

NAUSHON ISLAND IN THE ELIZABETH ISLANDS



"So long as the past and present are outside one another, knowledge of the past is not of much use in the problems of the present. But suppose the past lives on in the present: suppose, though encapsulated in it, and at first sight hidden beneath the present's contradictory and more prominent features, it is still alive and active; then the historian may very well be related to the non-historian as the trained woodsman is to the ignorant traveller."



— R.G. Collingwood, *AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY*
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939, page 100

The Islands offlying New England	
Block Island	Mt. Desert Island
Boston Harbor	Nantucket Island
Dry Salvages	Naushon Island
Gardiners Island	Newfoundland
Isles of Shoals	Plum Island
Long Island	Shelter Island
Manhattan	Staten Island
Martha's Vineyard	St. George's Bank
Minots Ledge	Aquidneck Island

"An island always pleases my imagination, even the smallest, as a small continent and integral portion of the globe. I have a fancy for building my hut on one. Even a bare, grassy isle, which I can see entirely over at a glance, has some undefined and mysterious charm for me."

— [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#)



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1842

Steam shipping to [China](#) began. [Naushon Island](#) in the Elizabeth Islands was purchased in its entirety by [John Murray Forbes](#) and [William W. Swain](#), largely with money from the [China](#) trade, [opium](#) money, for instance (Forbes would soon buy out Swain).

By this point England's [opium](#) trade in [China](#) had reached 40,000 chests annually. The government of China, attempting to interdict opium traffic and thus prevent its citizens from debilitating themselves by "chasing the dragon" as so desired by foreign enemies, seized and destroyed bales of opium belonging to English merchants. Naughty naughty!

When the dust of the 1st Opium War had settled later on in this year, China had been re-opened to the English [opium](#) traffic by the initial one of the "Unequal Treaties" into which it was coerced by overwhelmingly powerful and insolent and paternalistic Westerners. Trade restrictions were removed. In a decade the trade volume would double. Having been chastened by the lion and unicorn of Great Britain, the [Central Kingdom](#) would be obliged for many years to "chase the dragon" for the greater profit of Englishmen (who would eventually be mailing postcards home to their loved ones from [Hong Kong](#), postcards showing picturesque scenes of the indescribable debasement of Orientals, obtained from filthy opium dens).

Let us pause for a moment and savor this situation. Naushon is a remote bucolic island near Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. –And, it was a significant part of the reward some New Englanders gave themselves for the creation of one of the driving forces of our contemporary world, the absolute fury with which the Chinese still contemplate the manner in which their nation had been humiliated during this period!



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Well, but drugs aren't all bad. For instance, in this year C.W. Long of Jefferson, Georgia first used [nitrous oxide](#) gas as an anesthetic during an operation. Some have attested this to be the first such use of any anesthetic during an operation. The effect of shock upon patients had been such a great killer that the rule of thumb of the time was, that if a surgeon took longer than 15 minutes to complete an operation the patient was gonna die. Therefore surgeons needed not only the eye of an eagle, the hand of a lady, and the heart of a lion (the saying in those days), but also the speed of a weasel: it had been said in praise of a particularly swift British sawbones, Dr. Astley Cooper, that:

For operating with alacrity, and well at the same time,
I have never known his equal.

DENTISTRY



A little more opium, Mr. China?

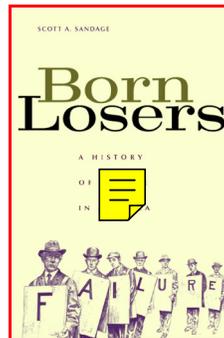


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September 28, Thursday: A federal court decided John Brown's bankruptcy case, as the culmination of years of dicey business decisions. His creditors were awarded all but the essentials which the Brown family needed to sustain life — but this proceeding did free him.

A failed surveyor, farmer, speculator, schoolteacher, tanner, and cattleman, he showed up as a wool dealer in an 1848 credit report: "his condition is questionable." Winter 1849: "may or may not be good." Summer 1850: "his means are equally obscure." Still in his forties, he looked sixty to credit reporters. The agency lost him when he switched lines of work yet again, only to fail yet again. Like many another misfit who pushed a doomed venture too far, he quit when he had no other choice. Having grown whiskers for the first time, his craggy face looked still more ancient. Everyone had an opinion of this broken man. "Served him right." Overhearing such comments, Thoreau said he felt proud even to know him and questioned why people "talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success." The bankrupt court had restored this loser's freedom in 1842. Now it was 1859, and no earthly court could save John Brown after his failure at Harpers Ferry.



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[Waldo Emerson](#) continued in his journal:

Next morning, we begun our walk at 6¹/₂ o'clock for the Shaker Village distant 3¹/₂ miles. Whilst the good Sisters were getting ready our breakfast, we had a conversation with Seth Blanchard & Cloutman of the Brethren, who gave an honest account by yea & by nay of their faith & practice. They were not stupid like some whom I have seen of their society, & not worldly like others.... From the Shaker Village we came to Littleton, & thence to Acton, still in the same redundance of splendour. It was like a day of July, and from Acton we sauntered leisurely homeward to finish the nineteen miles of our second day before four in the afternoon.



After the two walkers returned to [Concord](#), [Margaret Fuller](#) came visiting the Emerson home for two weeks.

[Lidian Emerson](#) was on [opium](#) and began to fantasize connections between Margaret and Waldo, and Margaret had to defend by pointing out that on two of the evenings Lidian supposed she spent talking to Waldo, actually she had been with [Ellery Channing](#) or [Henry Thoreau](#) while Waldo had been alone, writing in his study.



There was embarrassment at the dining table when Lidian burst into tears at an imagined slight. After the meal the two women went walking and evidently bonded somewhat, for Lidian confided to Margaret that “she has a lurking hope that Waldo’s character will alter, and that he will be capable of an intimate union.”

Margaret mused on this in her journal:

 I suppose the whole amount of the feeling is that women cant bear to be left out of the question. ...when Waldo’s wife, and the mother of that child that is gone [Waldo Jr.] thinks me the most privileged of women, & that EH [Elizabeth Hoar] was happy because her love [Charles (?) Emerson] was snatched away for a life long separation, & thus she can know none but ideal love: it does seem a little too insulting at first blush. - And yet they are not altogether wrong.

HDT

WHAT?

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An entanglement arose when [Ellery Channing](#) wanted to visit his former love Caroline Sturgis on [Naushon Island](#) one last time, at her suggestion, before his new wife [Ellen Fuller Channing](#) would arrive in [Concord](#) from Boston. [Margaret Fuller](#) had no objection and Ellery went to Naushon but then Ellen arrived early in Concord and discovered his absence and Margaret was unwilling to admit where he was — and everyone became rather upset. Margaret recorded:



If I were Waldo's wife, or Ellery's wife, I should acquiesce in all these relations, since they needed them. I should expect the same feeling from my husband, & I should think it little in him not to have it. I felt I should never repent of advising Ellery to go whatsoever happened. Well, he came back next day, and All's Well that Ends Well.... Mama [Emerson's mother [Ruth Haskins Emerson](#)] & Lidian sympathized with me almost with tears. Waldo looked radiant, & HT [Henry Thoreau] as if his tribe had won a victory. Well it was a pretty play, since it turned out no tragedy at last. Ellery told Ellen at once how it was, and she took it just as she ought.

Bronson Alcott, Henry Wright, Charles Lane, and Lane's son William who was about 9 years of age, embarked at Gravesend on the *Leland* for Boston. They brought a large library of books on mysticism to be used "in the commencement of an Institution for the nurture of men in universal freedom of action, thought, and being." More important, Lane brought his life savings of approximately \$2,000.⁰⁰. Wright's bride and infant waited in England for developments.

1852

July 17, Saturday: It was reported in the [Practical Christian](#) that, during a sermon at [Hopedale](#) delivered by the Reverend John Murray Spear, Medium, the spirit of [Benjamin Franklin](#) had manifested itself through the reverend, and had communicated its satisfaction with "the rise and progress of a people so **practical**, in respect to all that is necessary to human welfare, morally, intellectually and physically."



The [Hopedale](#) community would become more and more entangled in spiritualism and table-rapping.

SPIRITUALISM

[Herman Melville](#) wrote to [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#):

My Dear Hawthorne: —
This name of "Hawthorne" seems to be ubiquitous. I have been on



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something of a tour lately, and it has saluted me vocally & typographically in all sorts of places & in all sorts of ways. I was at the solitary Crusoeish island of [Naushon](#) (one of the Elisabeth group) and there, on a stately piazza, I saw it gilded on the back of a very new book, and in the hands of a clergyman. — I went to visit a gentleman in Brooklyne, and as we were sitting at our wine, in came the lady of the house, holding a beaming volume in her hand, from the city — “My Dear,” to her husband, “I have brought you Hawthorne’s new book.” I entered the cars at Boston for this place. In came a lively boy “Hawthorne’s new book!” — In good time I arrived home. Said my lady-wife “there is Mr Hawthorne’s new book, come by mail” And this morning, lo! on my table a little note, subscribed Hawthorne again. — Well, the Hawthorne is a sweet flower; may it flourish in every hedge. I am sorry, but I can not at present come to see you at Concord as you propose. — I am but just returned from a two weeks’ absence; and for the last three months & more I have been an utter idler and a savage — out of doors all the time. So, the hour has come for me to sit down again. Do send me a specimen of your sand-hill, and a sunbeam from the countenance of Mrs. Hawthorne, and a vine from the curly arbor of Master Julian. As I am only just home, I have not yet got far into the book but enough to see that you have most admirably employed materials which are richer than I had fancied them. Especially at this day, the volume is welcome, as an antidote to the mooniness of some dreamers — who are merely dreamers — Yet who the devel aint a dreamer? H Melville My rememberances to Miss Una & Master Julian — & the “compliments” & perfumes of the season to the “Rose-bud.”



July 17, Saturday: Cooler weather — a gentle steady rain not shower — such coolness as rain makes — not sharp & invigorating — exhilarating as in the spring — but thoughtful — reminding of the fall — still — moist — unoppressive weather in which corn & potatoes grow — not a vein of the N-W. wind or the N-E. The coolness of the west tempered with rain & mist. As I walked by the river last evening. I heard no toads. — A coolness as from an earth covered with vegetation — such as the toad finds in the high grass. A verdurous coolness — not a snowy or icy one — in the shadow of the vapors which the heat makes rise from the earth. Can this be dog-day-ish?

Pm A summer rain — A gentle steady rain — long agathering — without thunder or lightning — Such as we have not & methinks could not have had earlier than this.

To Beck Stow’s I pick raspberries dripping with rain beyond Sleepy Hollow — This weather is rather favorable to thought — on all sides is heard a gentle dripping of the rain on the leaves — yet it is perfectly warm. It is a day of comparative leisure to many farmers. Some go to the mill-dam & the shops, some go a-fishing. The *Antennaria Margaritacea* Pearly Everlasting is out. & the thoroughworts — red & white begin to show their colors. Notwithstanding the rain some children still pursue their black berrying on the Great Fields. Swamp pink lingers still. Roses are not so numerous as they were — Some which I examine now have short stout hooked thorns & narrow bracts — Is it the R. Carolina? I love to see a clear crystalline water flowing out of a swamp over white sand & decayed wood — spring like. The year begins to have a husky look or scent in some quarters — I remark the green coats of the hazel nuts — & hear the permanent jay. Some fields are covered now with tufts or clumps of Indigo weed yellow with blossoms — with a few dead leaves turned black here & there. Beck Stow’s swamp! What an incredible spot to think of in town or city! When life looks sandy & barren — is reduced to its lowest terms — we have no appetite & it has no flavor — Then let me visit such a swamp as this deep & impenetrable where the earth quakes for a rod around you at every step. — with its open water where the swallows skim & twitter — its meadow & cotton grass — its dense patches of dwarf andromeda now brownish green — — with clumps of blue-berry bushes — its spruces & its verdurous border of woods imbowering it — on every side. The trees now in the rain look heavy & rich all day as commonly at twilight — drooping with the weight of wet



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leaves. That seriocarpus conyzoides prevails now & the entire leaved erigeron still abounds every where— The meadows on the Turnpike are **white** with the meadow rue **now more than ever**. They are filled with it many feet high. The lysimachia lanceolata is very common too. All flowers are handsomer in rain. Methinks the sweetbriar is done. The hard-hack whose spines are not yet abundant stands to me for agreeable coarseness. Swallows are active throughout this rain.

Lobelia inflata Ind. tobacco.
Lappa Major Burdock.
Amaranthus hybridus — though not yet red.
Verbena hastata.
blue vervain.
Gnaphalium uliginosum by the roadside.
cud-weed

Again methinks I hear the goldfinch but not for a day or two the bob-o-link.
At evening the prunellas in the grass like the sky glow purple which were blue all day— The vetch I looked for is mown—but I find it fresh elsewhere. The caducous polygala has the odor of checker-berry at its root & hence I thought the flower had a fugacious spicy fragrance Hypericum Canadense. The slender bell flower—galium like with a triangular stem in low grounds now.

1854

December 26, Tuesday: It was a fine, mild day, and [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#) walked through the



woods to Tarkiln Hill and then through Acushnet to the Friends Meeting House. In the afternoon they rode around White's factory. In the evening Thoreau delivered "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" at the [New Bedford](#) lyceum but [Friend Daniel](#) didn't feel well enough to attend.

THOREAU'S SERMON

[Various versions of "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE", variously titled, would be delivered:



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- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 6, 1854 at Railroad Hall in [Providence](#)
- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 26, 1854 in the [New Bedford](#) Lyceum
- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 28, 1854 at the Athenaeum on [Nantucket Island](#)
- On January 4, 1855 in the [Worcester](#) Lyceum, as “The Connection between Man’s Employment and His Higher Life”
- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on February 14, 1855 in the [Concord](#) Lyceum
- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on November 16, 1856 for the [Eagleswood](#) community
- “Getting a Living” on December 18, 1856 in the vestry of the Congregational Church of Amherst, New Hampshire
- “LIFE MISSPENT” on Sunday morning, October 9, 1859 to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)’s 28th Congregational Society in Boston Music Hall
- “LIFE MISSPENT” on Sunday, September 9, 1860 at Welles Hall in Lowell.]



A fine mild spring-like day. Walked through the woods to Tarkiln Hill and through Acushnet to Friends’ Meeting House with Henry D. Thoreau, author of Walden. Rode this P.M. with H.D.T. round White’s factory. Louisa [Mrs. Louisa Sampson Ricketson] and the children, except Walton [son], attended Lyceum this evening. Lecture by Mr. Thoreau. Subject, “Getting a Living.” I remained at home, not feeling well enough to attend.



December 26, 1854: At Ricketson’s ([New Bedford](#)).

I do not remember to have ever seen such a day as this in Concord. There is no snow here (though there has been excellent sleighing at Concord since the 5th ult.), but it is very muddy, the frost coming out of the ground as in spring with us. I went to walk in the woods with R.; it was wonderfully warm and pleasant, and the cockerels crowed just as in a spring day at home. I felt the winter breaking up in me, and if I had been at home I should have tried to write poetry. They told me that this was not a rare day there. That they had little or no winter such as we have, and it was owing to the influence of the Gulf Stream, which was only sixty miles from Nantucket at the nearest or 120 miles from them. In mid-winter when the wind was S.E. or even S.W. they frequently had days as warm and debilitating as in summer. There is a difference of a degree in latitude, between Concord and New Bedford, but far more in climate. The American holly is quite common there, with its red berries still holding on, and is now their [Christmas](#) evergreen. I heard the lark sing, strong and sweet, and saw robins. R. lives in that part of New Bedford, three miles out of the town, called the Head of the River, i.e. the Acushnet River. There is a [Quaker](#) meeting-house there. Such an ugly shed without a tree or bush about it, which they call their meeting-house (without steeple of course), is altogether repulsive to me, like a powder-house or grave. And even the quietness and perhaps unworldliness of an aged Quaker has something ghostly and saddening about it — as it were a mere preparation for the grave.

R. said that pheasants from England (where they are not indigenous) had been imported to [Naushon](#), and were killed there.

“Read not the Times. Read the Eternities.”





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GOD IN CONCORD by Jane Langton © 1992

Viking Penguin

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Read not the Times. Read the Eternities.
 “Life Without Principle”

The battle was joined. The news was out.
 DEVELOPER EYES

Penguin Books USA Inc.

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1856

June 27, Friday: It was a clear warm day after some rain and sharp lightning during the night. [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#) spent the forenoon in the Shanty, involved in ornithology in particular and the philosophy of life in general, and then in the afternoon they took Ricketson’s son [Walton Ricketson](#) with them in a carriage to Freetown and Fairhaven and onto the steamer *Eagle’s Wing*¹ to [Naushon Island](#) in the Elizabeth Islands, returning at 6:30PM.² Ricketson would sum up the day and its experiences in his 1858 publication HISTORY OF NEW BEDFORD (shown on a following screen).



1. A “steamer” would be a ship powered at least in part by a steam engine, but which might also have sails.
 2. The Berg Collection in the New York Public Library contains a manuscript fragment: “June 27— 56 At Naushon I see / a common wild”



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On the afternoon of the 27th of June, 1856, in company with a congenial friend, I visited this island. Leaving New Bedford, in less than two hours our gallant steamer, the Eagle's Wing, landed us at Hadley's harbor, upon the east end of the island. Our object being to see the natural beauties and productions of this comparatively unmolested realm of nature, we at once proceeded into the ancient woods, where we were soon amply rewarded by a sight of some of the noblest trees and forest ranges we had ever seen. The beeches, oaks, and other trees here grow to a large size, many of them undoubtedly of great age. Soon after our entrance we were greeted by the sight of a beautiful fawn, that stood gazing at us from a thicket at a short distance, but quickly bounded away from our view. The island being private property, the native deer are still preserved; but at certain seasons, we regret to say, these beautiful and noble creatures are hunted and shot. Naushon is the largest of the Elizabeth Islands, and is about seven miles in length and a mile and a quarter in breadth. It was formerly the property of the Hon. James Bowdoin, a Governor of Massachusetts, by whom it was bequeathed to his nephew, James Bowdoin, and by him bequeathed to his nephew, James Temple Bowdoin, who resided in London. It is now the property, by purchase, of William W. Swain, of New Bedford, and John M. Forbes, of Milton. The old mansion-house upon this island, which has been for many years the summer residence of the elder proprietor, Mr. Swain, was built by said James Bowdoin, an old bachelor, who died there while seated in his chair. The house was closed for many years, and had the reputation of being haunted, and was occasionally visited from this cause by the curious.... [W]e saw a grapevine, which my companion thought might have dated back to the time of Gosnold, that measured twenty-three inches in circumference six feet from the ground, firmly interlaced with a sturdy beech, each apparently striving for the mastery.... Passing out of the woods, we stopped upon a rising ground to view the hospitable mansion of Mr. Swain, which stands upon an elevated spot at the northeast part of the island, commanding a fine view of the broad landscape around, the bay, and the adjoining main. This house, the same before spoken of, is a large old-fashioned mansion, fronting the north, hip-roofed, with several tall chimneys, which with its ample piazzas presents an imposing and agreeable appearance. During the past year (1857) this house has been enlarged by the addition of a wing upon each side, and in other respects materially improved by the proprietors. Mr. Swain is familiarly known as "the governor," but truly he belongs to a more gallant and noble class, the ancient Lords of the Isles....



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July 2, Saturday[?]: [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) to his journal, in [New Bedford](#) with [Henry Thoreau](#):



ELLERY CHANNING

Clear and fine, cool this morning. Thermometer at about 50, 5 A.M. My friend H.D. Thoreau left in the early train this morning for his home at Concord, Mass. Took him to the Tarkiln Station. Channing, who spent the night with us, left about 9 to walk to town. During the visit of my friend Thoreau we have visited the [Middleborough Ponds](#) twice, [the Island Naushon](#), [Sconticut Neck](#), etc. His visit has been a very pleasant one to myself and family. He is the best educated man I know, and I value his friendship very much. His health is quite poor at present, and I fear he will hardly reach old age, which from his unconcern in regard to it the more strengthens my fears for his loss.

1857



August 28, Friday, 1857: Polygonum Pennsylvanicum by bank, how long?

R.W.E. says that he saw *Asclepias tuberosa* abundant and in bloom on [Naushon](#) last week; also a sassafras stump three feet across. The deer escape by running to the mainland, and in winter cross on the ice. The last winter they lost about one hundred and fifty sheep, whose remains have never been found. Perhaps they were carried off on the ice by the sea. Looking through a glass, E. saw vessels sailing near [Martha's Vineyard](#) with full sails, yet the water about them appeared perfectly smooth, and reflected the vessels. They thought this reflection a mirage, i. e. from a haze.

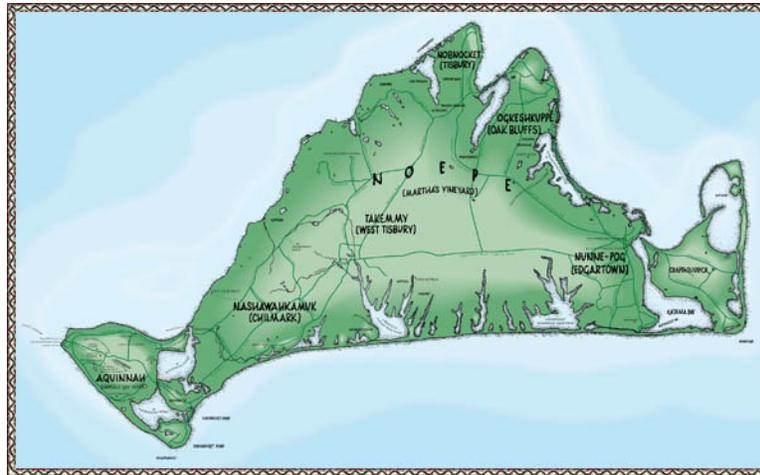
As we were riding by Deacon Farrar's lately, E. Hoar told me in answer to my questions, that both the young Mr. Farrars, who had now come to man's estate, were excellent young men, –their father, an old man of about seventy, once cut and corded seven cords of wood in one day, and still cut a double swath at haying time, and was a man of great probity, –and to show the unusual purity of one of them, at least, he said that, his brother Frisbie, who had formerly lived there, inquiring what had become of a certain hired man whom he used to know, young Mr. Farrar told him that he was gone, “that the truth was he one day let drop a prophane word, and after that he thought that he could not have him about, and so he got rid of him.” It was as if he had dropped some filthy thing on the premises, an intolerable nuisance, only to be abated by removing the source of it. I should like to hear as good news of the New England farmers generally. It to some extent accounts for the vigor of the father and the successful farming of the sons.

I read the other day in the Tribune that a man apparently about seventy, and smart at that, went to the police in New York and asked for a lodging, having been left by the cars or steamboat when on his way to Connecticut. When they asked his age, native place, etc., he said his name was McDonald; he was born in Scotland in 1745, came to Plymouth, Mass., in 1760, was in some battles in the Revolution, in which he lost an eye; had a son eighty-odd years old, etc.; but, seeing a reporter taking notes, he was silent. Since then I heard that an old man named McDonald, one hundred and twelve years old, had the day before passed through Concord and was walking to Lexington, and I said at once he must be a humbug. When I went to the post office to-night (August 28), G. Brooks asked me if I saw him and said that he heard that he told a correct story, except he said that he remembered Braddock's defeat! He had noticed that Dr. Heywood's old house, the tavern, was gone since he was here in the Revolution. Just then Davis, the postmaster, asked us to look at a letter he had received. It was from a Dr. Curtis of Newton asking if this McDonald belonged about Concord as he said, and saying that his story appeared to be a correct one. Davis had never heard of him, and, as we presumed him to be a humbug, we advised Davis to write accordingly. But I afterward remembered reading nearly a year ago of a man of this name and age in St. Louis, who said he had married a wife in Concord before the Revolution, and then began to think that his story might be all true. So it seems that a veteran of a hundred and twelve, after an absence of eighty-seven years, may come back to the town where he married his wife in order to hunt up his relatives, and not

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only have no success, but be pronounced a humbug!!³



1858



August 9, Monday, 1858: Edward Bartlett shows me this morning a nest which he found yesterday. It is saddled on the lowest horizontal branch of an apple tree in Abel Heywood's orchard, against a small twig, and answers to Nuttall's description of the goldfinch's nest, which it probably is. The eggs were five, pure white or with a faint bluish-green tinge, just begun to be developed. I did not see the bird.⁴

It is but little you learn of a bird in this irregular way,—having its nest and eggs shown you. How much more suggestive the sight of the goldfinch going off on a jaunt over the hills, twittering to its plainer consort by its side!

It is surprising to what extent the world is ruled by cliques. They who constitute, or at least lead, New England or New York society, in the eyes of the world, are but a clique, a few "men of the age" and of the town, who work best in the harness provided for them. The institutions of almost all kinds are thus of a sectarian or party character. Newspapers, magazines, colleges, and all forms of government and religion express the superficial activity of a few, the mass either conforming or not attending. The newspapers have just got over that eating-fulness or dropsy which takes place with the annual commencements and addresses before the Philomathean or Alpha Beta Gamma societies. Neither they who make these addresses nor they who attend to them are representative of the latest age. The boys think that these annual recurrences are part and parcel of the annual revolution of the system. There are also regattas and fireworks and "surprise parties" and horse-shows. So that I am glad when I see or hear of a man anywhere who does not know of these things nor recognizes these particular fuglers. I was pleased to hear the other day that there were two men in Tamworth, N.H., who had been fishing for trout there ever since May; but it was a serious drawback to be told that they sent their fish to Boston and so catered for the few. The editors of newspapers, the popular clergy, politicians and orators of the day and office-holders, though they may be thought to be of very different politics and religion, are essentially one and homogeneous, inasmuch as they are only the various ingredients of the froth which ever floats on the surface of society.

I see a pout this afternoon in the Assabet, lying on the bottom near the shore, evidently diseased. He permits the boat [to] come within two feet of him. Nearly half the head, from the snout backward diagonally, is covered with an inky-black kind of leprosy, like a crustaceous lichen. The long feeler on that side appears to be wasting, and there stands up straight in it, about an inch high, a little black tree-like thorn or feeler, branched at top. It moves with difficulty.

Edith Emerson gives me an *Asclepias Tuberosa* from [Naushon](#), which she thinks is now in its prime there.

It is surprising what a tissue of trifles and crudities make the daily news. For one event of interest there are nine hundred and ninety-nine insignificant, but about the same stress is laid on the last as on the first. The newspapers

3. These last two paragraphs appear in the manuscript journal under date of July 28, having been written at the time when he was writing up his recent Maine excursion. The date in the second paragraph indicates this as their proper place.

4. Vide next page but one.



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have just told me that the transatlantic telegraph-cable is laid. That is important, but they instantly proceed to inform me how the news was received in every larger town in the United States,—how many guns they fired, or how high they jumped,—in New York, and Milwaukee, and Sheboygan; and the boys and girls, old and young, at the corners of the streets are reading it all with glistening eyes, down to the very last scrap, not omitting what they did at New Rochelle and Evansville. And all the speeches are reported, and some think of collecting them into a volume!!!

You say that you have travelled far and wide. How many men have you seen that did not belong to any sect, or party, or clique? Did you go further than letters of introduction would avail?

The goldfinch nest of this forenoon is saddled on a horizontal twig of an apple, some seven feet from ground and one third of an inch in diameter, supported on one side by a yet smaller branch, also slightly attached to another small branch. It measures three and one half inches from outside to outside, one and three quarters inside, two and one half from top to bottom, or to a little below the twig, and one and one half inside. It is a very compact, thick, and warmly lined nest, slightly incurving on the edge within. It is composed of fine shreds of bark—grape-vine and other—and one piece of twine, with, more externally, an abundance of pale brown slender catkins of oak (?) or hickory (?), mixed with effete apple blossoms and their peduncles, showing little apples, and the petioles of apple leaves, sometimes with half-decayed leaves of this year attached, last year's heads of lespedeza, and some other heads of weeds, with a little grass stem or weed stem, all more or less disguised by a web of white spider or caterpillar silk, spread over the outside. It is thickly and very warmly lined with (apparently) short thistle-down, mixed with which you see some grape-vine bark, and the rim is composed of the same shreds of bark, catkins, and some fine fibrous stems, and two or three hairs (of horse) mixed with wool (?); for only the hollow is lined with the looser or less tenacious thistle-down. This nest shows a good deal of art. The mind tastes but few savors in the course of a year. We are visited by but few thoughts which are worth entertaining, and we chew the cud of these unceasingly. What ruminant spirits we are! I remember well the flavor of that rusk which I bought in New York two or three months ago and ate in the cars for my supper. A fellow-passenger, too, pretended to praise it, and yet, O man of little faith! he took a regular supper at Springfield. They cannot make such in Boston. The mere fragrance, rumor, and reminiscence of life is all that we get, for the most part. If I am visited by a thought, I chew that cud each successive morning, as long as there is any flavor in it. Until my keepers shake down some fresh fodder. Our genius is like a brush which only once in many months is freshly dipped into the paint-pot. It becomes so dry that though we apply it incessantly, it fails to tinge our earth and sky. Applied to the same spot incessantly, it at length imparts no color to it.

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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





NAUSHON ISLAND

IN THE ELIZABETH ISLANDS

Prepared: September 3, 2013

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



NAUSHON ISLAND

IN THE ELIZABETH ISLANDS

Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.