in combination with such elements that no chemistry has yet been able to separate it without great loss. Alcott is a man of unquestionable genius, yet no doctrine or sentence or word or action of his which is excellent can be detached & quoted. He is like Channing, who possesses a painter's eye, an appreciation of form & especially of colour, that is admirable, but who, when he bought pigments & brushes & painted a landscape on a barrel head could not draw a tree so that his wife could know it was a tree. So Alcott the philosopher has not an opinion or an apothegm to produce. I shall write on his tomb, **Here lies Plato's reader**. Read he can with joy & naiveté inimitable, and the more the style rises, the more natural & current it seems to him. And yet his appetite is so various that the last book always seems to him the best. **Here lies the amateur**.*

. . .

The Beatitude of Conversation. I am afraid books do stand in our way; for the best heads are writers, and when they meet & fall into profound conversation, they never quite lose all respects of their own economy & pour out the divinest wine, but each is a little wary, a little checked, by thought of the rare helps this hour might afford him to some page which he has written. Each is apt to become abstracted & lose the remark of the other through too much attention to his own. Yet I have no book & no pleasure in life comparable to this. here I come down to the shore of the Sea & dip my hands in its miraculous waves. Here I am assured of the eternity, & can spare all omens, all prophecies, all religions, for I see & know that which they obscurely announce. I seem rich with earth & air & heaven, but the next morning I have lost my keys. To escape this economy of writers, women would be better friends; but they have the drawback of the perplexities of sex.





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1849

June 21, Thursday evening: A small party of sightseers from Buffalo had gathered on Luna Island to view the American Falls. Elizabeth DeForest, six years of age, was standing with her mother about two feet above the water, about twenty feet from the point where the water was going over the edge. At about 7:45PM, a young man known to the DeForest family, Charles Addington, tapped Lizzie teasingly on the shoulder. "I'm going to throw you in," he said. Evidently he intended only to frighten the little girl, but as he swung her body out over the water, somehow she slipped from his grasp. He immediately threw himself into the water after her and shoved her in the direction of the shore. The shrieks of Mrs. DeForest were being heard all the way to Prospect Point, nearly a quarter mile away. Another man in the party also entered the water, and attempted to reach out to the little girl. Although this second man managed to save himself by grabbing a bush on the bank, the current pulled Charles Addington and Elizabeth DeForest over the brink of the [Niagara Falls](#).

(This incident is reported under the rubric of [suicide](#) in accordance with the formal definition sponsored by Durkheim in his classic sociological treatise SUICIDE.)

[Margaret Fuller](#) reported to the [New-York Tribune](#) from a Rome under siege by the French army:

Rome, June 21, 1849.

It is now two weeks since the first attack of Oudinot, and as yet we hear nothing decisive from Paris. I know not yet what news may have come last night, but by the morning's mail we did not even receive notice that Lesseps had arrived in Paris. Whether Lesseps was consciously the servant of all these base intrigues, time will show. His conduct was boyish and foolish, if it was not treacherous. The only object seemed to be to create panic, to agitate, to take possession of Rome somehow, though what to do with it, if they could get it, the French government would hardly know.

Pius IX., in his allocution of the 29th of April last, has explained himself fully. He has disavowed every liberal act which ever seemed to emanate from him, with the exception of the amnesty. He has shamelessly recalled his refusal to let Austrian blood be shed, while Roman flows daily at his request. He has implicitly declared that his future government, could he return, would be absolute despotism, - has dispelled the last lingering illusion of those still anxious to apologize for him as only a prisoner now in the hands of the Cardinals and the king of Naples. The last frail link is broken that bound to him the people of Rome, and could the French restore him, they must frankly avow themselves, abandon entirely and fully the position they took in February, 1848, and declare themselves the allies of Austria and of Russia.

Meanwhile they persevere in the Jesuitical policy that has already disgraced and is to ruin them. After a week of vain assaults, Oudinot sent to Rome the following letter, which I translate, as well as the answers it elicited.

LETTER OF GENERAL OUDINOT,



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Intended for the Roman Constituent Assembly, the Triumvirate, the Generalissimo, and the Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard.

"General, — The events of war have, as you know, conducted the French army to the gates of Rome.

"Should the entrance into the city remain closed against us, I should see myself constrained to employ immediately all the means of action that France has placed in my hands.

"Before having recourse to such terrible necessity, I think it my duty to make a last appeal to a people who cannot have toward France sentiments of hostility.

"The Roman army wishes, no doubt, equally with myself, to spare bloody ruin to the capital of the Christian world.

"With this conviction, I pray you, Signore General, to give the enclosed proclamation the most speedy publicity. If, twelve hours after this despatch shall have been delivered to you, an answer corresponding to the honor and the intentions of France shall not have reached me, I shall be constrained to give the forcible attack.

"Accept, &c.

"Villa Pamfili, 12 June, 1849, 5 P.M."

He was in fact at Villa Santucci, much farther out, but could not be content without falsifying his date as well as all his statements.

"PROCLAMATION.

"Inhabitants of Rome, — We did not come to bring you war. We came to sustain among you order, with liberty. The intentions of our government have been misunderstood. The labors of the siege have conducted us under your walls. Till now we have wished only occasionally to answer the fire of your batteries. We approach these last moments, when the necessities of war burst out in terrible calamities. Spare them to a city full of so many glorious memories.

"If you persist in repelling us, on you alone will fall the responsibility of irreparable disasters."

The following are the answers of the various functionaries to whom this letter was sent: —

ANSWER OF THE ASSEMBLY.

"General, — The Roman Constitutional Assembly informs you, in reply to your despatch of yesterday, that, having concluded a convention from the 31st of May, 1849, with M. de Lesseps, Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Republic, a convention which we confirmed soon after your protest, it must consider that convention obligatory for both parties, and indeed a safeguard of the rights of nations, until it has been ratified or declined by the government of France. Therefore the Assembly must regard as a violation of that convention every hostile act of the French army since the above-named 31st of May, and all others that shall take place before the resolution of your government can be made known, and before the expiration of the time agreed upon for the armistice. You demand, General, an answer correspondent to the intentions and power of France.



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Nothing could be more conformable with the intentions and power of France than to cease a flagrant violation of the rights of nations.

"Whatever may be the results of such violation, the people of Rome are not responsible for them. Rome is strong in its right, and decided to maintain the conventions which attach it to your nation; only it finds itself constrained by the necessity of self-defence to repel unjust aggressions.

"Accept, &c., for the Assembly,

"The President, GALLETTI.

"Secretaries, FABRETTI, PANNACCHI, COCCHI."

"ANSWER OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD.

"General, — The treaty, of which we await the ratification, assures this tranquil city from every disaster.

"The National Guard, destined to maintain order, has the duty of seconding the resolutions of the government; willingly and zealously it fulfils this duty, not caring for annoyance and fatigue.

"The National Guard showed very lately, when it escorted the prisoners sent back to you, its sympathy for France, but it shows also on every occasion a supreme regard for its own dignity, for the honor of Rome.

"Any misfortune to the capital of the Catholic world, to the monumental city, must be attributed not to the pacific citizens constrained to defend themselves, but solely to its aggressors.

"Accept, &c.

"STURBINETTI,

General of the National Guard, Representative of the People" .

ANSWER OF THE GENERALISSIMO.

"Citizen General, — A fatality leads to conflict between the armies of two republics, whom a better destiny would have invited to combat against their common enemy; for the enemies of the one cannot fail to be also enemies of the other.

"We are not deceived, and shall combat by every means in our power whoever assails our institutions, for only the brave are worthy to stand before the French soldiers.

"Reflecting that there is a state of life worse than death, if the war you wage should put us in that state, it will be better to close our eyes for ever than to see the interminable oppressions of our country.

"I wish you well, and desire fraternity.

"ROSSELLI."

ANSWER OF THE TRIUMVIRATE.

"We have the honor to transmit to you the answer of the Assembly.

"We never break our promises. We have promised to defend, in execution of orders from the Assembly and people of Rome, the banner of the Republic, the honor of the country, and the sanctity of the capital of the Christian world; this promise we shall maintain.

"Accept, &c.

"The Triumvirs,



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ARMELLINI. MAZZINI. SAFFI."

Observe the miserable evasion of this missive of Oudinot: "The fortune of war has conducted us." What war? He pretended to come as a friend, a protector; is enraged only because, after his deceits at Civita Vecchia, Rome will not trust him within her walls. For this he daily sacrifices hundreds of lives. "The Roman people cannot be hostile to the French?" No, indeed; they were not disposed to be so. They had been stirred to emulation by the example of France. They had warmly hoped in her as their true ally. It required all that Oudinot has done to turn their faith to contempt and aversion.

Cowardly man! He knows now that he comes upon a city which wished to receive him only as a friend, and he cries, "With my cannon, with my bombs, I will compel you to let me betray you."

The conduct of France — infamous enough before — looks tenfold blacker now that, while the so-called Plenipotentiary is absent with the treaty to be ratified, her army daily assails Rome, — assails in vain. After receiving these answers to his letter and proclamation, Oudinot turned all the force of his cannonade to make a breach, and began, what no one, even in these days, has believed possible, the bombardment of Rome.

Yes! the French, who pretend to be the advanced guard of civilization, are bombarding Rome. They dare take the risk of destroying the richest bequests made to man by the great Past. Nay, they seem to do it in an especially barbarous manner. It was thought they would avoid, as much as possible, the hospitals for the wounded, marked to their view by the black banner, and the places where are the most precious monuments; but several bombs have fallen on the chief hospital, and the Capitol evidently is especially aimed at. They made a breach in the wall, but it was immediately filled up with a barricade, and all the week they have been repulsed in every attempt they made to gain ground, though with considerable loss of life on our side; on theirs it must be great, but how great we cannot know.

Ponte Molle, the scene of Raphael's fresco of a battle, in the Vatican, saw again a fierce struggle last Friday. More than fifty were brought wounded into Rome.

But wounds and assaults only fire more and more the courage of her defenders. They feel the justice of their cause, and the peculiar iniquity of this aggression. In proportion as there seems little aid to be hoped from man, they seem to claim it from God. The noblest sentiments are heard from every lip, and, thus far, their acts amply correspond.

On the eve of the bombardment one or two officers went round with a fine band. It played on the piazzas the Marseillaise and Roman marches; and when the people were thus assembled, they were told of the proclamation, and asked how they felt. Many shouted loudly, *Guerra! Viva la Repubblica Romana!* Afterward, bands of young men went round singing the chorus, "Vogliamo sempre quella, Vogliamo Liberta."

("We want always one thing; we want liberty.") Guitars played, and some danced. When the bombs began to come, one of the



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Trasteverini, those noble images of the old Roman race, redeemed her claim to that descent by seizing a bomb and extinguishing the match. She received a medal and a reward in money. A soldier did the same thing at Palazza Spada, where is the statue of Pompey, at whose base great Cæsar fell. He was promoted. Immediately the people were seized with emulation; armed with pans of wet clay, they ran wherever the bombs fell, to extinguish them. Women collect the balls from the hostile cannon, and carry them to ours. As thus very little injury has been done to life, the people cry, "Madonna protects us against the bombs; she wills not that Rome should be destroyed."

Meanwhile many poor people are driven from their homes, and provisions are growing very dear. The heats are now terrible for us, and must be far more so for the French. It is said a vast number are ill of fever; indeed, it cannot be otherwise. Oudinot himself has it, and perhaps this is one explanation of the mixture of violence and weakness in his actions.

He must be deeply ashamed at the poor result of his bad acts, — that at the end of two weeks and so much bravado, he has done nothing to Rome, unless intercept provisions, kill some of her brave youth, and injure churches, which should be sacred to him as to us. St. Maria Trastevere, that ancient church, so full of precious remains, and which had an air of mild repose more beautiful than almost any other, is said to have suffered particularly.

As to the men who die, I share the impassioned sorrow of the Triumvirs. "O Frenchmen!" they wrote, "could you know what men you destroy! *They* are no mercenaries, like those who fill your ranks, but the flower of the Italian youth, and the noblest among the aged. When you shall know of what minds you have robbed the world, how ought you to repent and mourn!"

This is especially true of the Emigrant and Garibaldi legions. The misfortunes of Northern and Southern Italy, the conscription which compels to the service of tyranny those who remain, has driven from the kingdom of Naples and from Lombardy all the brave and noble youth. Many are in Venice or Rome, the forlorn hope of Italy. Radetzky, every day more cruel, now impresses aged men and the fathers of large families. He carries them with him in chains, determined, if he cannot have good troops to send into Hungary, at least to revenge himself on the unhappy Lombards.

Many of these young men, students from Pisa, Pavia, Padua, and the Roman University, lie wounded in the hospitals, for naturally they rushed first to the combat. One kissed an arm which was cut off; another preserves pieces of bone which were painfully extracted from his wound, as relics of the best days of his life. The older men, many of whom have been saddened by exile and disappointment, less glowing, are not less resolved. A spirit burns noble as ever animated the most precious deeds we treasure from the heroic age. I suffer to see these temples of the soul thus broken, to see the fever-weary days and painful operations undergone by these noble men, these true priests of a higher hope; but I would not, for much, have missed seeing it



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all. The memory of it will console amid the spectacles of meanness, selfishness, and faithlessness which life may yet have in store for the pilgrim.

June 23.

Matters verge to a crisis. The French government sustains Oudinot and disclaims Lesseps. Harmonious throughout, shameless in falsehood, it seems Oudinot knew that the mission of Lesseps was at an end, when he availed himself of his pacific promises to occupy Monte Mario. When the Romans were anxious at seeing French troops move in that direction, Lesseps said it was only done to occupy them, and conjured the Romans to avoid all collision which might prevent his success with the treaty. The sham treaty was concluded on the 30th of May, a detachment of French having occupied Monte Mario on the night of the 29th. Oudinot flies into a rage and refuses to sign; M. Lesseps goes off to Paris; meanwhile, the brave Oudinot attacks on the 3d of June, after writing to the French Consul that Ire should not till the 4th, to leave time for the foreigners remaining to retire. He attacked in the night, possessing himself of Villa Pamfili, as he had of Monte Mario, by treachery and surprise.

Meanwhile, M. Lesseps arrives in Paris, to find himself seemingly or really in great disgrace with the would-be Emperor and his cabinet. To give reason for this, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, who had publicly declared to the Assembly that M. Lesseps had no instructions except from the report of the sitting of the 7th of May, shamefully publishes a letter of special instructions, hemming him in on every side, which M. Lesseps, the "Plenipotentiary," dares not disown.

What are we to think of a great nation, whose leading men are such barefaced liars? M. Guizot finds his creed faithfully followed up.

The liberal party in France does what it can to wash its hands of this offence, but it seems weak, and unlikely to render effectual service at this crisis. Venice, Rome, Ancona, are the last strong-holds of hope, and they cannot stand for ever thus unsustained. Night before last, a tremendous cannonade left no moment to sleep, even had the anxious hearts of mothers and wives been able to crave it. At morning a little detachment of French had entered by the breach of St. Pancrazio, and intrenched itself in a vineyard. Another has possession of Villa Poniatowski, close to the Porta del Popolo, and attacks and alarms are hourly to be expected. I long to see the final one, dreadful as that hour may be, since now there seems no hope from delay. Men are daily slain, and this state of suspense is agonizing.

In the evening 'tis pretty, though terrible, to see the bombs, fiery meteors, springing from the horizon line upon their bright path, to do their wicked message. 'T would not be so bad, methinks, to die by one of these, as wait to have every drop of pure blood, every childlike radiant hope, drained and driven from the heart by the betrayals of nations and of individuals, till at last the sickened eyes refuse more to open to that light



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which shines daily on such pits of iniquity.

ARTHUR FULLER'S BOOK

June 22, Friday: The tiny body of Elizabeth DeForest was retrieved from a rock below the always-deadly American Falls of [Niagara Falls](#).

Stephen C. Massett opened at the San Francisco courthouse as its 1st professional entertainer, utilizing what was allegedly the only piano yet to have arrived in [California](#).

The Liberator carried the following obituary of [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#), apparently by William Lloyd Garrison:

ANOTHER FRIEND OF THE SLAVE GONE

Died, in Concord, on Thursday, June 14th, Miss HELEN THOREAU, aged 36 years.

Our friend, Miss Thoreau, was an abolitionist. Endowed by nature with tender sensibilities, quick to feel for the woes of others, the cause of the slave met with a ready response in her heart. She had a mind of fine native powers, enlarged and matured by cultivation. She had the patience to investigate truth, the candor to acknowledge it when sufficient evidence was presented to her mind, and the moral courage to act in conformity with her convictions, however unpopular these convictions might be to the community around her. The cause of the slave did not come before her in its earliest beginnings; but as soon as it was presented, she set herself to inquire how it was, that a system which imbrutes man so cruelly, which tears asunder all the tenderest ties so ruthlessly, which puts out the life of the soul, by denying it the means of growth and progress so effectually, was supported. She saw the religious denominations with which she had been connected vehemently crying out against the Catholics for denying the BIBLE to the people, and yet one-sixth part of the people of the Protestant United States were legally deprived of the right to read God's word, nay, worse than the Catholics, the right of learning to read. She ascertained that the actual number of slaveholders in the land was not more than two hundred and fifty or three hundred thousand. How, she said, can these keep three millions of people in bondage? Why do not the slaves rise, as did our fathers in the revolution, and demand their rights at the point of the bayonet? She ascertained that the bayonets of the North were pledged to unite with those of the Southern tyrants, in case of any attempt at insurrection, and put down the poor crushed bondman, if, in his agony, he would strike down the oppressor. She saw that the nation had written in the Constitution the grievousness it had prescribed to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of the people, that widows might be its prey, and that it might rob the fatherless. This Constitution, every man, either by himself or his deputy, held up his hand to heaven, and



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swore, So help me God, I will sustain. She saw that in the same Constitution, they agreed, by the same solemn oath, if the poor victim of oppression should flee to any of the so-called free States, braving incredible danger, facing death in its most terrible forms, to obtain deliverance from his oppressors, and appeal to Northern men for protection, being pursued by his enslaver, they must perjure themselves, or allow his being delivered up to his pursuers, and sent back again to the most cruel bondage, without lifting a finger in his defence – thus stifling the noblest feelings of their natures.

In despair, she turned to the church. Surely, she said, the church of Christ is free from these abominations. But she found the church made up of men from all the political parties, alike pledged to the support of the accursed institution. In keeping with this, she saw the church, almost universally, giving to the slaveholder or his abettor, the right hand of Christian fellowship – calling him dear brother in Christ. She saw the pulpits of the North open to Southern divines, while the advocates of the slave knocked in vain for admission at the door of almost every church in the land. She said to herself, Is this the church of Christ, and has it come down so low? She repudiated such a church. Immediately did she turn her back upon its communion, and if she went to the house of prayer, as she occasionally did, she went to see if the spirit of Christ and humanity might not be rising among them. Again and again has she called upon the writer of this notice, when returning from church, and said, with strong emotion, it is all darkness and gloom. It was not eloquent declamation which led her from the church; but it was the array of strong, incontrovertible facts, which impelled her to the course she felt called upon to pursue and she knew that the eloquence of anti-slavery owed its source to these same facts, and endowed with eloquence the most ungifted tongues. To her, as to many others, it was pleasant to go to the church on the Sabbath, and worship with her friends; and nothing but an entire conviction of its wrongfulness, in her case, would have prevented her constant attendance upon the institutions of religion. But the call to her was imperative – "Come out of her, that ye be not partaker of her plagues," and she obeyed. This obedience brought peace in health, and peace in sickness. Not an hour of gloom did she experience during her protracted illness. Though constitutionally timid, the gloom of death was all taken away, and the king of terrors became to her an angel of hope and joy, opening before her bright visions of beauty; to use her own expression. One day, in conversation, she expressed her gratitude for what anti-slavery had done for her, in opening new and juster views of God, and truth, and duty, and exclaimed – "O how much has anti-slavery done for me, and how little have I done for it! I wanted health, that I might keep school, and in this way do something for the cause I so much love. But it is ordered otherwise."

She experienced in its fullest extent the fulfilment of the



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promise — "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord shall be with him upon his bed of languishing, and make all his bed in his sickness." Her long continued illness made the suffering virtues, patience and resignation, to shine brightly, and smoothed away the sharp edges of her character, fitting her, we doubt not, for a polished stone in the great temple above.

The abolitionists of Concord will mourn deeply her loss; for, few and feeble as they are, they can ill afford to lose one so intelligent and so true. But they feel, that though no longer present with them in the flesh, she will still be a co-laborer with them in the great and good cause in which they have so long been associated.

June 26, Tuesday: The body of Charles Addington was recovered from the river downstream of [Niagara Falls](#).

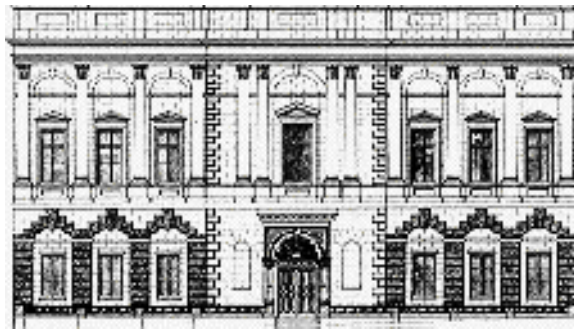


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July: Friend [William Henry Harvey](#) had been invited to visit the United States as a guest of the Smithsonian Institution and of Harvard College, by way of Nova Scotia and the port of New-York, and then [Niagara Falls](#) and Québec.²⁸ While a guest of [Harvard professor Asa Gray](#) he delivered, in a series of a dozen lectures before The Lowell Institute of [Boston](#), a comprehensive survey of the world of Cryptogamia, from the point of view of the “progressive organization of the vegetable entity.” He would pass on to deliver a popular lecture on seaweeds at the Franklin Institute in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) and make a coastal tour that included Wilmington, Delaware, Charleston, South Carolina, and Key West, Florida.

The Boston Athenæum formally opened its doors ([Henry Thoreau](#) had already visited that spring and [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) would visit in the next spring).



The magnificent building for the use of the BOSTON ATHENÆUM is situated on Beacon Street, near the State House. It is of Patterson freestone, and in the Palladian style of architecture. It is one hundred and fourteen feet in length, of irregular breadth, sixty feet in height, and stands ten feet back from the street, the ground space in front being surrounded by a balustrade with stone coping. The main entrance opens into a pillared and paneled rotunda, from which fine iron staircases conduct above.... Near the foot of the staircase stands Ball Hughes's statue of Bowditch, and a very fine one of Webster, by Powers.

WEBSTER/POWERS

November 27, Tuesday, evening: Mrs. J.G. Miller checked into the Eagle Hotel hard by [Niagara Falls](#), along with two sons, ages 4 and 6. She tucked them into their hotel bed and kissed them good-night.

28. He wrote in a letter that while visiting the famous Falls he had glimpsed an inscription to a young lady who had fallen over the cliff while picking flowers, “Miss Ruggs at the age of twenty-three / (Who) Was launched into eternity” — and that he had resolved to name a flower *Ruggia* in her honor (it is rather more likely that what he had seen was some sort of touristy joke tablet having to do with the reputation of the place, rather than that he had glimpsed an actual memorial inscription; it seems that although he named many species for his friends, he did not ever actually name a flower *Ruggia*).



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November 28, Wednesday, morning: When the two sons of Mrs. J.G. Miller inquired of the hotel staff about their mother, she was nowhere to be found, but in the room was her clothing, and her silk purse, and her wedding band, and a lock of her hair.



She had left three letters, one of them addressed to the hotel's manager:

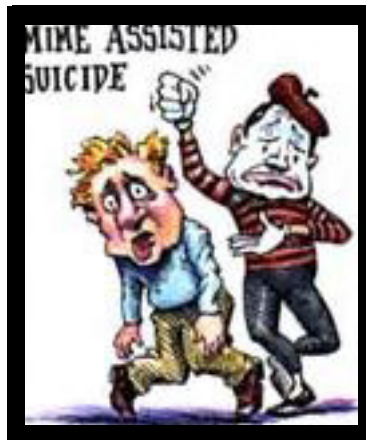
My mind is made up. I have no wish to live any longer. I shall go where my body will never be recovered. No one shall gaze on my mangled remains. Please take care of my two little boys till they can be sent to Detroit, where their grandparents reside. They are the sons of Major Miller, of the army, now in Florida, and grandsons of Hon. John Norvell, of Detroit, Michigan. Please forward my letters and protect my children till some of their relatives can come for them.



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Mrs. Miller's shawl and bonnet were found on the Goat Island Bridge leading to a lookout point above the [Niagara Falls](#). It should have been informative that this married mamma, rather than leaping to her death with her wedding band still in place on her finger, had removed it before leaving the hotel and her children — obviously not all the cucumbers in this salad were out of the same patch — she and a Mr. Blakemer of Philadelphia would soon be detected, eloping on a train to Buffalo.





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1850

The third edition of the TABLE ROCK ALBUM AND SKETCHES OF THE FALLS AND SCENERY ADJACENT offered future generations a unique glimpse of mid-nineteenth-century Americans' response to spectacular natural beauty in the form of notations made by [tourists](#) in an album at [Niagara Falls](#).

Shortly before meeting [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), [Herman Melville](#) moved to Pittsfield, Massachusetts and wrote HAWTHORNE AND HIS MOSSES. He was thrilled at this author's misanthropy and depression: "Hawthorne's vision was all for the evil and sin of the world; a side of life as to which Emerson's eyes were thickly bandaged."²⁹ Melville praised Hawthorne by the use of an interestingly Thoreauvian "interior travel" metaphor: "[I]f you travel away inland into his deep and noble nature, you will hear the far roar of his Niagara."



NIAGARA FALLS

29. This is from a review by Henry James, Jr. of Cabot's MEMOIR, in 1887, as reprinted in Leon Edel's THE AMERICAN ESSAYS OF HENRY JAMES (New York, 1956).



1851

A group of vacationers including the landscape painter Frederick Edwin Church and the Lee, Massachusetts paper manufacturer Cyrus W. Field³⁰ traveled by train to Virginia and Kentucky and took a steamboat up the Mississippi River. In St. Paul, Minnesota, the group boarded another steamboat to go on up the [Minnesota River](#) and go watch the “Indian treaty” be “negotiated,” as planned in Washington, with the Dakotas, that would replace the red man with the white man on the central plains. The painter Church having gone on to [Niagara Falls](#) to prepare for his 1857 work on that monstrous subject, Field wrote him and alleged that the primitives at Traverse des Sioux had been terrified by the steamboat.

February 12, Wednesday: Gold was discovered by Edward Hammond Hargreaves in Summer Hill Creek near Bathurst, New South Wales. This would precipitate an influx of immigration into Australia.³¹

The Reverend [Jared Sparks](#) was publicly attacked for alleged literary dishonesty, in that some discrepancies had been noted between his edition of George Washington’s letters and another more recent book in which some of these letters were re-transcribed from source records. Sparks would find himself excoriated in print as one of “those whom the God of the Jews accursed as the movers and destroyers of landmarks.” Sparks had, for instance, substituted “General Putnam” at a point at which Washington had referred to him as “Old Put.” He had “spoiled Washington’s bad grammar,” the [Democratic Review](#) would complain.

Jared Sparks

(What had happened was that the Reverend, succumbing to “Editor’s Disease,” had committed the egregious and unscholarly blunder of attempting to make the letters he transcribed more legible to his intended audience.)³²



February 12, Wednesday: A beautiful day with but little snow or ice on the ground. Though the air is sharp, as the earth is half bare the hens have strayed to some distance from the barns. The hens standing around their lord & pluming themselves and still fretting a little strive to fetch the year about.

A thaw has nearly washed away the snow & raised the river & the brooks & flooded the meadows covering the old ice which which is still fast to the bottom

I find that it is an excellent walk for variety & novelty & wildness to keep round the edge of the meadow –the ice not being strong enough to bear and transparent as water –on the bare ground or snow just between the highest water mark and the present water line A narrow meandering walk rich in unexpected views & objects. The line of rubbish which marks the higher tides withered flags & reeds & twigs & cranberries is to my eyes a very agreeable & significant line which nature traces along the edge of the meadows.

It is a strongly marked enduring natural line which in summer reminds me that the water has once stood over where I walk Sometimes the grooved trees tell the same tale. The wrecks of the meadow which fill a thousand coves and tell a thousand tales to those who can read them Our prairial mediterranean shore. The gentle rise of water around the trees in the meadow –where oaks & maples stand far out in the sea– And young elms

30. The Reuters news wire service was beginning in London, and the first underwater cable was being laid under the English Channel. Field would become the primary venture capitalist behind the transatlantic cable which would follow after this channel cable.

31. [Henry Thoreau](#) would be underimpressed, but his take contrasted remarkably with the attitude taken by Ashley in his diary: *Auri sacra fames*. What no motive, human or divine, could effect, springs into life at the display of a few pellets of gold in the hands of a wanderer. This may be God’s chosen way to fulfil his commandment and “replenish the earth.”

32. The blunder, here, was neither dishonesty nor incompetence, but having left himself vulnerable to antagonists who were willing to play the aggressor in the ever-popular game “Now I’ve Got You You Son Of A Bitch” — using him as their designated victim.



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sometimes are seen standing close around some rocks which lifts its head above the water –as if protecting it preventing it from being washed away though in truth they owe their origin & preservation to it. It first invited & detained their seed & now preserves the soil in which they grow. A pleasant reminiscence of the rise of waters To go up one side of the river & down the other following this way which meanders so much more than the river itself– If you cannot go on the ice –you are then gently compelled to take this course which is on the whole more beautiful –to follow the sinuosities of the meadow. Between the highest water mark & the present water line is a space generally from a few feet to a few rods in width. When the water comes over the road, then my spirits rise –when the fences are carried away. A prairial walk– Saw a caterpillar crawling about on the snow

The earth is so bare that it makes an impression on one as if it were catching cold.

I saw today something new to me as I walked along the edge of the meadow –every half mile or so along the channel of the river I saw at a distance where apparently the ice had been broken up while freezing by the pressure of other ice –thin cakes of ice forced up on their edges & reflecting the sun like so many mirrors whole fleets of shining sails. giving a very lively appearance to the river –Where for a dozen rods thin flakes of ice stood on their edges –like a fleet beating upstream against the sun –a fleet of ice-boats

It is remarkable that the cracks in the ice on the meadows sometimes may be traced a dozen rods from the water through the snow in the neighboring fields.

It is only necessary that man should start a fence that nature should carry it on & complete it. The farmer can not plough quite up to the rails or wall which he himself has placed –& hence it often becomes a hedge-row & sometimes a coppice.

I found to-day apples still green under the snow– And others frozen and thawed sweeter far than when sound. a sugary sweetness.

There is something more than association at the bottom of the excitement which the roar of a cataract produces. It is allied to the circulation in our veins We have a waterfall which corresponds even to Niagara somewhere within us.

NIAGARA FALLS

It is astonishing what a rush & tumult a slight inclination will produce in a swollen brook. How it proclaims its glee –its boisterousness –rushing headlong in its prodigal course as if it would exhaust itself in half an hour –how it spends itself– I would say to the orator and poet Flow freely & *lavishly* as a brook that is full –without stint –perchance I have stumbled upon the origin of the word lavish. It does not hesitate to tumble down the steepest precipice & roar or tinkle as it goes, –for fear it will exhaust its fountain.– The impetuosity of descending waters even by the slightest inclination! It seems to flow with ever increasing rapidity.

It is difficult to believe what Philosophers assert that it is merely a difference in the form of the elementary particles, as whether they are square or globular –which makes the difference between the steadfast everlasting & reposing hill-side & the impetuous torrent which tumbles down it.

It is worth the while to walk over sproutlands –where oak & chestnut sprouts are mounting swiftly up again into the sky– And already perchance their sere leaves begin to rustle in the breeze & reflect the light on the hillsides –

“Heroic underwoods that take the air
With freedom, nor respect their parent’s death”

I trust that the walkers of the present day are conscious of the blessings which they enjoy in the comparative freedom with which they can ramble over the country & enjoy the landscape –anticipating with compassion that future day when possibly it will be partitioned off into so called pleasure grounds where only a few may enjoy the narrow & exclusive pleasure which is compatible with ownership. When walking over the surface of Gods earth –shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman’s grounds. When fences shall be multiplied & man traps & other engines invented to confine men to the public road. I am thankful that we have yet so much room in America.

August 27, Wednesday: The following story appeared in the Niagara Courier:

The Chippawa Advocate has the following in relation to the catastrophe at the Falls, which we noticed a few days since:–

On Friday last, Mr. Jeremiah McMurray, from Grand Island, went over the Falls near Goat Island. He had

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been at his place in the morning, selling vegetables, and before returning home got considerably intoxicated. On his way to the American side, somewhere in the American channel, he fell asleep in his canoe, which of course went down the river. On approaching Goat Island, he was seen to be asleep, and did not arouse until on the brink of the first breakers, when he started up, gave two or three strokes with the oars just as the canoe plunged into the rapids and broke in pieces. Nothing more was seen of him. He passed this side of Goat Island, and had he been sober could have saved himself.

NIAGARA FALLS



August 27, Wednesday: I see the volumes of smoke—not quite the blaze from burning brush as I suppose far in the western horizon. I believe it is at this season of the year chiefly that you see this sight. It is always a question with some whether it is not a fire in the woods or some building. It is an interesting feature in the scenery—at this season. The farmers simple enterprises. The vervain which I examined by the R.R. the other day.— has still $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to the top of its spikes Hawkweed Groundsel, Senecio Hieracifolius (fireweed)— Rubrus Sempervirens Evergreen Raspberry the small low blackberry is now in fruit. The medeola Virginica Cucumber root the whorl leaved plant is now in green fruit— Polygala cruciata Cross leaved Polygala in the mead. between Trillium Woods & RR.. This is rare & new to me. It has a very sweet but as it were intermittent fragrance as of checker berry & Mayflowers combined. The handsome calyx leaves—



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Mid-September: [Ellen Kilshaw Fuller Channing](#) was invited to visit the home of her brother William Henry Fuller in Cincinnati, all expenses paid, traveling by the [canal](#) and river route in the company of her brother Eugene Fuller and viewing the [Niagara Falls](#) along the way.



While she and the children were out of the house, [Ellery Channing](#) would be going on daily walks with [Henry Thoreau](#). One night Thoreau would drop by and exhaust or exasperate his host by continuing to chat away until after 10PM.

October 1, Wednesday: On this very day on which, in Concord, Massachusetts, [Henry Thoreau](#) was forwarding an American man named [Henry Williams](#) along his way to [Canada](#) and freedom, Federal marshals from Rochester, Auburn, Syracuse, and Canandaigua, accompanied by local policemen, were taking into their custody an American in Buffalo and an American in Syracuse, [New York](#) who had been alleged to be, similarly, escaped pieces of some white man's property. At about noon the deputies of US Marshal Henry W. Allen entered the cabinet shop of Charles F. Williston in Syracuse and took into their custody a barrel maker who called himself Jerry, also known as William Henry (Jerry McHenry), upon a warrant from US Commissioner Joseph F. Sabine based upon a complaint from a citizen of the state of Missouri named John McReynolds. McReynolds had sworn before officers of the US federal government that this Jerry or William Henry or McHenry belonged to him (and it is a lucky thing that no American man of property had thought to send these factors off after the Lady Moon as one of his misplaced possessions, as it is clear that such factors could be induced to believe anything no matter how preposterous). The barrel-maker was being told that the charge against him was theft, until, that is, he was in manacles. Then he was informed that he had been taken under the Fugitive Slave Law. He put up substantial resistance but was subdued. Word spread and every

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church-bell in the city began to toll, with of course the exception of the one in the Episcopal steeple.



The Reverend Samuel Joseph May and a group of his parishioners and delegates of the Liberty Party went to the office of the commissioner and, evidently upon a prearranged signal, McHenry, in slave restraints, threw



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himself across Commissioner Sabine's desk, scattering the papers and weapons upon it. The crowd of men in



the room pressed the marshals present against the wall while they hoisted McHenry above their heads and rushed him out of the building. Unfortunately, on their way down the stairs they dropped him and he was badly injured and rendered unconscious. While he was regaining consciousness and being helped into a carriage on Water Street, the deputies recaptured him and took him to the police station. He was so terrified at this point that he could not be calmed. For the remainder of that day rioters roamed the streets of the city and the police station was stoned, and then that night at about 7PM or 8PM a mob estimated by some at 3,000 and by some at 10,000 stormed the building. One man, Peter Hornbeck, a mulatto who was by trade a butcher, was using his meat cleaver on a window casement, while a deputy was being decked by a stone and then beaten by a white man with a club. Marshall Allen, considering that he had already done his part, made an exit from a back



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door and James Lear, the factor for the slavemaster McReynolds of Missouri, figuring discretion to be the better part of valor, hid out in an adjoining building. Marshall Fitch, after some blows and perhaps a pistol shot, jumped out a second-floor window, and McHenry was saved.

The Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward was putting out a newspaper in Syracuse, but after reading in the newspapers of the Christiana riot of that summer, and its consequences, he and Mrs. Ward had already decided that they would take their children and flee to Canada when way opened, rather than remain in jeopardy in the United States of America. At this point, in consequence of his involvement in this “Jerry rescue,” it would become necessary for him to abandon this newspaper occupation forthwith, and for the Ward family to flee immediately to their refuge in Canada.



Residing then at Syracuse, we went home [after reading in the newspapers of the riot at Christiana and its sad consequences], arriving on Wednesday, the first day of October. We found the whole town in commotion and excitement. We soon learned the cause. A poor Mulatto man, named Jerry, at the suit of his own father had been arrested under the Fugitive Law, had been before the Negro-catcher's court, had escaped, had been pursued and retaken, and was now being conveyed to prison. I went to the prison, and, in company with that true sterling friend of the slave, the Reverend Samuel J. May, was permitted to go in and see the man. He had fetters on his ankles, and manacles on his wrists. I had never before, since my recollection, seen a chained slave. He was a short, thick-set, strongly built man, half white though slave born. His temperament was ardent, and he was most wonderfully excited. Though chained, he could not stand still; and in that narrow room, motioning as well as he could with his chained, manacled hands, and pacing up and down as well as his fetters would allow, fevered and almost frenzied with excitement, he implored us who were looking on, in such strains of fervid eloquence as I never heard before nor since from the lips of man, to break his chains, and give him that liberty which the [Declaration of Independence](#) assumed to be the birthright of every man, and which, according to the law of love, was our duty towards a suffering brother.

I cannot recall the ipsissima verba of his eloquent pleading. As far as I can revive his sentences in my memory, he exclaimed – “Gentlemen, behold me, and these chains! Why am I bound thus, in a free country? Am I not a man like yourselves? Do you not suppose I feel as other men feel? Oh, gentlemen, what have I done to deserve this cruel treatment? I was at my work, like an



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honest industrious man. I was trying to act the part of a good citizen; but they came upon me, and accused me of crime. I knew I was innocent; but I felt it my duty to go before the court, to declare and to prove my innocence. For that reason I let that little Marshal, I think you call him, put handcuffs on me. You know, gentlemen, handcuffs don't hurt an innocent man! But after they put the irons on me, they told me they were taking me as a runaway slave! Didn't I tell you I was innocent? They confessed I was. If I had known what they were about, do you think I should have let that little ordinary man put irons on me? No, indeed! I have told you how deceitfully they took me. When I saw a good chance, I thought it was not wrong to break away from them. I watched my opportunity: I dashed out of the door; I ran like a man running for his freedom; but they overtook me, and brought me back, and here I am like a wild beast, chained and caged.

"Gentlemen, is this a free country? Why did my fathers fight the British, if one of their poor sons is to be treated in this way? I beseech you, gentlemen, as you love your own liberty, break these chains of mine; yes, and break the chains that bind my brethren in the South, too. Does not the Bible say, "Break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free"? Don't you believe the Bible? I can't read it as some of you can, but I believe what it says, and I ask you, gentlemen, to do for me what that book commands. Suppose that any one of you were in my position. What would you wish me to do? I beg of you, gentlemen, to do for me what you would wish, were you where I am. Are not all men born free and equal? How is it, then, that I must wear these chains? Give me, O give me, gentlemen, that freedom which you say belongs to all men, and it is all I ask. Will you who are fathers, and brothers, see a man dragged in chains to the slavery of Tennessee, which I know is worse than death itself? In the name of our common nature – in the name of the Declaration of Independence – in the name of that law in the Bible which says, "do as you would be done by" – in the name of God, our common Father – do break these chains, and give me the freedom which is mine because I am a man, and an American."

What a sight! and what sounds! A slave, in a free Northern city chained as no felon would be chained, with the blood of Anglo-Saxons in his veins. Still, a slave; the son of a wealthy planter in Tennessee, and still a slave; arrested by a United States officer and several assistants, who were sworn to support the glorious Federal Constitution, serving under the freest government under the sun, the land of liberty, the refuge for the oppressed of all the world! And for what was he arrested? What was his crime? A love of that liberty which we all declared to be every man's inalienable right! And this slave was quoting the Declaration of Independence in chains! He was not the subject of some Czar, some,

"Turbaned Turk or fiery Russ:"

no, he was an American by birth, and a slave as well; so said the chains upon him: and on his lips were liberty's and religion's great watchwords! I never saw extremes so meet.



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I never saw how hollow a mockery was our talk about liberty, and our professions of Christianity. I never felt how really we were all subject to the slave power; I never felt before the depth of degradation there is in being a professed freeman of the Northern States. Daniel Webster had, a few months before, predicted the execution of the Fugitive Law in that very town. The people laughed him to scorn. We now felt, however, how much better he knew the depths to which Northern men can sink than we did. While these thoughts were galloping through our brains, this manacled son of a white man proceeded with his oration in his chains, and we felt dumb and powerless. A great crowd gathered about the door; and after looking on and drinking in as much of the scene as my excitable nature would allow, I turned to go away, and at that moment the crowd demanded a speech of me. I spoke. I ceased; but I I never felt the littleness of my always little speeches, as I did at that moment. Jerry had made the speech of the occasion, and all I could say was but tame and spiritless in comparison with his

“Words that breathed and thoughts that burned.”

The substance of what I said is as follows: – “Fellow citizens! we are here in most extraordinary circumstances. We are witnessing such a sight as, I pray, we may never look upon again. A man in chains, in Syracuse! Not a felon, yet in chains! On trial, is this man, not for life, but for liberty. He is arrested and held under a law made by “Us the People” – pursuant, we pretend, to a clause in the constitution. That constitution was made “to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” Here is a man one of “ourselves”; and the colour he bears shows that he belongs not altogether to my race, but that he is one of the “posterity” of those who framed and adopted our Federal constitution. So far are we from “securing” to him the “blessings of liberty,” that we have arrested him, confined him, and chained him, on purpose to inflict upon him the curses of slavery.

“They say he is a slave. What a term to apply to an American! How does this sound beneath the pole of liberty and the flag of freedom? What a contradiction to our “[Declaration of Independence](#)”! But suppose he be a slave: is New York the State to recognize and treat him as such? Is Syracuse the city of the Empire State in which the deeds which make this a day unfortunately memorable, should be perpetuated? If he be not a slave, then, he is the most outraged man we ever saw.

“What did our fathers gain by the seven years’ struggle with Great Britain, if, in what are called Free States, we have our fellow citizens, our useful mechanics and skilful artisans, chained and enslaved? How do foreign nations regard us, when knowing that it is not yet three short months since we were celebrating the [Declaration of Independence](#), and to-day we are giving the most palpable denial to every word therein declared? “But I am told that this is a legal transaction. That it is wrong and unwise to speak against a judicial proceeding, not yet completed: I admit it all. I make no pretensions to speak wisely.



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I have heard a speech from Jerry. I feel for him, as for a brother; and under that feeling, I may not speak quite so soberly as I ought. "Oppression maketh a wise man mad." I feel oppressed in a twofold sense. Yonder is my brother, in chains. Those chains press upon my limbs. I feel his sufferings, and participate his anguish. I feel, and we may all feel, oppressed in another sense. Here are certainly five-and-twenty hundred of us, wild with excitement in behalf of our chained brother, before our eyes, and we are utterly powerless to help him! We hear his strong, thrilling appeals, until our hearts sicken and our heads ache; but there is none among us that has the legal power to lift a hand in his defence, or for his deliverance. Of what advantage is it that we are free? What value is there in our freedom, while our hands are thus tied?

"Fellow citizens, whatever may be the result of these proceedings – whether our brother leaves the court, a declared freeman or a chained slave – upon us, the voters of New York State, to a very great extent, rests the responsibility of this Fugitive Slave Law. It is for us to say whether this enactment shall continue to stain our statute books, or be swept away into merited oblivion. It is for us to say whether the men who made it, and those who execute it before our faces, shall receive our votes, or shall by those votes be indignantly rebuked. Tell me, ye sturdy working men of Onondago, shall your votes be consecrated to the latter, or prostituted to the former? Do you swear fealty to freedom this day? Do you promise, so help you God! so to vote, as that your sanction never more shall be given to laws which empower persons to hunt, chain, and cage, MEN, in our midst? (cries of "yes, yes.") Thank you, fellow citizens, in the name of our brother in prison! thank you for your bold, manly promise! May we all abide by it, until deeds of darkness like the one we now lament shall no longer mar our institutions and blacken our history."

But the crowd felt rightly. They saw Gerrit Smith and me go off arm in arm to hold a consultation, and, two and two, they followed us. Glorious mob! unlike that of 1834, they felt for the poor slave, and they wished his freedom. Accordingly, at nine o'clock that evening, while the court was in session trying Jerry for more than his life, for his liberty, the mob without threw stones into the window, one of which came so near to the judge that, in undignified haste, he suddenly rose and adjourned the courts. In an hour from that time, the mob, through certain stalwart fellows whom the Government have never had the pleasure of catching, broke open the door and the side of the building where Jerry was, put out the lights, took him out in triumph, and bore him away where the slave-catchers never after saw him. The Marshal of the United States, who had him in custody, was so frightened that he fled in female attire: brave man! According to the Fugitive Law, he had to pay Jerry's master one thousand dollars; for so the law expressly ordains.

An assistant Marshal, who was aiding this one, fired a pistol when entrée was first made. He injured no one, but a stout stick



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struck his arm and broke it. Escaping out of a window soon after, he broke the same arm again, poor man! These two were not like a Marshal in Troy, in the same State, who, rather than capture a slave, resigned his office.

The papers in the interest of the Government, in publishing an account of this affair, connected my name with it in a most prominent manner. The Marshal with broken arm was especially commended to my tender regard. The Government, under the advice of Daniel Webster (whose Christianity, I find, is highly lauded in this country; it was always a *res non in his own*), ordered all the parties, directly or indirectly engaged in the rescuing of Jerry, to be put on trial for treason! For it was the doctrine of Mr. Webster and Mr. Fillmore, that opposition to the Slave Law was "treason, and drew after it all the consequences of treason." I knew enough to understand that one of the "consequences drawn after treason" is a hempen rope. I had already become hopeless of doing more in my native country; I had already determined to go to Canada. Now, however, matters became urgent. I could die; but was it duty? I could not remain in that country without repeating my connection with or participating in such an affair as I was then guilty of. If I did my duty by my fellow men, in that country, I must go to prison, perhaps; certainly, if the Government had their way, to the gallows. If I did not, I must go to perdition. Betwixt the two, my election was made. But then, what must become of my family, both as to their bread in my then circumstances, and as to their liberty in such a country? Recollecting that I had already my wife's consent (without which I could not take any important step of the sort) to go to Canada, I concluded that I must go immediately. I went; and a month or two after, my family followed: since which time we have each and severally been, *con amore*, the most loyal and grateful of British subjects. Jerry lived at Kingston, Canada, until the latter part of 1853, when he died, a free man, by virtue of living in British soil. The courts would not entertain the charge of treason against those accused in this case, from its manifest absurdity. They did hold, however, that they had broken the Fugitive Law, and must be tried for that. Luckily, but one person who was accused was ever convicted. He died before the court, in its mercilessness, could wreak its full vengeance upon him. He was innocent; I know.

When the accused were summoned to Auburn, twenty-six miles from Syracuse, to attend trial, the Railway Company provided carriages for the accused and their wives, gratis. Returning from Auburn, several of those ladies were in the large carriage into which the Government prosecutor entered. They unanimously requested his departure. They afterwards made up a purse of thirty pieces of silver, of the smallest coin of the country, and presented to him – wages of iniquity and treachery. The chains (which I helped to file off) of Jerry were packed in a neat mahogany box, and sent to President Fillmore. The Hon. W. Seward voluntarily became bail for the accused. He has been



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Governor of his native State. He is now one of its senators. This, however, is his highest honour. So he esteems it. In conclusion I beg to say, that the passage of the Nebraska Bill, and the outrages following it under sanction of the Government in Kansas, but confirms the opinion I formed four years ago, as to the impossibility – by any means now extant, and they are as wise as human ingenuity can invent – of reforming that country. The Government is too much at the mercy of 62,000 slaveholders; the people are too well content to let things remain as they are – the Churches, generally, cling with too great tenacity to their time-honoured pollutions to admit of any prospect of reformation at present, while the gloomiest future seems to overhang the country. The only hopeful spot in the American horizon is the growing, advancing attitude of the black people. From the whites, as a whole, I see no hopes. In the blacks I see some precious vigorous germs springing from seeds formerly sown, watered by many cries and tears, nourished by many prayers – the seed-sowing of Richard Allen and John Gloucester, Thomas Sipkins, Peter Williams, George Hogarth, Samuel Todd and William Hamilton, James Forten and Theodore Sedgewick Wright, among the departed; of Jehiel C. Beeman, Samuel E. Cornish, James William Charles Pennington, Christopher Rush, William Whipper, Timothy Eato, M.M. Clarke, Stephen Smith, and others, among the older living; the latter of whom have been permitted to outlive the darkness of a past and see the light enjoyed by the present generation. God grant that right may prevail, and that all things shall further his glory!

...

I made my entrée into Canada, as a resident and a fugitive, in October, 1851, at Montreal. I had been to Queenstown, Windsor, and Kingston, as well as [Niagara Falls](#), at various times within eleven years, as a mere visitor, then little dreaming of the necessity of my going as a settler. After spending a very few days at Montreal, I ascended the St. Lawrence, to Kingston; thence by Lake Ontario to Toronto, my present residence. It is impossible to convey to an English reader anything like a just idea of the St. Lawrence River scenery in October. This is my third autumn in Europe; but never, in the British Isles, did I witness such splendour of landscape as that river presents, in autumn. The river is large and majestic – near Montreal, where the placid Ottawa empties itself, it is most magnificent. The Ottawa, as smooth as a polished mirror, opening its ample mouth to the width of a lake, gently glides into the St. Lawrence; the latter with a quiet dignity receiving the tribute of the former, as an empress would graciously accept the homage of a courtier, rolling downward towards the gulf, as if created on purpose to convey to the ocean the tributes and the trusts committed to it, and as if amply powerful to bear both the honour and the burden. But going upwards, while the St. Lawrence is large and noble enough, it frequently is compressed into a comparatively small



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size, and falls over cascades. The steamers, however, are accommodated with canals, which admit of the continuance of navigation with but little interruption. At times, the St. Lawrence takes the form of a wide bay, studded with tiny islets, and the latter most densely covered with foliage – which, in early autumn, after the first few touches of the hoar frost, assume the most gorgeously brilliant hues. The intensest crimson, the deepest brown, the most glowing lemon colour, with occasional intermixtures of the unchanging foliage of the evergreens, and some intermediate colours, give these islets and these bays the appearance of immense vases filled with bouquets of unspeakable beauty and of most imposing grandeur. Those who have seen the representation of the brightness and charms of North American autumnal foliage, in Mr. Friend's panorama, may feel assured that it is not in the least exaggerated or overdrawn. I doubt if a more delightful autumnal voyage can be made in North America, than that from Montreal to Kingston; nor do I think that any season presents so many and so varied attractions to the lover of the picturesque in nature, even there, as does early autumn.

The banks of the St. Lawrence are cultivated to a considerable extent; and that cultivation both bespeaks the industry and enterprise of the yeoman, and the profit of living on the great watery highway to the ocean, and near to large and populous growing towns. Beautiful fields of early-sown wheat show themselves at intervals all along our way; neat, and in some cases elegant, farm houses, in the midst of orchards or ornamental trees, and nice rustic gardens, lent not a little to the beauty and interest of the scenery: and before I knew it, I was preferring the right hand – the British – side of the St. Lawrence, and concluding that on that side things were most inviting, and trying to reason myself into the belief of this with a sort of patriotic feeling to which all my life before I had been a stranger, and concerning which I had been a sceptic. Why had I interest in the British side of the noble St. Lawrence? What gave me a fellow feeling with those inhabitants? Simply the fact, that that country had become to me, in a sense in which no country ever was before, my own, and those people my fellow citizens.

After a most delightful passage of two days, I arrived at Toronto. I then renewed acquaintance, formerly made, with Thomas F. Cary, Esq., one of the sincerest, most generous, practical friends I ever had the honour to call by that endearing name. The Rev. J. Roaf, whom I had formerly met in New York, took me by the hand, as he is ever ready to do in the case of the outcast. Through the kindness of this gentleman I was introduced to the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, of which the Rev. Dr. Willis was and is President. Thus Mr. Roaf laid me under a twofold obligation, which I never can cancel, and never forget – that for his personal kindness, and that for affording me the honour and pleasure of the acquaintance, ripened into friendship (if the Doctor will allow me to say so), of the Rev. Michael Willis,



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D.D.

By the advice of these gentlemen and their colleagues in the Anti-Slavery Committee, I began to lecture in Canada, and finally became the agent of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society. While in this service, it was my duty to travel all over the country, giving facts touching American slavery, seeking to awaken an interest against slavery in Canada, asking aid and kindness towards such fugitives as needed help, forming auxiliary societies, seeking to show the influence correct sentiment in Canada might have upon the adjoining States, and doing all that could be done, by advice, encouragement, and any other means, to promote the development, the progress, all the best moral and material interests, of the coloured people. What I saw, and how I saw it, while thus engaged, shall be the theme of this part of this volume.

At first sight, one would scarcely allow that anti-slavery labours were needed in a free British colony: most persons think so. The remark was frequently made to me, when proposing a meeting, or when speaking of the subject. But it is to be remembered, that Canada lies immediately next the States of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan, to go no further westward. These States produce some of the boldest pro-slavery politicians, some of the guiltiest of slavery's abettors, some of the most heretical of slavery's pulpit parasites; and it is sorrowful to add, some of the most successful in their several pro-slavery pursuits, that ever disgraced a free country, or desecrated free institutions, or belied our holy religion and its Author. Their history is not only contemporaneous with the history of Northern pro-slaveryism, but part and parcel of it. It is easy to see that a large population, infected with a sympathy for the slaveholder, upon our very border, must either have a serious effect upon us, in corrupting us, or we must exert a good influence upon them, provided we be, as we should be, thoroughly and incorruptibly and actively anti-slavery. Unfortunately, the former is the fact, and not the latter.

Besides, there is a vast amount of intercourse with the adjoining States, and a great deal of traffic, and Canadians travel extensively in the States, as do the people of the States in Canada. Thus the spread of slaveholding predilections is both favoured and facilitated; and, what is more, there is abundant evidence that some Americans industriously use these opportunities for the purpose of giving currency to their own notions. Moreover, in various parts of Canada Yankees have settled, and for miles around them the poison of their pro-slavery influence is felt. Some of them do not scruple to make known their desire to see Canada a part of the Union, and thus brought under the control of the slave power, and made a park for slaveholders to hunt human deer in. In the time of the Rebellion these things were said without concealment; and I have known cases where Yankees, living in Canada for fifteen years, have shown themselves hostile to our Sovereign and our free



institutions until they-wanted office, and then, all at once, they took the oath of allegiance!

It is not to be forgotten, on the other hand, that in the States bordering upon us are some of the most thorough out-spoken abolitionists in the American Union. Having had the honour of being one of their humblest coadjutors, I could bear testimony to their zeal and trueness; and I felt, in living so near them, I was not entirely separated from them, though in another country, so far as political relations were concerned. I knew very well, and so did the society, that co-operation and sympathy with these benevolent men and women was an object well worthy of our labours. Our fugitives passed through their hands. They conducted the [underground railway](#). The goods were consigned to us. When they reached us they ceased to be goods, and became men instantaneously. For that purpose they sent them; for that purpose we received them. On that account they rejoiced in the true practical freedom of our country; on that account we deemed it a mercy to be permitted to live in such a country. They wrought and rejoiced on one side of the line; we did the same on the other side of the line. We were yokefellows, why should we not recognize each other as such? We did; we do yet. They attend our annual anti-slavery gatherings, we attend theirs.

But I may as well come to some more unwelcome facts, showing the need of anti-slavery labour in Canada. I class them under two heads – 1st, Pro-slavery feeling; and, 2nd, Negro-hate.

1. I do not now speak of Yankee settlers, visitors, or travellers: enough has been said of them. I now speak of British-born subjects, who in Canada exhibit these two sentiments in a manner that no Yankee can excel. There are men and women in our midst who justify slavery, out and out. Some of these were heretofore planters in the West Indies. The victims of their former power being translated by the law of 1834 into freemen, they never can forgive Lord Grey, Lord Derby, nor the British Cabinet and the British people, for the demanding, advocacy, and passing, of that law. Their property, their power, their wealth in human beings, are all gone, or nearly so. They are almost all of them friends of slavery, or enemies of the Negro, or both. Others were slaveholders aforetime in the United States. Circumstances of one sort and another have induced them to change their residences, and they now abide in our midst, participating in our freedom, and seeming to enjoy it; but they cannot forget the "leeks and the onions" of that Egypt in which they once luxuriated as small-sized, very small, Pharaohs. They are not wont to say a great deal about it, for that is not exactly the latitude for the popularity of such sentiments; but they say enough to show who and what they are. And, "tell it not in Gath!" some of both these classes of Canadian slaveocrats are coloured men!

Another class were poor in former days, and, going out to seek their fortunes, alighted upon Southern plantations, where they found lucrative employment, in slave-driving; or they have contracted marriage alliances with the daughters of



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slaveholders, and thus become sons-in-law and brothers-in-law to slaveholders and to slavery. Such self-seeking, pelf-seeking, devotees of the institution, are always the most clamorous in its behalf. These obey this rule with all their might.

Others still – like many, too many, Englishmen – without direct or indirect, present or past, interest in slavery, have travelled in the South; and, belonging to that extremely clever class of persons who possess the extraordinary facility of going through a country with both eyes wide open, and seeing nothing but just what they wish to see, return ignorant of any evils in slavery. "Fat, sleek, well contented slaves," were the only ones they saw. There were none but the kindest masters in any part of the country through which they travelled. They cannot distinctly remember to have heard of a slave auction, of the separation of a slave family, of a case of severe flogging, of a chained coffle gang, of murder, incest, fornication or adultery, during all the tour: in fact, they cannot believe that such things do occur! Slavery, in their eyes – sightless eyes, in chosen circumstances – is a very innocent, happy affair. True, they never wore the yoke, they never even tasted any of those sweets which they are sure were from necessity in slavery; but they know (that is, they know nothing) and are prepared to testify (albeit their testimony is good for nothing) that slavery is only bad, if bad at all, either in the exaggerated view of the abolitionists, or as the result of the exasperations of the amiable slaveholders by the intermeddling of the abolitionists. Yes, our sacred soil is polluted by the unholy tread of pro-slavery men. Fortunately, but few of them, so far as I know, are ministers of the gospel. Two bishops, one a Roman Catholic and the other an Episcopalian, have the name of it. I doubt if they are falsely charged; but still I cannot say, certainly. Some, I know, are very chary of doing anything against slavery. I know of one, an Englishman, in Hamilton (the Yankeeist town in Canada), who is especially cautious; and another, a Scotchman, "canny" to the last degree, lest he should be suspected of anti-slaveryism. And fame says – no, it was a doctor of divinity who told me – that there is at least one now in Toronto, who was once in Hamilton, who favours the pro-slavery side of the case. But the very difficulty I have in recollecting these few, after having travelled all over the colony, shows that, with us, anti-slavery is the rule, pro-slavery the exception, in our clergy-men, while in the States the converse is true. That is something. But I shall not leave this truth, so gloriously creditable to the ministry of my adopted country, to be merely inferred from the foregoing. I shall by and by have the great pleasure of asserting it in direct terms, as I do now by implication.

2. Canadian Negro-haters are the very worst of their class. I know of none so contemptible. I say this in justice to the Americans from whom I have suffered, in the States, and to whom I have very freely alluded; and in justice, too, to such Yankees as are now resident in Canada. And I beg to say, that I write



no more freely than I have spoken, to the very faces of those I am now describing.

This feeling abounds most among the native Canadians, who, as a rule, are the lowest, the least educated, of all the white population. Like the same class in England, and like the ancestors of the Americans, they have not the training of gentlemen, are not accustomed to genteel society, and, as a consequence, know but little, next to nothing, of what are liberal enlightened views and genteel behaviour. Having no social standing such as gentlemen feel the necessity of maintaining, they suffer nothing from doing an ungentlemanly deed; and having neither a high aim nor a high standard of social behaviour, they seem to be, and in fact are, quite content to remain as they are. It is obvious, too, that such a class will maintain a poor petty jealousy towards those coming into the country who give any signs of prospering, especially if they are, from colour or what not, objects of dislike. In saying this feeling abounds most among native Canadians of the lower order, I do not mean that it is confined to them; nor do I mean to say that it is universal, without exception, even among this class – others exhibit it, and some of that class are among the freest from it. Still, its chief seat is in their bosoms. A few facts will make my meaning more clear.

In many cases, a black person travelling, whatever may be his style and however respectable his appearance, will be denied a seat at table d'hôte at a country inn, or on a steamer; and in a case or two coming under my own observation, such have been denied any sort of entertainment whatever. A gentleman of my acquaintance,³³ driving a good pair of horses, and travelling at leisure, with his ladylike wife, was one night, in the winter of 1851-52, denied admittance at some dozen public taverns. His lady, being of lighter complexion than himself, on one or two occasions was admitted, and was comfortably seated by the fire, and politely treated – until her darker-skinned husband came in, and then, there was no room for either. It was a bitterly cold night; and being treated –maltreated– after this manner until nearly midnight, they were at length obliged to accept of a room in which they could sit up all night.

In December, 1851, a black man arrived at Hamilton. He proposed going into an omnibus, to ride up from the wharf at which he landed, to Week's Hotel. The servants on the omnibus declared it was full. This being false, and it being pointed out to them, they declared the empty seats were engaged to persons whom they were to take up on the way. After the black had been refused a passage in the omnibus, numbers of whites were freely admitted – in fact, solicited to enter it. The Negro had no means of getting up with his luggage until a kind-hearted Irishman took him in his waggon. Upon reaching Week's Hotel, he applied for lodging, but was distinctly refused a bed, solely on the ground of his colour. Such were Mr. Week's express orders.³⁴

Some six months after that, I heard of the destruction of a large

33. Mr. Peter O'Banyon.

34. The black person is the Writer.



amount of Week's property by fire, without shedding a single tear! Two cases like these I have not known in the States for twenty years. While these Canadian tavern-keepers have been apeing the bad character of their Yankee neighbours, they have not participated in some better influences on this subject, which the repeated droppings of the anti-slavery streamlet have caused to take place on the Yankee rock of Negro-hate. In that respect Canadian is beneath and behind Yankee feeling.

The instances which have come before me of such occurrences at taverns would be too numerous to mention. I will give two steamboat cases, of many. A gentleman of colour,³⁵ who graduated at King's College (now the university) at Toronto, was going to Kingston. He took a first class ticket, and was accordingly entitled to first class fare. When the dinner bell rang, he presented himself at the table. He was forbidden to sit down. He paid no attention to the prohibition, and was about sitting down, when the captain approached him menacingly, and was about to draw the chair from under him; when the black drew another chair, knocked the captain down, and then sat down and eat his dinner in peace. On their arrival at Kingston the captain complained of him for assault; and he of the captain, for interference with his rights. The Court fined-the black gentleman five pounds and the captain twenty. And here is the grand difference betwixt Yankee and Canadian Negro-hate – the former is sanctioned by the laws and the courts, the latter is not. In either of the tavern cases to which reference has been made, the parties could have had legal redress. In my own case, I went to a law office, and looked up the law upon the subject, and found it as plain as daylight; but I did not prosecute.

The other steamboat case was that of a coloured woman, with her sister and three children, coming to Canada from New York State, in 1851. The brutal captain, a Scotchman, by the name of Ker, refused them a seat anywhere else save on the deck, and refused even to take money from them for a cabin passage. His lying plea was, that it would be offensive to the passengers. Every one of them distinctly denied it, and, what is more, another coloured lady, with her husband, had and enjoyed a cabin passage! Tell me not that I speak too strongly about this case. The woman is my wife, the children ours! God forgive Captain Ker! I was stating this case one night in a lecture, and afterwards learned that among my hearers were several of the relatives of this same recreant Scotchman. Glad was I that the case was told so near home.

From this date forward the Reverend Samuel Joseph May would sponsor annual "Jerry Celebrations" in an attempt to make this blow for freedom of as great significance to Americans as the Boston Tea Party (vindication of "eternal principles of Right" being considered, according to the Reverend's idiosyncratic and perhaps even un-USer sense of values, "more valuable than tea").

The 1st Hawaiian stamps were issued.

35. Peter Galego, Esq.



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HENRY WILLIAMS

October 1, Wednesday: 5 P m Just put a fugitive slave who has taken the name of Henry Williams into the cars for Canada. He escaped from Stafford County Virginia to Boston last October, has been in Shadracks place at the Cornhill Coffee-house—had been corresponding through an agent with his master who is his father about buying—himself—his master asking \$600 but he having been able to raise only \$500.— heard that there were writs out for two Williamses fugitives—and was informed by his fellow servants & employer that Augerhole Burns & others of the police had called for him when he was out. Accordingly fled to Concord last night on foot—bringing a letter to our family from Mr Lovejoy of Cambridge—& another which Garrison had formerly given him on another occasion.

He lodged with us & waited in the house till funds were collected with which to forward him. Intended to despatch him at noon through to Burlington—but when I went to buy his ticket saw one at the Depot who looked & behaved so much like a Boston policeman, that I did not venture that time.

An intelligent and very well behaved man—a mullatto.

There is art to be used not only in selecting wood for a withe but in using it. Birch withes are twisted, I suppose in order that the fibres may be less abruptly bent—or is it only by accident that they are twisted?

The slave said he could guide himself by many other stars than the north star whose rising & setting he knew— They steered for the north star even when it had got round and appeared to them to be in the south. They frequently followed the telegraph when there was no railroad. The slaves bring many superstitions from Africa. The fugitives sometimes superstitiously carry a turf in their hats thinking that their success depends on it.

These days when the trees have put on their autumnal tints are the gala days of the year—when the very foliage of trees is colored like a blossom— It is a proper time for a yearly festival—an agricultural show.

Candlelight To Conantum— The moon not quite half full.³⁶ The twilight is much shorter now than a month ago, probably as the atmosphere is clearer and there is less to reflect the light. The air is cool & the ground also feels cold under my feet as if the grass were wet with dew which is not yet the case. I go through Wheelers cornfield in the twilight, where the stalks are bleached almost white—and his tops are still stacked along the edge of the field. The moon is not far up above the southwestern horizon. Looking west at this hour the earth is an unvaried undistinguishable black in contrast with the twilight sky. It is as if you were walking in night up to your chin. There is no wind stirring. An oak tree in Hubbard's pasture stands absolutely motionless and dark against the sky. The crickets sound farther off or fainter at this season as if they had gone deeper into the sod to avoid the cold. There are no crickets heard on the alders on the causeway. The moon looks colder in the water. There is a great change between this and my last moon light walk— I experience a comfortable warmth when I approach the south side of a dry wood—which keeps off the cooler air and also retains some of the warmth of day. The voices of travellers in the road are heard afar over the fields. even to Conantum house. The moon is too far west to be seen reflected in the river at Tupelo cliff—but the stars are reflected— The river is a dark mirror with bright points feebly fluctuating— I smell the bruised horsemint which I cannot see while I sit on the brown rocks by the shore. I see the glow-worm under the damp cliff— No whippoorwills [**Whip-poor-will** *Caprimulgus vociferus*] are heard tonight—and scarcely a note of any other bird. At 8 o'clock the fogs have begun which with the shining on them look like cobwebs or thin white veils spread over the earth— They are the dreams or visions of the meadow.

The second growth of the white-pine is probably softer & more beautiful than the primitive forest ever afforded. The primitive forest is more grand with its bare mossy stems and ragged branches, but exhibits no such masses of green needles trembling in the light.

The elms are generally of a dirty or brownish yellow now

36. The almanac shows October 1st to be the night of the half-full moon.



December 2, Tuesday: [Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his [JOURNAL INTIME](#): “Let mystery have its place in you; do not be always turning up your whole soil with the plowshare of self-examination, but leave a little fallow corner in your heart ready for any seed the winds may bring, and reserve a nook of shadow for the passing bird; keep a place in your heart for the unexpected guests, an altar for the unknown God. Then if a bird sing among your branches, do not be too eager to tame it. If you are conscious of something new — thought or feeling, wakening in the depths of your being — do not be in a hurry to let in light upon it, to look at it; let the springing germ have the protection of being forgotten, hedge it round with quiet, and do not break in upon its darkness; let it take shape and grow, and not a word of your happiness to any one! Sacred work of nature as it is, all conception should be enwrapped by the triple veil of modesty, silence and night.

Kindness is the principle of tact, and respect for others the first condition of *savoir-vivre*.

He who is silent is forgotten; he who abstains is taken at his word; he who does not advance, falls back; he who stops is overwhelmed, distanced, crushed; he who ceases to grow greater becomes smaller; he who leaves off, gives up; the stationary condition is the beginning of the end — it is the terrible symptom which precedes death. To live, is to achieve a perpetual triumph; it is to assert one’s self against destruction, against sickness, against the annulling and dispersion of one’s physical and moral being. It is to will without ceasing, or rather to refresh one’s will day by day.

It is not history which teaches conscience to be honest; it is the conscience which educates history. Fact is corrupting, it is we who correct it by the persistence of our ideal. The soul moralizes the past in order not to be demoralized by it. Like the alchemists of the middle ages, she finds in the crucible of experience only the gold that she herself has poured into it.”

On the 47th anniversary of the coronation of [Napoléon I](#) as the Emperor of France and the 46th anniversary of the Battle of Austerlitz, [French](#) President Louis-[Napoléon](#) Bonaparte staged his *coup d’état* against the 2d French Republic. The National Assembly was dissolved, with nearly all political leaders of the Republic taken into custody. There was but sporadic resistance.

An Englishman named Bainbridge was visiting the [Niagara Falls](#) in the off season and, while on the icy catwalk to the Terrapin Tower, slipped under the railing. He was able to hang onto a rock for a half an hour in the torrent until someone noticed him down there and summoned two tour guides, J. Davy and H. Brewster. By tying together their horse reins they were able to make a lifeline long enough to reach Bainbridge on his rock — and he got pulled to safety.

Miss [Mary Moody Emerson](#) was such a rigid defender of the sanctity of the Sabbath day that often she would spend the day in solitude, refusing to profane it by church and sermon:

*Pulpits & all the wonders dark & light of nature are but
means – not the end of existing – that is for God!*

Note that this sort of ultra-pious attitude, rather than distancing her from such non-observers of the Sabbath as [Margaret Fuller](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#), actually served to bring her closer to them.

On this day [Thoreau](#) made no entry in his journal, clearly because he was too busy beginning the survey of a line between Carlisle and Concord that would continue to occupy him on the 3d, 4th, 5th, 10th, and 13th (there had been a lot of controversy about this line for years; the Town Report for 1851/1852 says that Henry was paid \$42.⁰⁰ for setting this line; Henry’s measurements would not resolve the issue), and lotting off a 40-acre “Ministerial lot” in the southeast part of Concord between Cambridge Turnpike and Walden Streets so the lots could be sold to John McKeen, Nathan Brooks, Aaron A. Kelsey, [Daniel Shattuck](#), Reuben Brown, Richard Barrett, Charles B. Davis, Moses Prichard, the Reverend Addison Grant Fay, Patrick MacManners, [Dr. Josiah](#)



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

[Bartlett](#), Colonel Charles Holbrook, R.A. Messer, and Jonathan Farwell. (He would continue on this project during the following month.)

View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:



http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/89.htm

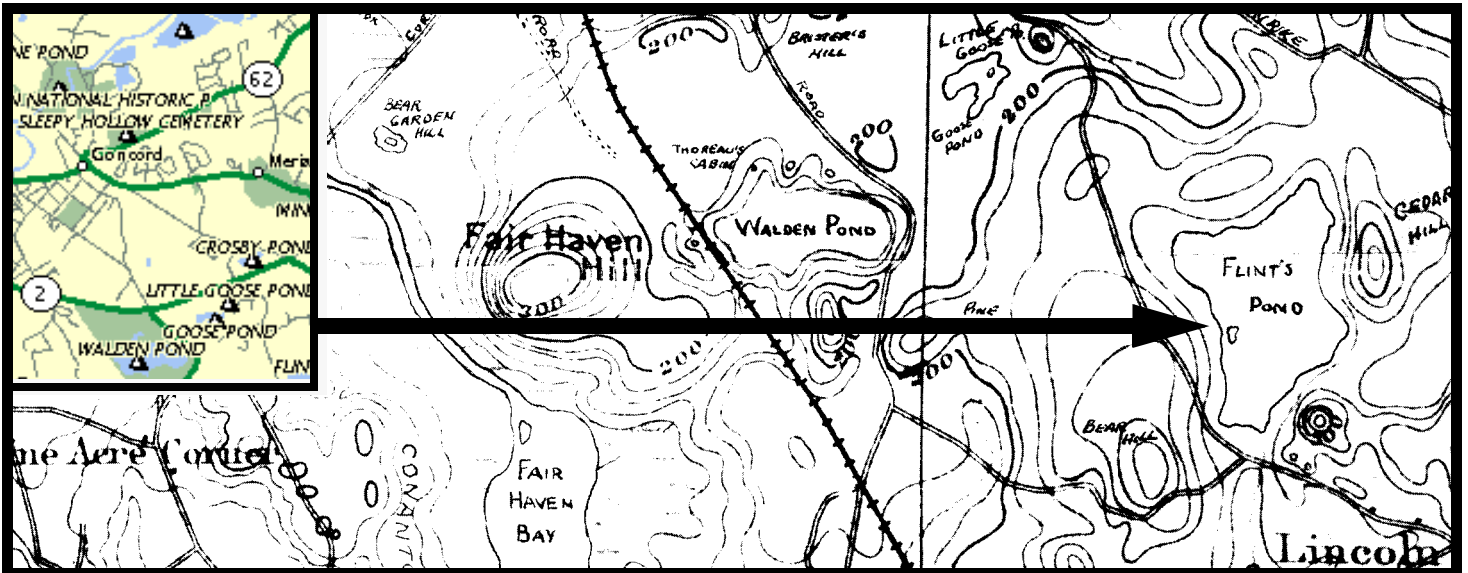
ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1852

April 1, Thursday: The 3rd, final installment of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, OR THE MAN THAT WAS A THING* appeared in the [Washington DC](#) antislavery weekly, *The National Era*.³⁷

[Henry Thoreau](#) continued studying the aesthetic and landscape theories in the [Reverend William Gilpin](#)'s *FOREST SCENERY*. Then he walked on the railroad in the afternoon to Flint's Pond cedar woods.



April 1, Thursday: [Gilpin](#) says well that the object of a light mist is a “**nearer distance**” Among minuter plants – regarded as component parts of the forest – he thinks the fern the most picturesque. He says “We are often at a loss to distinguish in pictures, the rising from the setting sun; tho their characters are very different, both in the lights & shadows. The ruddy lights indeed of the evening are more easily distinguished: but it is not perhaps always sufficiently observed, that the shadows of the evening are much less opaque, than those of the morning.”

This morning the ground was completely covered with snow & the water on the meadows looked dark & stormy & contrasted well with the white landscape. Now at noon the ground is once more as bare as before.

He is in the lowest scale of laborers who is merely an able-bodied man and can compete with others only in physical strength. Woodchoppers in this neighborhood get but 50 cents a cord, but though many can chop 2 cords in a day in pleasant weather & under favorable circumstances, yet most do not average more than 75 cents a day take the months together– But one among them of only equal physical strength and skill as a chopper – having more wit, buys a cross-cut saw for 4 dollars, hires a man to help him at a dollar a day – and saws down trees all winter at 10 cents apiece & 30 or 40 a day – & clears 2 or more dollars a day by it. Yet as long as the world may last few will be found to buy the cross-cut saw – and probably the wages of the sawyer will never be reduced to a level with those of the chopper.

2 Pm to Flint's Pond Cedar woods via RR – returning by C. Smith's orchard.

Saw the first bee of the season on the RR causeway – also a small red butterfly and later a large dark one with buff-edged wings. –G.

37.  Harriet Beecher Stowe. *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, OR THE MAN THAT WAS A THING*. *The National Era*, June 8, 1851 to April 1, 1852



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

BAKER FARM

JAMES BAKER

Gilpin's "Forest Scenery" is a pleasing book. So moderate, temperate, graceful, roomy – like a gladed wood – not condensed with a certain religion in its manners and respect for all the good of the past – rare in more recent books – & it is grateful to read after them. Somewhat spare indeed in the thoughts as in the sentences – Some of the cool wind of the copses converted into grammatical & graceful sentences – without heat. Not one of those humors come to a head which some modern books are, but some of the natural surface of a healthy mind.

Walden is all white ice but little melted about the shores. The very sight of it when I get so far on the causeway, though I hear the **spring** note of the chickadee [**Black-capped Chickadee**  **Parus atricapillus**] from over the ice carries my thoughts back at once some weeks toward winter – & a chill comes over them.

There is an early willow on sandbank of the RR against the pond by the fence – greyish below & yellowish above – The RR men have dug around the sleepers that the sun may thaw the ground & let them down. It is not yet out. Cut across near Bakers Barn. The swollen buds of some trees now give a new tint to their tops seen at a distance – to the maples at least. Bakers peach orchard – looks at this distance purplish below & red above – the color of the last year's twigs – The geranium? is the most common green leaf to be seen everywhere on the surface now the snow is gone.

They have been shooting great numbers of muskrats the last day or two. Is that the red osier (cornel or viburnum) near the grape vine on the Bear Hill road? How sure the farmer is to find out what bush affords the best withes – little of a botanist as he is. – The mts seen from Bare Hill are very fine now in the horizon – so evanescent – being broadly spotted white and blue like the skins of some animals – the white predominating. – The Peterboro Hills to the north are almost all white. The snow has melted more on the more southern mts. With their white mantles – notwithstanding the alternating dark patches – they melt into the sky – Yet perhaps the white portions may be distinguished by the peculiar light of the sun shining on them. They are like a narrow strip of broadly spotted leopard skin, the saddle cloth of the sun spread along the horizon –

I am surprised to find Flints Pond frozen still which should have been open a week ago. The Great Sudbury meadows covered with water are revealed – blue they look over the woods – each part of the river seen further north shines like silver in the sun – and the little pond in the woods west of this hill is half open water. Cheering that water with its reflections – compared with this opaque dumb pond. How unexpectedly dumb & poor & cold does Nature look when where we had expected to find a glassy lake reflecting the skies and trees in the Spring – we find only dull white ice. Such am I no doubt to many friends – But now that I have reached the Cedar Hill I see that there is about an acre of open water perhaps over bush island in the middle of the pond – and there are some water-fowl there on the edge of the ice mere black spots – though I detect their character by discovering a relative motion. – & some are swimming about in the water. The pond is perhaps the handsomer after all for this distant patch only of blue water in the midst of the field of white ice. Each enhances the other. It is an azure spot an Elysian feature in your cold companion making the imagined concealed depths seem deeper & rarer. This pond is worth coming to if only because it is larger than Walden – I can so easily fancy it indefinitely large – It represents to me that Icy Sea of which I have been reading in Sir J. Richardson's Book.

The prevailing color of the woods at present, excepting the evergreens, is russet – a little more red or greyish as the case may be, than the earth – for those are the colors of the withered leaves & the branches – The earth has the lighter hue of withered grass. Let me see how soon the woods will have acquired a new color. – Went over the hill toward the E. end of the pond. What is the significance of odors – of the odoriferous woods. – Sweet & yellow birch – Sassafras – fever-bush &c are an interesting class to me – when we bruise them in our walk we are suddenly exhilarated by their odor – This sweet scent soon evaporates & you must break the twig afresh – If you cut it, it is not as if you break it. Some like the sassafras have brought a great price as articles of commerce – No wonder that men thought they might have some effect toward renovating their lives. Gosnold, the discoverer of Cape Cod carried home a cargo of sassafras. What could be more grateful to the discoverer of a new country than a new fragrant wood?

Gilpin's is a book in which first there is nothing to offend – & 2ndly something to attract and please

The branches of the young black birch grow very upright – as it were appressed to the main stem. Their buds appear a little expanded now. Saw the fox-colored sparrows [**Fox Sparrow**  **Passerella iliaca**] & slate-colored snow birds [**Dark-eyed Junco**  **Junco hyemalis**] on Smiths Hill – the latter singing in the sun – a pleasant jingle.

The mts which an hour ago were white are now all blue – the mistiness has increased so much in the horizon & crept even into the vales of the distant woods. The mist is in wreathes or stripes because we see the mist of successive vales. There could not easily be a greater contrast than between this morning's & this evening's landscapes. The sun now an hour high –

Now I see the river reach far in the north. The more distant river is ever the most ethereal.

Sat awhile before sun-set on the rocks in Saw Mill Brook – A brook need not be large to afford us pleasure by its sands & meanderings and falls & their various accompaniments. It is not so much size that we want as



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THE SUBLIME

picturesque beauty & harmony. If the sound of its fall fills my ear it is enough. I require that the rocks over which it falls be agreeably disposed, & prefer that they be covered with lichens. The height & volume of the fall is of very little importance compared with the appearance & disposition of the rocks over which it falls, the agreeable diversity of still water rapids & falls & of the surrounding scenery. I require that the banks & neighboring hill sides be not cut off – but excite a sense of at least graceful wildness. One or two small evergreens, especially hemlocks standing gracefully on the brink of the rill contrasting by their green with the surrounding deciduous trees when they have lost their leaves, & thus enlivening the scene & betraying their attachment to the water. It would be no more pleasing to me if the stream were a mile wide & the (trees) hemlocks 5 feet in diameter. I believe that there is a harmony between the hemlock & the hemlock & the water which it overhangs – not explainable. In the first place its green is especially grateful to the eye the greater part of the year in any locality. and in the winter by its verdure overhanging & shading the water it concentrates in itself the beauty of all fluvial trees. It loves to stand with its foot close to the water – its roots running over the rocks of the shore – & it 2 or more on opposite sides of a brook make the makes the most beautiful frame to a water-scape especially in deciduous woods – where the light is somber & not too glaring. It makes the more complete frame because its branches – particularly in young specimens such as I am thinking of spring from so near the ground & it makes so dense a mass of verdure. There are many larger hemlocks covering the steep side a hill forming the bank of the assabet where they are successively undermined by the water and they lean at every angle over the water – some are almost horizontally directed, and almost every year one falls in & is washed away. The place is known as the “Leaning Hemlocks.”– But to return to Saw Mill Run. I love that the green fronds of the fern pressed by the snow – lie on its rocks. It is a great advantage to take in so many parts at one view. We love to see the water stand – or seem to stand – at many different levels within a short distance – while we sit in its midst – some above some below us – & many successive falls in different directions meandering in the course of the fall – rather than one “chute” – rather spreading & shoaling than contracting & deepening at the fall– In a small brook like this there are many adjuncts to increase the variety, which are wanting in a river – or if present cannot be attended to – even dead leaves & twigs vary the ripples & increase the foam.– And the very lichens on the rocks of the run are an important ornament – which in the great waterfall are wont to be overlooked. I enjoy this little fall on Saw Mill Run more than many a large one on a river that I have seen. The hornbeams & witch hazel & canoe birches all come in for their share of attention. We get such a complete idea of the small rill with its overhanging shrubs – as only a birds eye view from some eminence could give us of the larger stream. Perhaps it does not fall more than 5 feet within a rod & a half. I should not hear Niagara a short distance off. The never ending refreshing sound. It suggests more thoughts than Montmorenci. A stream & fall which the woods imbosom– They are not in this proportion to a larger fall. They lie in a more glaring & less picturesque light. Even the bubbles are a study. It can be completely examined in its details. The consciousness of their being water about you at different levels is agreeable. The sun can break through & fall on it & vary the whole scene infinitely.

NIAGARA FALLS

EDMUND HOSMER

Saw the freshly? broken shells of a tortoise’s eggs – or were they a snakes? in Hosmer’s field. I hear a robin [**American Robin**,  *Turdus migratorius*] singing on the woods S of Hosmers just before sunset. It is a sound associated with New England village life– It brings to my thoughts summer evenings when the children are playing in the yards before the doors & their parents conversing at the open windows.– It foretels all this now before those summer hours are come.

As I come over the turnpike – the song sparrow’s [*Melospiza*,  *melodia*] jingle comes up from every part of the meadow as native as the tinkling rills – or the blossoms of the spirea– The meadow sweet – soon to spring. Its cheep is like the sound of opening buds.– The sparrow is continually singing on the alders along the brook side while the sun is continually setting.

We have had a good solid winter – which has put the previous summer far behind us – intense cold deep & lasting snows – & clear tense winter sky– It is a good experience to have gone through with.



1853

George P. Bond prepared the first accurate [tourist](#) map of the White Mountains.

Mount Washington House, one of Horace Fabyan's tourist hotels, burned. Due to legal squabbles it would not be rebuilt. By this point in time, with the Atlantic and Saint Lawrence Railroad passing eight miles to the east of Mount Washington, two new hotels had been built on the eastern slopes of the mountain in an area previously little frequented by [tourists](#). One of these the railroad corporation itself had erected, in Gorham to the east of the mountain: a hotel known as the Alpine House. The Lafayette House in the Franconia Notch was replaced by a much more elaborate hotel, the Profile House, renamed of course in honor of the attractiveness of the nearby Great Stone Face. By this point the grand hotels of the region could play host to two thousand paying tourists at a time.

Although we 20th-Century people might presume that these 19th-Century people were [tourists](#) for the same reasons that we ourselves are tourists, perhaps a back-to-nature experience obtained on solitary hiking trails featuring superb views, Dona Brown has pointed out that this simply was not the case: in the 19th Century what the American tourist was seeking was instead the picturesque and [the sublime](#):



Sublime scenery was in some sense overwhelming. It inspired the viewer with awe, reverence, perhaps even fear. Towering mountains, a massive waterfall, an overhanging cliff, could all serve as reminders of one's own insignificance and weakness in the face of larger forces. In an encounter with the sublime, the observer would be deeply moved by the overwhelming power of the sight.

Dona Brown points out that [George Gordon, Lord Byron](#) well understood the fact that "scenery and the emotions it engendered were of tremendous importance to the travellers and would-be travelers who modeled their writing on his poems." She suggests that:



[T]he cult of scenery may have been connected with the crisis of young adulthood. Its most fervent practitioners tended to be young, perhaps traveling after graduation from college, or immediately before or after marriage.



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I personally think that Dona Brown is onto something here. I believe that people were seeking out scenery that would match the scenery in the popular “Journey of Life” paintings. Newlyweds, for instance, in visiting the [Niagara Falls](#), were reminding themselves that the placid stream of their marriage could suddenly become a maelstrom of plunging disaster, if they did not look ahead and plan carefully together to sail only in the waters of marital bliss.



July 18, Monday, 9PM: Three sand-scow workers who had been drinking attempted to make a crossing of the river above the [Niagara Falls](#) and blundered into the American Rapids. When their tiny boat was swamped, one of the men, Joseph Avery, a German immigrant, managed to make his way to a rock about 500 feet above the lip. The other two, we surmise, perhaps went over the rim in the dark still clinging to their overturned boat.

September: Patrick Sneed, a person of color employed as a waiter in the Cataract House near [Niagara Falls](#), was taken into custody when an accusation was made against him, that he had committed a murder in Savannah, Georgia. When the accused man was brought under a writ of Habeas Corpus before the court at Buffalo, New York, however, Judge Sheldon ordered that he be “fully discharged.” It appears that this accusation of being a murderer was most likely a pretense, the objective of the complainant presumably being to transport Sneed to the South on the “[reverse underground railroad](#)” that had been made possible by the Fugitive Slave Law, and there reduce him to slavery.



1854

The US soldiers were again withdrawn from [Fort Niagara](#).

January 17, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed for William O. Benjamin in the east part of Lincoln.

Detroit and [Niagara Falls](#) became connected across Canada by way of the Great Western Railway.



Jan. 17. Surveying for William O. Benjamin in east part of Lincoln. Saw a red squirrel on the wall, it being thawing weather. Human beings with whom I have no sympathy are far stranger to me than inanimate matter, — rocks or earth. Looking on the last, I feel comparatively as if I were with my kindred.

[Cato](#), prescribing a *medicamentum* for oxen, says, “When you see a snake’s slough, take it and lay it up, that you may not have to seek it when it is wanted.” This was mixed with bread, corn, etc.

He tells how to make bread and different kinds of cakes, viz., a *libum*, a *placenta*, a *spira* (so called because twisted like a rope, perhaps like doughnuts), *scriblita* (because ornamented with characters like writing), *globi* (globes), etc., etc. Tells how to make a vow for your oxen to Mars Sylvanus in a wood with an offering, no woman to be present nor know how it is done.

When the brine will float a dry *maena* (a fish) or an egg, then it will preserve meat. Tells how to cram hens and geese. If you wish to remove an ill savor from wine, he recommends to heat a brick and pitch it and let it down by a string to the bottom of the cask and there remain two days, the cask being stopped.

“If you wish to know if water has been added to wine, make a little vessel of ivy wood (*materia ederacea*). Put into it the wine which you think has water in it. If it has water, the wine will run out (*effluct*), the water will remain. For a vessel of ivy wood does not hold wine.”

“The dogs must be shut up by day that they may be more sharp (*aeriores*, more fierce (?)) and vigilant by night.” So I might say of a moon and star gazer.

“Make a sacrificial feast for the oxen when the pear is in blossom. Afterward begin to plow in the spring.” “That day is to be holy (*feriae*) to the oxen, and herdsmen, and those who make the feast.” They offer wine and mutton to Jupiter Dapalis, also to Vesta if they choose.

When they thinned a consecrated grove (*lucum conlucare*) (as if [to] let in the light to a shaded place) they were to offer a hog by way of expiation and pray the god or goddess to whom it was sacred to be favorable to them, their house and family and children. Whatever god or goddess thou art to whom this grove is sacred, I pray thee be propitious. Should not all groves be regarded as a *lucus*, or consecrated grove, in this sense? I wish that our farmers felt some such awe when they cut down our consecrated groves; would realize that they are sacred to some god.

A *lustrum*, or sacrifice, of a sow, sheep, and bull (*suovitautilia*) was performed every fifth year, when various things were prayed for.

Gives several charms to cure diseases, mere magician’s words.

February 24, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) measured the thickness of the ice at Walden Pond and on Fair Haven Bay.

Two workers fell to their deaths from a suspension bridge being erected at [Niagara Falls](#).



February 24. P. M. — To Walden and Fair Haven.

In Wheeler’s Wood by railroad. Nuthatches are faintly answering each other, — tit for tat, — on different keys, — a faint creak. Now and then one utters a loud distinct *gnah*. This bird more than any I know loves to stand with its head downward.

Meanwhile chickadees, with their silver tinkling, are flitting high above through the tops of the pines. Measured the ice of Walden in three places, —



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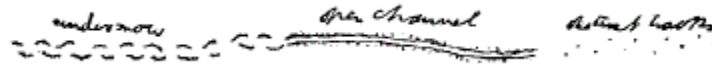
THE SUBLIME

One about 10 rods from the shore, $16\frac{7}{8}$ inches thick
25 rods from the shore, “ “ “
In middle $17\frac{1}{4}$ “ “

Call it then 17 inches on an average . On Fair Haven, in the only place tried, it was 21 inches thick. The portion of the ice in Walden above water was *about* $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, in Fair Haven *about* $1\frac{3}{4}$.. This part then equals $\frac{1}{13}$ + and $\frac{1}{12}$ respectively .

Tried the frost in five different and very distant woods in my walk. Found that though the ground is frozen more than 18 inches — from 18 [inches] to $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet — thick on the open hillside on the new Bedford road, notwithstanding some snow on it, I can drive a stake without any trouble in the midst of ordinary level mixed pine and oak woods where the snow is a foot deep, in *very thick* pine and oak woods where the snow is only one inch thick or none at all, and the ground does not slope to the north and east, and probably the northwest, and in sprout-lands where it is 20 inches thick in some places, and in springy meadows. In Moore's Swamp it is frozen about 4 inches deep in open land. I think that in an average year the ice in such a pond as Fair Haven attains a greater thickness than the snow on a level. The other day I thought that I smelled a fox very strongly, and went a little further and found that it was a skunk. May not their odors differ in intensity chiefly? Observed in one of the little pond-holes between Walden and Fair Haven where a partridge had travelled around in the snow amid the bordering bushes twenty-five rods, had pecked the green leaves of the lambkill and left fragments on the snow, and had paused at each high blueberry bush, fed on its red buds and shaken down fragments of its bark on the snow. These buds appeared its main object. I finally scared the bird.

I see such mice or mole tracks as these :—



The frozen earth at the new road cut is hauled off twenty rods by chains hooked round it, and it lies like great blocks of yellow sandstone for building, cracked out exactly square by wedges. The sexton tells me that he had to dig the last grave through two feet of frozen ground. I measured a block to-day two feet five inches thick after being dragged a dozen rods.



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1855

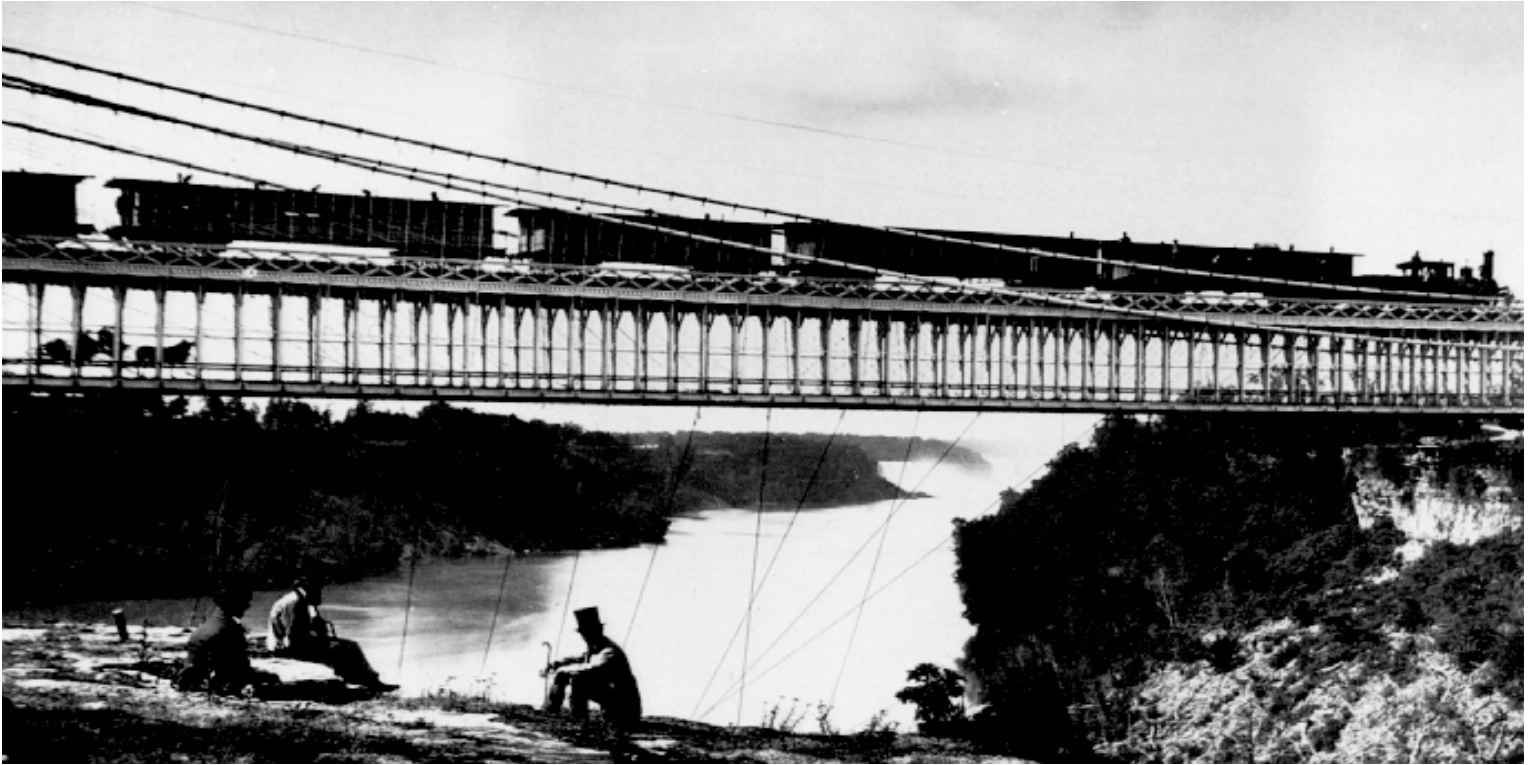
The Buffalo and [Niagara Falls](#) Railroad was taken over by the [New York](#) Central Railroad.

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THE SUBLIME

The Roeblings constructed the “suspension” bridge³⁸ over the [Niagara River](#) which would legitimate suspension for railroad trains. At 825 feet it was twice as long as the Britannia rail bridge over the Menai Strait in North Wales, but it was very light, using only 1/6th the weight of materials in proportion to its length. The decks were hung from four cables each 10 inches in diameter and stiffened by 18-foot-deep trusses between the upper rail deck and the lower highway deck. The cables were hung from the cliffs and helped to resist deck uplift from the winds. In addition, inclined cable stays were used to stiffen the bridge above its top deck. The Roeblings positioned the bridge over the rapids of the river. The falls themselves, slightly downstream, were then being touted to America by [George William Curtis](#)—who claimed to be able to hear Niagara roar “FORWARD!”—as a natural USer symbol of “irresistible progress.”³⁹



“No one is afraid to cross.”

We may speculate that John Augustus Roebling’s claim “No one is afraid to cross” was made due to the fact that, five years earlier, hundreds had fallen to their deaths when a suspension bridge collapsed in France. However, of all the people who would pass over this bridge, it would be Mark Twain of course who would

38. It was called that, although really it classified as a cable-stayed span like one over a ship canal east of Houston TX rather than like the Golden Gate bridge.

39. One is reminded of the concluding scene in the movie “Doctor Zhivago.”



THE SUBLIME

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have the appropriate remark:

You drive over the Suspension Bridge, and divide your misery between the chances of smashing down two hundred feet into the river below, and the chances of having a railway train overhead smashing down onto you. Either possibility is discomfiting taken by itself, but, mixed together, they amount in the aggregate to positive unhappiness.

March 8, Thursday: The 1st train of the Rochester, Lockport & Suspension Bridge line crossed John Augustus Roebling's newly-constructed suspension bridge over the [Niagara River](#).



March 8. P. M. — To old Carlisle road. Another fair day with easterly wind. This morning I got my boat out of the cellar and turned it up in the yard to let the seams open before I calk it. The blue river, now almost completely open (i. e. excepting a little ice in the recesses of the shore and a good deal over the meadows), admonishes me to be swift. I see where many young trees and bushes have been broken down by the ice after the last freshet, many of Loring's young maples, for example. The cornel and other bushes along the walls are broken like young trees by snowdrifts, the ice, sinking with them in its embrace, weighing or dragging them down. In many places, where the water rose so high as to reach the ends of the lower branches of white maples and these were afterward frozen in, the ice, sinking with the ebb, breaks off or strips down the branch [Vide Mar. 14th.]. There appears to be a motion to the ice (even on meadows away from the current and at Walden shore) somewhat like that of a glacier, by which it tips over the trees, etc., standing in it without breaking up, — the result, one would say, of its swelling under the influence of the sun.⁴⁰ Was surprised to see a cluster of those large leek buds on a rock in Clark's (?) meadow between the oak and my house that was. Daniel Clark tells me that on his part of the Great Meadows there is a hole just about the breadth and depth of a man, commonly full of water. He does not know what made it. I crossed through the swamp south of Boulder Field toward the old dam. Stopping in a sunny and sheltered place on a hillock in the woods, — for it was raw in the wind, — I heard the hasty, shuffling, as if frightened, note of a robin from a dense birch wood, — a sort of tche tche tche tche, — and then probably it dashed through the birches; and so they fetch the year about Just from the South Shore, perchance, it alighted not in the village street, but in this remote birch wood. This sound reminds me of rainy, misty April days in past years. Once or twice before, this afternoon, I thought I heard one and listened, but in vain. I still see the bluish bloom on thimble-berry vines quite fresh. I walk these days along the brooks, looking for tortoises and trout, etc. They are full of a rust-colored water, as if they flowed out of an iron mine. As the ice melts in the swamps I see the horn-shaped buds of the skunk-cabbage, green with a bluish bloom, standing uninjured, ready to feel the influence of the sun, — the most prepared for spring — to look at — of any plant. I see of late more than before of the fuzzy caterpillars, both black and reddish-brown.

40. This was the year in which the bookstore shelves of Boston would have been featuring [James David Forbes](#)'s new THE TOUR OF MONT BLANC AND OF MONTE ROSA, BEING A PERSONAL NARRATIVE, ABRIDGED FROM THE AUTHOR'S "TRAVELS IN THE ALPS OF SAVOY," & C. Edinburgh, (R. and R. Clark for) Adam and Charles Black. Abridged edition of TRAVELS THROUGH THE ALPS OF SAVOYE (1843) and NORWAY AND ITS GLACIERS VISITED IN 1851 (1853) illustrated with 24 woodcuts. Forbes's major contribution to the Mont Blanc range were his extensive surveyings of the "Mer de Glace" and other glaciers, resulting in his map of the Mer de Glace of Chamouni and the adjoining district from an actual survey in 1842, 1844, 1846, and 1850. Drawn by August Petermann, Lith. by C. Helfarth, Gotha. Glaciers colored in blue. Another map shows "The Penine chain of Alps."



WHAT?



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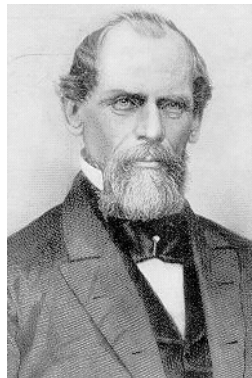


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March 19, Monday: The temporary vehicular suspension bridge which had been thrown across the chasm of the [Niagara River](#) in 1848, which had had to be removed, was replaced in a form strengthened by wooden trusses for the passage of railway trains. (These wooden trusses would be replaced with steel trusses in 1880.)

A little more detail on this: The chasm of the Niagara River had for many years prevented connection of New York Central tracks with the Great Western Railway of Canada. The solution had to be a railway suspension structure, but of a magnitude never previously attempted. A company had formed for that purpose with Ellet as their engineer. When the main effort began, there were disagreements and Ellet left the project. In 1851 John Augustus Roebling had been invited to submit plans and estimates.



(While all this was going on, another railway suspension bridge had been being constructed by the Roebling firm, across the Kentucky River on the line of the Southern Railroad leading from Cincinnati to Chattanooga. The gorge of that river in that region is deeper and wider than the gorge of the Niagara, necessitating a clear span of no less than 1,224 feet. The anchorage and stone towers had rapidly been completed, the necessary plates and saddles hoisted up the towers; most of the cable wire delivered, as also the material for the superstructure, the girder principle adopted there being essentially different from that carried out in the Niagara Bridge since no floor for vehicles was required in that case; suddenly, however, the finances of the railway company had collapsed and the building of that stupendous bridge, already well advanced, had immediately stopped, as well as work on the railroad — and has never since been renewed.)

Construction of the Niagara span, however, had been uninterrupted even during the coldest Canada winters and in this month the 1st locomotive and train crossed the new 825-foot span. A railroad train hanging from wires! This clear span was not merely longer than the Britannia rail bridge over the Menai Strait in North Wales, it was twice as long, and it was very light, using only $\frac{1}{6}$ th the weight of materials in proportion to its length. Its 4 wire cables were each 10 inches in diameter and hung from the cliffs in such a manner as to resist deck uplift from the winds. The bridge had two decks, a lower one devoted to vehicles and an upper one for



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trains. The decks were connected by struts and diagonal tension rods so as to create a continuous, hollow suspended⁴¹ girder stiff enough to support rolling load. Inclined cable stays above its top deck further stiffened the bridge. John Augustus Roebling had positioned the bridge over the rapids of the river rather than above the falls themselves, slightly downstream, which were then being touted to America by [George William Curtis](#) – he claimed to be able to hear Niagara roar “FORWARD!” – as a natural USer symbol of our “irresistible progress.”⁴²

“No one is afraid to cross.”



We may speculate that John Augustus Roebling’s claim “No one is afraid to cross” needed to be issued simply because hundreds of people had fallen to their deaths five years earlier when a suspension bridge had collapsed in France. Of all the people who would pass over this bridge, it would be Mark Twain (of course) who would

41. The structure would be referred to as a suspension structure, although it was not like the Golden Gate bridge and really classifies instead as a cable-stayed span, similar to the one over a ship canal east of Houston TX.

42. For some reason this is reminiscent of the concluding scene in the movie “Doctor Zhivago.”



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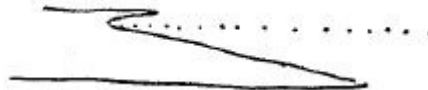
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have the most apposite remark:

You drive over the Suspension Bridge, and divide your misery between the chances of smashing down two hundred feet into the river below, and the chances of having a railway train overhead smashing down onto you. Either possibility is discomfiting taken by itself, but, mixed together, they amount in the aggregate to positive unhappiness.



March 19. A fine clear and warm day for the season. Launched my boat. P. M. — Paddled to Fair Haven Pond. Very pleasant and warm, when the wind lulls and the water is perfectly smooth. I make the voyage without gloves. The snow of March 14th is about gone, and the landscape is once more russet. The thick ice of the meadows lies rotting on each side of the stream, white and almost soft as snow. In many places it extends still over the shallower parts of the river. As I paddle or pole up the side of the stream, the muddy bottom looks dark and dead, and no greenness is observed but on a close scrutiny. The unsightly dead leaf-stalks of the pontederia cover it in irregular whorls covered with filth. The black stems of the polygonums here and there still rise above the surface. But on a closer scrutiny you detect here and there bits of the evergreen ranunculus (commonly floating), the cress, some reddish pads of nuphar expanded close to the bottom, and a few points of its closely rolled, unexpanded leaves, also some radical greenness in the pontederia. And what is that fresh green oblong, perhaps spatulate, leaf one and a half inches long, making little rosettes on a running root, in one place just this side the ash above the railroad [It is forget-me-not.]? There is this radical greenness to correspond with that on the land. The muskrat-houses are for the most part flatted down, even below the present level of the water (at least five feet and more below the truss), probably by the water and ice a month ago. I see but three or four well repaired. One new one at least, however, on a piece of meadow lately lodged. It is to be inferred that they have not the same need of them as in the fall. Already Farrar is out with his boat looking for spring cranberries, and here comes, slowly paddling, the dark-faced trapper Melvin with his dog and gun. [See him out here the first boating day next year also.]. I see a poor drowned gray rabbit floating, back up as in life, but three quarters submerged. I see a hawk circling over a small maple grove through this calm air, ready to pounce on the first migrating sparrow that may have arrived. As I paddle or push along by the edge of the thick ice which lines the shore, sometimes pushing against it, I observe that it is curiously worn by the water into this form:



the dotted line being the water's edge. The water has eaten into the edge of the ice just where its surface meets it (which may be one and a half inches beneath the top), four or five inches or more, leaving a sharp projecting eave above, while the lower part, five or six inches thick, being preserved hard by the water, slopes off to a very sharp edge from one to even four feet from the upper. The undulations made by my boat and paddle, striking under this eave, make a constant sound as I pass. I am surprised to find that the river has not yet worn through Fair Haven Pond. Getting up a weed with the paddle close to the shore under water, where five or six inches deep, I found a fishworm in the mud. Here and there, floating or on the edge of the ice, I see small pieces of nuphar root, with a few rolled, pointed leaf-buds, probably gnawed off by the muskrats. The greater part of the Wood meadow this side Clamshell has been lifted up and settled again, and it now sounds hollow and sinks under my steps. The wind has got round more to the east now, at 5 P. M., and is raw and disagreeable, and produces a bluish haze or mist at once in the air. It is early for such a phenomenon. Smelled muskrats in two places, and saw two. Saw, by their white droppings on the bottom, where ducks had fed. I hear at last the tchuck tchuck of a blackbird and, looking up, see him flying high over the river southwesterly, — the wrong way, — in great haste to reach somewhere; and when I reach my landing I hear my first bluebird, somewhere about Cheney's trees by the river. I hear him out of the blue deeps, but do not yet see his blue body. He comes with a warble. Now first generally heard in the village. Not a duck do I see. It is perhaps too bright and serene a day for them.



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Our national birthday, Wednesday the 4th of July.⁴³ It was while the Emerson gate was festooned with its usual 4th-of-July black mourning cloth for the slave that Whitman's anonymous book LEAVES OF GRASS arrived in the mail.

In Worcester, Massachusetts, citizens demonstrated against city officials who had refused to fund the usual drunken 4th-of-July event.

In Columbus, Ohio there was a parade of firemen, Turners, and other local tough-guy societies, and after awhile this segued into a downtown riot, leaving one corpse and several citizens injured.

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY

Inspired by the George and Godfrey Frankenstein panorama of [Niagara Falls](#), the poet Corilla rhapsodized the birthday of our nation by a reference to these painters/presenters in a poem ending:

"America, Niagara, Frankenstein—
Three names united in a kindred bond—
Glad freedom's home — her voice of Praise — her mind."

The poet was equating this name, not at all sarcastically, with the collective mentation of America! George Frankenstein would later be renowned for his Civil War scenes while Godfrey Frankenstein's painting "Lagonda Creek" has been described as representing the "Emersonian Transparent Eyeball," the eye of inner man transcending the ego to view God's nature, in the surrounding landscape, and himself, as one.



Godfrey enjoyed the romantic setting of the White Mountains of [New Hampshire](#), painting dramatic scenes of
43. [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s 51st birthday.

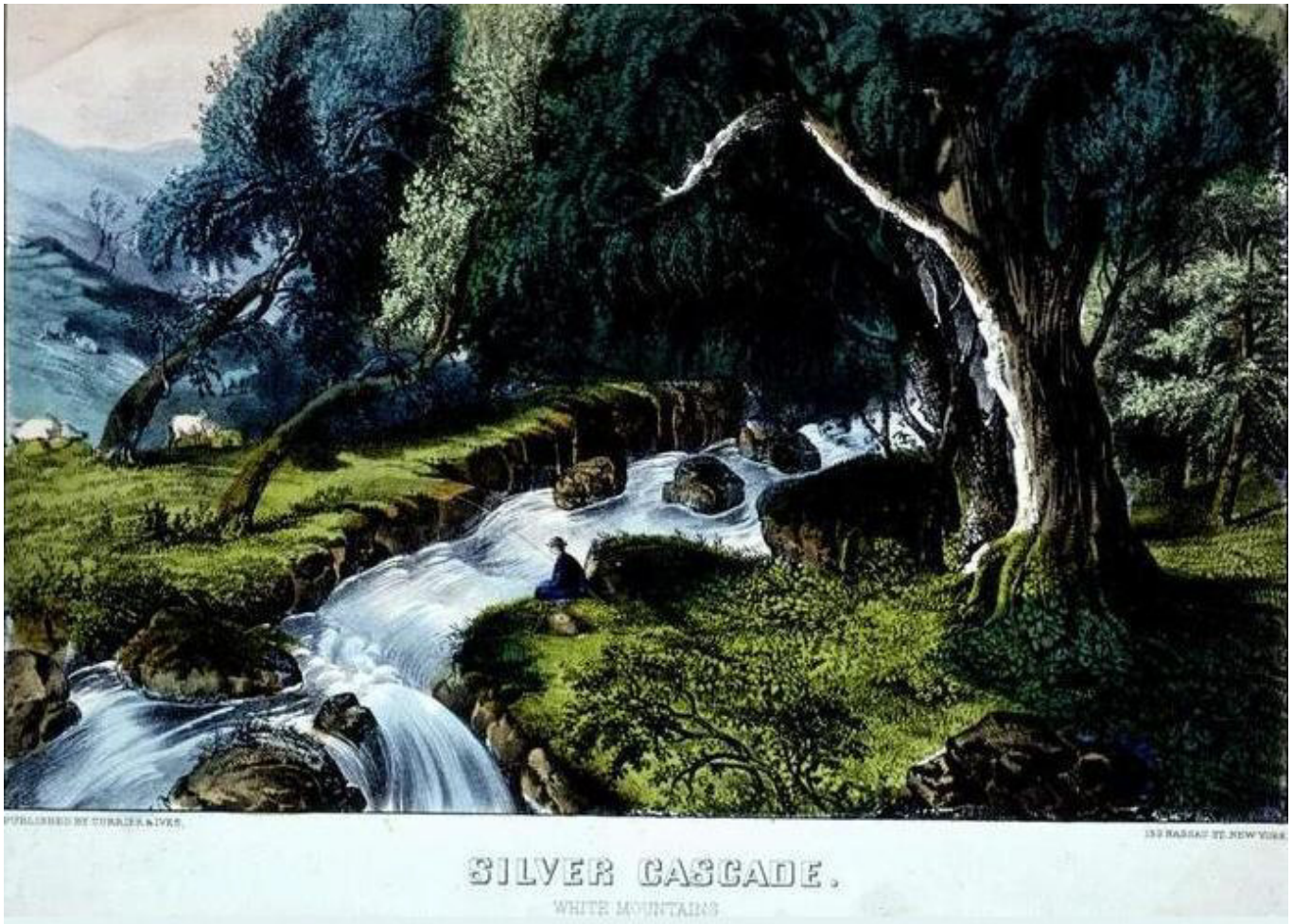


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the rugged landscape. (Well, lots of people enjoyed the romantic settings of the White Mountains of New Hampshire. In fact, in this year Currier & Ives was issuing a print featuring fishing at “Silver Cascade” in this area.)



Frankenstein Cliff in Crawford Notch was named after Godfrey by Dr. Bemis, who owned land in the area. Dr. Bemis, like Dippel and like the “Victor Frankenstein” of [Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft Shelley](#)’s romance FRANKENSTEIN; OR, THE MODERN PROMETHEUS, was fascinated with technology. He invented artificial teeth, developed a new genetic strain of apples, and is credited with taking the very first Daguerreotype landscape images (scenes in the White Mountains). This venue would be remarked upon by [Henry Thoreau](#), [Waldo Emerson](#), Thomas Cole, [Daniel Webster](#), and [Hawthorne](#). For instance, in SKETCHES FROM MEMORY



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Hawthorne would describe the area around Frankenstein Cliff:

A demon it might be fancied or one of the Titans, was traveling up the valley elbowing the heights carelessly aside as he passed, till at length a great mountain took its stand directly across his intended road. He tarries not for such an obstacle but rendering it asunder a thousand feet from peak to base, discloses its treasures of hidden minerals, its guileless water, all the secrets of the mountain's innermost heart, with a mighty fracture of rugged precipices on each side. This is the Notch of the White Hills.

It is only today that a name such as "Frankenstein" evokes either an image of a monster from a Hollywood makeup lab or an image of the "Mad Scientist" of Hollywood.

Hoping to promote South Carolina's trade in sea island cotton, [William Elliott](#) was serving as South Carolina's commissioner to the Paris Exposition, and on this day addressed the Imperial Agricultural Society of France (in a letter home from Europe, he wrote of having seen [Queen Victoria](#)'s legs⁴⁴).

[Thoreau](#) saw Frederic Edwin Church's "The Andes of Equador" at the Athenaeum gallery in [Boston](#).



July 4. To Boston on way to Cape Cod with C.

The schooner Melrose was advertised to make her first trip to Provincetown this morning at eight. We reached City (?) Wharf at 8.30. "Well, Captain Crocker, how soon do you start?" "To-morrow morning at 9 o'clock." "But you have advertised to leave at 8 this morning." "I know it, but we are going to lay over till to-morrow."!!! So we had to spend the day in Boston, — at Athenaeum gallery, Alcott's, and at the regatta. Lodged at Alcott's, who is about moving to Walpole.

July: Writing in his diary, a New-York clerk, Edward Neufville Tailer, Jr., took note of the dozens of business failures and made a comment about the barrage of articles in the gazettes reporting one or another [suicide](#) of the era: "The alarming increase of suicides in this country, is ... generally remarked upon by the news papers. Scarcely a day passes, in which there are not one or more deaths from self destruction."

At [St. Helena](#) a humpback whale was taken, just off the wharf. Was this one of those cetaceans who inexplicably commit [suicide](#) by beaching themselves?

44. In this year she was 36 and although an exceedingly short person (4' 10" before osteoporosis would shorten her another couple of inches) she had not yet begun to become rotund.



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1856

Niagara University was founded at [Niagara Falls, New York](#).

August 27, Wednesday: E. Jackson swam the [Niagara River](#) from the Bridle Stairway of Goat Island to the Horseshoe Falls and survived.

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December 13, Saturday: In the evening, on the great new suspension bridge over the [Niagara](#) gorge, the gale winds were vibrating the structure to the extent that the toll-takers deserted their posts, and a crowd gathered to witness the event should the bridge break up and plunge into the chasm.



After awhile the winds died down and the bridge ceased vibrating, and a few at a time these observers dispersed.

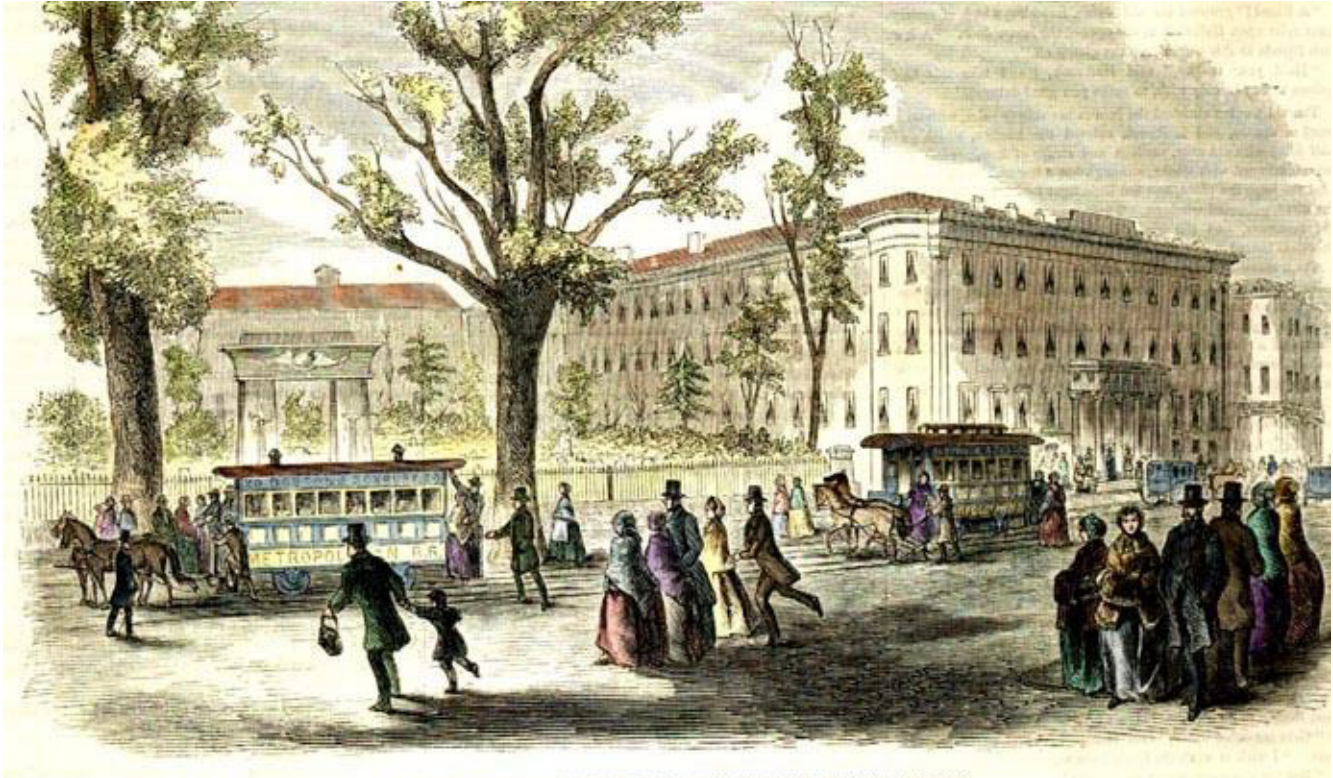
Just at the point at which the power of the horse was being replaced with the power of the steam engine, [Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion](#) published a commemorative engraving featuring the Boston

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Horse Railroad that still ran under horsepower along Tremont Street:

[HORSEPOWER](#)[STEAM ENGINES](#)[MAGAZINE](#)

[CONSULT THE WIKIPEDIA](#)



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The striking group of Indians on page 377 of this number, was drawn for us by Mr. Champney, from a fine daguerreotype taken by Mr. Heywood at Crescent City, Klamath River, Oregon coast. The Indian with a cap and sword is a chief, and the second one next to him is his son. The remainder of the group are Indians and their squaws. The costumes, appointments, attitudes and faces of these specimens of the aborigines are faithfully rendered from the daguerreotype. Mr. Heywood, to whom we are indebted for this unique group, is an accomplished artist, who has traveled extensively in this country and Europe, and has brought home many interesting souvenirs of his journeyings, in the shape of views of places, people and buildings of note. His rooms are at 228 Washington, corner of Summer Street, with a branch establishment at 103 Court Street, and are freely open to all visitors. He has won quite a reputation by his portraits and views.



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[Niagara Falls](#), that [Henry Thoreau](#) would visit in a few years although he didn't know it yet, was portrayed by the landscapist Frederic Edwin Church [FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH](#), not for Henry but for railroad and steamboat magnate Marshall O. Roberts.



[John Andrew](#) prepared wood engravings for the guide book HUNTER'S PANORAMIC GUIDE FROM NIAGARA TO QUEBEC by William S. Hunter, Jr. (Boston: J.P. Jewett & Co., and Cleveland: H.P.B. Jewett, and Montreal: Benjamin Dawson, 1857).

[NIAGARA FALLS](#)



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June 12, Friday to June 22, Monday: During this 11-day period [Henry Thoreau](#) was making his 4th and last excursion to [Cape Cod](#). He took the train to Plymouth and visited Clark's Island, Manomet Point, Salt Pond, and Scusset; took train to Sandwich and walked to Highland Light and Provincetown; then took the steamer to Boston. The account of it is in his Journal (9:413-55).

This would be material not used in [CAPE COD](#). Presumably the reason for this is that the manuscript had already been completed; Journal evidence suggests that the manuscript had been completed during the fall of 1855.



It was during this trip that Thoreau, reporting that "Mine was a case of distress," sought out the Humane House supposedly provisioned in Newcomb's Hollow for the benefit of shipwrecked sailors. The pamphlet of the



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Trustees of the Humane Society indicates that they were maintaining at that time six huts:

- halfway between Race Point and Stout's Creek
- at the head of Stout's Creek
- on Nauset Beach one and a half miles north of Nauset Harbor (possibly the Newcomb's Hollow facility entered by Thoreau)
- on Chatham Beach about half way between the entrance of Nauset Harbor and Chatham Harbor
- a mile north of the entrance to Chatham Harbor
- on the beach of Cape Malebarre



The whole of the coast, from Cape Cod to Cape Malebarre, is sandy, and free from rocks. Along the shore, at the distance of a half of a mile, is a bar; which is called the Outer bar, because there are smaller bars within it, perpetually varying. This outer bar is separated into many parts by guzzles, or small channels. It extends to Chatham; and as it proceeds southward, gradually approaches the shore and grows more shallow. Its general depth at high water is two fathoms, and three fathoms over the guzzles; and its least distance from the shore is about a furlong. Off the mouth of Chatham harbour there are bars which reach three quarters of a mile; and off the entrance of Nauset harbour the bars extend a half of a mile. Large, heavy ships strike on the outer bar, even at high water; and their fragments only reach the shore. But smaller vessels pass over it at full sea; and when they touch at low water, they beat over it, as the tide rises, and soon come to land.

If a vessel is cast away at low water, it ought to be left with as much expedition as possible; because the fury of the waves is then checked, in some measure, by the bar; and because the vessel is generally broken to pieces with the rising flood. But seamen, shipwrecked at full sea, ought to remain on board till near low water; for the vessel does not then break to pieces; and by attempting to reach the land before the tide ebbs away, they are in great danger of being drowned. On this subject there is one opinion only among judicious mariners. It may be necessary however to remind them of a truth, of which they have full conviction, but which, amidst the agitation and terrour of a storm, they too frequently forget.

Dona Brown has contrasted [Thoreau's](#) visits to [Cape Cod](#) with the more fashionable jaunts of his period, which were to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, to the Catskills, and of course to Saratoga Springs and [Niagara Falls](#):



Until very late in the nineteenth century, Cape Cod was regarded as a kind of New England outback, inhabited by unschooled



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savages with almost no contact with the outside world. Henry David Thoreau (who went out of his way to visit places no other tourist would go) visited Cape Cod in the 1850s. Writing about Nauset Beach, now one of the most popular beaches on the Cape, Thoreau reported only "a vast **morgue**, where famished dogs may range in packs." Thoreau knew what he was talking about when he predicted that "for a long time [fashionable visitors] will be disappointed here." The outer Cape remained more or less untouched by tourism for decades. Not until the age of the automobile did Cape Cod really come into its own.



[The location of the Catskills] along the heavily traveled Hudson River route between New York City and Albany made them the most accessible romantic mountains in the east and brought them as early as the 1820s into a web of development that included scenic tourism, industrial development, shipping, and suburbanization. For the best account of the Catskills, see Kenneth Myers, *THE CATSKILLS: PAINTERS, WRITERS, AND TOURISTS IN THE MOUNTAINS, 1820-1895* (Hanover NH: The Hudson River Museum of Westchester, UP of New England, 1987).

Dona Brown continues her observations on the subject of [Thoreau's](#) "tourist non-tourism" of [Cape Cod](#) on her pages 64-65, with an endnote on page 228:



Some promoters came to see the remaining prosaic names in the region as a great handicap to its development. Starr King was most outspoken in his opposition to the names of the White Mountain region, referring to the names of the Presidential Range as "absurd" and "a wretched jumble," and calling for a renaming of the peaks. Most writers did not openly attack local names, especially those of the Presidential Range, which possessed at least some meaning for mid-nineteenth-century tourists, but instead opted for a kind of parallel unofficial naming system, based on real or imagined Indian names for places. Many guidebooks opened their first chapters with a discussion of the "original" names of the region and their meanings. It was a convenient way of attaching romantic Indian associations to the region, since the writer was free to embellish the interpretation of such Algonquin terms as "Waumbek," which means "white rocks" but could be interpreted as something like "Mountains of the Snowy Foreheads." These shadow names had become so conventionalized by mid-century that Henry David Thoreau could make an inside joke of them. His book on Cape Cod, like many other pieces of scenic writing, began by tracing the origins of a local name. In Thoreau's hands, it was pure parody:



CAPE COD: I suppose that the word Cape is from the French *cap*; which is from the Latin *caput*, a head; which is, perhaps, from the verb *capere*, to take, -that being the part by which we take hold of a thing:-Take Time by the forelock. It is also the safest part to take a serpent by. And as for Cod, that was derived directly from that "great store of codfish" which Captain Bartholomew Gosnold caught there in 1602; which fish appears to have been so called from the Saxon word *codde*, "a case in which seeds are lodged," either from the form of the fish, or the quantity of spawn it contains; whence also, perhaps, *codling* ("*pomum coctile*"?) and coddle, -to cook green like peas. (V. Dic.)

COD

Thoreau had not always mocked such scenic conventions. At one time, he had actually anticipated a career like Hawthorne's or Cole's, making a living interpreting scenery to readers. Thoreau wrote extensively about his travels and, at least at first, he too attempted to attach romantic associations to the landscape. But by the middle of his traveling career, he had come to see scenery very differently.



After his 1846 trip to Mount Katahdin, Thoreau turned against the patching of human associations onto the landscape. He began to portray the places he visited as examples of nature untoured: "vast and drear and inhuman," like Mount Katahdin; "inhumanly sincere, wasting no thought on man," like the deserted beaches of Cape Cod.⁴⁵ He traveled as far away as he could get from genteel tourist regions, and his writing took the form of antiscenery tracts. But Thoreau's mocking discussion of the origins of the name Cape Cod ended on a serious note, with his famous description of the Cape as the "bare and bended arm of Massachusetts." Even for Thoreau, writing about scenery led to the irresistible temptation to create serious associations.

On pages 201-3 Dona Brown continues her discussion of **Cape Cod**:



Not much of **Cape Cod** had become familiar tourist ground by the turn of the [20th] century. True, Henry David Thoreau wrote with great admiration of the landscape of the Cape after his walking tours there in the 1850s. But Thoreau's Cape Cod essays describe a place very different from the Cape of today. The popular beaches of what is now the Cape Cod National Seashore appear in Thoreau's descriptions, not as lovely scenery, but as an empty and savage land - the "most uninviting landscape on earth." Thoreau himself preferred the desolation he encountered on Cape Cod to the more civilized charms of heavily traveled regions

45. His experiences on Mount Katahdin or on Cape Cod cannot be categorized simply as encounters with the sublime. In fact, they are a direct repudiation of the language of the sublime, since he described nature as having **no human meaning**: the sublime in nature, though frightening in its power and "otherness," was understood to be filled with significance, even messages, for its human viewers.



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like the White Mountains or [Newport](#). In fact, he made that contrast a central theme of his Cape Cod essays, playing up the difference between fashionable resorts and the beaches of Cape Cod: "They commonly celebrate those beaches only which have a hotel on them," he wrote, "But I wished to see that seashore where all man's works are wrecks." Although his essays took the form of the sort of travel writing that was intended to entice tourists to a region, Thoreau emphasized that he had peculiar tastes few travelers would share: "Every landscape which is dreary enough has a certain beauty to my eyes." He really hoped no one would be converted to his taste for Cape Cod: "I trust that for a long time [fashionable visitors] will be disappointed here." And for a long time they were. Many of Thoreau's contemporaries were looking for scenery with a special sort of meaning, for landscapes endowed with the "interesting associations" of poetry or romantic history or legends. Cape Cod certainly possessed the raw material for such a trade: sublime seascapes, native legends, the tales of weather-beaten "old salts." But, with the notable exception of Thoreau, no one exploited that raw material in the 1840s and 1850s. Mid-century travelers imagined Cape Cod, when they thought of it at all, almost as "antiscenery" – the direct opposite of the kind of nature they craved. One 1863 children's book, for example, used the Cape's landscape as a symbol of emotional deprivation: The heroine suffered through a loveless, stunted childhood, growing up where there was "no sweet singing of birds in the air; but the harsh cry of curlews.... No soft murmur of little brooks; but only the measured roar of the wild ocean waves. No rustle of leafy woods ... only the dreary beach-grass and blue moss." Not all coastal regions appeared so unattractive to nineteenth-century travelers. In fact oceanfront resorts were springing up almost everywhere except Cape Cod in the second half of the century. To the south, on [Martha's Vineyard](#), the Methodists colonized Oak Bluffs. Their hotels and cottages competed with a variety of nearby [Rhode Island](#) resorts, all the way from ritzy [Newport](#) to popular Narragansett Pier. Not far to the north, Nantasket Beach and Cohasset on the Massachusetts coast plied their vacation trade with great success. Cape Cod certainly had beaches fine enough to rival any of its competitors. But few promoters saw their possibilities. Twenty years after Thoreau made his famous tramp, the situation had not changed much. National guidebooks gave Cape Cod very little attention.

In APPLETON'S ILLUSTRATED HAND-BOOK OF AMERICAN SUMMER RESORTS, published in 1876, the whole area of the Cape rated only one page. (The White Mountains, in contrast, were allotted fourteen pages; Mount Desert rated three.) The single page devoted to [Cape Cod](#) was composed of a series of passages the editor lifted from Samuel Adams Drake's NOOKS AND CORNERS OF THE NEW ENGLAND COAST [1876], a book dedicated to exploring out-of-the-way and quaint sections of the shore. Yet even Drake found it tough going to promote the Cape. "To one accustomed to the fertile shores of [Narragansett Bay](#) or the valley of the Connecticut," he admitted, "the region



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between Sandwich and Orleans ... is bad enough." But, as he put it, "beyond this is simply a wilderness of sand."

July: [Illinois](#) attorney Abraham Lincoln and his wife Mary Lincoln visited New-York, [Niagara Falls](#), and Canada.
(No, that's not them in this photo.)





September 26, Saturday: Harper's Weekly carried the following story:

NIAGARA FALLS

Over Niagara – Mysterious Suicide

An Englishman, well dressed and supplied with ordinary luggage, arrived in the Great Western train on the 11th instant, at Niagara Falls, and registered his name on the books of the Clifton House, as W.T. Allen, Montreal. After getting his room he ordered a bottle of wine – drank it – wrote two letters, and then came down stairs; walked deliberately out on Table Rock; waded into the water as far as the rapid current would permit, took off his hat and threw it and plunged himself over the precipice into the roaring cataract to be seen no more. The letters left in his room were opened. One was directed to a Miss Allen, Ireland, probably a sister, the other to a business firm in Montreal. The first was an unintelligible scrawl; the other could only be deciphered partially. On his way from the dépôt he asked the driver whether any one had ever jumped over the Falls without being killed. An answer in the negative brought the response that he could or would do it. This threat was regarded by the driver as a foolish, idle boast, but about 3 1/2 P.M. the stranger made the attempt. Whether he intended to commit suicide or simply to outjump Sam Patch probably no one will ever be able to tell. The leap certainly was premeditated, but the letters assign no reason for the rash act. He seemed to have plenty of money, and a gold watch and chain, all of which, with his body, will probably lie wedged in the crevices of the rocks at the bottom of the Niagara River.

Charles Darwin commented on Louis Agassiz's pseudoscientific political agenda, in a private letter to Thomas Henry Huxley:

I have always suspected Agassiz of superficiality & wretched reasoning powers; but I think such men do immense good in their way. See how he stirred up all Europe about Glaciers.



September 26, Saturday: A.M. –Apparently *Hypericum prolificum* in Monroe's garden, still out. The season is waning. A wasp just looked in upon me. A very warm day for the season. P.M. Up river to Clamshell.

These are warm, serene, bright autumn afternoons. I see far off the various-colored gowns of cranberry-pickers against the green of the meadow. The river stands a little way over the grass again, and the summer is over. The pickerel-weed is brown, and I see musquash-houses. *Solidago rigida*, just done, within a rod southwest of the oak. I see a large black cricket on the river, a rod from shore, and a fish is leaping at it. As long as the fish leaps, it is motionless as if dead; but as soon as it feels my paddle under it, it is lively enough. I sit on Clamshell bank



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and look over the meadows. Hundreds of crickets have fallen into a sandy gully and now are incessantly striving to creep or leap up again over the sliding sand. This their business this September afternoon. I watch a marsh hawk circling low along the edge of the meadow, looking for a frog, and now at last it alights to rest on a tussock. Coming home, the sun is intolerably warm on my left cheek. I perceive it is because the heat of the reflected sun, which is as bright as the real one, is added to that of the real one, for when I cover the reflection with my hand the heat is less intense.

That cricket seemed to know that if he lay quietly spread out on the surface, either the fishes would not suspect him to be an insect, or if they tried to swallow him would not be able to.

What blundering fellows these crickets are, both large and small! They were not only tumbling into the river all along shore, but into this sandy gully, to escape from which is a Sisyphus labor. I have not sat there many minutes watching two foraging crickets which have decided to climb up two tall and slender weeds almost bare of branches, as a man shins up a liberty-pole sometimes, when I find that one has climbed to the summit of my knee. They are incessantly running about on the sunny bank. Their still larger cousins, the mole crickets, are creaking loudly and incessantly all along the shore. Others have eaten themselves cavernous apartments, sitting-room and pantry at once, in windfall apples.

Speaking to Rice of that cricket's escape, he said that a snake [sic] in like manner would puff itself up when a snake was about to swallow him, making right up to him. He once, with several others, saw a small striped snake swim across a piece of water about half a rod wide to a half-grown bullfrog which sat on the opposite shore, and attempt to seize him, but he found that he had caught a Tartar, for the bullfrog, seeing him coming, was not afraid of him, but at once seized his head in his mouth and closed his jaws upon it, and he thus held the snake a considerable while before the latter was able by struggling to get away.

When that cricket felt my oar, he leaped without the least hesitation or perhaps consideration, trusting to fall in a pleasanter place. He was evidently trusting to drift against some weed which would afford him a point d'appui.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1858



→ Our national birthday, Sunday the 4th of July: [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s 54th birthday.



In [Chicago, Illinois](#) Central Railroad workers were attempting to launch a balloon they were referring to as “The Spirit of ’76.” The record doesn’t state whether or not they did manage to get this “monster balloon” up into the air, or if they did, how long it stayed up or how high it rose.⁴⁶

In Brooklyn, New-York, the corner-stone of the Armory was set in position with appropriate ceremony.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes delivered an oration in Boston.

A treaty was signed in Tientsin between [China](#) and France. Over and above the sums in silver to be paid to Britain, China would pay 16,000,000 francs in silver to France. Chinese Christians currently imprisoned were to be released.

46. The Russian film “Burnt by the Sun” records a similar attempt near Moscow.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

This is what the [Niagara Falls](#) looked like in this year, to Currier & Ives:



During the celebration of the opening of the associated hydraulic canal, the dam gave way (fortunately, no one was injured).



The [negrero](#) *Wanderer* sailed from the harbor of [Charleston](#), South Carolina for the coast of Africa, disguised as a luxury cruise ship. There's now an entire book about this one remarkable vessel, Erik Calonius's *THE WANDERER: THE LAST AMERICAN SLAVE SHIP AND THE CONSPIRACY THAT SET ITS SAILS*, published by St. Martin's Press in 2006.

Jefferson Davis, delivering a 4th-of-July oration on board a steamer bound from [Baltimore](#) to Boston, predicted (it would seem :-)) the outcome of the Civil War, when he roundly declared that "this great country will continue united."

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY



Overlooking Lake Winnepiseogee, now Winnepesaukee:



July 4. Sunday. A. M.—Clears up after a rainy night. Get our breakfast apparently in the northern part



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

BIGELOW

of Loudon, where we find, in a beech and maple wood, *Panax quinquefolium*, apparently not quite out, *Osmorrhiza brevistylis* (or hairy uraspermum), gone to seed, which Bigelow refers to woods on Concord Turnpike, i. e. hairy sweet cicely. Also ternate polypody (?). Saw a chestnut tree in Loudon.

Leaving Loudoh Ridge on the right we continued on by the Hollow Road—a long way through the forest without houses—through a part of Canterbury into Gilmanton Factory village. I see the *Ribes prostratum*, or fetid currant, by roadside, already red, as also the red elder-berries, ripe or red. Strawberries were abundant by the roadside and in the grass on hillsides everywhere, with the seeds conspicuous, sunk in pits on the surface. (Vide a leaf of same kind pressed.)

The Merrimack at Merrimack, where I walked, —half a mile or more below my last camp on it in '9,— had gone down two or three feet within a few days, and the muddy and slimy shore was covered with the tracks I This only in the northern part of New Hampshire of many small animals, apparently three-toed sandpipers, minks, turtles, squirrels, perhaps mice, and some much larger quadrupeds. The *Solidago lanceolata*, not out, was common along the shore. Wool-grass without black sheaths, and a very slender variety with it; also *Carex crinita*.

We continue along through Gilmanton to Meredith Bridge, passing the Suncook Mountain on our right, a long, barren rocky range overlooking Lake Winnepiseogee. Turn down a lane five or six miles beyond the bridge and spend the midday near a bay of the lake. *Polygonum cilinode*, apparently not long. I hear song sparrows there among the rocks, with a totally new strain, ending *whit whit, whit whit, whit whit whit*. They had also the common strain. We had begun to see from Gilmanton, from high hills in the road, the sharp rocky peak of Chocorua in the north, to the right of the lower Red Hill. It was of a pale-buff color, with apparently the Sandwich Mountains west of it and Ossipee Mountain on the right. The goldfinch was more common than at home, and the fragrant fern was perceived oftener. The evergreen-forest not frequently heard.

It is far more independent to travel on foot. You have to sacrifice so much to the horse. You cannot choose the most agreeable places in which to spend the noon, commanding the finest views, because commonly there is no water there, or you cannot get there with your horse. New Hampshire being a more hilly and newer State than Massachusetts, it is very difficult to find a suitable place to camp near the road, affording water, a good prospect, —nd retirement. We several times rode on as much as ten miles with a tired horse, looking in vain for such a spot, and then almost invariably camped in some low, unpleasant spot. There are very few, scarcely any, lanes, or even paths and bars along the road. Having got beyond the range of the chestnut, the few bars that might be taken down are long and heavy planks or slabs, intended to confine sheep, and there is no passable road behind. And beside, when you have chosen a place one must stay behind to watch your effects, while the other looks about. I frequently envied the independence of the walker, who can spend the midday hours and take his lunch in the most agreeable spot on his route. The only alternative is to spend your noon at some trivial inn, pestered by flies and tavern loungers.

Camped within a mile of Senter Harbor, in a birch wood on the right near the lake. Heard in the night a loon, screech owl, and cuckoo, and our horse, tied to a slender birch close by, restlessly pawing the ground all night and whinnying to us whenever we showed ourselves, asking for something more than meat to fill his belly with.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1859

January: Ten-year-old Willie Gibbs had just delivered a lunchpail to his father, Tyler Gibbs, hard at work at the paper mill on [Niagara Falls](#)'s Bath Island. On his way home he stopped to watch some workmen who were removing ice from the mill's race channel, and somehow slipped and fell into the water. He had already passed through the waste gate and into the pack ice and was being pulled toward the always-deadly American Falls before the workers noticed anything. He was seen to go over the brink near Luna Island. The body would never be seen.



June 30, Thursday: John Brown left Chambersburg, Pennsylvania and would spend the night at Hagerstown.

Jean-François Gravelot, "The Great Blondin," crossed the gorge of the [Niagara](#) on a 3-inch 1,100-foot manila tightrope stretched from what is now Prospect Park in [Niagara Falls](#), New York to what is now Oakes Garden in Niagara Falls, Ontario. He made use of a 30-foot balancing pole weighing 40 pounds. This 1st walk began on the American side and required 20 minutes (that summer he would make such a crossing eight more times).



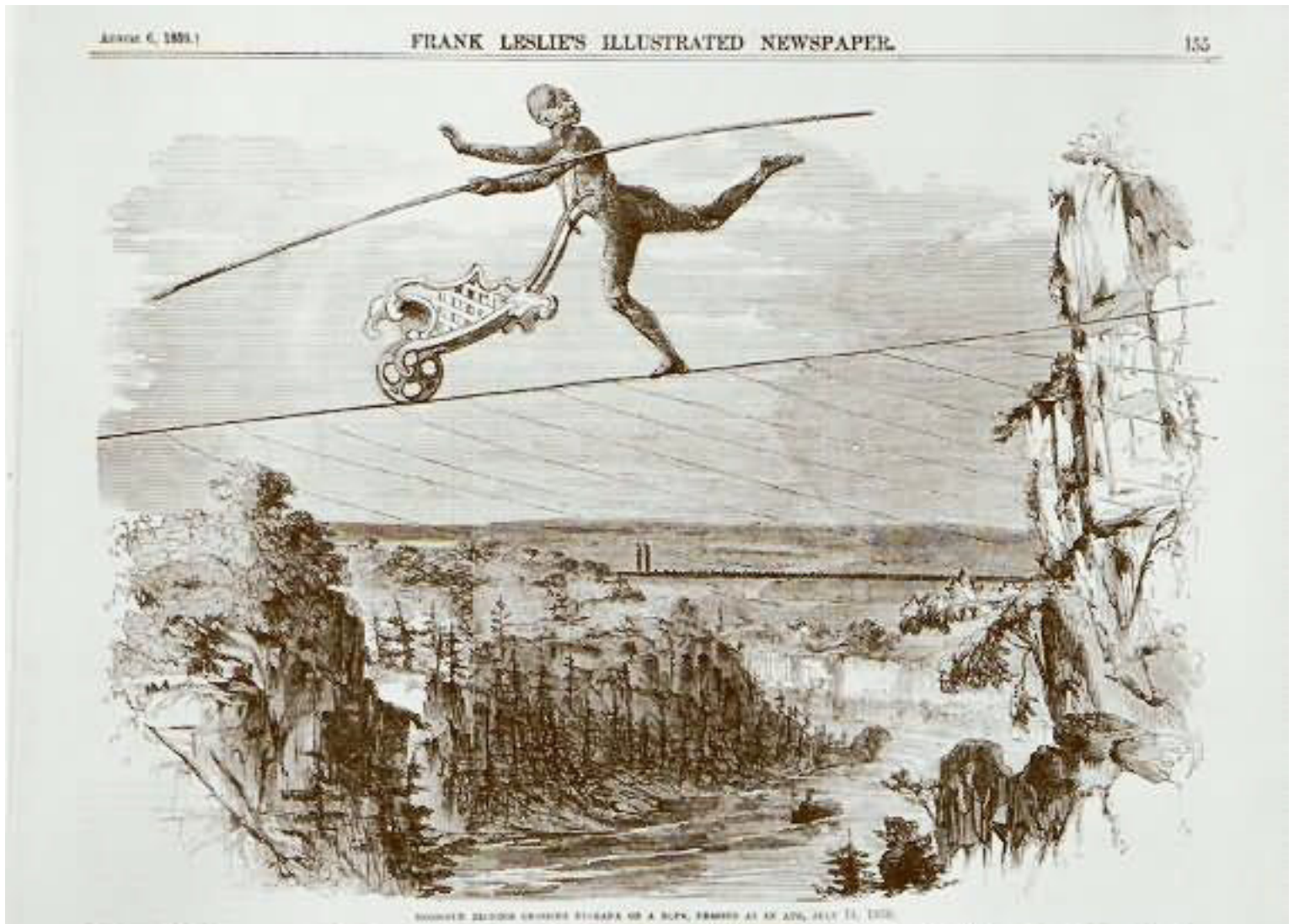
June 30: Cooler, with a northerly wind. The pads blown up by it already show crimson, it is so strong, but this not a fall phenomenon yet.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

July 14, Thursday: M. Jean-François Gravelot, “The Great Blondin,” again did his tightrope stunt above the [Niagara Falls](#):



[Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his [JOURNAL INTIME](#): “I have just read “Faust” again. Alas, every year I am fascinated afresh by this somber figure, this restless life. It is the type of suffering toward which I myself gravitate, and I am always finding in the poem words which strike straight to my heart. Immortal, malign, accursed type! Specter of my own conscience, ghost of my own torment, image of the ceaseless struggle of the soul which has not yet found its true aliment, its peace, its faith — art thou not the typical example of a life which feeds upon itself, because it has not found its God, and which, in its wandering flight across the worlds, carries within it, like a comet, an inextinguishable flame of desire, and an agony of incurable disillusion? I also am reduced to nothingness, and I shiver on the brink of the great empty abysses of my inner being, stifled by longing for the unknown, consumed with the thirst for the infinite, prostrate before the ineffable. I also am torn sometimes by this blind passion for life, these desperate struggles for happiness, though more often I am a prey to complete exhaustion and taciturn despair.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

What is the reason of it all? Doubt — doubt of one's self, of thought, of men, and of life — doubt which enervates the will and weakens all our powers, which makes us forget God and neglect prayer and duty — that restless and corrosive doubt which makes existence impossible and meets all hope with satire."



July 14: P.M.—Sounded river from Ball's Hill (i. e. off Squaw [?] Harbor) to Atkins's boat-house corner.

The river, in all the above distance, nowhere washes the base of an isolated (i. e. to except long, lowish hillbanks like Clamshell, etc.) steep hill, without a greater depth off it.

The average depth between Sudbury Causeway and Atkins's boat-house bend at wall, or for fifteen miles two hundred and eighty-two rods, is eight and one eighth feet.

There extends from Tarbell Hill to Skelton Bend what I will call the Straight Reach, a mile and a third long and quite straight. This is the finest water view, making the greatest impression of size, of any that I know on the river. It is very broad, deep, and clear of weeds. Average depth 11+ feet (and at highest water some 19 feet). The bottom is almost everywhere muddy. No weeds in the middle. Measuring on the plan by Baldwin, it is three to four hundred feet wide. The depth is also very uniform, varying but little (in the thread) from the average 11+ (except a deep hole and channel at the commencement off Tarbell Hill).

Yesterday (the 13th) Frank Adams brought me a bird's nest and egg from an apple tree near the road by Addison Fay's house. He says it was about twelve feet high in the tree, and it appears to have been in a fork. The nest is most like a kingbird's, or a stout, thick cherry-bird's, or even a very thick tanager's, or a purple finch's half as large again as usual. The egg is the size and form of the phoebe's, but blue-white. The nest is three inches high and five inches wide outside, two inches deep and two and a half wide inside; composed of coarse stubble, strings, coarse root-fibre, etc., externally, and neatly lined with fine withered grass. The egg is pale blue-white, four tenths of an inch long by three tenths wide at the larger end, being broad at one end like a phoebe's. Can it be a cherry-bird's without spots and of the form described by Wilson?

He also has a very large cuckoo's egg, which again makes me suspect that we have the yellow-billed cuckoo.

July 22, Friday: Seth Ford swam across the [Niagara River](#) from a location north of the always-deadly American Falls, to the Canadian shoreline.

The [Hawthornes](#) had returned from Italy to England, where they would remain for approximately a year. On this date they arrived at the resort Redcar on the coast of Yorkshire, where [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) would work on his manuscript for TRANSFORMATION, or THE MARBLE FAUN.



July 22: Start just before 8 A.M. and sail to the Falls of Concord River.

Water 21+ inches above summer level. A southwest wind rises and blows us rapidly along.

We are early enough to see the light reflected from the sides of the gyrating water-bugs. Heard from a bittern above the factory yesterday, too large for the small one and too small, perhaps, for the large one, a peculiar hoarse, grating note, lazily uttered,—a bittern's croak,—at 1 P.M., as it flew over the meadows,—a sound perfectly becoming the bird, far as possible from music.

Some have just begun to get the hay on our Great Meadows.

The peetweet, our only beach-bird, teeters along the shore, reminding me that this is an arm of the ocean stream. At Hill's Bridge we begin to find ourselves shut in by hills, and the character of the shores is fairly changed. There is very little meadow along the stream henceforward, but commonly a firm bank and pastures and cultivated fields—corn and potatoes—down to the shore, for it is commonly a firm shore, though it may be subject to inundation. The shores are still uninhabited,—the road being remote,—especially on the west side, and in the neighborhood of Middle Bridge we find ourselves off the middle of Billerica, the quiet town, and see its rural spire rising above the trees. Many handsome elm-tops and groves of elms are visible in Billerica. There is a fine grove of elms about the first house of the Atkins boat-house. Jug Island is a peculiar one, the only one of the kind that I know in the river,—except the small one at Falls,—firm and rocky, not made by the river, with deep water about it, especially on the east side, always separated from the shore, rising to a considerable height above the surface,—a part of the adjacent rocky range cut off by the river. The interval becomes more and more narrow and sandy or firm below this island and range of hills, and you see red-top and corn on it and woods.

For the last mile above the Falls the river becomes rocky, the rocks gradually increasing in number, until at the



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

Falls its bed is crowded with them. Some of the rocks are curiously water-worn. They are, as usual in our black river, almost as black as ink,—the parts much submerged,—and I notice that bricks and white crockery on the bottom acquire the same color from the water, as if painted black. The water of this river is a black paint-brush which coats all things with fast colors. Rocks half a dozen feet in diameter which were originally of the usual lumpish form

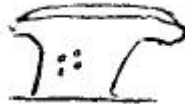


are worn thus

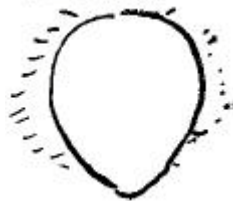


by the friction of the pebbles, etc., washed against them by the stream at high water. Several of them have this peculiar sheaf-like form; and black as ink. But, though evidently worn into this form by the rush of water, they are by no means worn smooth, but are as rough as a grater, such being their composition. These are just above the Fordway. There are two pleasant old houses near the Fordway on the east side.

I was surprised to see on the upright sides of these rocks, one or two feet above the present water, very distinct white spots, looking like white paint across the river.



Examining, I found them to be three fourths to one inch in diameter of an oval or circular form; the white coating spreading on to the rock in an irregular fringe like the feet of an insect, increasing their resemblance to a bug, and they were raised one eighth or one tenth of an inch and finely dotted with the contained ova, reminding me of coins,—shaped like bugs or coins,—and I at first bent to read the inscriptions as if they were a work of art.



They were full of ova with much water in them or other liquid. [Vide August 8th.]

Subtracting two and a quarter inches, I find the water at the Fordway, west side, two and one fourth feet deep, but generally not quite two feet.

Apparently the stream has been cleared of rocks and deepened on the westerly side at the Falls. At the narrowest place, where there is a willow in the middle, there is a clear channel on the west about thirty-five feet wide and four and a quarter feet deep (at deepest), or to the willow thirty-eight and a quarter feet, to opposite shore fifty-four feet more, and about two feet deep at deepest, with many rocks; in all say ninety-two feet.

We lunched about 12 o'clock (having got to the Falls about eleven), sitting on the largest rocky islet there, which, as I remember, may have been four to six rods long, but though it was not six feet above the water, if so much, there was no trace of the water ever having washed over it. Indeed, I *think* it does not rise more than five feet there ever, to judge from appearances. The obvious water-marks were about four feet above the present water. On this rock were dense trees and bushes, grass and soil, etc., etc., only five feet above the present surface and evidently not disturbed by water or ice.

In the very midst of the Falls, on the rocky ridge where is some earth, only a foot or two above the water, grows the nesaea, as also abundantly on the sides. The hibiscus is very common along the neighboring shores.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

When I was here a month ago, the water being high, the current was very strong here, so that I could not paddle, perhaps could not have rowed a boat against it at the narrowest place; but now I can paddle against it there, and easily push about anywhere. When the water is high, then, it is strong and hard to resist at all falls and rapids. Now there is not so much of a rush as at the bridge near the powder-mills.

The shores at the Falls are firm and rocky, though for the most part covered densely with bushes,—maples, alders, grape-vines, cat-briars, etc. There is no space for the river to expand in, and it is withal very much contracted in capacity by the rocks in it. Its bed is more or less strewn with rocks for some sixty rods, the largest forming rocky isles with soil and bushes and trees on them, though only some five or maybe six (?) feet high. There is water six and a half feet deep between the Fordway and the narrowest place below.

I was surprised to see on the rocks, densely covering them, though only in the midst of the fall, where was the swiftest water, a regular seaweed, growing just like rockweed and of the same olive-green color, —“*Podostemon Ceratophyllum*, River-weed,”— still in bloom, though chiefly gone to seed. Gray says it is “attached to loose stones,” and Torrey says it “adheres to pebbles,” but here it covered the rocks under water in the swiftest place only, and was partly uncovered by the fall of the water. I found, in what I gathered, a little pout which had taken refuge in it. Though the botanist, in obedience to his rules, puts it among phaenogamous plants, I should not hesitate to associate it with the rockweed. It is the rockweed of our river. I have never seen it elsewhere in the river, though possibly it grows at the factory or other swift places. It seemed as if our river had there for a moment anticipated the sea, suffered a sea-change, mimicked the great ocean stream. I did not see it a few rods above or below, where the water is more sluggish. So far as I know, then, it grows only in the swiftest water, and there is only one place, and that the Falls, in Concord River where it can grow. Gray only speaks of it as growing at “the bottom of shallow streams,” Torrey says “at the bottom of shallow pebbly streams,” and Bigelow only says it is attached to stones at the bottom. Yet apparently our sluggish river is only a stream, and sufficiently like ordinary rippling streams to admit of its growth at this one spot. A careless observer might confound it with the rockweed of the sea. It covers the rocks in exactly the same manner, and when I tore it off, it brought more or less of the thin, scaly surface of the rocks with it. It is a foretaste of the sea. It is very interesting and remarkable that at this one point we have in our river a plant which so perfectly represents the rockweed of the seashore. This is from four to eight or nine inches long. It has the peculiar strong fresh-water scent.

The west end of Hill’s Bridge is (upper side of planking) eight feet eleven inches above summer level, under side of string-piece seven feet eight inches. I cannot hear that it ever rises on to this bridge, but there is a good deal of fresh drift stuff on the top of the abutment under the string-piece at seven feet eight inches above summer level, apparently washed on in the spring. The upper side of planking at east end is about nine feet eight inches above summer level.

At Turnpike Bridge the water has apparently washed away a part of the abutment some seven and a half feet above summer level.

At Middle Bridge, judging from water-marks on the piers, I should think the water might have risen there seven feet seven inches (more or less) above summer level, i. e. up to the timber which rests crosswise on the piers, twenty-two inches below top of planks.

A carpenter who lives (?) at Billerica Corner says the water stood all around the nearest inhabited two-story house to the bridge last spring, so that you could go round it in a boat. (It is the opposite side the road to the river.) I think that this proves a rise here of at least seven feet above summer level and perhaps more.

Therefore, as far as my observation goes, the rise of the river last spring from Sherman’s Bridge to Billerica Corner Bridge was very uniform and to about the same height above summer level, but it must fall off rapidly two or three feet or more at the Falls.

I see neither of the small islands which are on Baldwin’s map below the Atkins house.

It is a question if the river has as much created the shoal places as found them.

The shallowest place in all the river above described also from Pelham Pond—is at the Fordway above the Falls, where it is not two and a half [FEET] at deepest to-day, and generally only two feet, with a hard bottom and numerous rocks in its bed. It is quite fordable in a carriage.

The weediest place is at the Sudbury causeway. The most of a sand-bar *visibly* formed or forming is Barrett’s Bar. If a large piece of meadow should lodge on this, it would help make an island of it rapidly.

The deepest and broadest place is in Fair Haven Pond. I think that the river proper is nowhere so wide as in some parts between Squaw [?] Harbor and Skelton Bend.

The presence or absence of weeds at a given shallowness is a good gauge of the rapidity of the current. At the Fordway they do not grow where it is only two feet on an average, owing to the swiftness of the current (as well as stoniness), and in the very swiftest and narrowest part of the Falls occurs one species, the podostemon, which I have not found in any other part of the river.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

The muddiest are the most stagnant parts. The hibiscus and white maple do not occur on the main stream for a long distance above the mouth of the Assabet, maybe ten miles.

It is remarkable how the river, even from its very source to its mouth, runs with great bends or zigzags regularly recurring and including many smaller ones, first northerly, then northeasterly, growing more and more simple and direct as it descends, like a tree; as if a mighty current had once filled the valley of the river, and meandered in it according to the same law that this small stream does in its own meadows.

A river of this character can hardly be said to fall at all: it rather runs over the extremity of its trough, being filled to overflowing. Its only fall at present (above the Falls and this side Framingham) is like the fall produced by a dam, the dam being in this case the bottom in a shallow. If, after flowing twenty miles, all the water has got to rise as high as it was when it started, or rather if it has got to pass over a bottom which is as high as that was where it started, it cannot be said to have gained anything or have fallen at all. It has not got down to a lower level. You do not produce a fall in the channel or bottom of a trough by cutting a notch in its edge. The bottom may lose as much as the surface gains.

Rocks which are covered by freshets a week or more will have lichens on them, as that on my old plan just below the Hemlocks.

If our river had been dry a thousand years, it would be difficult to *guess* even where its channel had been without a spirit level. I should expect to find water-worn stones and a few muddy pools and small swamps.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

July 30, Saturday: Jean-François Gravelot, “The Great Blondin,” performing before a crowd of 25,000, was again crossing above the [Niagara Falls](#) on his tightrope. This time, to keep the repeat of the stunt interesting, he made the crossing pushing his wheelbarrow, on stilts, blindfolded, carrying his manager Harry Colcord on his back.



[Henry Thoreau](#) sent off to William A. Wilson a copy of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) at his request, with a bill for \$1.²⁵, and let him know that he had no copies of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) to spare and had been informed it was out of print.⁴⁷

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

*Concord Mass.
July 30th 1859
Mr W^m A. Wilson,
Dear Sir,
I send you
by the same mail with
this a copy of 'A Week*

47. Copies of WALDEN would still, however, have been available from the publisher.



*on the Concord & Merri-
mack Rivers'. The
price is \$1.25 The
change can be sent in
postage stamps. I have
no copies of "Walden" to
spare; and I learn that
it is out of print.
Yrs respectfully
Henry D. Thoreau*



July 30. A. M.—On river to ascertain the rate of the current.

This dog-day weather I can see the bottom where five and a half feet deep. At five feet it is strewn clear across with sium, heart-leaf, Ranunculus Purshii, etc. It is quite green and verdurous, especially with the first. I see the fishes moving leisurely about amid the weeds, their affairs revealed, especially perch,—some large ones prowling there; and pickerel, large and small, lie imperturbable.

I see more moss(?)—covered rocks on the bottom and some rising quite near the surface,—three or four between my boat's place and thirty rods above,—and a good many three feet over on the bottom, revealed in the sunny water, and little suspected before. Indeed, the bottom may be considered rocky from above Dodd's to my boat's place, though you would suspect it only when looking through this clear water. They are so completely covered with moss-like weeds or tresses that you do not see them,—like the heads of mermaids. A rock there is a nucleus or hard core to a waving mass of weeds, and you must probe it hard with a paddle to detect the hard core. No doubt many a reach is thus rock-strewn which is supposed to have an uninterruptedly muddy bottom. They sleep there concealed under these long tresses on the bottom, suggesting a new kind of antiquity. There is nothing to wear on and polish them there. They do not bear the paint rubbed off from any boat. Though unsuspected by the oldest fisher, they have eyed Concord for centuries through their watery veil without ever parting their tresses to look at her.

Perchance the increased stagnancy of the river at this season makes the water more transparent, it being easier to look into stagnant water than when the particles are in rapid motion.

The outside heart-leaves above Dodd's grow in six feet of water, and also the kalmiana lily. Trying the current there, there being a very faint, chiefly side, wind, commonly not enough to be felt on the cheek or to ripple the water,—what would be called by most a calm,—my bottle floats about seventy-five feet in forty minutes, and then, a very faint breeze beginning to drive it back, I cannot wait to see when it will go a hundred. It is, in short, an exceedingly feeble current, almost a complete standstill. My boat is altogether blown up-stream, even by this imperceptible breath. Indeed, you can in such a case feel the pulse of our river only in the shallowest places, where it preserves some slight passage between the weeds. It faints and gives up the ghost in deeper places on the least adverse wind, and you would presume it dead a thousand times, if you did not apply the nicest tests, such as a feather to the nostrils of a drowned man. It is a mere string of lakes which have not made up their minds to be rivers. As near as possible to a standstill.

Yet by sinking a strawberry box beneath the surface I found that there was a slight positive current there, that when a chip went pretty fast up-stream in this air, the same with the box sunk one foot and tied to it went slowly down, at three feet deep or more went faster than when the box was sunk only one foot. The water flowed faster down at three feet depth than at one, there where it was about seven feet deep, and though the surface for several inches deep may be flowing up in the wind, the weeds at bottom will all be slanted down. Indeed, I suspect that at four or five feet depth the weeds will be slanted downward in the strongest wind that blows up, in that the current is always creeping along downward underneath. After my first experiments I was surprised to find that the weeds at bottom slanted down-stream.

I have also been surprised to find that in the clear channel between the potamogetons, though it looked almost stagnant, it was hard to swim against it; as at Rice's Bend.

See many cowbirds about cows.

P. M.—Left boat at Rice's Bend. I spoke to him of the clapper rail. He remembered that his father once killed a



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

bird, a sort of mud-hen, which they called the tinker, since he made [A] noise just like a tinker on brass, and they used to set it agoing in the meadows by striking two coppers together. His father stuffed it and did not know what it was. It had a long body.
Yet the river in the middle of Concord is swifter than above or below, and if Concord people are slow in consequence of their river's influence, the people of Sudbury and Carlisle should be slower still.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

August 14, Sunday: Jean-François Gravelot, “The Great Blondin,” again crossed the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) above the [Falls](#), this time carrying his manager Harry Colcord on his back.

[Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) learned of the varying churches and the invariant white righteousness of the new [California](#), and profoundly approved of both.



ONGUIAAHARA

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AND NOW, FOR SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT, A REPORT FROM OUR SAILOR:



Sunday, August 14th. When I awoke in the morning, and looked from my windows over the city of San Francisco, with its storehouses, towers, and steeples; its court-houses, theatres, and hospitals; its daily journals; its well-filled learned professions; its fortresses and fight-houses; its wharves and harbor, with their thousand-ton clipper ships, more in number than London or Liverpool sheltered that day, itself one of the capitals of the American Republic, and the sole emporium of a new world, the awakened Pacific; when I looked across the bay to the eastward, and beheld a beautiful town on the fertile, wooded shores of the Contra Costa, and steamers, large and small, the ferryboats to the Contra Costa and capacious freighters and passenger-carriers to all parts of the great bay and its tributaries, with lines of their smoke in the horizon,— when I saw all these things, and reflected on what I once was and saw here, and what now surrounded me, I could scarcely keep my hold on reality at all, or the genuineness of anything, and seemed to myself like one who had moved in “worlds not realized.”

I could not complain that I had not a choice of places of worship. The Roman Catholics have an archbishop, a cathedral, and five or six smaller churches, French, German, Spanish, and English; and the Episcopalians, a bishop, a cathedral, and three other churches; the Methodists and Presbyterians have three or four each, and there are Congregationalists, Baptists, a Unitarian, and other societies. On my way to church, I met two classmates of mine at Harvard standing in a door-way, one a lawyer and the other a teacher, and made appointments for a future meeting. A little farther on I came upon another Harvard man, a fine scholar and wit, and full of cleverness and good-humor, who invited me to go to breakfast with him at the French house,— he was a bachelor, and a late riser on Sundays. I asked him to show me the way to Bishop Kip’s church. He hesitated, looked a little confused, and admitted that he was not as well up in certain classes of knowledge as in others, but, by a desperate guess, pointed out a wooden building at the foot of the street, which any one might have seen could not be right, and which turned out to be an African Baptist meeting-house. But my friend had many capital points of character, and I owed much of the pleasure of my visit to his attentions.

The congregation at the Bishop’s church was precisely like one you would meet in New York, Philadelphia, or Boston. To be sure, the identity of the service makes one feel at once at home, but the people were alike, nearly all of the English race, though from all parts of the Union. The latest French bonnets were at the head of the chief pews, and business men at the foot. The music was without character, but there was an instructive sermon, and the church was full.

I found that there were no services at any of the Protestant churches in the afternoon. They have two services on Sunday; at 11 A.M., and after dark. The afternoon is spent at home, or in friendly visiting, or teaching of Sunday Schools, or other humane and social duties.

This is as much the practice with what at home are called the strictest denominations as with any others. Indeed, I found individuals, as well as public bodies, affected in a marked degree by a change of oceans and by California life. One Sunday afternoon I was surprised at receiving the card of a man whom I had last known, some fifteen years ago, as a strict and formal deacon of a Congregational Society in New England. He was a deacon still, in San Francisco, a leader in all pious works, devoted to his denomination and to total abstinence,— the same internally but externally— what a change! Gone was the downcast eye, the bated breath, the solemn, non-natural voice, the watchful gait, stepping as if he felt responsible for the balance of the moral universe! He walked with a stride, an uplifted open countenance, his face covered with beard, whiskers, and mustache, his voice strong and natural,— and, in short, he had put off the New England deacon and become a human being. In a visit of an hour I learned much from him about the religious societies, the moral reforms, the “Dashaways,”— total abstinence societies, which had taken strong hold on the young and wilder parts of society,— and then of the Vigilance Committee, of which he was a member, and of more secular points of interest.

**THE REPORT FROM OUR SAILOR DANA, CONCLUDED:**

In one of the parlors of the hotel, I saw a man of about sixty years of age, with his feet bandaged and resting in a chair, whom somebody addressed by the name of Lies. [Pronounced "Leese".] Lies! thought I, that must be the man who came across the country from Kentucky to Monterey while we lay there in the *Pilgrim* in 1835, and made a passage in the *Alert*, when he used to shoot with his rifle bottles hung from the top-gallant studding-sail-boom-ends. He married the beautiful Dona Rosalia Vallejo, sister of Don Guadalupe. There were the old high features and sandy hair. I put my chair beside him, and began conversation, as any one may do in California. Yes, he was the Mr. Lies; and when I gave my name he professed at once to remember me, and spoke of my book. I found that almost— I might perhaps say quite— every American in California had read it; for when California "broke out," as the phrase is, in 1848, and so large a portion of the Anglo-Saxon race flocked to it, there was no book upon California but mine. Many who were on the coast at the time the book refers to, and afterwards read it, and remembered the *Pilgrim* and *Alert*, thought they also remembered me. But perhaps more did remember me than I was inclined at first to believe, for the novelty of a collegian coming out before the mast had drawn more attention to me than I was aware of at the time.

Late in the afternoon, as there were vespers at the Roman Catholic churches, I went to that of Notre Dame des Victoires. The congregation was French, and a sermon in French was preached by an Abbe; the music was excellent, all things airy and tasteful, and making one feel as if in one of the chapels in Paris. The Cathedral of St. Mary, which I afterwards visited, where the Irish attend, was a contrast indeed, and more like one of our stifling Irish Catholic churches in Boston or New York, with intelligence in so small a proportion to the number of faces. During the three Sundays I was in San Francisco, I visited three of the Episcopal churches, and the Congregational, a Chinese Mission Chapel, and on the Sabbath (Saturday) a Jewish synagogue. The Jews are a wealthy and powerful class here. The Chinese, too, are numerous, and do a great part of the manual labor and small shop-keeping, and have some wealthy mercantile houses.

It is noticeable that European Continental fashions prevail generally in this city,— French cooking, lunch at noon, and dinner at the end of the day, with cafe noir after meals, and to a great extent the European Sunday,— to all which emigrants from the United States and Great Britain seem to adapt themselves. Some dinners which were given to me at French restaurants were, it seemed to me,— a poor judge of such matters, to be sure,— as sumptuous and as good, in dishes and wines, as I have found in Paris. But I had a relish-maker which my friends at table did not suspect,— the remembrance of the fore-castle dinners I ate here twenty-four years before.



August 14, Sunday: P.M. To Barrett's Bar. The zizania now makes quite a show along the river, overtopping the withered heads of the early canary grass. When I reached the upper end of this weedy bar, at about 3 P.M., this warm day, I noticed some light-colored object in mid-river, near the other end of the bar. At first I thought of some large stake or board standing amid the weeds there, then of a fisherman in a brown holland sack, referring him to the shore beyond. Supposing it the last, I floated nearer and nearer till I saw plainly enough the motions of the person, whoever it was, and that it was no stake. Looking through my glass thirty or forty rods off, I thought certainly that I saw C., who had just bathed, making signals to me with his towel, for I referred the object to the shore twenty rods further. I saw his motions as he wiped himself,—the movements of his elbows and his towel. Then I saw that the person was nearer and there-fore smaller, that it stood on the sand-bar in mid-stream in shallow water and must be some maiden [in] a bathing dress,—for it was the color of brown holland web,—and a very peculiar kind of dress it seemed. But about this time I discovered with my naked eye that it was a blue heron [Great Blue Heron  *Ardea herodias*] standing in very shallow water amid the weeds of the bar and pluming itself. I had not noticed its legs at all, and its head, neck, and wings being constantly moving, I had mistaken for arms, elbows, and towel of a bather, and when it stood



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still its shapely body looked like a peculiar bathing-dress. I floated to within twenty-five rods and watched it at my leisure. Standing on the shallowest part of the bar at that end it was busily dressing its feathers, passing its bill like a comb down its feathers from base to tip. From its form and color, as well as size, it was singularly distinct. Its great spear-shaped head and bill was very conspicuous, though least so when it turned toward me (whom it was eying from time to time). It coils its neck away from its back or breast as a sailor might a rope, but occasionally stretches itself to its full height, as tall as a man, and looks around at me. Growing shy, it begins to wade off, until its body is partly immersed amid the weeds, —potamogetons, —and then it looks more like a goose. The neck is continually varying in length, as it is doubled up or stretched out, and the legs also, as it wades in deeper or shallower water.

Suddenly comes a second, flying low, and alights on the bar yet nearer to me, almost high and dry. Then I hear a note from them, perhaps of warning, — a short, coarse, frog-like purring or eructating sound. You might easily mistake it for a frog. I heard it half a dozen times. It was not very loud. Any-thing but musical. The last proceeds to plume himself, looking warily at me from time to time, while the other continues to edge off through the weeds. Now and then the latter holds its neck as if it were ready to strike its prey, — stretched forward over the water, —but I saw no stroke.



The arch may be lengthened or shortened, single or double, but the great spear-shaped bill and head are ever the same. A great hammer or pick, prepared to transfix fish, frog, or bird. At last, the water becoming too deep for wading, this one takes easily to wing, —though up to his body in water — and flies a few rods to the shore.

It rather flies, then, than swims. It was evidently scared. These were probably birds of this season. I saw some distinct ferruginous on the angle of the wing. There they stood in the midst of the open river, on this shallow and weedy bar in the sun, the leisurely sentries, lazily pluming them-selves, as if the day were too long for them. They gave a new character to the stream. Adjutant they were to my idea of the river, these two winged men.

You have not seen our weedy river, you do not know the significance of its weedy bars, until you have seen the blue heron wading and pluming itself on it. I see that it was made for these shallows, and they for it. Now the heron is gone from the weedy shoal, the scene appears incomplete. Of course, the heron has sounded the depth of the water on every bar of the river that is fordable to it. The water there is not so many feet deep, but so many heron's tibiae. Instead of a foot rule you should use a heron's leg for a measure. If you would know the depth of the water on these few shoalest places of Musketaquid, ask the blue heron that wades and fishes there. In some places a heron can wade across.

How long we may have gazed on a particular scenery and think that we have seen and known it, when, at length, some bird or quadruped comes and takes possession of it before our eyes, and imparts to it a wholly new character. The heron uses these shallows as I cannot. I give them up to him.

By a gauge set in the river I can tell about what time the millers on the stream and its tributaries go to work in the morning and leave off at night, and also can distinguish the Sundays, since it is the day on which the river does not rise, but falls. If I had lost the day of the week, I could recover it by a careful examination of the river. It lies by in the various mill-ponds on Sunday and keeps the Sabbath. What its *persuasion* is, is another question. In 1677 the town's "brandmarke" as fixed by the State was



David Heard says that the cattle liked the pipes so well that they distinguished their rustle from that of other grass as he was bringing them to them, and were eager to get them. The cattle distinguished the peculiar rustle of the pipes in the meadow-hay which was being brought to them, and were eager to get them.



September 5, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to E.G. Dudley in Boston that on October 9th he planned to “read a lecture to your company” on “Life Misspent” rather than upon “Autumnal Tints.”

Dudley’s “company” was the 28th Congregational Society whose regular pastor, the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), had fled to Europe in a vain attempt to regain his health. While the right Reverend was absent, Dudley was trying to fill the pulpit with speakers and [Waldo Emerson](#) had suggested to him that he solicit Thoreau to deliver “AUTUMNAL TINTS”.⁴⁸ Thoreau continued, however, by saying that

*I should prefer, however, to bring one which I call
“Life Misspent,” instead of “Autumnal Tints.”*
(CORRESPONDENCE 557)

This lecture Thoreau referred to as “LIFE MISSPENT” was an altered version of “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”. It is curious that he changed the title of the lecture, for the earlier title was eminently appropriate for the pulpit. The reason he called the earlier lecture “What Shall It Profit?” is that the sentence immediately following the exordium was

My text this evening is “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world,
and lose his own soul?” (paragraph 4)

When revising the lecture in the weeks before his engagement in Boston, however, he dropped this sentence and placed in its stead the sentence

Let us consider the way in which we spend our lives. (paragraph 2)

This change accounts for the change of titles. What is curious, though, is that Thoreau should drop the biblical quotation and the reference to his “text” before he delivered the lecture as a sermon to the Reverend Parker’s Society. Bradley P. Dean wonders if he thought that retaining the earlier sentence in its place of prominence – immediately following the exordium– would be too close to pandering to the expectations of his audience. Thoreau made several other changes in his text of “What Shall It Profit?” in the weeks prior to his first delivery of “LIFE MISSPENT”. In order to add more current material to the lecture, he turned to his journal of 1855-59, and Dean has found, interlined on a few of the leaves he would soon drop from his text, and quotes for us from a MS in the Collection of Walter Harding, notes keyed to passages from his journal of this period. One such note, for example, reads:

*V[ide] Journal—Aug 9—58 for news of Commencements & telegraphic
rejoicings.*

Since he dropped these leaves from the lecture, he did not use the journal passages cited on them in “LIFE MISSPENT”. Of the seven new paragraphs he added to his text, however, he drew six almost verbatim from his journal of 1855-59. The seven new paragraphs are “LIFE MISSPENT” 20-23, 38-39, 47. All except “LIFE MISSPENT” 23 were drawn from the journal. For the journal sources of the six new paragraphs, see the textual

48. Walter Harding, DAYS OF HENRY THOREAU, page 414.



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commentary on “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 45, 59, 71. To accommodate this new material, he dropped and placed in his file the leaves containing the material in “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 1-2, 7-30, 65-66, 69, 75, 77, 84-92, and 94-95.⁴⁹ He also combined the material in “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 61 and 76, and in “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 67-68 and 70; transposed “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 31 with “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 32-33 and “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 71 with “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 72; and added new leaves containing the material in “LIFE MISSPENT” 20-23, 38-39, and 47. When he had made these and several minor changes, “What Shall It Profit?” was transformed into “Life Misspent.” He did not rewrite an entire draft. All he did was add leaves to, drop leaves from, and interline revisions in his reading draft of “What Shall It Profit?”

This item appeared in the Buffalo, New York Daily Courier:

☞ THE MEN OVER THE FALLS. — In our Saturday’s issue we copied from the Lockport Advertiser, a report that three persons went over the Falls on Thursday, and gave their names as Rousseau, Morse, and a woman. We are informed by Mr. Morse, of Chippawa, whom we saw in this city last week, that there were but two persons lost — two men, named Johnson and Young, both of whom lived on Grand Island. It seems they had been to Chippawa in a sail boat, and before starting on their return, became considerably intoxicated. When in the river, the sail jibed, being struck with a gust of wind, and the boat was upset. They both managed to get hold of the boat, and in this way floated over the falls. No doubt the reason of its being reported that it was Mr. Morse, came from the fact of Young having whiskers very like those of Mr. Morse, and at the distance, seen through a spy-glass, the mistake was a very natural one. Johnson has been a dissipated man, and has had two or three very narrow escapes. About five years ago, he fell asleep while rowing from Navy Island, and his boat providentially floated to the head of Goat Island, where his companion, a boy, secured it.

NIAGARA FALLS



September 5. Spent a part of the forenoon in the woods in the northwest part of Acton, searching for a stone suitable for a millstone for my lead-mill.

PLUMBAGO

ACTON

49. The textual and historical evidence for this and the other assertions about the structural changes summarized in this paragraph is presented in Bradley P. Dean, “Sound of a Flail,” pages 99-118.



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1860

February 1, Wednesday: The [Niagara Falls Gazette](#) expressed scepticism about the promised exploits of the touring tight-rope performer “Charles Blondin” (M. Jean-François Gravelot, 1824-1897): “The English mind has been surely excited on the subject of Blondin and his performances at the Falls. The ‘stilt’ hoax, the ‘Georgia Railroad’ yarn, the Silver Lake ‘snaik’ story, and other American ‘sells’ by which their most solemn journals have been victimized together with the wiggish letter to the New York [Times](#) last summer, which declared Blondin to be a myth, have combined their cautioning influence to render our British brethren confirmed skeptics as regards the rope walking achievements of the little Frenchman.”⁵⁰ The performer appears to have been touring, having performed the night before at the Theatre Royal in Liverpool. Midway on his path above the [Niagara Falls](#) he would stop on the highwire to cook and eat an omelette. Nowadays he is in the Kensal Green Cemetery of London and may for all we know still be cooking his omelettes.⁵¹

The Democratic candidate having withdrawn, the American candidate for the Speakership of the House of Representatives finally achieved the necessary 119 votes. The longest speakership struggle in our nation’s history had been completed. During this struggle the representatives had been coming into the chambers armed for their own protection, and had friends sitting in the galleries who were likewise armed and alert to defend them by firing down onto the floor if and when the occasion arose. In the course of the debating over the Speakership, Representative L.O.B. Branch of North Carolina had challenged Representative Galusha Grow of Pennsylvania to a [duel](#) and the two Representatives had had to be arrested and placed under heavy bond. Representative John A. Logan had become so enraged in the midst of a violent argument with Representative William Kellogg over an alleged insult to Senator Stephen A. Douglas of [Illinois](#) that he had drawn and

50. Once upon a time a yarn had been pulled over the eyes of a New-York Times reporter, that Georgian white men fought [duels](#) aboard their state railroad trains.

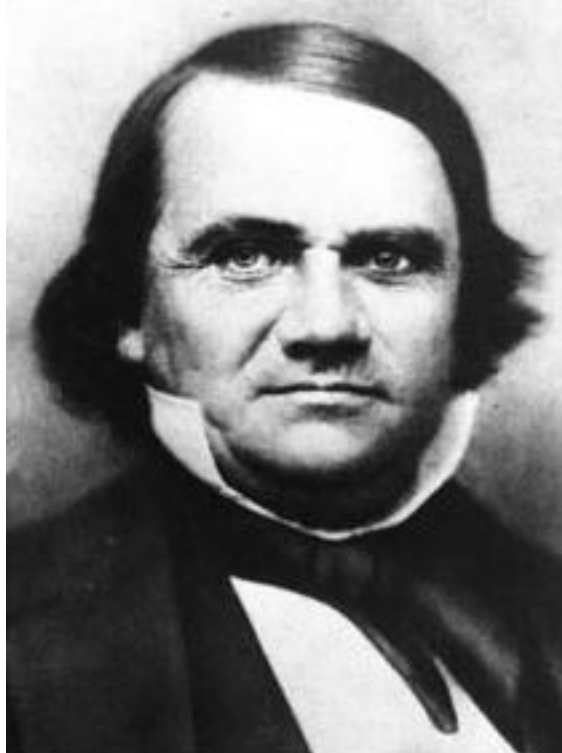
51. High-Density Lipoproteins have no medical significance subsequent to death.



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brandished his pistol, proclaiming “By God, if I can’t talk, I can do something else.”



While Representative John B. Hasking of New York had been in the process of making derogatory remarks about a Democratic colleague, he had accidentally dropped his pistol onto the floor, although it appears not to have discharged. Senator William Bigler of Pennsylvania commented in regard to all this that “Nothing has made so much bad blood as the endorsement of the Hinton Rowan Helper book and attempt now making to promote a man who did this to the responsible station of speaker of the House. The next most offensive thing is the sympathy manifested for old Brown.”

A person evidently named R. Redington was writing [Henry Thoreau](#) to inquire if he had written more than two books, to request that, if so, he be informed where these books might be purchased, and to request in addition that two copies of each of his existing books be sent to Little, Brown, & Company:

*Cle[ve]land Ohio
Feby 1 1860
H.D. Thoreau
Dr Sir
I would
inquire if you have publish-
ed any other of you writings
than[?] “A week on the C & M” and
“Walden” if so will you inform
me [where] they can be had [] or*



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*if you can furnish them
and will send me two copies
of each to the care of Little
Brown & Co Boston—if they are
in pamphlet form by mail.
I will remit you the bill
soon on them on recd—
Truly Yours
R. Redington
Where can the two works named
above be had?—*



Feb. 1. 2 P. M.—5°. A cold day.
Two or three inches of dry snow last night.
Grows colder apace toward night. Frost forms on windows.

Summer: M. Jean-François Gravelot, “The Great Blondin,” returned to Niagara for a 2d successful year of tightrope walking across the gorge of the [Niagara](#) above the [Falls](#) for hundreds of thousands of sightseers. This year he would not be the sole daredevil on the scene: Signor Guillermo Antonio Farini (AKA William Hunt) of Lockport, New York was making risky stunt crossings as well.

August 15, Wednesday: William Leonard Hunt, AKA Signor Guillermo Antonio Farini “The Great Farini,” made his debut performance at the [Niagara Falls](#) carrying a coil of rope. He positioned himself above the *Maid of the Mist* on the river 200 feet below and, tying his balancing pole to the tightrope, lowered himself to enjoy a glass of wine. Then, with apparent difficulty, he shinnied back up the rope to complete his journey. After resting at the edge, he made a return crossing blindfolded with baskets on his feet. (In the weeks to follow, “The Great Farini” would be performing twice a week, duplicating or exaggerating each of the stunts of Jean-François Gravelot, “The Great Blondin.” He balanced himself on his head, hung by his toes, and carried a person on his back, and when M. Gravelot set up a stove on the tightrope, cooking himself an omelette, he set up a washtub, collected a bucket of water from the river below, and washed his handkerchiefs. In 1862 he would walk a tightrope above a bull ring in Havana, Cuba carrying a woman on his back and she would fall, sustaining injuries that would cause her death.)



August 15, Wednesday: Fair weather.
See a blue heron.

September 5, Wednesday: William Leonard Hunt, AKA Signor Guillermo Antonio Farini “The Great Farini,” crossed the gorge of the [Niagara](#) above the [Falls](#) on a tightrope carrying an Irish washer woman on his back.



September 5, Wednesday: P.M.—To Ball’s Hill.
The brink of the river [Vide Aug. 22d] is still quite interesting in some respects, and to some eyes more interesting than ever. Though the willows and button-bushes have already assumed an autumnal hue, and the pontederia is extensively crisped and blackened, the dense masses of mikania, now, it may be, paler than before, are perhaps more remarkable than ever. I see some masses of it, overhanging the deep water and completely



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concealing the bush that supports them, which are as rich a sight as any flower we have,—little terraces of contiguous corymbs, like mignonette (?). Also the dodder is more revealed, also draping the brink over the water. The mikania is sometimes looped seven or eight feet high to a tree above the bushes,—a manifest vine, with its light-colored corymbs at intervals.

See the little dippers back. Did I not see a marsh hawk in imperfect plumage? Quite brown, with some white midway the wings, and tips of wings black?

What further adds to the beauty of the bank is the hibiscus, in prime, and the great bidens.

Having walked through a quantity of desmodium under Ball's Hill, by the shore there (*Marilandicum* or *rigidum*), we found our pants covered with its seeds to a remarkable and amusing degree. These green scales closely covering and greening my legs reminded me of the lemna on a ditch. It amounted to a kind of coat of mail. It was the event of our walk, and we were proud to wear this badge, as if he were the most distinguished who had the most on his clothes. My companion expressed a certain superstitious feeling about it, for he said he thought it would not be right to walk intentionally amid the desmodium so as to get more of the ticks on us, nor yet to pick them off, but they must be carried about till they are rubbed off accidentally. I saw that Nature's design was furthered even by his superstition.

September 8, Saturday: M. Jean-François Gravelot, "The Great Blondin," made his final tightrope crossing of the gorge of the [Niagara](#) above the [Falls](#).



September 8, Saturday: To Lowell via Boston.

Rainy day.

Pursh's [SIC] *Brassica Napus* is "radice caulescente fusiformi, fol. laevibus, superioribus cordato-lanceolatis amplexicaulibus, inferioribus lyratis dentatis." Frequently found wild. The lower leaves of mine are considerably bristly. Sowerby's *Botany* at Cambridge says of *B. campestris*, "Pods upright, cylindrical, or very obscurely quadrangular, veiny, the seeds slightly projecting, the beak awl-shaped, striated, square at its base." *B. Napus*,—"Pod on a slender stalk, spreading, round, beaded, with an angular point." Mine is apparently *B. Napus*, judging from pods, for the lower leaves are all eaten. Vide young plants in spring. [Vide back, Aug. 19th.]

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Fall: The crown prince of England, “Good old Teddy” or [“Dirty Bertie” the Prince of Wales](#) who would become Edward VII,⁵² touring [Canada](#), visited the falls of the [Niagara River](#):



From Montreal he went on to Ottawa, where he ... rode a timber shoot down the Ottawa River; then on, past Kingston, to Toronto and across Lake Ontario to the Niagara Falls, where he saw Charles Blondin, the French acrobat, walk across the Falls on a tightrope, pushing a man in front of him in a wheelbarrow. Blondin offered to put the Prince into the wheelbarrow for the return journey across the tightrope to the United States. The Prince accepted the offer, but was naturally prevented from going. So Blondin went back by himself, this time on stilts.

52. This is the guy that the immortal lines would be penned for –when he fell seriously ill just before his coronation which therefore had to be postponed– by the poet laureate of England, Alfred Austin:

“Swift down the wire th’electric message came
‘He is no better, he is much the same.’”





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Continuing his [tourism](#), the English prince arrived in Pennsylvania:



At Philadelphia, which he thought the "prettiest town" he had seen in America, he went to the opera -where the audience stood up to sing "God Save the Queen"- and he visited the big, modern penitentiary, where he met a former judge, Vandersmith, who was serving a sentence for forgery. He asked him if he would like to talk. "Talk away, Prince," Vandersmith replied breezily. "There's time enough. I'm here for twenty years."

EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY



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1861

[Albert Edward, Prince of Wales](#) transferred from Christ Church, Oxford to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he would be tutored in history by Charles Kingley, Regius Professor of Modern History. [Prince Albert](#) opened a dossier on his son Bertie's marital prospects (inspecting this dossier, we find that one of the favorable comments made in regard to the Princess Alexandra as royal marriage material was that she had not as yet "read a novel of any kind").

Nicholas A. Woods, in [THE PRINCE OF WALES IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES](#), wondered about [Niagara Falls](#) in the following interestingly suicidal manner: "Who that has ever gazed down here from this bridge can wonder at the belief of the Indians that an evil spirit resided beneath these dreadful waters?"⁵³ ...As you gaze upon the rush you feel a horrid yearning in your heart to plunge in and join the mad whirl and see the mystery out."⁵⁴

In this year if you were feeling truly desperate, you could attempt [suicide](#) with a sackful of [tomatoes](#). Although [Godey's Lady's Book](#) had come to accept that the fruit could be both "delicious and wholesome" when properly prepared, it was also warning that you needed to really cook cook cook these strange fruits — you needed to simmer the little mothers in fact for not less than three hours.

[Fort Niagara](#) would be reoccupied shortly after the outbreak of civil war, but not because the post was considered of any importance to the war effort. A Confederate attack on Western [New York](#) was of course considered rather unlikely. The explanation is that the soldiers being assigned there simply could not be used elsewhere. They were of the 7th United States Infantry Regiment that had surrendered to a Confederate force at Mesilla, New Mexico on July 25, 1861. Following common practice, these prisoners of war had been paroled on the basis of their promise not to fight again until the procedures of formal exchange had been completed. After their return to the North, the companies of the 7th Infantry were therefore stationed at border posts, far from the front. The formal exchange procedure for these men would come finally, in 1863, and the troops would then join in the civil strife and [Fort Niagara](#) would once again be a pretty fort without a garrison.



May 3, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) made no entry in his journal on this day. He wrote to H.G.O. Blake:

Concord May 3^d 1861

Mr Blake,

I am still as much an invalid as when you & Brown were here, if not more of one, and at this rate there is danger that the cold weather may come again, before I get over my bronchitis. The Doctor accordingly tells me that I must "clear out", to the West Indies, or else-

53. The native American tribes who lived adjacent to the falls of the Niagara strait, between the eastern tip of Lake Erie and the western end of Lake Ontario, who were initially the Onguiaarhas and later the Senecas, of course had legends about the falls. One of the legends was that Hihnon, the benevolent Seneca thunder god, lived in a crystal cave beneath the cataract. Another of the legends had not only Hihnon but also a nameless negative demon who would sometimes appear as a great water serpent. Then again, there was a story of a nameless demon who demanded at least four human sacrifices per year — perhaps this one could be an expression of Tawiskaro, a Seneca devil with a heart of flint, the maker of cliffs and precipices, thorns and briers, whose mother died while giving birth to him through her axilla.

54. One may speculate that there must have been some sort of linkage between the 19th-Century concept of [the sublime](#) and repressed forbidden thoughts of [suicide](#). Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain their great preoccupation with the sublime.



where, he does not seem to care much where. But I decide against the West Indies, on account of their muggy heat in the summer, & the S. of Europe, on ac. of the expense of time & money, and have at last concluded that it will be most expedient for me to try the air of Minnesota, say somewhere about St Paul's. I am only waiting to be well enough to start—hope to get off within a week or 10 days.

The inland air may help me at once or it may not, At any rate I am so much of an invalid that I shall have to study my comfort in travelling to a remarkable degree—stopping to rest &c &c if need be. I think to get a through ticket to Chicago—with liberty to stop frequently on the way, making my first stop of consequence at Niagara Falls—several days or a week, at a private boarding house—then a night or day at Detroit—& as much at Chicago, as my health may require.

At Chicago I can decide at what point (Fulton—Dunleith or another) to strike the Mississippi & take a boat to St. Pauls.

I trust to find a private boarding house in one or various agreeable places in that region, & spend my time there.

I expect, and shall be prepared to be gone 3 months—& I would like to return by a different route—perhaps Mackinaw & Montreal.

I have thought of finding a companion, of course, yet not seriously, because I had no right to offer myself as a companion to anybody—having such a peculiarly private & all absorbing but miserable business as my health, & not altogether his, to attend to—causing me to stop here & go there—&c &c unaccountably.

Never the less, I have just now decided to let you know of my intention, thinking it barely possible that you might like to make a part or the whole of this journey, at the same time, & that perhaps your own health may be such as to be benefitted by it.

Pray let me know, if such a statement offers any temptations to you—

I write in great haste for the mails & must omit all the moral.

H. D. Thoreau

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May 10, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) made no entry in his journal on this day. He paid \$25.²⁵ for a railroad ticket as far as Chicago, with stopover privileges at the [Niagara Falls](#) and in Detroit. He dined with [Waldo Emerson](#) and Horace Mann, Jr.

The Path of Henry and Horace's Journey West, May – July 1861



According to the Milwaukee Sentinel, there had been “Punsters at the Play” on Wednesday evening, the occasion of a Mr. Sharp’s benefit at the Albany Hall, and a number of “conundrums” had been read in accordance with the programme, which stated that the author of the best conundrum on the Union would be presented with a silver cup:

Immediately after the representation of the first piece, Mr. Sharp came before the curtain with the cup, and read the following dreadful affairs:

- 1. Why is the Union like a quince? Because it must be preserved!
(Oh!)



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- 2. Why is it that the Seceders refused to adopt our National Banner for their ensign? Because, like naughty boys, in getting the stripes they would have seen stars!
- 3. Why is DeGroat & Ryan's Company like the Southern Confederacy? Because seven of them seceded.
- 4. Why is Lincoln like a poor horse? Because he shows backbone! (This was received with roars of laughter as may be imagined)
- 5. Why will the Southern planters, instead of tilling their plantations, turn to a new vocation? Because, while they choose to secede (see seed), they will have plenty of grape to make them whine (wine).
- 6. Why is the American Flag like the colors of the rainbow? Because, though these colors may fade, a whole legion of traitors cannot make them run.
- 7. Why will the Union pass safely through the crisis? Because the Stars and Stripes are never to be trampled upon by traitors. (My!)
- 8. What is the difference between Lincoln before and after the Union was dissolved? (!!) Before the Union was dissolved, he split rails, and after, he railed at the split. (Written by a relation of Jeff Davis evidently)
- 9. Why will the winner of the cup tonight be like a man undergoing a severe course of medical treatment? Because he will be sold coming in, and cupped going out.
- 10. Why will our flag outlive all others? Because the rose will wither, the shamrock will droop, the thistle will die and the palmetto decay, but the stars must shine forever.

It was decided that the number 10 was the best conundrum and the author was requested to come forward and receive the cup, but no one came forward, it was left in the box office to be claimed to-day.

[Corinne Hosfeld Smith's "What a Difference a Year Can Make: Henry David Thoreau and the Grand Pleasure Excursion of 1861" has just been published in Minnesota's Heritage, #4, July 2011 and is available now online at <<http://www.thoreausjourneywest.com/mnheritagearticle.pdf>>.

Thoreau's visit to Minnesota has been previously written up in 1905 by Franklin Benjamin Sanborn as FIRST AND LAST JOURNEYS OF THOREAU, LATELY DISCOVERED AMONG HIS UNPUBLISHED JOURNALS AND MANUSCRIPTS. Volume Two. Boston: The Bibliophile Society <http://books.google.com/books?id=gLU2F4_60WoC>, and in 1962 by Professor Walter Roy Harding as THOREAU'S MINNESOTA JOURNEY: TWO DOCUMENTS: THOREAU'S NOTES ON THE JOURNEY WEST AND THE LETTERS OF HORACE MANN, JR. Geneseo, N.Y.: The Thoreau Society (Thoreau Society Booklet No. Sixteen). Thoreau's holograph 100-page journey notebook is at The Huntington Library in San Marino, California. A typed transcript has been prepared by Mabel Densmore and is on file as "Quarto 917.68 T39a" at the Owen H. Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. A new annotated transcription of each page in this notebook will soon be available online with The Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods Library.

We are presently awaiting publication, by Green Frigate Books, of Corinne Hosfeld Smith's WESTWARD I GO FREE: TRACING THOREAU'S LAST JOURNEY.]



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May 11, Saturday: A boy brought [Henry Thoreau](#) a salamander from S. Mason's and Thoreau sent it on to Horace Mann, Jr.



May 11. A boy brings me a salamander from S. Mason's. Sent it to Mann. What kind?

[Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Waldo Emerson](#), suggesting a number of people he might seek out on his trip west.

Concord, Mass^{ts}

11 May, 1861.

My dear Thoreau,

I give you a little list of names of good men whom you may chance to see on your road. If you come into the neighborhood of any of these, I pray you to send this note to them, by way of introduction, praying them, from me, not to let you pass by, without salutation, & any aid & comfort they can administer to an invalid traveller, one so dear & valued by me & all good Americans.

Yours faithfully,

R.W. Emerson

Henry D. Thoreau.

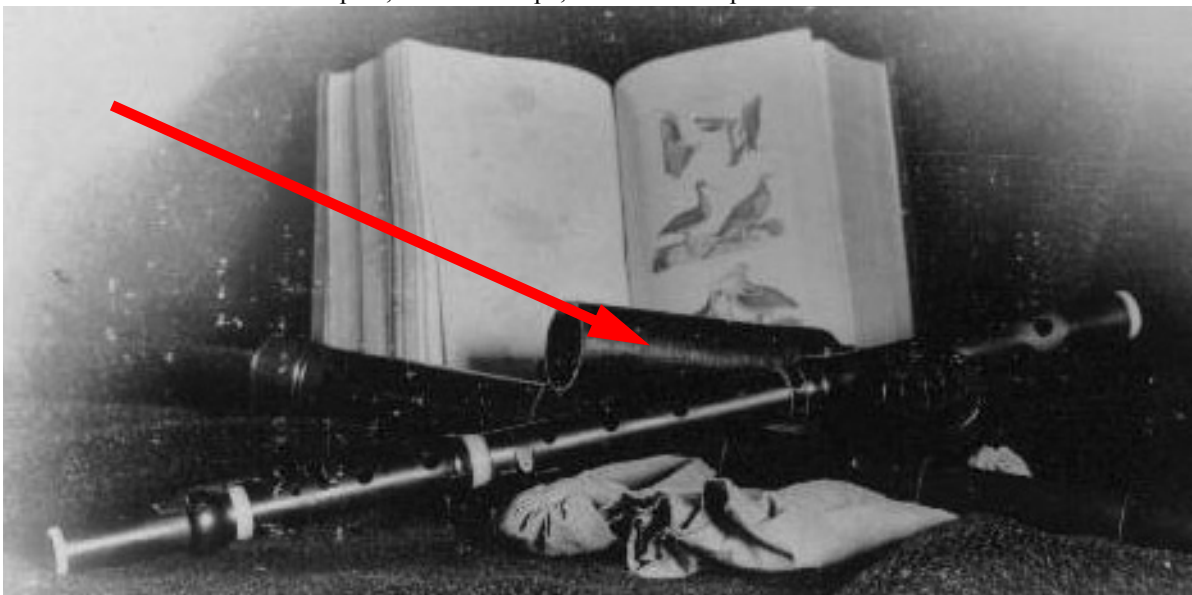


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In starting out by rail from Concord to Albany and then to [Niagara Falls](#), [Thoreau](#) was aware that he was generally retracing the “great central trail of the Iroquois,” some 12 to 18 inches in width, that had stretched from Albany to Buffalo. He had once made extensive excerpts from Lewis Henry Morgan’s *LEAGUE OF THE HO-DE-NO-SAU-NEE, OR IROQUOIS*, and was aware that this path had been “so judiciously selected, that the turnpike was laid out mainly on [its] line.”

He took with him his compass, his microscope, and his telescope.



He set out on this Iroquois Trail with \$178.¹⁰ on his person, about half a year’s income. As a precaution against theft and being left entirely without funds on this journey, he carried \$78.¹⁰ of this in his left pants pocket, \$60.⁰⁰ in his right pants pocket, and \$40.⁰⁰ in his “bosom” garment. (Bear in mind that this was presumably almost all in gold coins, and that a dollar then was worth a hundred-dollar bill now.) They spent the evening chatting with H.G.O. Blake in Worcester, and slept at his home. Here is a raw “OCR” scan, which needs to be checked, of the list Thoreau made of things to take with him on his long trip:

.arpet oar & unbrella; 1) half-thick coat; 2) plant book, blot[tin~l ¥ aper ~ hritin~ dr ittlo; 3) waist coat; 4) smoke cap; 7) boteny; 8) twine & cards, pencils, buttons, scissors, &c.; 5) thin coat; 9) trochees; 8) envelopes; 10) tape; 11) dipper & bo. sles.

In pocket~ 5~c: [word], pins, needles, thread, stamps, & money, Jack[knife, watch, ticket, guidebook &c., shoestring, map of U.S., notebook, matches, letters.

1) best pants; 2) 3 pr socks; 3) flannel shirt; 2) 1 p[air] drawers; 4) cotton batting; 6) 5 handkerchiefs Sc 2; 8) towel & soap; 13) medicine; 14) compass & microscope; 10) spy glass; 15) insect boxes; 11) clothes brush; 15) 1 slippers; 7) 2 neckerchiefs, ribbon; 3



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shirts; 9) 5 (& 1) bosoms.

Left pocket, \$78.10

Right 60.

Bosom 40.

178.10

Send home smoke ~, 1 pair drawers or 2.

According to the Madison, Wisconsin Weekly Patriot:

Now Let Slip the Dogs of War.

The President's twenty days of grace is exhausted, and unless we soon witness the most decided military action against the rebels, the most intense distrust and excitement will prevail. We cannot now afford to permit the rebels, to maintain an armed defensive, to block our commerce, insult and hang our citizens, and annoy us in all manner of ways. No, the President has given ample time for all lawless bands to disperse, and it should not be sufficient for him to know the capital is merely safe, with 30,000 troops, at enormous expense, surrounding it. It will not be enough to keep what forts and arsenals we now holds by force of arms – It will not satisfy the law-abiding north to merely keep the Potomac, the Chesapeake, the Delaware – the railroad and telegraph communications free for government use and occupation by the force of 150,000 troops, at a cost of millions. No, these things are not enough – They must not be the sine qua non of the object for which 153,000 troops were marshaled into service at the tap of the drum.

The great north-west, and the upper Mississippi Valley are in a blaze of excitement. Here we are, cut off from the Gulf by piratical bandits, who not only hinder and menace our commerce, but threaten our lives. This state of thing's cannot – Must not – shall not long continue. If the powers that be do not give the word of command, the Mississippi – Civilians will "assume the responsibility," and in mighty phalanx of 200,000 strong, will swarm like clouds of Saharan locusts, overrunning the lower Mississippi, until every Bayou is free from piratical obstruction. All the captured forts must be retaken – All the stolen property must be restored – all menace must be withdrawn or the southern rebels will see such an outpouring of Hoosiers, Wolverines, Buckeyes, Badgers, Gophers and Hawkeye's as will overwhelm them in dismay.

Our commercial pathway to the Gulf must be kept free from the thorns and debris of rebellion or the Mississippi will be crimsoned from Cairo to the delta. This we believe to be the determined sentiment of every 999 out of a thousand who inhabit the Great West. We all



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prefer to have the government act – to take the lead, and to say “come, boys” but if we are not called out our volunteers will Go Out. They cannot and will not lie idle, so long as there is a foe in the field.

We must not merely stand on the defensive now – we must punch on the aggressive. That is, we must follow up the retreating foe – give him battle until he shall cry enough and be content to live under the good old stars and stripes – We say to the President and Cabinet, that the people of the great north-west are not satisfied with this apparent tardy movement. Our troops are anxious to be led on.

They must and they will go. No power can keep them in check much longer and if the President don’t soon give the word of command, the western battalions will put themselves under marching orders, and will be after the scalps of the free-booters.

The Power of the United North

We have during the past three weeks had the most convincing evidence that an army can be assembled in the course of twenty or thirty days of seven hundred thousand men, devoted to the union. Here are the figures:

- Maine 18,000
- New Hampshire 12,000
- Vermont 10,000
- Massachusetts 40,000
- [Rhode Island](#) 5,000
- Connecticut 15,000
- New York 150,000
- New Jersey 20,000
- Pennsylvania 135,000
- Delaware 4,000
- Ohio 100,000
- Indiana 50,000
- Illinois 65,000
- Michigan 20,000
- Wisconsin 20,000
- Iowa 15,000
- Minnesota 8,000
- Kansas 3,000
- California 10,000

Total 700,000

But a well appointed army of half this number, giving Wisconsin the privilege of furnishing 10,000 good men, would beyond all question be amply sufficient to conquer a permanent peace, and bury secession so deep that it would never be heard of again. We want to see an army called into the field on a scale of such magnitude, that Jeff. Davis and his crew, like Crockett’s coon will be

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willing to come down and stay down, until it shall please the insulted laws to run them up as high as Human's gallows.

The Printers

No trade or craft in the country has turned out an equal number of volunteers with the printers, in proportion to numbers. They are accustomed to the use of the "shooting stick" and no one would be "justified" in questioning their bravery in the "matter" of war. The printers have given a "proof" of patriotism, that all may "copy" after, with perfect "justification" So walk up and "register" your names in "large caps."

May 15, Wednesday: Crossing the river to [Niagara Falls](#)⁵⁵ on the John Augustus Roebling span suspended from wire cables cost [Henry Thoreau](#) and Horace Mann, Jr. \$1.⁵⁰ each.

➡ "No one is afraid to cross."



There is not a record that either Thoreau or Mann were in fear during their crossing.⁵⁶ Their tickets to Goat Island cost an additional \$0.²⁵ each.



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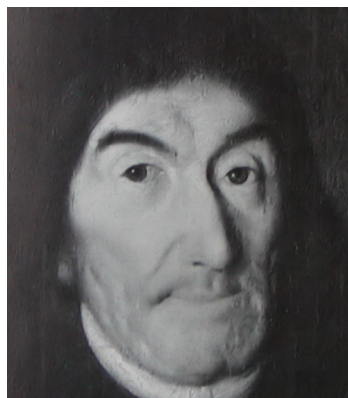
May 15: To Niagara Falls. Afternoon to Goat Island. Sight of the Rapids from the Bridge like the sea off Cape Cod – most imposing sight as yet. The great apparent height of the waves tumbling over the immense ledges – at a distance; while the water view is broad and boundless in that direction, as if you were looking out to sea, you are so low. Yet the distances are very deceptive; the most distant billow was scarcely more than a quarter of a mile off, though it appeared two miles or more. Many ducks [~~Oldsquaw~~ *Clangula hyemalis*] were constantly floating a little way down from the Rapids, -then flying back and alighting again.

An editorial in the St. Paul, Minnesota Pioneer and Democrat elaborated on the needs of war and managed to stop a bit short of urging Minnesota's farmers to immediately get their wives pregnant:

To Farmers. – Now is the time for the farmers to make money. The country is at war. A half million of men instead of being producers will become consumers. Flour, beef, pork, beans – the substantials – will be wanted in large quantity. Europe is convulsed, and the indications are that there will be a general outbreak across the water; if so, America must supply the armies of France, Italy and England with food. Let the farmers prepare for a great demand; let every cultivator put in an extra acre of corn or wheat, and carry his tilth to the best possible perfection; let every calf be saved from the butcher's hand, for there will be a great demand for beef. Farmers, every where, now is your time!



In a letter to his mother, Mann said “We arrived at the Suspension Bridge last night at about half 55. In considering [Thoreau](#)'s visit to Niagara Falls, you really should go back and review the treatment of the falls given by [Margaret Fuller](#) in her *SUMMER ON THE LAKES*, IN 1843 (Boston MA: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1844, Chapter I). She wrote several things which Thoreau must certainly have remembered, such as “It seems strange that men could fight in such a place.” The book begins with some utterly conventional remarks about the falls such as that it is a spectacle “great enough to fill the whole life, and supersede thought,” from which however we are immediately distanced by remarks such as that although Fuller has only been at the falls for eight days, once she had witnessed a fellow visitor appropriate them by spitting into them, she found that she was “quite willing to go away.” When she first saw the falls, her take was that it was just like its pictures. Referring to the first viewers of the falls who were not only white but also male, such as [Father Hennepin](#) (she was, after all, an inhabitant of the 19th Century, and a beneficiary of white civilization), she wrote “Happy were the first discoverers of Niagara, those who could come unawares upon this view and upon that, whose feelings were entirely their own.”





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past eight, and stopped over night at the New York Central House.... a room at the American House ... for one dollar a day.... I have seen the falls though I have not been to look at them yet, and I hear them roaring now all the time.”

May 15, Wednesday or later: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) &/or [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) presumably from [Niagara Falls, New York](#).

Horace Mann asked me if I did not hear the sound of the Fall as we went—from the Depot to the Hotel last night—but I had not—though certainly it was loud enough— I had probably mistaken it for a train coming or a locomotive letting off steam—of which we hear so much at home— It sounds hardly as loud this morning though now only 1/3 of a mile off— As I sit in my chamber the impression is as if I were surrounded by many factories—in full blast This is quite a town—with numerous hotels—& stores—Pave streets & &c— —& niagra falls will soon be surrounded by a city— I intend to walk down to the Falls & goat Island after dinner I pay a dollar a day here & shall certainly stay here till next Monday— Direct to Chicago Ill. till Monday next is passed—

56. We may speculate that John Augustus Roebling’s claim “No one is afraid to cross” had been made because, five years earlier, 200 people had fallen to their deaths when a suspension bridge collapsed in France. However, when he passed over this bridge, Mark Twain commented “You drive over the Suspension Bridge, and divide your misery between the chances of smashing down two hundred feet into the river below, and the chances of having a railway train overhead smashing down onto you. Either possibility is discomfiting taken by itself, but, mixed together, they amount in the aggregate to positive unhappiness.”

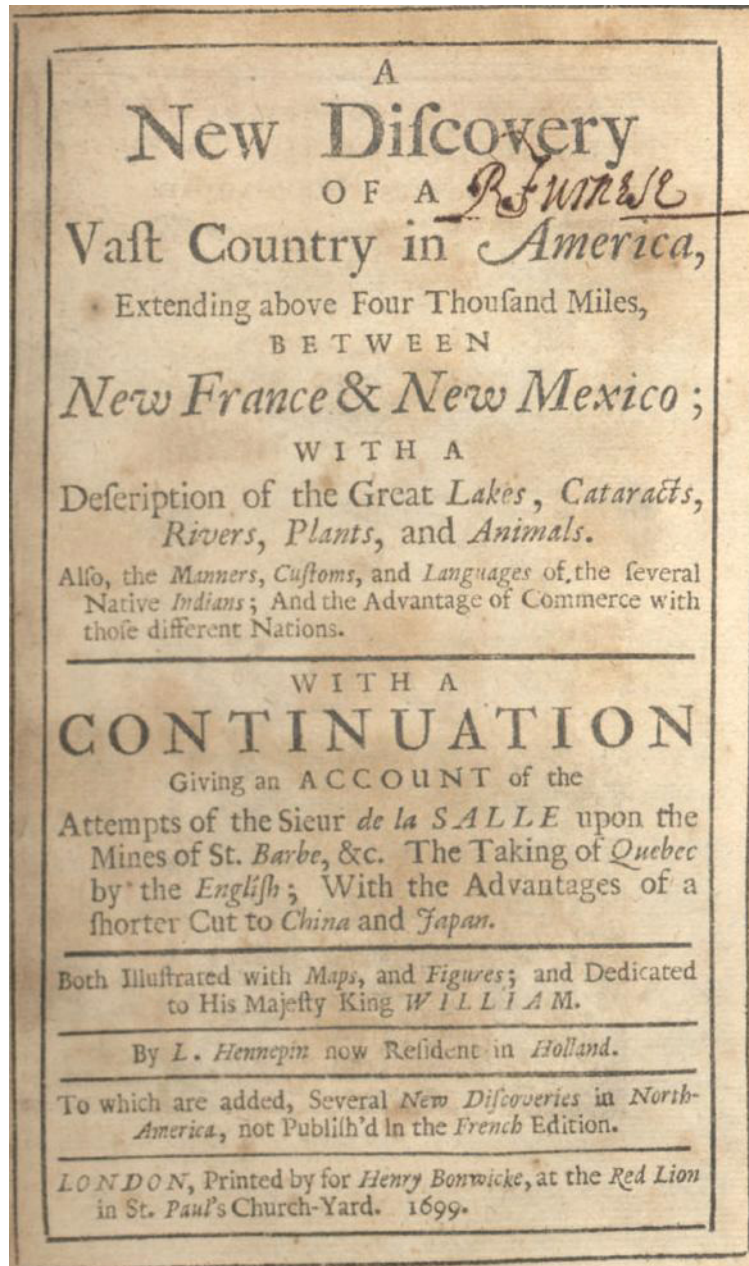
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Sight of rapids, from Brid[g]e like sea off Cape Cod.... Many ducks⁵⁷ constantly floating a little way

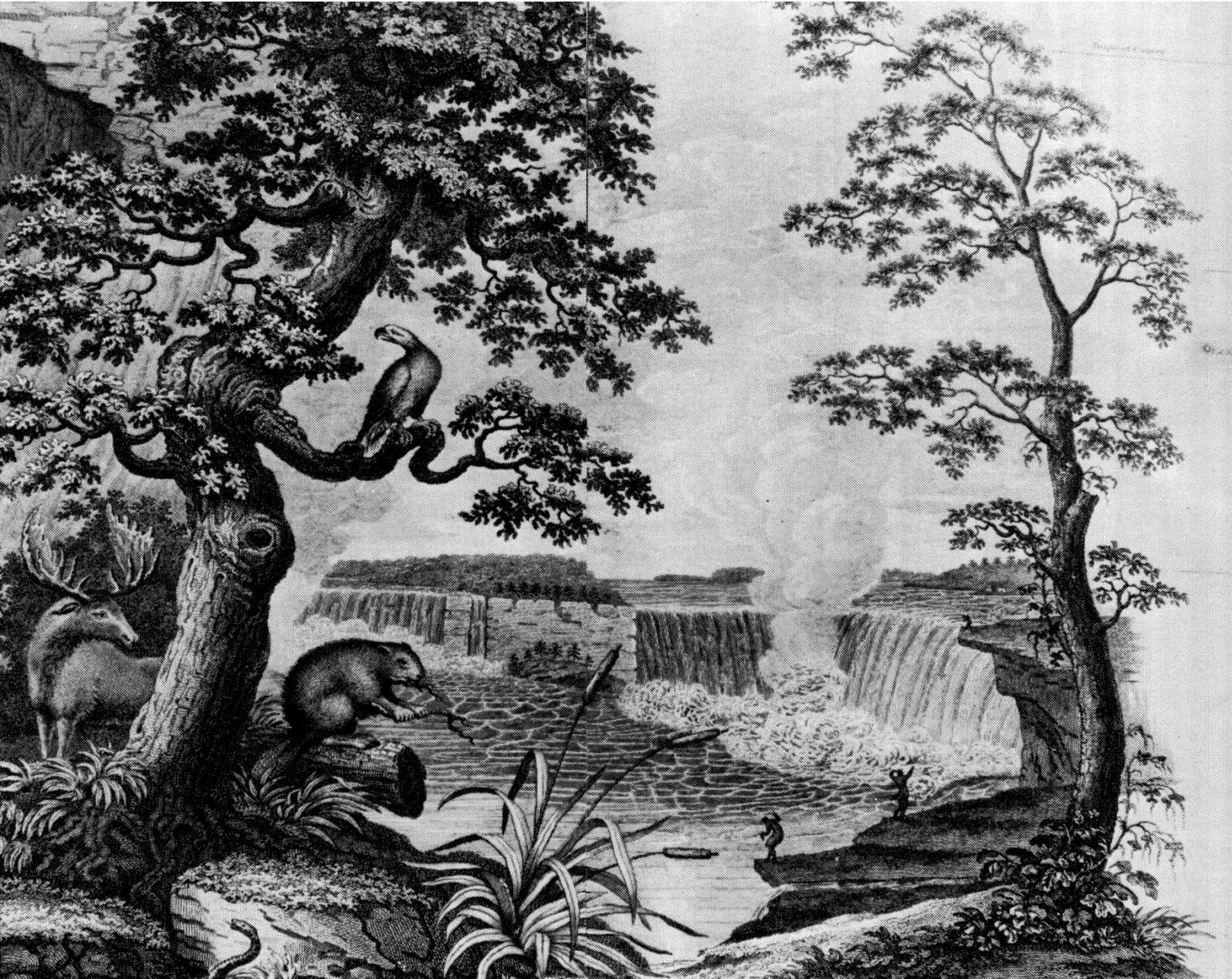
57.Apparently long-tailed Coween or “Oldsquaw” ducks *Clangula hyemalis*.

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down the rapids, then flying back & alighting again.... Pestered by coachmen &c. &c.



Niagara as portrayed by H.S. Tanner in 1822

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"It was not until I came to Table Rock and looked, Great Heaven, on what a fall of bright green water, that it came upon me in its full might and majesty... Niagara was at once stamped upon my heart, an image of beauty, to remain there changeless and indelible, until its pulses cease to beat forever."

—Charles Dickens, 1842



The H.S. Tanner picture of 1822, as quoted by [Edward Hicks](#) in 1825



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May 17, Friday: The Reverend [Beriah Green](#), pastor of the Congregational Church in Whitesboro, New York, wrote to the Liberator to take [William Lloyd Garrison](#) to task for supposing that a meaningful emancipation could possibly eventuate to the black people of America as a consequence of civil war. He pointed out that, obviously,

Freedom in any proper sense of the inspiring word, is not the child of violence.

He also mentioned that, obviously,

Good must be built in good alone.

and concluded that, obviously, in consequence of this,

We shall derive **from** war what is characteristically involved **in** war, and nothing else.

One is left wondering, by the magnificent simplicity of his reasoning, how anyone could ever have been so foolish and misguided, as to have supposed that a spasm of warfare was going to cause some of America's problems to become more tractable! If you yourself just don't get this, gentle reader — which part of "resist not evil" is it that you just don't get?



May 17: Go to the Suspension Bridge and walk up on the Canada side. The completest view of the Falls is from that side.... A man says he calls these ducks "coween" [[Oldsquaw](#)  [Clangula hyemalis](#)], and that they and other ducks both wild and tame, alight in the mist and are often carried over the Falls.

May 20, Monday: Large plantations such as Hardscrabble, Cameron, and Leigh had been established in the region surrounding [Durham, North Carolina](#). By this decade, Stagville Plantation lay at the center of one of the largest plantation holdings in the South. Black slaves from Africa labored on the farms and plantations. Due to a disagreement between the plantation owners and the farmers, [North Carolina](#) would make itself the last state to secede from the Union. However, on this day the sovereign state of [North Carolina](#), whose plantation masters were unable to sustain the thought that all men were created equal, did actually vote to "undo" the act that had brought it into the federal union centered in [Washington DC](#). White Durhamite sons would fight in several North Carolina regiments. Seventeen days after Lee would surrender his army at Appomattox, it would be at Bennett Place in Durham that General Sherman and General Johnston would negotiate the largest surrender and the end of civil strife. While in Durham, Yankee troops would become users of Brightleaf tobacco — and this would be what would spawn the commercial success of Washington Duke and his family and the firms known as American Tobacco, Liggett & Meyers, R.J. Reynolds, and P. Lorillard. The first mill to produce denim and the world's largest hosiery maker would eventually establish themselves in Durham.

Well, the above remark about being unable to sustain the thought that all men were created equal is a cold joke, really, a cold joke based on the reputation that North Carolina has acquired — as a state whose chief claim to fame is that at least it is not South Carolina. In fact none of the Southern tier of states were breaking away in order to protect their peculiar institution of human enslavement. That's merely a modern misapprehension! The president-elect, Abraham Lincoln, had given them assurances that interfering with human enslavement was not an item to be found anywhere on his agenda. None of the Southern politicians had any reason at all to suspect that Lincoln had any affection for people of color, for in fact, as was well understood, he had no such affection. The man was a master of the nigger joke (if you hadn't known that, it is merely that our historians have been sparing you the agony of hearing them). The primary reason for the breaking away was that the election had indicated to the states of the Southern agricultural tier very clearly that the Northern industrial



sector of the nation was increasing in relative influence over the Southern. During the first century of the existence of our nation, the most important political fact was that the primary political division in the federal government was sectional, between the Northern sector and the Southern sector of the country. The Constitution had been drafted in such a manner that the powers of these two sectors were about on a par with one another — it was to achieve this rough parity between the industrial North and the agricultural South that slavemasters had been granted an extra 3/5ths of a vote for every human being they owned. Year after year, shifts in the relative power of the two regions had been being carefully monitored and struggled over. This was a sectional issue, a geographical one, an economic one, Northern sector versus Southern sector, and so, you see, any and all debates as to the morality of race enslavement pro and con amount to a mere “stalking horse.” All of American national politics had for all of the existence of the federal union been a delicate balancing act. When Florida had become available, from Spain, Florida could not be brought into the union as an addition to the Southern sector until the federal politicians had come up with the idea of offering something equivalent to the Northern sector, so that the relative influences of the two sectors could be kept in balance within the corridors of power in [Washington DC](#) (so, Massachusetts was split into two states, Massachusetts and Maine, with the addition of Maine to the Northern sector balancing the addition of Florida to the Southern sector). When Texas came in, the whole chunk of territory had been brought in as one humongous state rather than breaking it apart into four reasonably sized new states, simply because the relative power of the two regions, north versus south, was being so carefully monitored and struggled for. For similar reasons, Canada is now an independent nation: Canada retained its independence because nobody could figure out how to add Canada to the Northern sector without adding Mexico to the Southern sector (and nobody wanted the Mexicans because they were thought of as half-breeds). National politics went on and on like this, and it wasn’t ever a struggle over freeing the negroes, but was instead a struggle between two groups of white men over which group of white men was going to achieve dominance over the federal establishment in [Washington](#). Now hear me, the black people were just a pawn, being moved around the white man’s chessboard. So, in the 1860 election, when a northern candidate won rather than the candidate that was in the pocket of the Southern sector, they became fearful that the big bad wolf was knocking on the door, that the Northern sector had finally won out in this long-term contest for dominance over the federal establishment in [Washington](#). It didn’t matter how much Lincoln protested that freeing the slaves was the furthest thing from his mind (“Who, lil’ ol’ me?”).

Thus, at our present juncture, the states of the Southern sector were seceding not because the Republican election victory posed a threat to enslavement practices —such a threat was not presented by the new Republican party platform— but because with the growing industrial power of the North, the agricultural South sensed a permanent diminution of its relative influence. It was willing to be part of a 50% versus 50% nation but feared having to suck hind tit in a 60% versus 40% nation. It had been all right when Franklin Pierce, a Northerner, had been president, because they had all understood that Pierce was a true blue Southerner at heart (besides, he was an ineffectual drunkard with the charisma of a door stop). This time, with a Northerner rather than a Southerner in control of the White House, the Northern bloc was going to start adding a bunch of free states out west, with each free state having two senators to make the Senate ever more and more lopsided — and this long stalemate would be irrevocably shattered.

[Ellery Channing](#) had hinted that he might join [Henry Thoreau](#) and Horace Mann, Jr. at [Niagara Falls](#). He did not show up, which disappointed Thoreau. After having spent five days waiting in the Niagara Falls area, Thoreau and Mann took the train across lower Ontario and spent a night in Detroit.



May 20. Niagara Falls to Detroit... Wild fowl east of Lake St. Clair; of which a long and fine view on each side of the Thames. Crossing, saw about Thamesville a small plump bird, —red head and blackish or bluish



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back and wings, but with broad white on the rounded wing and tail. Probably the red-headed woodpecker
[**Red-headed Woodpecker**  *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*].
The one dollar houses in Detroit are the Garrison & the Franklin H.

June 6, Thursday, 3PM: The 1st *Maid of the Mist* had been launched on May 27, 1846, and until 1848, when the 1st suspension bridge was built, it had constituted the only way to cross the border. With ferry service no longer needed, that craft had been repurposed as a tourist boat. It had been superseded with this larger boat, the *Maid of the Mist II*, a 72-foot paddle wheeler, on July 14, 1854. The vessel had been sold at public auction to a Canadian company on condition that it be transferred to the docks at Queenston, Ontario, three incredibly difficult miles downstream. The crew had been promised a reward of \$500 if this could be accomplished. On this day, with a shrill blast of the steam whistle, Captain Joel Robinson, mechanic James McIntyre, and engineer James Jones took the *Maid of the Mist II* tourist ferry full speed ahead down the [Niagara Falls](#) through the Great Gorge Rapids, the Whirlpool Rapids, and the Devil's Hole Rapids, three miles of excitement to Lake Ontario. In this passage the craft reached a speed of approximately 39 miles per hour. When they reached the placid waters of Lake Ontario they were without their smokestack, but despite this the three-man crew would be receiving the promised reward.



June 6: ... a wild pigeon's nest in a young bass tree, ten feet from the ground, four or five rods south of Lake Calhoun; built over a broad fork of the tree, where a third slender twig divided it, and a fourth forked it.... Built of slender hard twigs only, so open that I could see the eggs from the ground, and also so slight I could scarcely get to it without upsetting it. The bulk of the nest was six inches over; the ring of the concavity three-quarters of an inch thick, but irregular. At first (seeing the bird fly off) I thought it an unfinished nest.

Lumberers came here & speared this eve.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

October 13, Sunday: William Duncan was sailing from Port Day toward Chippawa Creek on the [Niagara River](#), to visit his parents, and was close to his destination when strong winds arose that blew his craft into the Canadian Rapids. His attempt to swim toward the shore, as his unmanageable craft approached the line at which the river surface was simply disappearing, was unsuccessful. Although, in this “Horseshoe” of the falls where at some points there are no piles of rocks below, a few people have gone over the edge and survived, William Duncan wouldn’t be among these lucky ones.





THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1863

January 4, Sunday, 3AM: [Waldo Emerson](#) was sleeping at the American Hotel near [Niagara Falls](#), and it burned. While dashing out into the street he had the presence of mind to snatch up his lecture notes, and as luck would have it his trunk was still in existence as it had not yet been delivered. The agent at the station made him out a new railroad ticket at no charge.

Summer: [Fort Niagara](#) had been garrisoned at the start of the civil war by troops of the 7th United States Infantry Regiment that had surrendered to a Confederate force at Mesilla, New Mexico on July 25, 1861. Following common practice, these prisoners of war had been paroled on the basis of their promise not to fight again until the procedures of formal exchange had been completed. After their return to the North, the companies of the 7th Infantry had therefore been stationed at border posts, far from the front. At this point the formal exchange procedure for these men was complete, and the troops were again able to join in the civil strife. However, fear that Great Britain might intervene on the side of the Confederacy was once again raising tensions along the border, so plans were afoot to reconstruct the fortifications. The work commenced during this summer. New revetments to support the earthen walls of the land front were the first part of the project. Later work was to include new walls and gun positions on the river and lake sides. Though renovations would continue from 1863 to 1872, the civil war would have amply demonstrated the vulnerability of masonry forts to the new forms of artillery. Gradually, these ambitious plans would be altered. By the time work would cease in 1872 only the land front would be complete. Even by then the new gun emplacements would not have been armed.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1864

July 17, Sunday: [Horace Greeley](#), under President Abraham Lincoln's sanction, met at [Niagara Falls](#) with alleged Confederate peace commissioners.

On this day and the following day, there would be fighting at Cool Spring / Island Ford / Parkers Ford.

August 8, Monday: William Leonard Hunt, AKA Signor Guillermo Antonio Farini "The Great Farini," attempted a crossing of the [Niagara River](#) just above the always-deadly American Falls on a pair of stilts. When a stilt got wedged in a crevice, Farini, his leg injured, managed to reach Robinson Island and was rescued by a boat. (In 1866 this performer would take his act on tour to England, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.)



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1865

June 15, Thursday: Harry Leslie, who was billing himself as “the American Blondin,” walked a tightrope across the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) above the Whirlpool Rapids.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1866

Spring: Fenian forces gathered at Buffalo, [New York](#).

IRELAND

June: An armed force of Fenians crossed the upper reaches of the [Niagara River](#), occupied the village of Fort Erie and defeated Canadian militia, at the Battle of Ridgeway, Ontario. The Fenians, faced with gathering British and Canadian resistance, soon regrouped themselves in Buffalo, [New York](#). United States authorities would block further such raids along the river frontier. Fenian activities would, however, continue into the early 1870s, and friction between the neighbor nations would remain high.

IRELAND



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1869

Francis Parkman, in *LA SALLE AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE GREAT WEST*, flatly denied the truth of much of the account of travels down the Mississippi River left by [Père Louis Hennepin](#). Although attempts have been made to sort this out by interpreting the egregiously false information to interpolations by other parties, these attempts have never managed to persuade.



Inspired by a tour of Yosemite, and perhaps by the ideas of his friend Frederick Law Olmsted, Samuel Bowles published *OUR NEW WEST. RECORDS OF TRAVEL BETWEEN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN, AN INFLUENTIAL TRAVELLER'S ACCOUNT OF THE WILDS AND PEOPLES OF THE WEST*, in which he advocated preservation of scenic areas such as [Niagara Falls](#) and the Adirondacks.

CONSERVATIONISM

A group of citizens –including Frederick Law Olmsted, Frederic Edwin Church, and Henry Hobson Richardson– began to work towards the restoration and preservation of [Niagara Falls](#). (These efforts would finally bear fruit in the creation of the Reservation in 1885.)

CONSERVATIONISM

August 25, Wednesday: J.F. “Professor” Jenkins rode a velocipede across the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) just north of the Railway Suspension Bridge, above the Whirlpool Rapids.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1871

George Armstrong Custer visited New-York in an unsuccessful attempt to find a way to evade military service. (Are you surprised to learn this?)



Do I gotta?

William Dean Howells's *THEIR WEDDING JOURNEY*, his first novel, was published in Bloomington, Indiana and serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the magazine of which in this year he was becoming editor. (In this story of a honeymoon at the [Niagara Falls](#), the groom was surprised that his bride had not heard about [Sam Patch](#).)



George Armstrong who?



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1872

Work ceased at [Fort Niagara](#) with only the land front completed. Even then the new gun positions were not armed, and the walls had become obsolescent by the time of their completion. The fact that work was carried even to this point was probably due to another period of border tension. The threat of British involvement in the Civil War had soon disappeared as Confederate fortunes had declined. With the end of hostilities, however, large numbers of discharged veteran Union soldiers of [Irish](#) birth had become involved in the Fenian movement. Their new goal was independence for their Irish homeland of origin. One scheme to achieve this had come to be the invasion and conquest of British [Canada](#) as a blow against the British Empire and as a bargaining chip to use among other bargaining chips to gain self-determination for [Ireland](#).

[John Boyle O'Reilly](#) got married with Mary Murphy, who was writing for the [Young Crusader](#) under the pen name Agnes Smiley. This couple would produce four daughters, Mollie, Eliza, Agnes, and Blaid O'Reilly.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1873

August 25, Monday: Henry Bellini did his 1st tightrope stunt above the [Niagara River](#). The rope was two and a half inches thick and 1,500 feet long. It weighed 2,500 pounds. The balance pole was 22 feet long and weighed 48 pounds. At the middle of the span he stepped off the rope, plunged into the river below, and immediately was plucked from the churning water by a rescue crew aboard a waiting boat.

Later this year he would do two more such plunges. However, Stephen Peer, an assistant in stringing the rope across the gorge, would attempt to use Bellini's equipment without authorization to stage his own stunt — while meanwhile Bellini was attempting to cut the tightrope to bring his assistant down. For this Bellini would be run out of town.



1876

July 8, Saturday: Signorina Maria Spelterini, in crossing the gorge just north of the lower suspension bridge of the [Niagara River](#) on a tight wire two and a quarter inches in diameter, made herself the only woman ever to be so foolish as to attempt such a feat — since she weighed in at 150 pounds, clearly some personal advertisement was indicated.

July 12, Wednesday: On [Henry Thoreau](#)'s birthday, Paul Henry discovered asteroid #164 Eva, and Signorina Maria Spelterini again made the crossing of the gorge just north of the lower suspension bridge of the [Niagara River](#) on her tight wire (this time with her feet in peach baskets).

[Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his [JOURNAL INTIME](#): “Trouble on trouble. My cough has been worse than ever. I cannot see that the fine weather or the holidays have made any change for the better in my state of health. On the contrary, the process of demolition seems more rapid. It is a painful experience, this premature decay!... “Après tant de malheurs, que vous restet-il? Moi.” This “moi” is the central consciousness, the trunk of all the branches which have been cut away, that which bears every successive mutilation. Soon I shall have nothing else left than bare intellect. Death reduces us to the mathematical “point;” the destruction which precedes it forces us back, as it were, by a series of ever-narrowing concentric circles to this last inaccessible refuge. Already I have a foretaste of that zero in which all forms and all modes are extinguished. I see how we return into the night, and inversely I understand how we issue from it. Life is but a meteor, of which the whole brief course is before me. Birth, life, death assume a fresh meaning to us at each phase of our existence. To see one’s self as a firework in the darkness — to become a witness of one’s own fugitive phenomenon — this is practical psychology. I prefer indeed the spectacle of the world, which is a vaster and more splendid firework; but when illness narrows my horizon and makes me dwell perforce upon my own miseries, these miseries are still capable of supplying food for my psychological curiosity. What interests me in myself, in spite of my repulsions is, that I find in my own case a genuine example of human nature, and therefore a specimen of general value. The sample enables me to understand a multitude of similar situations, and numbers of my fellow-men.

To enter consciously into all possible modes of being would be sufficient occupation for hundreds of centuries — at least for our finite intelligences, which are conditioned by time. The progressive happiness of the process, indeed may be easily poisoned and embittered by the ambition which asks for everything at once, and clamors to reach the absolute at a bound. But it may be answered that aspirations are necessarily prophetic, for they could only have come into being under the action of the same cause which will enable them to reach their goal. The soul can only imagine the absolute because the absolute exists; our consciousness of a possible perfection is the guarantee that perfection will be realized.

Thought itself is eternal. It is the consciousness of thought which is gradually achieved through the long succession of ages, races, and humanities. Such is the doctrine of Hegel. The history of the mind is, according to him one of approximation to the absolute, and the absolute differs at the two ends of the story. It was at the beginning; it knows itself at the end. Or rather it advances in the possession of itself with the gradual unfolding



of creation. Such also was the conception of Aristotle.

If the history of the mind and of consciousness is the very marrow and essence of being, then to be driven back on psychology, even personal psychology, is to be still occupied with the main question of things, to keep to the subject, to feel one's self in the center of the universal drama. There is comfort in the idea. Everything else may be taken away from us, but if thought remains we are still connected by a magic thread with the axis of the world. But we may lose thought and speech. Then nothing remains but simple feeling, the sense of the presence of God and of death in God — the last relic of the human privilege, which is to participate in the whole, to commune with the absolute.

‘Ta vie est un éclair qui meurt dans son nuage,
Mais l'éclair t'a sauvé s'il t'a fait voir le ciel.’”

July 19, Wednesday: Signorina Maria Spelterini again made the crossing of the gorge just north of the lower suspension bridge of the [Niagara River](#) on her tight wire (this time blindfolded).

July 22, Saturday: Signorina Maria Spelterini again made the crossing of the gorge just north of the lower suspension bridge of the [Niagara River](#) on her tight wire (this time with ankles and wrists manacled).

July 26, Wednesday: Signorina Maria Spelterini made a final crossing of the gorge just north of the lower suspension bridge of the [Niagara River](#) on her tight wire. (She succeeded in making this crossing but we have no info whatever on her subsequent life.)

[Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his [JOURNAL INTIME](#): “A private journal is a friend to idleness. It frees us from the necessity of looking all round a subject, it puts up with every kind of repetition, it accompanies all the caprices and meanderings of the inner life, and proposes to itself no definite end. This journal of mine represents the material of a good many volumes: what prodigious waste of time, of thought, of strength! It will be useful to nobody, and even for myself — it has rather helped me to shirk life than to practice it. A journal takes the place of a confidant, that is, of friend or wife; it becomes a substitute for production, a substitute for country and public. It is a grief-cheating device, a mode of escape and withdrawal; but, factotum as it is, though it takes the place of everything, properly speaking it represents nothing at all....

What is it which makes the history of a soul? It is the stratification of its different stages of progress, the story of its acquisitions and of the general course of its destiny. Before my history can teach anybody anything, or even interest myself, it must be disentangled from its materials, distilled and simplified. These thousands of pages are but the pile of leaves and bark from which the essence has still to be extracted. A whole forest of cinchonas are worth but one cask of quinine. A whole Smyrna rose-garden goes to produce one vial of perfume.

This mass of written talk, the work of twenty-nine years, may in the end be worth nothing at all; for each is only interested in his own romance, his own individual life. Even I perhaps shall never have time to read them over myself. So — so what? I shall have lived my life, and life consists in repeating the human type, and the burden of the human song, as myriads of my kindred have done, are doing, and will do, century after century. To rise to consciousness of this burden and this type is something, and we can scarcely achieve anything further. The realization of the type is more complete, and the burden a more joyous one, if circumstances are kind and propitious, but whether the puppets have done this or that —



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

”Trois p’tits tours et puis s’en vont!”

everything falls into the same gulf at last, and comes to very much the same thing.

To rebel against fate — to try to escape the inevitable issue — is almost puerile. When the duration of a centenarian and that of an insect are quantities sensibly equivalent — and geology and astronomy enable us to regard such durations from this point of view — what is the meaning of all our tiny efforts and cries, the value of our anger, our ambition, our hope? For the dream of a dream it is absurd to raise these make-believe tempests. The forty millions of infusoria which make up a cube-inch of chalk — do they matter much to us? and do the forty millions of men who make up France matter any more to an inhabitant of the moon or Jupiter? To be a conscious monad — a nothing which knows itself to be the microscopic phantom of the universe: this is all we can ever attain to.”



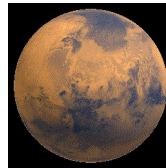
ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1877

Jacob Schoellkopf purchased [Niagara Falls's Hydraulic Canal](#) for \$71,000.

Giovanni Virginio Schiaparelli's map of the surface features of the planet [Mars](#), which would help touch off the "[canals](#) of Mars" furor which would play such a role in the subsequent mythifications of this planet. Actually, in recycling the previous term "canale" as a designator on this map, that term was being utilized more or less as a synonym for river, "fiume," and thus, to the astronomers involved at least, indicated surface features which were presumably completely natural rather than having been created by some race of extraterrestrial beings. Such a term should have been transliterated from the Italian as "channel" but for egregious reasons it would become "canal."



ASTRONOMY



"[Mars](#) is essentially in the same orbit ... somewhat the same distance from the Sun, which is very important. We have seen pictures where there are canals, we believe, and water. If there is water, that means there is oxygen. If oxygen, that means we can breathe."

— J. Danforth Quayle

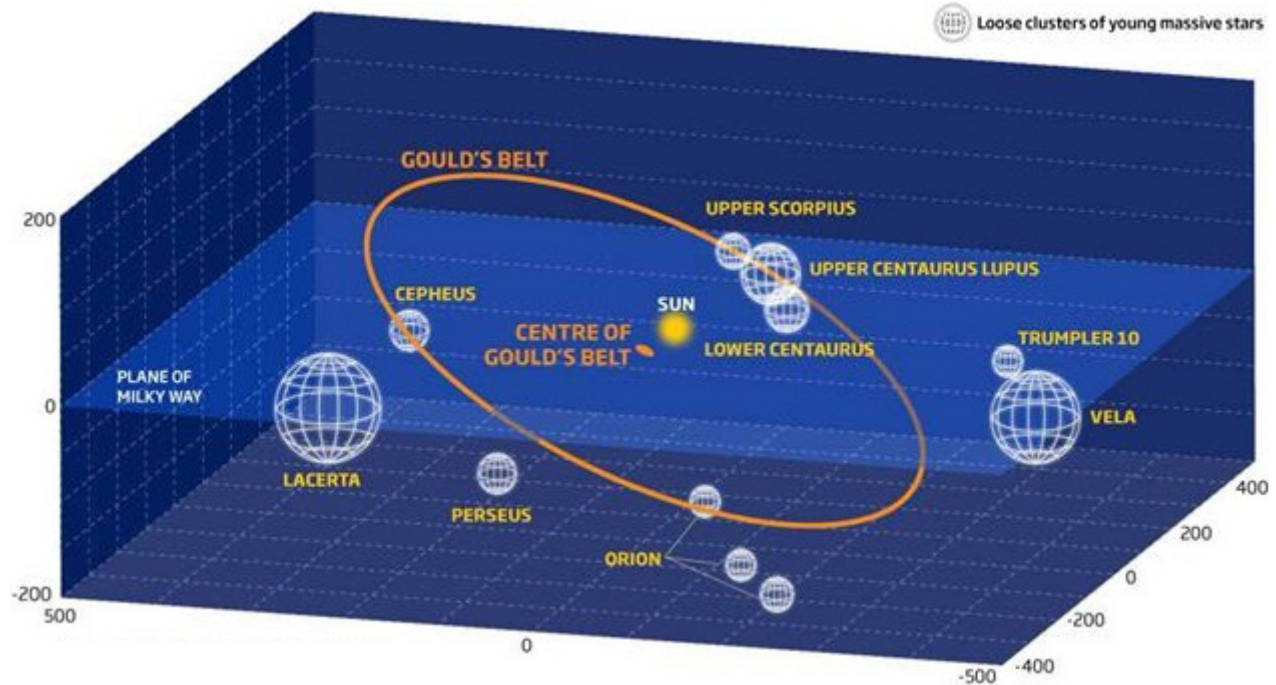


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THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

[Benjamin Apthorp Gould](#) noted a large-scale feature of the Milky Way Galaxy. Our solar system happens to be close to the center of a rotating ring of stars, tilted with respect to the main plane of the Milky Way Galaxy, which this tilted rotating ring includes some of the brightest stars in our night sky.



We have come to characterize this tilted rotating ring as the “Gould Belt.”

[ASTRONOMY](#)



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1878

June 26, Wednesday: From a platform erected below Prospect Point on the American shore of the [Niagara Falls](#),
“Captain” J.D. Rhodes dropped 90 feet into the [Niagara River](#).



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1881

August 10, Wednesday: Having had too much to drink, David McDowell of Batavia, [New York](#) got up on the narrow railing of the Upper Suspension Bridge and walked entirely across the gorge of the [Niagara River](#)—something which, of course, no sane and non-inebriated person would ever attempt— and did so without falling.

A report from Walt Whitman:

“Specimen Days”

As I haltingly ramble an hour or two this forenoon by the more secluded parts of the shore, or sit under an old cedar half way up the hill, the city near in view, many young parties gather to bathe or swim, squads of boys, generally twos or threes, some larger ones, along the sand-bottom, or off an old pier close by. A peculiar and pretty carnival — at its height a hundred lads or young men, very democratic, but all decent behaving. The laughter, voices, calls, responses — the springing and diving of the bathers from the great string-piece of the decay'd pier, where climb or stand long ranks of them, naked, rose-color'd, with movements, postures ahead of any sculpture. To all this, the sun, so bright, the dark-green shadow of the hills the other side, the amber-rolling waves, changing as the tide comes in to a transparent tea-color — the frequent splash of the playful boys, sousing — the glittering drops sparkling, and the good western breeze blowing.



“Specimen Days”

“CUSTER’S LAST RALLY”

Went to-day to see this just-finish’d painting by John Mulvany, who has been out in far Dakota, on the spot, at the forts, and among the frontiersmen, soldiers and Indians, for the last two years, on purpose to sketch it in from reality, or the best that could be got of it. Sat for over an hour before [Page 910] the picture, completely absorb’d in the first view. A vast canvas, I should say twenty or twenty-two feet by twelve, all crowded, and yet not crowded, conveying such a vivid play of color, it takes a little time to get used to it. There are no tricks; there is no throwing of shades in masses; it is all at first painfully real, overwhelming, needs good nerves to look at it. Forty or fifty figures, perhaps more, in full finish and detail in the mid-ground, with three times that number, or more, through the rest – swarms upon swarms of savage Sioux, in their war-bonnets, frantic, mostly on ponies, driving through the background, through the smoke, like a hurricane of demons. A dozen of the figures are wonderful. Altogether a western, autochthonic phase of America, the frontiers, culminating, typical, deadly, heroic to the uttermost – nothing in the books like it, nothing in Homer, nothing in Shakspeare; more grim and sublime than either, all native, all our own, and all a fact. A great lot of muscular, tan-faced men, brought to bay under terrible circumstances – death ahold of them, yet every man undaunted, not one losing his head, wringing out every cent of the pay before they sell their lives. Custer (his hair cut short) stands in the middle, with dilated eye and extended arm, aiming a huge cavalry pistol. Captain Cook is there, partially wounded, blood on the white handkerchief around his head, aiming his carbine coolly, half kneeling – (his body was afterwards found close by Custer’s). The slaughter’d or half-slaughter’d horses, for breastworks, make a peculiar feature. Two dead Indians, herculean, lie in the foreground, clutching their Winchester rifles, very characteristic. The many soldiers, their faces and attitudes, the carbines, the broad-brimm’d western hats, the powder-smoke in puffs, the dying horses with their rolling eyes almost human in their agony, the clouds of war-bonneted Sioux in the background, the figures of Custer and Cook – with indeed the whole scene, dreadful, yet with an attraction and beauty that will remain in my memory. With all its color and fierce action, a certain Greek continence pervades it. A sunny sky and clear light envelop all. There is an almost entire absence of the stock traits of European war pictures. The physiognomy of the work is realistic and Western. I only saw it for an hour or so; but it needs to be seen many times – needs to be studied [Page 911] over and over again. I could look on such a work at brief intervals all my life without tiring; it is very tonic to me; then it has an ethic purpose below all, as all great art must have. The artist said the sending of the picture abroad, probably to London, had been talk’d of. I advised him if it went abroad to take it to Paris. I think they might appreciate it there – nay, they certainly would. Then I would like to show Monsieur Crapeau that some things can be done in America as well as others.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1882

August 25, Friday: Frank M. Brown of New-York, [New York](#) swam across the [Niagara River](#) from the foot of the always-deadly American Falls to the Canadian shoreline. The swim was completed in 4 minutes, 46 seconds.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1883

July 24, Tuesday: Captain Matthew Webb, a strong swimmer, had once been honored with a gold medal by the Royal Humane Society of Great Britain for having leaped from the deck of the Cunard steamer *Russia* to save a sailor who was washed overboard. On August 24, 1875, he had swum the English Channel. At this point someone had promised him \$2,000 if he could survive the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). Jack McCloy rowed him out from the landing of the *Maid of the Mist* to the middle of the river. At 4:25PM Captain Webb dove from the rowboat into the river. Eyewitnesses say he completed his transit of the rapids in two minutes but was then drawn underwater at the vortex of the whirlpool. There are however conflicting accounts to suggest that what was glimpsed coming out of the rapids was the swimmer's drowned body. At any rate, the corpse would be recovered four days later near Queenston, mangled, and would be interred at Oakwood Cemetery in [Niagara Falls, New York](#).



1886

July 11, Sunday afternoon: Carlisle D. Graham, an English cooper (barrel maker) who had recently immigrated to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had come to [Niagara Falls, New York](#) with a five-and-a-half-foot barrel of oaken staves and handmade iron hoops he had fabricated explicitly for the purpose of passing safely through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). He had widely advertised that his barrel stunt was to take place on this Sunday afternoon. Inside the barrel his body was inside a waterproof canvas sheath except that his hands poked out so that he could grasp metal handles mounted on the inside of the barrel. The watertight lid was screwed shut, and the barrel was committed to the river. The barrel completed the trip through the rapids in 30 minutes. When the barrel was recovered downstream and the lid unscrewed, it was found that Graham was alive, but extremely sickened and dizzy from his jolting, spinning ride.

August 8, Sunday: George Hazlett and William Potts used Carlisle D. Graham's barrel to transit the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) together. They emerged from the barrel uninjured.

August 18, Wednesday: James Scott of Lewiston, [New York](#) attempted to swim the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) and was killed.

August 19, Thursday: Carlisle D. Graham, the cooper (barrel maker) who had on July 11th survived an initial trip through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) inside a five-and-a-half-foot barrel of oaken staves and handmade iron hoops he had himself fabricated, made the trip again, this time with his head sticking out of the barrel. Leaving his head unprotected in this manner would turn out to create a hearing impediment.

August 22, Sunday: A [Boston](#) policeman, William Kendall, wearing a cork life preserver, made it intact through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#).

Carlisle D. Graham had offered \$10 for retrieval of his barrel from the Whirlpool Rapids following a daredevil stunt. James Scott planned to take advantage of Graham's offer but thought it would be a good idea to first get some practice. Making a practice jump into the waters of the Whirlpool from a location west of Thompson's Point at the Whirlpool, he failed to resurface.

November: George Hazlett and a girlfriend, Sadie Allen of Buffalo, [New York](#), used Carlisle D. Graham's barrel to transit the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). The duo emerged from the barrel unscathed.

November 7, Sunday: Lawrence Donovan dropped into the [Niagara River](#) from the Upper Suspension Bridge wearing a suit, canvas shoes, and a bowler hat.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

Winter: Henry Bellini dropped from the Upper Suspension Bridge into the [Niagara River](#), only to be hauled from the water unconscious and with broken ribs (he would survive this drop from a bridge to die of injuries after a drop from a bridge in London in 1888).

December 15, Wednesday: Alphonse “Professor” King walked about a hundred feet at the Upper Suspension Bridge across the [Niagara River](#), near the Canadian shoreline, wearing a pair of giant tin flotation shoes. King was terming his shoe invention “Golden Fish.”



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1887

Clifford Calverly, a steeplejack, crossed the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) on a tightrope in 2 minutes and 32 seconds — this stunt usually required 15 to 20 minutes. During subsequent crossings Calverly would skip rope, hang by one arm, hang by one foot, sit on a chair, and push a wheelbarrow. D.H. MacDonald would make at least one successful crossing using Clifford Calverly's equipment. Also, Charles Cromwell, a rope walker with the Yankee Robinson Circus, made a ropewalk across the river's gorge without attracting much media or public attention, assisted by a 16-foot balancing beam weighing 42 pounds.

June 15, Wednesday: In a new 7-foot barrel, Carlisle D. Graham accomplished his 3d trip through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#).

June 22, Wednesday: Stephen Peer had been a teenager in 1859 when Jean-François Gravelot, "The Great Blondin," had performed his 1st tightrope walk above the [Niagara River](#). In 1873 Stephen had been assisting Henry Bellini to string his rope across the gorge, when without authorization he had used Bellini's equipment to stage his own stunt — with meanwhile Bellini attempting to cut the tightrope. For this Bellini had been run out of town. On this day Peer used his own five-eighth-inch wire cable stretched between the present location of the Whirlpool Bridge and the Penn Central Bridge and, starting on the Canadian side, completed a double crossing.

June 25, Saturday: The body of Stephen Peer was found on the bank of the [Niagara River](#) directly beneath his wire cable. It would appear that Peer had attempted an unscheduled night crossing while inebriated.

The Grand Prix de Rome was won by Gustave Charpentier on his 27th birthday.

Jovan Ristic replaced Milutin Garasanin as prime minister of Serbia.

A conference convened in Washington among representatives of Great Britain, [Germany](#), and the United States, to try to work out differences in Samoa. This meeting of the minds would fail to produce any significant benefits.

August 14, Sunday: Alphonse King made it across the [Niagara River](#) below the Horseshoe Falls peddling madly on a sort of water bicycle. The device was a wheel with paddles erected between pontoons 8 inches in diameter and 10 feet in length.

August 28, Sunday: Charles A. Percy attempted to transit the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) in a 17-foot boat. He failed to make it all the way down to Lewiston, New York because his boat got stranded. This was, however, the 1st time such a boat trip had been accomplished even in part.

On Percy's 3d attempt his boat sank and he almost didn't make it to shore.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1888



Our national birthday, Wednesday the 4th of July: In Prescott, Arizona, the initial organized rodeo competition took place.

In San Francisco, California, a monument to Francis Scott Key, the first monument to a Washington DC attorney to be placed anywhere in the American western region, was unveiled.

Robert Flack made an attempt to duplicate the feat of Charles Percy in the previous year, of riding a boat down through the rapids and whirlpool of the [Niagara River](#), after fastening himself securely with several harnesses into a craft having a self-described “secret” buoyant filling. When boat flipped Flack was of course unable to extricate himself from his harnesses, and drowned. The boat would be opened and Flack’s “secret” would turn out to be merely what was known at the time as excelsior — which is to say, wood shavings.

Kingston, New Hampshire and Amesbury, Massachusetts unveiled a statue of [Josiah Bartlett](#), proclaimed as “1st signer” of the [Declaration of Independence](#) (1st signer among the ordinary delegates, of course, after John Hancock, a Boston banker who had presided).⁵⁸

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY

September 15, Saturday, 3:20PM: Walter Campbell, a local teenager, went down the [Niagara River](#) in a clinker-built boat with several friends and his dog Jumbo. Campbell was wearing bathing trunks and a cork life preserver. He dropped off his friends at the old *Maid of the Mist* landing, which was just south of the Michigan Central Railway Cantilever Bridge, and then, standing and using an oar as a rudder, he attempted to guide his boat to the middle of the river. The boat was caught by the current and as it was carried into the Whirlpool Rapids, Jumbo was pitched into the water and Campbell lost his oar. He crouched and held the sides of the boat as it pitched wildly and filled with water and broke into pieces. At the Whirlpool, Campbell was able to swim to the Canadian shore, where he was rescued 20 minutes after his journey began. Jumbo had drowned. Due to the publicity, Campbell would be able to earn \$1,000 per week for a month of appearances at the old Wonderland in Buffalo, New York.

September 16, Sunday: Charles A. Percy again attempted to transit the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) in a boat, and this time made it all the way down through the Great Gorge (Devils Hole) Rapids. As Percy was passing through the area known as the glen he got tossed out of his boat, but as he was wearing a life preserver he was able to float downriver the remaining distance to Lewiston, New York.

58. This Josiah Bartlett would be an ancestor of the President Josiah Bartlett of “The West Wing” on TV — who would be everything we need an American president to be, except real.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1889

August 25, Sunday: In his 7-foot barrel, Carlisle D. Graham accomplished his 4th trip through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). He would announce that next he was planning to ride his barrel over the [Niagara Falls](#), but in fact he would never attempt such a feat.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1890

Clifford Calverly, a steeplejack, pushing a wheelbarrow across the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) on a tightrope. Charles Cromwell, a rope walker with the Yankee Robinson Circus, made another successful tightrope walk across that gorge, but again without attracting much media or public attention. He used a 16-foot balancing beam weighing 42 pounds.

May 3, Saturday: I.H. Ashley of Chicago lowered himself on a strand of aluminium tape from the Upper Suspension Bridge over the [Niagara River](#) into a small boat waiting below, controlling his rate of descent with a clutch.

September 6, Saturday: Samuel J. Dixon, a photographer from Toronto, Canada, crossed above the wildest part of the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) on a seven-eighths-inch tightrope. He had fashioned a balancing pole out of three pieces of gas pipe totaling sixteen feet. On the return trip he did some stunts like lying down on the rope with the pole on his chest, then standing on one foot, and then hanging from the rope by one hand.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1891

May 12, Tuesday: [Horatio Wood](#) died.

Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky visited [Niagara Falls](#) (he visited both the US and Canadian sides, and in addition made the tour under the falls; let's hope it was loud enough for him).

Captain Edmond Verney, Conservative member of the House of Commons for North Bucks who had been conspicuous in the ongoing purity crusade of the National Vigilance Association, had pled guilty in [London](#) to “conspiring to procure for corrupt and immoral purposes a girl of nineteen.” On this day Tory leader W.H. Smith performed the “disagreeable duty” of expelling him from that august body. While there was no discussion of the “painful details” attendant on this married man’s private conduct, there was not a single dissenting vote.⁵⁹

59. This former MP would be spending a year in prison. A procuress named Madame Rouillier had lured a series of young women from a London registry for governesses to clandestine meetings with him in Paris. Nellie Blaskett from Belgravia had been his undoing, after her prospective employer “Mr. Wilson” took her to the Eiffel Tower holding her by “her pretty little hand.”



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1893

Publication, by Underhill & Nichols, of THE NIAGARA BOOK: A COMPLETE SOUVENIR OF [NIAGARA FALLS](#), a book of stories and essays by William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, and others with sketches by Harry Fenn.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1894

May 23, Wednesday: The Niagara Power and Development Company, under [William T. Love](#), began construction at La Salle of a power-generating [canal](#) linking the upper Niagara River with the lower. This would enable the company to turn down the [Niagara Falls](#)'s famous sublimity (except of course for prime paying-tourist viewing hours).





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1895

The Boatman's Association formed recently by [Erie Canal](#) workers to protest against unfair distribution practices, went on strike. A Captain Philips and his son were killed by boatmen while trying to take on a load of lumber in Tonawanda.

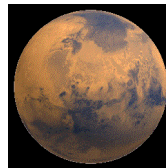
Construction began on the 2d enlargement of the [Erie Canal](#).

[Niagara Falls](#)'s [Hydraulic Canal](#) was widened to 100 feet and deepened to an average of 10 feet.

In the Netherlands, D.J. Korteweg and his student G. deVries were able to derive a non-linear partial differential equation that would mimic the behavior of the solitary wave described by John Scott Russell, the wave form of waves in shallow water. This Korteweg-deVries (KdV) equation would play an important role in the development of a mathematical description of solitons.

HISTORY OF OPTICS

Percival Lowell began to publicize, in POPULAR ASTRONOMY and in [The Atlantic Monthly](#) and in this book MARS, that the canals of [Mars](#) were an intelligent race's response to the progressive desiccation of their home environment, and that they represented irrigation canals to draw the remaining water toward still-fertile oases. The more impressionable of our society were of course fascinated:



ASTRONOMY



"[Mars](#) is essentially in the same orbit ... somewhat the same distance from the Sun, which is very important. We have seen pictures where there are canals, we believe, and water. If there is water, that means there is oxygen. If oxygen, that means we can breathe."

— J. Danforth Quayle





THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1896

The State Lock on the [Soo Canal](#) was replaced by the Poe Lock, named after Colonel Orlando Poe.

The [Erie Canal](#) was enlarged a 2d time.



[William T. Love](#)'s power generating [canal](#) project near the [Niagara Falls](#) ran out of funds while only partially completed.

Summer: James E. Hardy of Toronto, Canada went to [Niagara Falls](#), at 21 the youngest person to perform tightrope stunts above the gorge. That summer he did 16 crossings.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1897

September 16, Thursday: Oliver Hilton of Hamburg, [New York](#), a circus ropewalker, would later alleged that on this day, at the age of ten, he crossed the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) in stocking feet on a rope left behind by James E. Hardy. This was merely an allegation, with no substantiation offered.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1899

The space along both sides of [Niagara Falls](#)'s [Hydraulic Canal](#) had come to be fully in use. This situation had gotten to be as sublime as it was going to get.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1900

July: Peter Nissen challenged the rapids and whirlpool of the [Niagara River](#) using a specially built 20-foot boat with a 6-foot beam and 4-foot draw. He had his boat entirely decked over except for its center cockpit, and there were sealed air compartments in the front, back, and sides of this cockpit. Although his 1st trip down the rapids turned out in the end to be non-catastrophic, he was sent whirling around and around for more than an hour before giving up and allowing himself to be drawn to shore. The next day he was able to put in just below the Whirlpool Rapids and make it the remainder of the way down to Lewiston. Over the winter he would rebuild this craft, making it longer and two feet narrower and providing it with a larger rudder and more ballast, plus installing an 8-horsepower steam engine.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1901

In upstate [New York](#), to meet a rising demand for power, the [Niagara Falls](#) Hydraulic Power & Manufacturing Company began an expansion program, building a 2d powerhouse and enlarging its [Hydraulic Canal](#).



Our national birthday, Thursday the 4th of July: In a parade in Nome, Alaska, survivors of the Spanish-American War marched and a good time was had by all.

Captain Billy Johnson dived from the *Maid of the Mist* into the [Niagara River](#) just below the Horseshoe Falls and swam downriver — and he survived.

Chinese minister Wu Ting-Fang delivered an Independence Day oration at Independence Square in Philadelphia in which he predicted diplomatically that “this Republic will become the greatest power upon the earth.” (Outside of China, he presumably meant.)

In Courtland, Kansas, some folks laid a cornerstone for a monument proposed to mark the spot at which, in 1806, Zebulon M. Pike had raised the American flag over territory that would become part of Kansas.

Some citizens attempted to improve Pike’s Peak in Colorado by detonating a pile of explosives (it’s the sort of summit that, when you’ve finally gotten there, clearly seems to be in need of some improvement).

In Jackson, Mississippi, someone was allowed to read our [Declaration of Independence](#) out loud in public, for the 1st time since 1861.

In Santa Cruz, California the authorities allowed Minnie Cope to read our [Declaration of Independence](#) out loud in public, despite the fact that she was a woman.

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY



July 14, Sunday: Carlisle D. Graham accomplished his 5th and final trip through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). This time he came close to suffocating when his sealed barrel was caught, for 20 minutes, in an eddy.

August 2, Wednesday: Joe Chambers tied a life buoy to himself and swam the Lower (Devil’s Hole) Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) between the Whirlpool and Queenston-Lewiston.

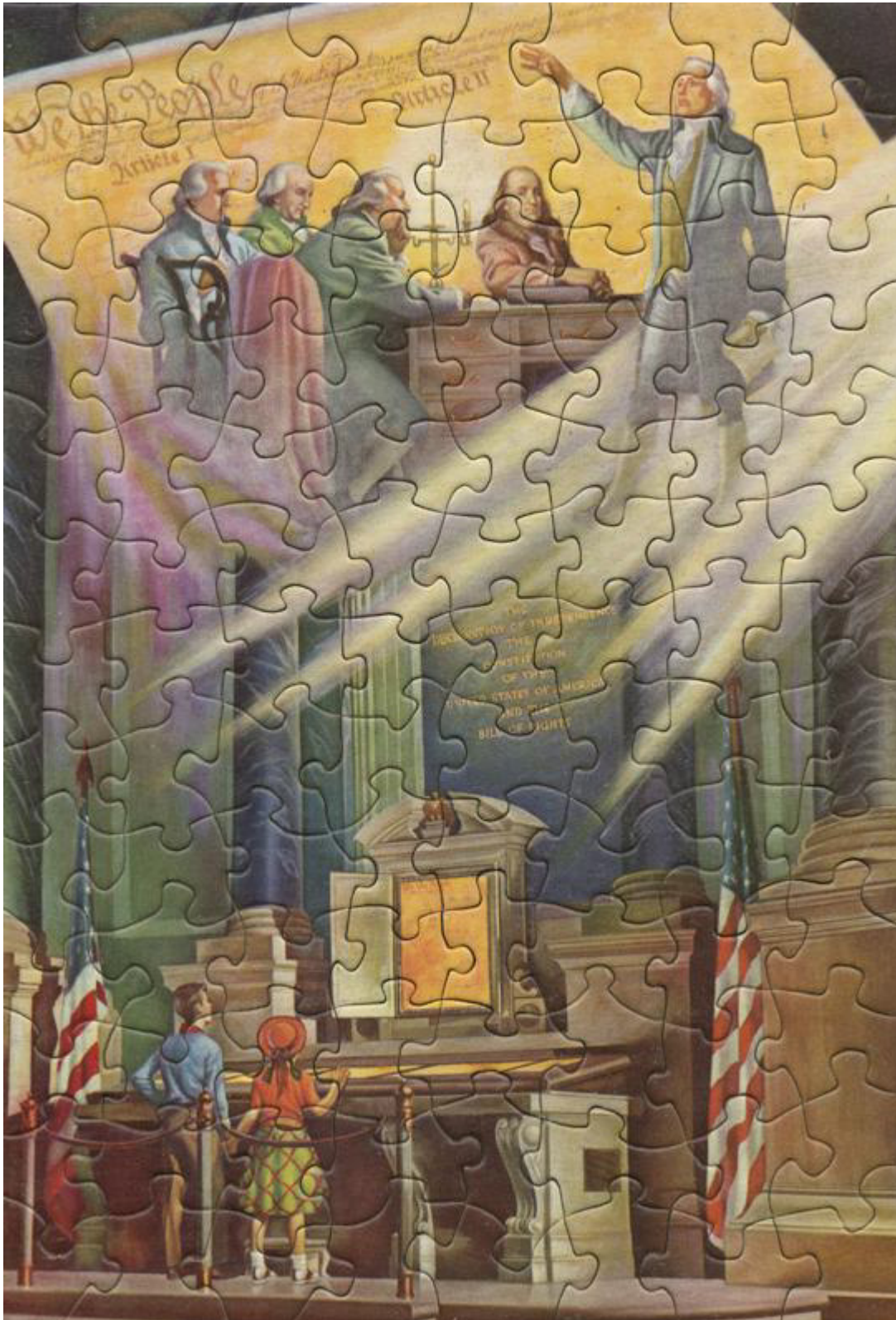
HDT

WHAT?

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ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME





THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

September 6, Friday: Carlisle D. Graham loaned his famous barrel to Martha Wagenfuhrer of Buffalo, [New York](#) so she could become the 1st woman to pass through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) solo. However, the barrel became trapped in the middle of the whirlpool for such a period of time that onlookers called for the Great Gorge Railway illumination car to be brought to the Whirlpool to shine its search light upon the water surface. When finally the barrel was pulled to shore Martha emerged exhausted, seasick — but still in one piece.

President William McKinley was shot during a reception at the Temple of Music in San Francisco, by anarchist Leon Czolgosz. Plaza Hotel waiter James F. Parker grabbed Czolgosz, preventing him from getting off a third shot. Abraham Lincoln's son Robert Todd Lincoln, who had witnessed his father's death and Garfield's assassination, was present as an invited guest. Vice-president Theodore Roosevelt, hearing the news while vacationing in the Adirondacks, set out for Buffalo.

September 7, Saturday: [China](#) was obliged to sign the Boxer Protocol (an apology for the deaths of foreign diplomats during the Boxer Rebellion), erect a memorial to the defunct [German](#) minister, root out anti-foreignism among government officials, and pay an indemnity of 450,000,000 silver taels (approximately \$300,000,000) to [France](#), [Germany](#), [Japan](#), Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. This was more than the [Peking](#) government's annual tax revenue. As security, almost all Chinese money would be placed in foreign hands. The Boxer Rebellion entered the history books.

Carlisle D. Graham schemed with a daring friend, Maude Willard of Canton, [Ohio](#) to perpetrate a stunt in the [Niagara River](#). She was to take Graham's famous barrel through the Whirlpool Rapids and then, they planned, she and Graham would join up and he would swim alongside the barrel for the remainder of the way down the river rapids to Lewiston. However, this time the barrel got caught in an eddy for six hours, and when it was retrieved and opened she was found to have suffocated. She had taken her fox terrier along for the ride, there was only one airhole in the barrel — and her terrier's snout had become wedged in that airhole.

October 12, Saturday: Peter Nissen took his reconstructed boat down through the rapids and whirlpool of the [Niagara River](#), ducking into a crawl space under the cockpit for the worst of it. (In a later incident, Peter and his friend James Rich would attempt depth soundings in the Whirlpool and the boat would get trapped in the vortex and break up and go down, with the two men barely escaping with their lives.)



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

October 24, Thursday: On her 46th birthday, needing to repay a loan on her ranch in [Texas](#), Mrs. Annie Edson Taylor climbed into a barrel and went over the [Niagara Falls](#). She was a widow and schoolteacher weighing in at 160 pounds. Her barrel was constructed of white Kentucky oak staves held together with seven steel hoops. It was 22 inches in diameter at the head, 34 inches in diameter in the middle and 15 inches in diameter at the foot. It was four and a half feet long. For ballast a 100-200 pound anvil was placed at the barrel's bottom. Mrs. Taylor began her trip from the north side of Little Grass Island situated just off of the American side of the [Niagara River](#) upstream of Goat Island. She was dressed in a long black dress and a flowery hat. About 600 feet from shore Mrs. Taylor climbed into her barrel, standing on the anvil. The spaces around her were packed with a small mattress and wadding, and the lid was screwed down. A bicycle pump was used to pressurize the air inside the barrel to 30 pounds per square inch. At 4:05PM the barrel was released and drifted toward the Canadian side before going over the Horseshoe Falls. It wasn't until 4:40PM that rescuers could get close enough to the barrel along the Canadian shore to cut the top away and let her out. Upon emerging, Mrs. Taylor commented "Nobody ought ever do that again."



Following this stunt which had brought only slight cuts and bruises, for the remainder of her life Mrs. Taylor would be able to support herself meagerly by posing for photographs with tourists. Upon her demise she would be buried in [Niagara Falls, New York](#) in the stunters' section of Oakwood Cemetery.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1903

The [New York](#) legislature passed a bond issue to construct a [Barge Canal](#) to replace the old [Erie Canal](#).

Paleontologist Clifton James Sarle named a shale/dolomite mixture “Pittsford Shale,” after the district at which the formation had been uncovered as the [Erie Canal](#) had been being deepened, during 1897/1898.

Mark Twain commented about the spectacular waters of [Niagara](#), New York:

NIAGARA FALLS is a most enjoyable place of resort. The hotels are excellent, and the prices not at all exorbitant. The opportunities for fishing are not surpassed in the country; in fact, they are not even equaled elsewhere. Because, in other localities, certain places in the streams are much better than others; but at Niagara one place is just as good as another, for the reason that the fish do not bite anywhere, and so there is no use in your walking five miles to fish, when you can depend on being just as unsuccessful nearer home. The advantages of this state of things have never heretofore been properly placed before the public.

— SKETCHES NEW AND OLD



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1905

July 17, Monday: Carlisle D. Graham and William J. Glover, Jr. of [Baltimore](#) had a swimming race in the rapids of the [Niagara River](#) below the Whirlpool. Each donned a life preserver and a neck brace. Surprise! –Glover, a 32-year-old, got to the finish line at Lewiston before Graham, a 45-years-old.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1906

June: Construction was begun on the Schoelkopf Bridge over the [Hydraulic Canal](#) at [Niagara Falls](#).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1908

Work began on the portion of the [Barge Canal](#) between Oneida Lake and Mosquito Point, on the [New York](#)'s Seneca River.

The Schoelkopf Bridge over the [Hydraulic Canal](#) at [Niagara Falls](#) was completed.

State senator George F. Argetsinger of Rochester sponsored a bill to require [New York](#) to turn abandoned [canal](#) rights-of-way over to its municipalities (the bill would fail).

July 1, Wednesday: [Alfred Russel Wallace](#) received the Darwin-Wallace Medal of the Linnaean Society of London.

The US entry in the international automobile race sank into a Siberian swamp, necessitating major repairs.

Bobby Leach, an English circus stuntman, had announced that he was going to make himself the 1st person to complete a "triple challenge," which he described as: 1.) making a barrel trip through the rapids of the [Niagara River](#) to the whirlpool, 2.) going over the [Niagara Falls](#) in a barrel, and 3.) parachuting from the Upper Suspension Bridge into the [Niagara River](#) upstream of the rapids. On this day he leaped from the Upper Steel Arch Bridge using a parachute, the 4th person to venture this.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1910

Summer: Bobby Leach, an English circus stuntman, had announced that he was going to make himself the 1st person to complete a “triple challenge,” which he described as: 1.) making a barrel trip through the rapids of the [Niagara River](#) to the whirlpool, 2.) going over the [Niagara Falls](#) in a barrel, and 3.) parachuting from the Upper Suspension Bridge into the [Niagara River](#) upstream of the rapids. In 1908 he had leaped from the Upper Steel Arch Bridge using a parachute. At this point he was testing the barrel he planned to use for his adventure over the [Niagara Falls](#). He attempted to ride in this barrel through the Great Gorge Rapids to the Whirlpool. The anchor that he had attached to his barrel, however, was cut loose by rocks, and so Leach bounced from rock to rock down through the rapids and became stuck in an eddy of the Whirlpool. There William “Red” Hill Sr. swam out to Leach’s barrel and dragged it ashore. Inside the barrel Leach turned out to be unconscious, so William “Red” Hill Sr. himself clambered in and rode the barrel down through the lower rapids to Queenston.⁶⁰



September 18, Sunday: The Niagara International Carnival Committee had attempted to promote a boat race through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). Only a single entrant showed up, Captain Klaus Larsen. As the sole racer he nevertheless took his craft on the 1st heat of the planned race, down through the rapids to the Whirlpool. Then he began the 2d heat, through the Lower (Devil’s Hole) Rapids and on to Queenston. The boat became swamped and within sight of Queenston he was propelled into the water. Larsen was able to reach shore and completed his single-contestant race to Queenston, but as a passenger on the Great Gorge Railway.

60. During that summer Leach made three other trips through the Whirlpool Rapids and failed twice in attempts to swim across the river below the American Falls.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1911

June: The joint United States/Canadian International Carnival at Buffalo and Fort Erie was offering \$1,000 to anyone who could fly in. Look, up in the sky, it's a bird, no, it's not a bird! On this day Lincoln Beachy flew above the [Niagara Falls](#) in a 2-winged Curtiss biplane with an open cockpit — the 1st aircraft to pass above the falls.

June 25, Sunday: At approximately 5:30PM Oscar Williams (AKA Oscar Wilson “The Great Houdini”) grabbed a leather thong with his teeth and shoved off from the American shore near the Upper Suspension Bridge on a “Slide for Life” across the gorge of the [Niagara River](#). The cable hadn't been sufficiently tightened and Williams lost his momentum. He would hang in midriver for half an hour until a rope could be run out so he could be lowered ignominiously to the deck of the *Maid of the Mist*.

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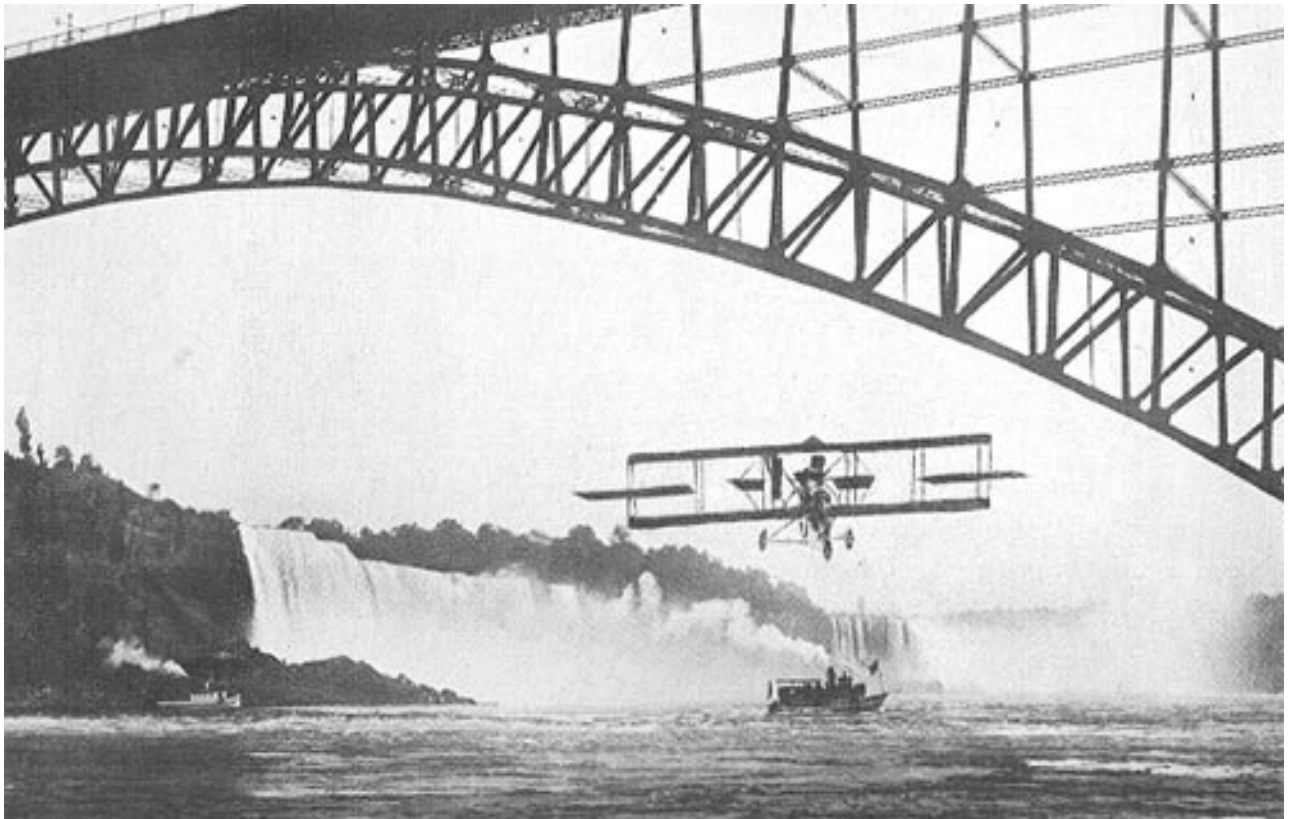
THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

June 28, Wednesday: There has been, so far, only one report of a fatality due to the fall of stones from the sky. It happened on this day when a shower of stones fell on the Nile delta near Alexandria, [Egypt](#), at Nakhla — a stone killed a dog.

[ASTRONOMY](#)

At 5:40PM a 2-wing Curtis biplane circled the [Niagara Falls](#) several times with Lincoln Beachy in its open cockpit. He dove into the rising plume of mist above the falls and slipped through the arch of the Falls View Honeymoon Bridge.



Following the river surface at 50 mph within 20 feet of the water the length of the gorge, he'd made his point and didn't attempt to underfly the two railroad bridges.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

July 25, Tuesday: Bobby Leach, who once upon a time had announced that he was going to make himself the 1st person to complete the “triple challenge” of making a barrel trip through the rapids of the [Niagara River](#) to the whirlpool, going over the [Niagara Falls](#) in a barrel, and parachuting from the Upper Suspension Bridge into the [Niagara River](#) upstream of the rapids, at 3:13PM on this afternoon plunged in an 8-foot steel drum over the brink of the Horseshoe Falls. His drum got stuck in eddies among the rocks at the base of the falls and it was 22 minutes before Fred Bender, an Ontario Power Company employee, was able to get a rope to it and haul it to the Canadian shore. Leach’s kneecaps and jaw had been broken and he would be in hospital for 23 weeks before being able to go on tour with his barrel throughout North America and Europe.



Leach would become a local restaurateur, and eventually would make parachute jumps from an airplane. Ultimately, however, he would slip on an orange peel on the sidewalk, a fractured leg would become infected, and he would not survive amputation.

October 24, Tuesday: Peter Langaard was navigating the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) when a piece of driftwood snapped his propeller. Without power, the craft remained in the whirl for 4 hours and 20 minutes until a rescue was effected.

October 28, Saturday: Captain Klaus Larsen took his boat through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#).

October 29, Sunday: Captain Klaus Larsen again took his boat through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#).

The *Hochschule für Frauen* opened with considerable fanfare in Leipzig. This was the initial college for women in [Germany](#). The primary endowment had come from Henri Hinrichsen, of C.F. Peters music publishers.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1912

February 4, Sunday, near noon: The “Ice Bridge Disaster.” Shifting winds had sent thousands of tons of ice from Lake Erie over the [Niagara Falls](#) into the gorge below, creating an ice jam perhaps as thick as 100 feet. In earlier years both the US government and the Canadian government had been tolerating persons who attempted to pass over this natural ice dam or build shacks atop it. However, at about noon on this day, the packed ice began to shudder and moan. William “Red” Hill, Sr., a local taxi driver and risk-taking celebrity, was sitting in one of the shacks with several of his friends. They sensed that something untoward was happening and made a dash for the Canadian shore. A short distance away, a group of tourists was still just standing around. Hill ran back out onto the ice and managed to persuade all but a few of them to get their dumb asses pronto onto terra firma. Mr. & Mrs. Ellwood Stanton of Toronto, newlyweds, and a teenage would-be rescuer, Burrell Peacock of Cleveland, were however carried away into the Great Gorge Rapids, where of course they immediately perished.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1916

August: The right-of-way of the [Hydraulic Canal](#) at [Niagara Falls](#) was opened to the public, as a park.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1918

August 8, Thursday: An Anglo-French counterattack at Amiens, supported by heavy artillery and 400 tanks, achieved major successes. Ludendorff would describe this as having been the German Army's "Black Day."

A scow engaged in dredging had broken loose from its moorings above the upper rapids of the [Niagara River](#) and had drifted in the general direction of the Horseshoe Falls with two dredgers, Gustave Luffberg and Frank Harris, aboard. The workers managed to open the two holes in the bottom of the scow, in such a way as to cause it to drop its load and hang itself up atop some reef rocks a few hundred feet above the curl of the waters. This was, however, a location which a local rescue boat could not safely reach, so the United States Coast Guard was called from Youngstown, [New York](#). Mounting a rescue gun on the roof of the Toronto powerhouse, they managed to shoot a breeches buoy line out to the scow. The breeches buoy, however, then got stuck midway. With night approaching, William "Red" Hill, Sr., a local taxidriver and daredevil, swung himself hand over hand out the line with his feet tugged at by the rapids, and untangled the device, and then the two dredgers were brought safely to the shore. (Hill would spend his waning years exhibiting the barrel in which he had gone over the falls and selling pictures of himself at his souvenir store. Besides his career as a daredevil, he has been credited with having saved the lives of 28 persons who were at risk of drowning and with having recovered 177 corpses, of accident victims and/or suicides.)

The wreckage of this scow can still be seen in the river:





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1920

July 1, Thursday: Bobby Leach, who had become a restaurateur in the city of [Niagara Falls](#), made a parachute jump from an airplane, coming to earth in a Canadian cornfield near the gorge of the [Niagara River](#).



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

July 11, Sunday: The Red Army captured Minsk as Soviet rule was restored in Byelorussia.

A plebiscite in East and West Prussia voted 97% for [Germany](#).

8:55AM: Rejecting the cautions of fellow daredevils Bobby Leach and William “Red” Hill, Sr., the Englishman Charles Stephens, the “Demon Barber of Bristol,” put himself over the Horseshoe Falls of the [Niagara Falls](#) in a barrel made out of Russian oak held together by metal rings. The plunge was witnessed by Stevens’s 10-year-old daughter Viola.

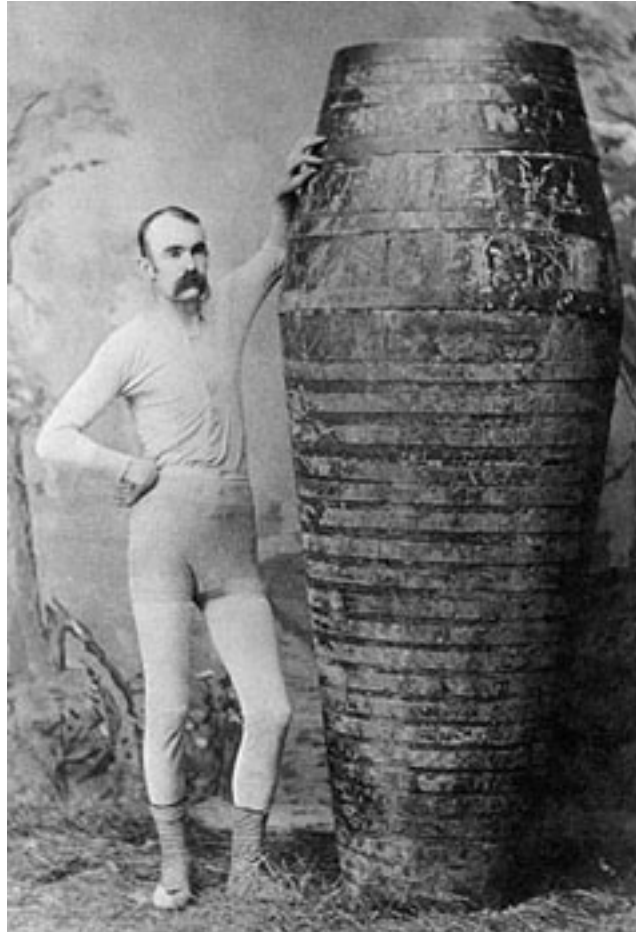


As ballast Stephens had strapped an anvil to his feet. Upon impact with the water at the base of the falls the anvil of course kept on going, yanking Stephens right through the bottom of the barrel. When the wreck of the barrel was recovered downstream, only one of Stephens’s arms was still inside. The arm –his right one with its tattoo to his wife, mother for 11 children, “Forget Me Not Annie”– would be deposited in an unmarked grave at the local Drummond Hill Cemetery. (It would be eight years before another daredevil would challenge the falls. That person would be Joseph Albert Jean Lussier, at the time a worker in a grocery store in Springfield, Massachusetts, who would be inspired by this ludicrous fatality to more carefully work out in detail the engineering problem of survival.)



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME



In 1991, Viola would be 81 years of age and would revisit the Horseshoe Falls to relive her experience at age 10 of her father's death-defying stunt.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1925

October 10, Saturday: Bobby Leach, become a restaurateur in the city of Niagara Falls (a reputation as a former daredevil doesn't hurt business in this resort town), made another parachute jump from an airplane, again coming to earth in a Canadian cornfield near the gorge of the [Niagara River](#).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1927

September 5: Vincent Taylor, an Australian daredevil, made a parachute leap from the Upper Steel Arch Bridge into the gorge of the [Niagara River](#).



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1928



Our national birthday, Wednesday the 4th of July: In New-York, the last celebration of the Tammany Society in its Fourteenth Street Hall (the historic Wigwam built in 1867 had been sold) was held and Governor Alfred E. Smith addressed the members of that society.

Edith Nourse Rogers, Republican Representative from the Fifth Massachusetts District, was the orator for a Boston ceremony held in Faneuil Hall.

In Hinsdale, [Illinois](#) the Memorial Building was dedicated to those who had served in this nation's wars.

Joseph Albert Jean "Smiling Jean" Lussier, a French-Canadian Québécois, inserted himself into a rubber ball and at 3:35PM went over the [Niagara Falls](#) according to the engineering principle of resiliency (rather than, as always before, according to the more conventional engineering principle of rigidity as exemplified in the wooden barrel or steel drum). Here's the way this came about: Lussier had been a worker in a grocery store in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1920 when Charles Stephens had gotten himself ripped to pieces and drowned in the Horseshoe Falls. Lussier had saved up \$1,500, and ordered from an Akron, Ohio rubber company a

rubber ball device of his own design 6 feet in diameter with inner and outer steel bands, with 150 pounds of hard rubber ballast at its bottom. This structure was intended to contain 32 innertubes for shock protection around the space left available in the middle for his 154-pound body. Lussier would take along enough bottled oxygen to keep himself alive for 40 hours in case his ball became trapped in eddies. Here's what happened: as the ball was carried in the river currents, before it had even gotten to the lip of the falls, the ballast bottom ripped out. The impact of the fall burst three of the inner tubes and twisted the metal of the frame Lussier had



bruises, but was intact. Here's what would happen afterward: to recoup his costs and make some money, Lussier would begin selling the tourists pieces of rubber off of his apparatus. When the apparatus was completely gone Lussier would begin to cheat a little bit, by purchasing pieces of rubber from a nearby tire store and passing them off as from his apparatus.⁶¹

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY



61. At the age of 61 years, in 1952, Lussier would begin to scheme to make himself the only person ever to conquer not only the Horseshoe Falls but also the American Falls. He would sketch a new ball device twice as big as the one he had brought to the [Niagara Falls](#) in New York in 1928. This 12-foot ball was to be built in 3 layers, cork surrounded by aluminium surrounded by rubber, and was to have in addition a number of internal braces. There was to be an outer ball and a separate inner one, that would be ballasted and mounted on roller bearings so as to remain upright at all times. This time he would plan not only for an oxygen supply but also for a radio link with the outside world. (Nothing would ever come of this scheme for a renewed fame, which is just as well, because no one has ever gone over the American Falls and survived.)



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1930

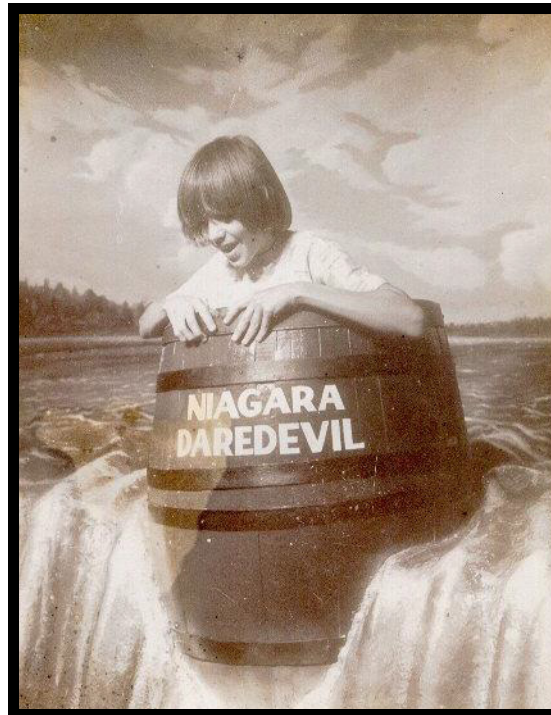
May 30, 1:15PM Friday: Approximately 25,000 people waited in anticipation as William “Red” Hill, Sr., a taxi driver of the city of [Niagara Falls](#), attempted to travel the length of the lower river from the dock of the *Maid of the Mist* below the Horseshoe Falls all the way to Queenston/Lewiston in a steel barrel painted bright red. The inscription “William Red Hill, Master Hero of Niagara” was clearly visible on the side of the barrel. It must not have been a very exciting show at first, for the barrel did fully 100 minutes of bobbing about in the eddies above the rapids before being seized by the current. Then, yanked suddenly into the rapids, it took but 90 seconds of excitement to make its way to the whirlpool. Then the barrel got trapped in that vortex, spinning around and around maddeningly for fully 210 minutes, before some people on the banks managed to help it get it angled downstream (Hill arrived at Queenston/Lewiston at 6:15PM with only a few bruises to show for his trouble).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

July 5, Saturday: The death of Charles Stephens in 1920 in attempting to conquer the Horseshoe Falls of the [Niagara River](#) in a rigid device, and the success of Jean Lussier in 1928 in a flexible device, had motivated George L. Strathakis, a chef and unpublished metaphysical writer of Buffalo, [New York](#), to repeatedly row out into the river above the falls, venturing each time closer to the brink. He had fashioned himself a rigid wood and steel barrel similar to that of Stephens, but much stronger and more massive, weighing in at a short ton. The design was a good one.⁶²



He took with him over the falls enough oxygen to survive for fully eight hours submerged, and his pet turtle Sonny (which was believed to be 150 years old). Unfortunately, his barrel got trapped behind the curtain of falling waters and was held there for 22 hours before an eddy in the current released it to travel downstream, so when the barrel was finally opened, Strathakis was very dead (a downer, that, but on the up side, Sonny, being possessed of a far lower rate of metabolism, was still very much alive).

62. On Memorial Day, May 30th, in the following year, William "Red" Hill, Sr. would ride in Strathakis's barrel through the [Niagara River](#) rapids and whirlpool.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1931

May 30, Memorial Day: William “Red” Hill, Sr., a taxi driver of the city of [Niagara Falls](#) his 3d trip through the rapids of the [Niagara River](#), this time inside the barrel in which George Strathakis had suffocated after going over the Horseshoe Falls on July 5, 1930. The trip was not uneventful: the barrel sprang a leak, then again it got caught in the whirlpool and needed help to move on down the river. (Hill would spend his waning years exhibiting the falls barrel and selling pictures of himself at his souvenir store. Besides his career as a daredevil, he has been credited with having saved the lives of 28 persons who were at risk of drowning and with having recovered 177 corpses, of accident victims and/or suicides.)



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1933

July 18, Tuesday: William Kondrat, a teenager of Chatham, New Jersey who was swimming across the [Niagara River](#) near the *Maid of the Mist* dock, was drawn downriver into the Whirlpool Rapids. He survived, although he was in the water nearly two and a half hours before being rescued.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1945

July 8, Sunday 2:00PM: The München Philharmonic Orchestra gave its first concert since the end of the European war.

William “Red” Hill, Jr. needed badly to prove that his shoes were as big as the shoes of his daredevil father, William “Red” Hill, Sr. He helped Dad on most of his 28 credited rescues. He helped Dad recover 117 of the 177 corpses, and had on his own recovered an additional 28 corpses. He had twice completed the swim from the base of the American Falls to the Canadian shore, although he was never able to match Dad’s time of 11 minutes. In order to keep up, Junior needed also to conquer the Great Gorge Rapids and the Whirlpool in a barrel. It was on this day that he made his 1st trip. A crowd of 200,000 had lined the banks of the [Niagara River](#), but as everyone knew, the local police were set to thwart the attempt if they could figure out the exact time and starting point. In order to create a diversion he announced at 2:00PM that his 6-foot, 720-pound all-steel barrel would be put in the water at the *Maid of the Mist* dock (the bright red barrel had already secretly been lowered into the gorge during predawn hours, just upstream of the rapids). Shortly after 2:00PM Junior clambered inside and the barrel was shoved out into the 42-mph current. Just at the start of the churning water, a cross wave tossed the barrel 20 feet into the air and caused it to somersault twice. As the barrel hit the Whirlpool it became trapped in the vortex, and eventually it had to be towed to shore. Junior was dizzy but persisted on his voyage to Queenston. After he completed the two-and-a-half-hour trip, he escorted his mother to Fairview Cemetery where they laid a wreath on the grave of their father and husband (later that evening the mother had a heart attack).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1946

September 20, Friday: A section of the brink collapsed at the [Niagara Falls](#), transforming the American Falls into a horseshoe.

[President Harry S Truman](#) requested the resignation of Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace, who on September 12th had publicly criticizing Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and US policy in regard to Russia. He would replace Wallace with W. Averell Harriman.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1948

September 6, Monday: William “Red” Hill, Jr. made his 2d trip through the rapids of the [Niagara River](#), this time inside a barrel weighing about 1,000 pounds. His trip started the same way, with the barrel being tossed approximately 40 feet in the air by a wave at the start of the descent. This time it took 5 minutes for the barrel to make its way through the rapids and into the Whirlpool, and there it spun 'round and 'round for more than an hour, occasionally disappearing totally into the vortex and then bobbing back up. Again a brother pulled the barrel to shore. Junior had received some bad bruises, but there were no broken bones. He bailed water out of his barrel for an hour and then clambered back in to complete the descent to Queenston. He arrived at the Queenston dock after four and a half hours on the river.

From this day to October 30th, [President Harry S Truman](#) would be making several extensive campaign trips, traveling through all sections of the country except the South. Calling it a “whistle stop” campaign, he would make 275 speeches, centering his attack upon the record of the “do nothing 80th Congress,” traveling in all about 22,000 miles.

October: In [Niagara Falls, New York](#), a month after his 2d barrel ride, three creditors persuaded a bailiff to seize all the goods and chattels of William “Red” Hill, Jr. The three falls barrels owned by the Hill family sold at forced public auction for a total of \$2,900.

When Aircraft Carriers HMS *Theseus* and *Vengeance* together with Destroyers HMS *Corunna* and *Jutland* participated in a military exercise involving a mock attack upon [St. Helena](#) with 30 naval aircraft (for purposes of the simulation, everyone understood, they were pretending that the island was some other island, someplace worth attacking), this must have been just awesome, at least for the islanders.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1949

July 30, Saturday: When Major Lloyd Hill, a daredevil son of a daredevil, challenged the rapids of the [Niagara River](#) below the falls in a 625-pound torpedo-shaped steel barrel, the device was so pounded in the rapids that Major Hill needed to be hauled out of the Whirlpool region in a basket to the rim of the gorge by the City of Niagara Falls Fire Department, and hospitalized. Although the daredevil would the next day go back down into the gorge and complete his journey to Queenston, the stunt would be a failure in terms of media coverage, and financially as well.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1950

Demolition of the Aluminum Company of America plant on the [Niagara River](#)'s [Hydraulic Canal](#) was begun.

The [Champlain Canal](#) terminal building at Whitehall, [New York](#) became the Skenesborough Museum.

WWII was so over! Judo returned to [Japanese](#) schools, but only as an elective, and with the prewar indoctrination on sacrifice for the Emperor replaced by the idea of healthy competition — to demonstrate that prewar judo and postwar judo were two entirely different animals, until 1989 the Ministry of Education would mandate that such classes be offered not as *budo* “martial art” but as *kakugi* “combative technique.”

WORLD WAR II

Oh, well, OK then.

August 6, Sunday: Major Lloyd Hill attempted the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) in a barrel and circled the Whirlpool only twice before bobbing into calm waters near shore. The barrel needed to be towed to the entrance of the Lower Great Gorge before it would continue its journey to Queenston. Hill's journey required only two hours and 45 minutes, which by a considerable margin beat his brother William “Red” Hill, Jr.'s previous record of five hours.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1951

August 5, Sunday, 1:30PM: The dream of a fitting memorial to daredevil father William “Red” Hill, Sr. had weighed so heavily on his namesake William “Red” Hill, Jr. that he had schemed a stunt ride over the Horseshoe Falls of the [Niagara Falls](#). At the age of 38 he made his rendezvous with his destiny. Due to lack of funds and lack of support, he had been able to construct only a cheapo protection device, which he was terming “The Thing.” It consisted of 13 heavy-duty truck innertubes lashed together with three-inch canvass straps and encased in heavy-gauge commercial fishnet. This contraption he painted silver, painting the name “The Thing” here and there upon it. The thing was launched at 1:30PM at Ushers Creek on the Canadian shoreline some three miles upstream from the Horseshoe Falls. At 3:30PM, before a large crowd of onlookers, he rode the upper rapids to the lip of the Horseshoe falls and the silver ball vanished. The crowd waited in silence for “The Thing” to reappear. After a couple of minutes pieces of rubber began to come to the surface. His mother began to call out for him. His wife and 10-year-old daughter stayed with his mother while his brothers Major Lloyd Hill, Norman Hill, and Wesley Hill searched unsuccessfully for a body or at least body parts.



August 6, Monday morning: The badly battered body of William “Red” Hill, Jr. was found floating near the dock of the *Maid of the Mist*. The lower portion was mangled and there was a large laceration in the forehead. The corpse would be interred on the following Thursday at Fairview Cemetery in [Niagara Falls](#), Ontario. Public distress at these events enabled the premier of Ontario, Leslie Frost, to summon the courage to give a special order to the directors of the Niagara Parks Commission, that in the future they were actively to interfere with, and to take under arrest, any person who was suspected to be attempting to commit any act of stunting upon the properties of the Niagara Parks.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1952

Old men love to reminisce about the exploits of their youth. They're called, generically, "war stories." At the age of 61 years Joseph Albert Jean Lussier, who had conquered the Horseshoe Falls when he was 37, began to scheme to make himself the only person ever to conquer not only the Horseshoe Falls but also the American Falls, disregarding the fact that there had never ever been a survivor at the American section of the falls, with its piles of rock beneath rather than a surge basin. He sketched a new ball device twice as big as the one he had brought to the [Niagara Falls](#) in [New York](#) in 1928. This 12-foot ball was to be built in 3 layers, cork surrounded by aluminium surrounded by rubber, and was to have in addition a number of internal braces. There was to be an outer ball and a separate inner one, that would be ballasted and mounted on roller bearings so as to remain upright at all times. This time he planned not only for an oxygen supply but also for a radio link with the outside world. (He had gotten far and away too old and brittle to make the attempt. Nothing would ever come of this scheme for a renewed fame.)





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1954

July 31, Tuesday: Major Lloyd Hill made his 3d successful trip through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) in a barrel and came ashore at the Colts Point terminus of the Spanish Aero Car. The Ontario Provincial Police were waiting there, and removed him from the scene. He was never charged, but the police had succeeded in intercepting his plan to continue to Queenston.

August 18, Saturday: Three teenagers, Ted Mercier, Joseph Hawryluk, and Graham Scott, swam across the [Niagara River](#) from the Canadian shore near Seneca Street to the American shore approximately 400 yards downstream. The police did not file charges.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1956

July 30, Monday: Major Lloyd Hill again rode through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) in his barrel. He was stranded in the Whirlpool for three hours before floating close enough to shore to jump out of the leaking barrel and swim to shore dragging it behind him. (In a subsequent parachute accident, this daredevil would severely injure a leg and it would need to be amputated.)

British Prime Minister Anthony Eden informed the House of Commons that arms shipment to [Egypt](#) had ceased.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1957

October 1, Tuesday: [Kurt Vonnegut, Sr.](#) died.

Claus R. Kirkoff, a swimming instructor who had been deported from the United States of America, unaware that the Spanish Aero Car above the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) crosses from one Canadian terminus to another, purchased a ticket in order to get across the border from Ontario into New York. Having failed in that attempt, he leaped into the water and swam across the Lower or Devil's Hole rapids.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1960

July 9, Saturday: General Secretary Khrushchev threatened military action if the United States were to attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro.

Belgian airplanes began refugee flights from Léopoldville.

After five months of [civil disobedience](#), lunch counters at 7 downtown stores in Charlotte, [North Carolina](#) were racially desegregated.

At noon Roger Woodward, a 7-year-old, became the 1st person to survive going over the [Niagara Falls](#) without a barrel. He and his 17-year-old sister Deanne Woodward, local residents, had set out that morning on a harmless ride in a 14-foot aluminum motorboat on the upper [Niagara River](#) with an adult family friend, James Honeycutt of Raleigh, [North Carolina](#), who was a contractor at the Niagara Parks Commission hydro project. Honeycutt was living in a house trailer at the Lynch Trailer camp along the American shoreline. They began their excursion about five miles upstream of the falls. At noon when they arrived about a mile upstream of the Horseshoe Falls, they were turning the boat around when the propeller pin of its outboard sheared. Wasting no time to don a life-preserver, Honeycutt began rowing toward shore. He had just gotten Deanne to don her life-preserver when waves flipped the boat. The teenager was carried into the shallow rapids near Goat Island. Within a few feet of the curl at Terrapin Point, her hand was grabbed by an onlooker, John Hayes, leaning far out over the protective railing, and then another onlooker, John Quattrochi, grabbed a thumb, but meanwhile her little brother and James Honeycutt were going over the lip. James, without a life-preserver, was battered and drowned. At 12:55PM, however, the crew of the *Maid of the Mist II* spotted the 7-year-old boy bobbing in his life-preserver in the water at the base of the falls. Captain Clifford Keech was at the wheel and it required three approaches –eight minutes– before they could get a flotation ring and rope to Roger. Taken to the Greater Niagara General Hospital, he was found to have sustained only minor cuts and bruises.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1961

July 15, Saturday: Dr. William Uphaus spoke at the Annual Meeting of the Thoreau Society at the 1st Parish Church of Concord. His speech, “Thoreau to Me,” would be the basis for a mailing by UU’s Church of the Larger Fellowship.

Nathan T. Boya, 30 years of age, a person of color, had fabricated a “Plunge-O-Sphere” six feet in diameter. This was a steel frame wrapped in a 6-ply sheet of rubber, wrapped in sheet metal, wrapped in rubber. Several news reports averred that he was really William A. Fitzgerald, a maintenance man at IBM Headquarters in New York, [New York](#). The only information Boya would provide about himself was that he was self-employed. Inside were the words “Plunge-O-Sphere, Step from your PIT OF DARKNESS, into the light — Dell.”⁶³ Boya declined to provide an explanation, asserting that his intent was personal, denying that he was seeking the usual fame and fortune. He denied that he was a daredevil, and stated that this was just something he had to do. The address in the Bronx which he provided to the press turned out to be a dead end. A week earlier Boya had sought the advice of the Jean Lussier who had gone over the falls in 1928. The sphere therefore carried bottled oxygen, and a carbon dioxide scrubbing device, sufficient for 30 hours of submersion. The total weight, with Boya inside, was 1,200 pounds. On this day Boya launched his craft from an undisclosed location upstream of the [Niagara Falls](#) along the American shoreline. He must have been towed

63. Since Dell Computer Corporation would not be formed until 1987, this could not have been a commercial advertisement.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

into Canadian waters, as otherwise he would have gone over the American Falls and been shattered on the rocks beneath, instead of the survivable Horseshoe Falls with its plunge pool. Boya would comment later that he had been in the water a good length of time before reaching the upper rapids. When he entered the rapids, he said, the sphere felt as if it dropped 50 feet, and was upside down for a few moments before righting itself. Boya's trajectory took him over the Horseshoe Falls nearer to the American side. He reported that he hadn't felt himself going over the curl until the sphere bounced off a rock at the bottom, causing a large dent in the outer skin. The 7th person to go over the falls and survive, he opened his hatch to assess his location and was trying to pull it shut when the *Maid of the Mist* launch "Little Sister" came alongside and a policeman took him under arrest, on charges of stunting without permission from the Niagara Parks Commission. He would pay \$100 plus \$13 court costs in the local Provincial Court.



July 28, Friday 5:30AM: Raymond Weaver, a 39-year-old of [Niagara Falls, New York](#), challenged the Great Gorge Rapids and the Whirlpool of the [Niagara Falls](#) in a fourteen-and-a-half-foot steel boat weighing 800 pounds, containing 600 pounds of ballast. Some of the steel was 12-gauge and some 16-gauge. The top of the boat was completely enclosed. Weaver was strapped inside the boat and was wearing a safety helmet. The boat was powered by a three-and-a-half-horsepower outboard motor. Weaver began his journey near the *Maid of the Mist* dock and successfully navigated the Great Gorge Rapids. As he entered the Whirlpool, the motor became waterlogged and died. The boat was trapped in the vortex for four hours before there was a change in the currents and it was released. Weaver completed his journey to the Queenston dock, arriving seven hours after his departure.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1962

July 15, Sunday: Nathan T. Boya, who a year earlier on this day had gone over the [Niagara Falls](#) in a “Plunge-O-Sphere” of his own design, made a return visit to view the falls. (He would go on to earn a doctorate in sociology and a post-doctorate in medical behavior, and become a Fellow of Faculty at a medical school in [New York City](#).)



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1964

Summer: Karl Heinz Koch, a swimming instructor from Germany, was caught swimming in the [Niagara River](#) approximately 200 yards below the American Falls. He attempted to explain to the policeman “I was hot, and I didn’t see any sign saying no swimming — so I took a little dip.” (Clearly, Herr Koch had not yet grasped that our nation is a nation of laws, that one cannot do something just because one wants to!)



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1967

February 11, Saturday: The Peoples Liberation Army took over effective control of Peking, as well as all civil aviation in [China](#).

The Soviet Union began requiring visas for all [Chinese](#) visitors to the country, and [China](#) retaliated in kind.

Lukas Foss conducted opera for the first time, in a New York City Opera production of Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro.

The Orchestral Set no. 2 by Charles Ives was performed for the initial time, in Orchestra Hall, Chicago.

This year was the year of [Canada](#)'s centennial celebration. Henri Julien Rechatin proposed to the Niagara Parks Commission that he be permitted to perform a high wire act on a strand less than an inch in diameter above the Whirlpool of the [Niagara River](#) gorge (they would refuse).

Abraham Johannes Muste died suddenly in New York City.⁶⁴

A.J. MUSTE

64. His obituary, "The Christer," would be written by Friend [Milton Sanford Mayer](#).



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1969

July 14, Tuesday: Bruce Curtis and Ronald Hess of La Salle, [New York](#), boys who regularly went swimming at Devil's Hole, rode the Lower or Devil's Hole Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) on a tractor inner tube. They said they did it because they thought it looked like fun.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1972

May 23, Tuesday: The Niagara White Water Raft Company made its 1st successful transit of the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#).

May 25, Thursday: The Niagara White Water Raft Company made a 2d successful transit of the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). The passengers for this trip had been recruited from local media personnel and family members and friends of the Company.

Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas.

READ THE FULL TEXT

August 14, Monday: The rides down the rapids of the [Niagara River](#) being offered by the Niagara White Water Raft Company had to be discontinued following a number of incidents in which passengers had been dumped into the Whirlpool.

August 20, Sunday: The Niagara White Water Raft Company launched a shorter and much safer commercial raft ride taking passengers from Lewiston, [New York](#) upstream to an area of the Lower or Devil's Hole Rapids below the glen of the [Niagara River](#).

September 1, Friday: The Niagara White Water Raft Company ceased and desisted from the commercial offering of rides in the rapids of the [Niagara River](#).



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1974

June 28, Friday: A movie was being filmed on location and a local dude, Edward A. Friedland, conceiving that if he could get the attention of the film crew then he might be able to make of himself a Hollywood stuntman, rode a rubber dinghy down the [Niagara River](#) below the falls through the rapids and into the Whirlpool. His dinghy began to twirl in the vortex. This dinghy dude needed to be rescued by one of the sightseeing helicopters.

Eight Palestinian terrorists flown to Cairo three days earlier were taken into custody by [Egyptian](#) authorities.

Ethiopian troops loyal to Emperor Haile Selassie occupied the capital Addis Ababa and began arresting important people.

The French National Assembly voted to allow minors, with a prescription, to buy contraceptive pills.

Marcian Edward Hoff, Jr., Stanley Mazor and Federico Faggin received a US patent for a “memory system for a multi-chip digital computer” — the microprocessor.

August 12, Monday: Phillipe Petitt conceived a highwire walk between Prospect Point Park in [Niagara Falls, New York](#) and the Table Rock at the brink of the Horseshoe Falls in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

August 19, Monday: After a Cyprus mob killed our ambassador during hostilities between Turkish and Greek Cypriot forces, US Marines defended the American Embassy in Nicosia while the US Navy evacuated US civilians.

USMC

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

The Niagara Parks Commission refused Phillipe Petitt’s proposal for a highwire walk between Prospect Point Park in [Niagara Falls, New York](#) and the Table Rock poised above the Horseshoe Falls in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

September 18, Wednesday: Phillipe Petitt gave up on the [Niagara Falls](#) for the time being, to join the Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Baily Circus (one of his more famous walks would 1,350 feet up, between the twin towers of the World Trade Center in [New York City](#)).

Upon landing in Damascus, four Japanese Red Army terrorists surrendered to the PLO. Syria promised safe conduct to any country of their choice.

Nach Bergamo —Zur Heimat for flute, clarinet, percussion, piano, viola and cello by Peter Maxwell Davies was performed for the initial time, in Queen Elizabeth Hall, London.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1975

February 7, Friday: An unidentified man in a straitjacket (James Randi, AKA “Mr. X”) was dangled from the Table Rock of the [Niagara Falls](#) for five minutes for a TV program. Permission had been obtained for this from the Niagara Parks Commission, which had been assured that despite the spectacular nature of such a performance there was no appreciable risk.

May 26, Monday: Henri Julien Rechatin, whose scheme for a daredevil performance above the Whirlpool of the [Niagara River](#) in 1967 had been rejected by the authorities, planned to make himself on this day the 1st person to escape from a straitjacket while hanging upside down from a helicopter hovering over the [Niagara Falls](#). When the authorities indicated that charges would be brought against him, he abandoned the plan.

June 3, Tuesday, shortly after 9AM: At the top of the observation deck level of the Skylon Tower in [Niagara Falls, New York](#), 520 feet above the ground, on the outer edge of the deck Henri Julien Rechatin began his chair-balancing act. He placed two of the legs of an oak chair near the edge of the platform, put another chair atop it balanced so that only its rear legs were touching, somehow clambered up, and seated himself on the top chair. He was able to balance this stack of chairs and himself, without touching anything with either his legs or his arms, for a full 30 seconds. To facilitate the media, he performed this stunt three times in a row.

June 4, Wednesday, 6:30AM: At the Southern terminal for the Spanish Aero car that passed on a cable above the Whirlpool of the [Niagara River](#), Henri Julien Rachatin, his wife Janyck Rachatin, and Frank Lucas of Toulouse, France began without fanfare to cross on the Aero car’s cable. Lucas drove a specially modified motorcycle out onto the greasy cable. Rachatin was standing on a metal frame above the motorcycle and Mme. Rachatin was hanging upside down by one foot below the motorcycle. When they reached the other terminal they clambered into the Aero Car. When the ride operator showed up for work, the daredevils were carried back in the Aero Car to the Southern terminal, where by this point the police were waiting to take them into custody. Although there was a prospect that they be charged with performing a dangerous act, this would never come about.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA



Our national birthday, Friday the 4th of July: Fort McHenry near Baltimore, Maryland hosted a re-enactment of the famous British shelling that had occurred there. Some 40 ships participated (this time no live ammo, just cannon salute boom boom boom and multicolored fireworks rockets).

As part of the filming of the Playboy Productions made-for-television movie “The Mighty Niagara,” a plank-and-oil-drums raft was to be filmed as it made its way through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). The film crew had obtained permits from the US government and the Canadian government with the understanding that a dummy would be used rather than a stuntman. As filming began, however, Jim Sarten, a professional stuntman, boarded the raft and rode it through the river rapids to the Whirlpool. Nonresponsive when fished out of the Whirlpool, he was rushed to hospital, where he recovered. Playboy Productions would be fined \$75 for allowing a stunt to be performed in violation of the Niagara Parks Act.

Pulitzer-Prize winner Dumas Malone delivered an oration at Monticello.

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY



August 29, Friday: Niagara Gorge River Trips, Inc. had begun to offer white-water experiences in the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). Their apparatus was a prototype rubber raft made by the Zodiac Company of France. On this day, during the 11th trial run, the raft capsized. Although there were 30 survivors, 3 of the passengers were trapped under the overturned raft and drowned.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1976

May 27, Thursday, early morning: Henri Julien Rachatin began a wire walk endurance stunt on Clifton Hill in [Niagara Falls](#), Ontario. Two 47-foot steel towers had been erected, between the Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum and the Hollywood Wax Museum, and a 59-foot 5/8ths-inch cable strung. For the following 15 days there would be four performances per day for the benefit of the tourists in the street. The only refuge for the high-wire performer would be a 3x3 platform for purposes of eating, bathroom activities, and 20-minute catnaps. Rachatin's ordeal would end on June 7, 1976. During his final performance, Rechatin carried Christina Montgomery, a tourist, across the wire on his back.

June 7, Monday: During his final performance on Clifton Hill in [Niagara Falls](#), Ontario, Henri Julien Rachatin carried Christina Montgomery, a tourist, across the high-wire on his back.

June 8, Tuesday: A proposal by Henri Julien Rachatin that he be allowed to wire walk across the [Niagara River](#) above the Falls was refused by [New York](#) State Parks authorities.

July 22, Thursday: Karel Soucek of Hamilton, Ontario attempted to peddle a moped across the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) atop a cable of the Spanish Aero Car. He was wearing a safety harness. About 20 feet after he started, his wheel hit a bolt. The harness saved him from a plunge into the Whirlpool.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1977

June 11, Saturday: Karel Soucek of Hamilton, Ontario descended the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) in a steel barrel but then was caught in the vortex of the Whirlpool. Rescued after three hours of whirling, he was taken into custody by the Parks Police on the standard charge of performing a stunt without a license.

October 30, Sunday: A two-person kayak made its way through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#). Kenneth W. Lagergren was detained by the Parks Police but his fellow kayaker, known to us now only as Charles, managed to evade arrest (Lagergren would again run the Whirlpool Rapids in a kayak in 1981, during the filming of a television segment for the ABC-TV program “The American Sportsman”).



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1981

October 14, Wednesday: The Niagara Parks Commission allowed four professional kayakers, Kenneth W. Lagergren, Chris Spelius, Don Wheedon, and Carrie Ashton, to venture through the Whirlpool Rapids of the [Niagara River](#) while being filmed for the ABC-TV program “The American Sportsman.” Although at one point a kayak tipped over, there were no injuries.

Hosni Mubarak was sworn in as President of [Egypt](#), succeeding Anwar el-Sadat.

Conservative Kaare Willoch replaced Gro Harlem Brundtland of the Labor Party as Prime Minister of Norway, at the head of a minority Conservative government.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1983

May 17, Tuesday: South Korean opposition leader Kim Young Sam began a hunger strike to demand a return to democracy.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

A Concerto for organ and orchestra op.235 by Ernst Krenek was performed for the initial time, in Melbourne Concert Hall.

Israel and Lebanon signed a final agreement for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon.

Paa Vidderne for reciter and orchestra by Frederick Delius to words of Ibsen was performed for the initial time, over the airwaves of Norwegian television, 95 years after it was composed.

A federal study concluded that [Love Canal](#) residents were at no greater risk than any other residents of the community of [Niagara Falls](#) — so, you see, not to worry, you're as safe as anybody is around here.

June 21, Tuesday: A congressional agency revealed that the federal study announced on May 17th had had no basis whatever for its pronouncement that the [Love Canal](#) neighborhood of [Niagara Falls](#) was safe to live in.

October 10, Monday: For a lump sum settlement of \$20,000,000, 1,300 ex-residents of [Love Canal](#) tentatively abandoned their lawsuit against Occidental Petroleum, [Niagara Falls](#), Niagara County, and its Board of Education. Just give us enough money, about \$14,000 per person, so we can all get the heck outa here!



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1984

July 2, Monday, 9:30AM: Karel Soucek of Hamilton, Ontario, advertising himself as “Last of the Niagara Daredevils,” rode in a \$15,000 homemade barrel of lightweight metal and plastic, making himself the 1st person in 23 years to go over the [Niagara Falls](#) in a barrel, and the 8th barrel stunter to survive. He had with him in his red barrel a two-way radio. His device had enough ballast at one end to ensure that his plunge would be feet first. As he went over the curl of the Horseshoe Falls, his barrel, with “Karel Soucek” written on it in large letters, was already traveling at 75mph, and the fall itself occupied only 3.2 seconds. For 45 minutes the barrel bounced off rocks at the base of the surge pool of the Falls. When the barrel was released by a change in the water currents and bobbed to the surface, it was towed to the shore. Soucek’s forehead had struck his wristwatch producing facial cuts and bruises, so he was taken to Greater Niagara General Hospital. He was charged with stunting and his barrel confiscated.



July 11, Wednesday: Karel Soucek made his appearance in the Provincial Court of [Niagara Falls](#), Ontario and was fined \$500 for having stunted.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

November 12, Monday: Steven Trotter made his 1st attempt to go over the [Niagara Falls](#) in a barrel which he called "the Rig," the fabrication of which had set him back \$6,200. This barrel got hung up on some rocks before reaching the brink, he was arrested for stunting, and in the Provincial court of Niagara Falls, Ontario, he was fined \$500.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1985

January 19, Saturday: Karel Soucek mesmerized the 45,000 spectators in the Houston Astrodome by getting killed. They watched as a 6-foot barrel with Soucek inside was lifted by a crane to the top of the dome. The barrel was to fall into a 10-foot-wide target tank of water below, in simulation of his famous 1984 plunge over the Horseshoe Falls. The water tank was intended to have foam pads at its bottom. However, this foam had come loose and was merely floating in the tank. In addition, the barrel hit the side of the tank. In result, Soucek sustained massive internal injuries. His body would be interred at Drummond Hill Cemetery in [Niagara Falls](#), Ontario.



July 28, 1PM Sunday: A 900-pound silver and red aluminum and plastic barrel two meters wide by a meter long bearing the motto "To Challenge Niagara July 1985" was launched from the Canadian shoreline two and a half miles upstream of the [Niagara Falls](#). John David Munday was inside with a dream of becoming the 9th person to go over the falls and survive (the 8th person to go over successfully had been Karl Soucek). This barrel had over a couple of years of preparation set him back \$16,000. The police took note of the floating object and alerted Ontario Hydro, and the Hydro Control Dam was activated. In three minutes the water level of the [Niagara River](#) above the falls dropped five feet, trapping the device in the Hydro power pool some distance away from the brink.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

August 18, Sunday, 8:30AM: Steven Trotter of Barrington, [Rhode Island](#) came to the [Niagara Falls](#) with a device he had fashioned out of two plastic pickle barrels surrounded in large rubber inner tubes and covered with tarpaulin. He pushed off just upstream from the Horseshoe Falls, quickly reached the curl, and became, at the age of 22, the youngest person ever to survive the falls.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

October 5, 9AM Saturday: John David Munday's barrel, with him already inside, was taken from a truck and launched about a hundred and fifty yards above the curl of the Horseshoe Falls and went over in seconds. He was videotaping through a porthole. At the base the barrel became trapped in an eddy for 90 minutes before a river man, Ken Sloggett, managed a rescue. Munday, with minor abrasions, was the 9th person to survive the falls. In the Provincial Court of [Niagara Falls](#), Ontario he would be fined \$500 for stunting and \$1,000 for breach of probation.



On this day, in Ras Burka, [Egypt](#), a policeman killed his commander and 7 Israeli tourists (4 of them children) and injured several others.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1986

October 3, Friday: Phillipe Petitt returned to the [Niagara Falls](#), after an extended career with the Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Baily Circus as a highwire stuntman, with a film crew shooting the Imax movie “Niagara Miracle, Myths and Magic.” On a 50-foot wire 170 feet above the Canadian shore, he re-enacted for the camera the feats of Blondin.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1987

September 26, Saturday, 2:49AM: Police on patrol found and seized a six-foot barrel, inscribed with the name “Dave Munday,” above the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) just south of the Whirlpool Bridge opposite Queen Street. This confiscation might well have brought to an end John David Munday’s stunting in the Great Gorge Rapids and the Whirlpool — but he would be able to recover his vehicle, pending his appearance in court, from the police.



October 11, Sunday: John David Munday ventured down the Great Gorge Rapids and the Whirlpool of the [Niagara River](#) in the same barrel that had on September 26th been temporarily confiscated by the police. Interestingly, he could not swim and said he hated the water.

Two hours after Munday’s successful completion of the trip, Nolan Whitsell of Atlanta Georgia went through the same trajectory in an open 4.2-meter plastic canoe — and came out the other end in one piece.

November 12, Thursday: In the Provincial Court of [Niagara Falls](#), Ontario, John David Munday was fined \$500 for the offense of stunting and put on two years probation.



THE SUBLIME

ONGUIAAHARA

1989

September 28, Thursday 5:30PM: Peter DeBernardi had constructed a 12-foot by 4 1/2-foot [Niagara Falls](#) barrel of 3/16ths-inch steel, that had cost him a total of \$1,500. He had installed a two-way radio system, 90 minutes of oxygen supply, ballast control, a double hatch, and a couple of Plexiglas portholes. His vehicle had been emblazoned with the inscription “Don’t Put Yourself On The Edge – Drugs Kill.” He and Jeffrey Petkovich – a guy he had met only a few weeks before– clambered into the barrel a couple of hundred feet above the curl of the Horseshoe Falls — and in 25 seconds the bright yellow thingie had been sucked over. When it was recovered by the *Maid of the Mist* dock, neither DeBernardi nor Petkovich had been injured. Petkovich had been drinking and emerged from the barrel with nothing on but a necktie and cowboy boots. These were the 11th and 12th persons to go over the edge and survive.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1990

June 5, Tuesday: Jessie W. Sharp of Ocoee, Tennessee, an unemployed kayaker seeking a career in stunting, attempted to ride over the Horseshoe Falls in a 12-foot, 36-pound polyethylene kayak. He had been scheming to conquer the [Niagara Falls](#) for three years and was accompanied by a crew of three who were prepared to videotape the event from various angles. Since he needed to expose his face for the filming, he was unable to wear any sort of protective helmet. He chose not to wear a life-preserver either, because in his consideration it might hamper his escape were he caught deep in the surge pool beneath the falling waters. His plan was that immediately after triumphing over the falls in his kayak, he would continue down the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) through the Great Gorge Rapids and through the Whirlpool and all the way to the docks at Queenston — in furtherance of this plan he phoned ahead and made a supper reservation at the Queenston Park Restaurant. We have the film showing his kayak going over the cusp. No part of his body would ever be recovered.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

July 16, Monday, 5AM: John David Munday again tried to ride a barrel over the [Niagara Falls](#) in a homemade steel barrel. The barrel was built from one quarter inch thick steel pipe covered by 20 cm. of thick foam. The barrel cost one thousand dollars and had no provision for oxygen. Again because of the low morning water levels, Munday's barrel was caught up on the rocks at the brink of the Horseshoe Falls. Interestingly, to hear him tell it, suffocation was the most terrifying way to die.

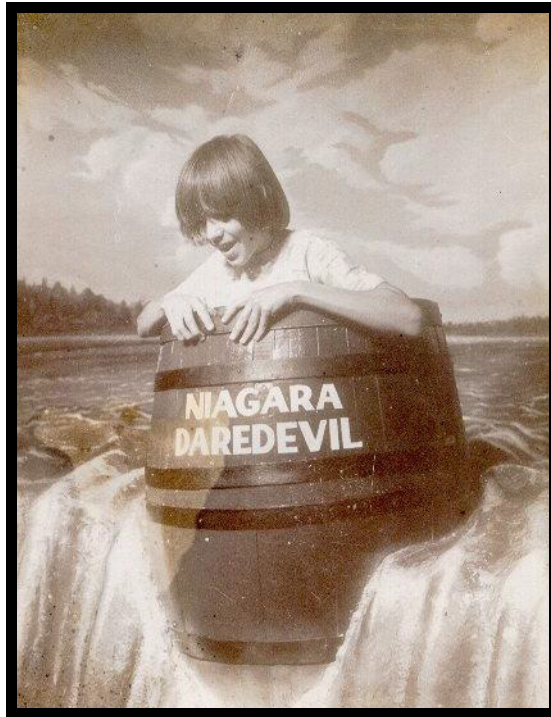




ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

August 14, Tuesday: The [New York](#) State Parks Police stopped a truck carrying a 10-foot yellow [Niagara Falls](#) ball fabricated out of nothing more substantial than Styrofoam. Peter DeBernardi and Jeffrey Petkovich had apparently been about to risk the always-deadly American Falls inside this Styrofoam ball.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1993

September 26, Sunday, 8:35AM: John David Munday went over the [Niagara Falls](#) a 2d time — this time inside a 660-pound diving bell he had purchased from the Canadian Coast Guard (it had taken him a full year to refit this device for its new purpose). He was knocked unconscious and, when the device was recovered at the base of the Horseshoe Falls by the little *Maid of the Mist*, was found to have cuts and bruises.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

1995

Henri Julien Rachatin's proposal to recreate his 1975 wire walk across the gorge of the [Niagara River](#) above the Whirlpool on the cables of the Spanish Aero Car was refused by the Niagara Parks Commission.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

June 18, Sunday, 9:30AM: After NATO agreed to abandon its plan to protect Sarajevo, the Bosnian Serbs released the last 26 UN peacekeepers they were holding hostage. A Serb shell killed 7 and injured 12 near Sarajevo.

...and a Time for Peace for mezzo-soprano and orchestra by Richard Wernick was performed for the initial time, in Ravenna.

Steven Trotter had returned to the venue of his 1985 stunt with a plan to go over the Horseshoe Falls in tandem with a girlfriend, Lori Martin of Atlanta, Georgia. His barrel this time was 12 feet long and consisted of two sections of water heater tank welded together and coated with kevlar. In the barrel were four oxygen tanks capable of providing air for an hour and twenty minutes. The barrel weighed 900 pounds and cost approximately \$19,000. It was launched about a hundred yards above the brink of the [Niagara Falls](#) along the Canadian shore. Steven Trotter and Lori Martin became the 2d couple to survive the falls. The barrel was intact at the base of the falls, but caught in rocks. Emergency Services personnel climbed over the guard rail in one of the observation tunnels under the Table Rock Pavilion and retrieved the stunters. While being treated for minor bruises at the Greater Niagara General Hospital, they were arrested. After some days, a crane was set up and the barrel lifted from the base of the falls. Since Trotter paid the costs of removal his barrel was returned to him.





ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

October 1, Sunday: The leftist Socialist Party won general elections in Portugal, unseating the ruling Social Democratic Party. The Socialists gain 40 seats but fall four short of a majority.

Ten Muslim militants, including Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, were convicted on 48 counts for a conspiracy to commit bombings in New York City.

Svyati for cello and chorus by John Tavener to words of the Orthodox liturgy was performed for the first time, in St. Sampson's Church, Cricklade. Also premiered was Tavener's Chant for solo cello.

By declaration of the General Assembly, [Prudence Crandall](#) became Connecticut's State Heroine.⁶⁵

France conducted a 2d [nuclear weapon](#) test, at Fangataufa Atoll.

At 12:35PM in the vicinity of the Canadian Niagara Power Plant, Robert Overacker of Camarillo, California rode his jet ski out into the rapids of the [Niagara River](#) above the falls. At the curl of the Horseshoe he yanked on a lanyard igniting a rocket strapped to his back. He was wearing a parachute he had trusted someone else to pack, and its cords turned out not to have been clipped to the body harness. When the rocket was exhausted, Overacker's step-brother and a friend watched as the parachute fabric billowed and came away and the parachutist plunged into the river. The body was recovered by the *Maid of the Mist*.



65.The Prudence Crandall House is a National Historic Landmark located at the intersection of 14 and 169 in Canterbury. It is operated by the Connecticut Historical Commission. Canterbury's website on the internet brags that the town is racially constituted as follows:

"White Non-Hispanic	(96.7%)
Two or more races	(1.4%)
American Indian	(1.1%)
Hispanic	(1.1%)

Ancestries: French (26.5%), Irish (21.0%), English (17.0%), Polish (14.8%), German (11.4%), Italian (11.1%)"

(We note immediately the reassuring fact, that absolutely nobody has come to this town from any region of Africa.)



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

2003

October 20, Monday, 12:45PM: An unemployed single 40-year-old from Canton just to the south of Detroit, Michigan, Kirk Raymond Jones, had come to the City of [Niagara Falls, New York](#) a few days before, and had been staying with his friend Bob Krueger of Garden City, Michigan at a local motel on Lundy's Lane. He was planning either a spectacular stunt or a spectacular suicide, and had purchased a used video camera with which to record this for posterity. At 12:45PM, at the Table Rock, while his friend Bob stood holding the video camera, Kirk leaped into the [Niagara River](#) approximately 20 feet above the curl of the waters into the Horseshoe Falls. Unfortunately, Bob hadn't taken the trouble to learn how to operate this camera and Kirk's leap into the water and his brief journey to the curl have not been preserved for posterity.

However, for the first time in recorded history, a human being had been swept over the Horseshoe Falls and had survived. Kirk's fall of 170 feet was into a plunge pool basin. By chance he didn't hit any pile of rocks, and by chance the churning of the waters did not hold him under. He was able to clamber onto a rock a short distance from the cataract, and emergency service personnel were able to move him from the rock to the shore, and from there by ambulance to the Greater Niagara General Hospital. He had suffered only minor rib injuries, so the physicians ordered an involuntary commitment to their psychiatric unit for evaluation of his mental condition. Kirk's story at this point became that he had been attempting [suicide](#), until family members and others came out with information that on the basis of this stunt Kirk had been hoping to obtain gainful employment. He was therefore released from the observation unit as non-suicidal, and taken into custody by the police. His charges would be "Mischievousness, and Performing a Stunt with the Niagara Parks."



Kirk would be fined \$2,300 and instructed that for the rest of his life — Canada was off limits.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

December 18, Thursday: Kirk Raymond Jones, the 1st human being ever known to have survived the Horseshoe Falls of the [Niagara River](#), pleaded guilty in a court of the City of [Niagara Falls, New York](#) on the counts charged, of “Mischief, and Performing a Stunt with the Niagara Parks,” and was fined \$3,000. In addition the judge ordered him to reimburse the “Niagara Parks – Journey Behind the Falls” business organization the receipt income they alleged that they had lost during the 45 minutes their tourist attraction had been forced to close in order to facilitate the rescue of Jones from the rock below the falls, in the amount of \$1,408. Jones, it would turn out, had been correct all along in his concept that his stunt, if he managed to survive, would bring him opportunities for gainful employment: he was then hired, by the Toby Tyler Circus of Texas, to perform unspecified stunts.



“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME



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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



Prepared: May 27, 2015



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

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, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



ONGUIAAHARA

THE SUBLIME

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process 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 requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.