

“MR. BLACKSTONE’S RIVER”¹ (THE *PAWTUCKET*) AND ITS CANAL



“I know histhry isn’t thru, Hinnissy, because it ain’t like what I see ivry day in Halsted Street. If any wan comes along with a histhry iv Greece or Rome that’ll show me th’ people fightin’, gettin’ dhrunk, makin’ love, gettin’ married, owin’ th’ grocery man an’ bein’ without hard coal, I’ll believe they was a Greece or Rome, but not befur.”



— Dunne, Finley Peter,
OBSERVATIONS BY MR. DOOLEY,
New York, 1902

1636

The congregation led by the Reverend [Roger Williams](#) fled to [Rhode Island](#) to create its 1st permanent white settlement in the colony of Providence Plantations in territory disputed between the [Pokanoket](#) and the [Narragansett](#). Head hereditary sachems Canonicus and Miantonomi granted the new arrivals “the meadows” upon the [Pawtuxet](#) River and its Seekonk estuary (which is to say, the [Blackstone River](#) and the brackish arm of the Narragansett Bay into which it feeds) and they began to plant. However, they were soon advised by Governor Winslow that this area was within the limits of Plymouth Colony. The Reverend accordingly embarked during the spring or early summer with five companions, landing at what has since been referred to as Slate Rock to exchange greetings with the local natives, and then rowing on to the site of their new settlement as negotiated, on the Moshassuck River, which, Williams observed, for the many “Providences of the Most Holy and Only Wise, I called Providence.” He observed of this, “I spared no cost towards them in tokens and presents to Canonicus and all his, many years before I came in person to the Narragansett; and when I came I was welcome to the old prince Canonicus, who was most shy of all English to his last breath.” [Henry Thoreau](#) would write later that “Nathaniel Morton, in his NEW ENGLAND’S MEMORIAL, printed in 1669 — speaking of white men going to treat with Canonicus, a Narragansett Indian, about Mr. Oldham’s death in 1636 — says ‘Boiled chestnuts is their white bread, and because they would be extraordinary in their feasting, they strove for variety after the English manner, boiling puddings made of beaten corn, putting therein great store of blackberries, somewhat like currants’ — no doubt whortleberries. This seems to imply that the Indians imitated the English — or set before their guests dishes to which they themselves were not accustomed — or which were extra-ordinary. But we have seen that these dishes were not new or unusual to them and it was the whites who imitated the Indians rather.”



“HUCKLEBERRIES”

1. On early maps, the river that flowed past the Reverend [William Blaxton](#)’s home would be labeled “Mr. Blackstone’s River.”



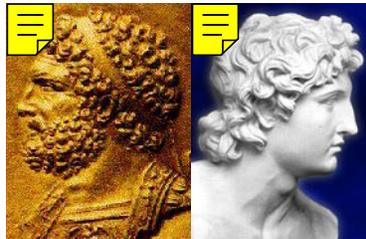
"Everything in life is unusual until you get accustomed to it."
- The Scarecrow, in THE MARVELOUS LAND OF OZ (L. Frank Baum, 1904)



1637

Birth of a 2nd son to *Ousamequin* Yellow Feather the *Massasoit*, whom he named *Metacom*, the brother who would be nicknamed “Phillip” by the amused whites.²

Att the earnest request of Wamsitta, desiring that in regard his father is lately deceased, and hee being desirouse, according to the custome of the natives, to change his name, that the Court would confer an English name upon him, which accordingly they did, and therefore ordered, that for the future hee shalbee called by the name of Allexander Pokanokett; and desiringe the same in the behalfe of his brother, they have named him Phillip.



In this year of *Metacom*'s birth there was a major battle between two groups of Nipmuc at Louisquisset (Loquasuck), which possibly indicates the fork of the Branch River and the *Pawtucket* or *Blackstone River* in what is now *Rhode Island*, or may indicate the vicinity of the villages of Albion and Manville, or may indicate some area farther to the west. Ownership of the territory in question was also in dispute between the Nipmuc and the *Narragansett*.

2. The brothers *Wamsutta* and *Metacom* were nicknamed Alexander (*sic*) and Phillip (*sic*) because the whites were into supplying Native American leaders with offensively grandiloquent and therefore implicitly derogatory names, more or less in the mode in which they were in the habit of condescending to their black *slaves*: such ostentatious names (in the case of black men, names such as “Pompey” or “Caesar”) implicitly gestured toward their low standing in the eyes of the whites, marking them as pretenders, as con artists, warning whites not to take them seriously as human beings or as leaders.

Actually, as might be expected, *Wamsutta* and *Metacom* had a number of brothers and sisters. One sister, called by the English name “Amie,” was the wife of Tuspaquin, headman of the Namaskets. Mention is also made of another son, and also another daughter, of *Ousamequin* Yellow Feather.

1642

Louisquisset (Loquasuck) was purchased by the proprietors of [Providence, Rhode Island](#). The bounds of Providence were set to run from beyond [Pawtucket](#) at the [Blackstone River](#) at Sugar Loaf Hill, to Observation Rock on the bank of the Moshassuck River west of Lonsdale north of Buitt's Bluff, to Absolute Swamp, which is the east bank of the Woonasquatucket River near Louisquisset, to Oxford of the Woonasquatucket (Centerdale), to Hipses Rock just west of Netaconkanut, to Mashapaug, to Sassafras Point on the Bay near the present Rhode Island Yacht Club near [Pawtuxet](#) village. These bounds are said to have been walked together by Miantonomi and the Reverend [Roger Williams](#).





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1676

March 26, Sunday: American attacks were staged on the English settlements at Longmeadow, Marlborough, and Simsbury. Mendon and Wrentham were evacuated. Although the citizens of Marlborough had become war refugees, it was decided that due to the strategic location a garrison of soldiers would need to maintain themselves in a fortified house there.

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

After the Plymouth force had staged its assault on the principal village of the [Narragansett](#) in the Great Swamp near [South Kingstown, Rhode Island](#), the surviving Narragansett –who had to this point been neutral– of necessity had joined with the surviving Wampanoag. That Great Swamp Fight had taken the lives, by some accounts, of some 300 braves and almost 400 women and children. During the following spring the merged groups were seeking their vengeance. Captain Michael Peirce of Scituate led a detachment in pursuit of Miantonomi’s son, the sachem Canonchet, at Quisnicket near [Pawtucket](#), but within the original limits of Bristol County (this happened near what is now Lincoln Woods Park in [Lincoln, Rhode Island](#)). They had marched to Taunton, and then along the Old Seacunke Road to [Rehoboth](#) (East Providence), and then had come north along the east side of the Seekonk. On this day a war party led by chief sachem Canonchet successfully ambushed and overwhelmed Captain Pierce’s company of approximately 63 or 65 Englishmen and 20 native Cape Cod auxiliaries on the banks of the [Blackstone River](#) in present-day [Central Falls](#) somewhere near

Lonsdale, at a ford in the river in a heavily wooded area.³ Several of the native American guides from Cape Cod were able to escape alive by various subterfuges. Actually, it seems the American natives lost more warriors in this fight than the English. Supposedly, nine of the white warriors were captured and would be conveyed to a spot in [Cumberland](#) that now goes under the name “Nine Men’s Misery,” and there killed.⁴



A messenger had been sent to [Providence](#) for aid, before the ambush, but had been, according to tradition, too pious to interrupt a church service in progress when he arrived. After he had waited outside the church for hours while the long service proceeded, his message was too late the relief force being able only to bury the scalped bodies. (A few days later Canonchet would be captured and executed.)

3. It would appear that at least some of the white soldiers who were cut down fighting back-to-back in that “double-double ring” were [Quakers](#) who had abandoned their Peace Testimony for the duration of the race war — because Benjamin Tompson would memorialize them as such in his canto “New-Englands Tears For Her Present Miseries”:

Here Captious ones, without their Queries lie,
The Quaker here, the Presbyterian by,
The Scruple dormant lies of thee and thou,
And most as one to Deaths dominion bow.

Among the fallen fighters whom we imagine probably to have been armed Quakers were:

- Friend Stephen Wing, Jr. of Sandwich
- Friend Samuel Bourman or Bowerman of Barnstable
- Friend John Sprague of Duxbury

THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY

4. According to Sidney Rider the common accounts of the episode are based mainly on legend. For instance, the [Cumberland](#) monument, which happens to be the first ever erected to American white fighters, states that these victims were the “pursued,” as if they had been seeking to avoid this, when actually they were very much the pursuers and had been out looking for a fight. The location now identified by this name on the grounds of the Edward J. Hayden library on Diamond Hill Road is highly questionable as having any relation to the events as they actually happened. Bicknell reports that the skulls of the nine victims were found in the 1960s in the basement of the Rhode Island Historical Society on Brook Street in [Providence](#), where they had been stored after being recovered in an 1800s antiquarian dig.

Among the skulls, that of Benjamin Buckland of Rehoboth was easy to identify, because he (like headman *Taoyateduta* in Minnesota in a subsequent race war) had a double set of teeth.



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May 24, Wednesday: According to the diary of Samuel Sewall,

Wednesday, May, 24, about 10 M., Capt. Davis dies, fever, he had been delirious severall times between while before his death.

Mr. Willard preaches the Lecture.

Mr. Woodrop, Hobart Ger., Nehem. Phips, Weld, Faild, came after lecture and sat with me. God grant we may sit together in heaven.

Captain Thomas Brattle of Boston, with about 50 mounted men and a body of infantry, marched to the [Pawtucket](#) Falls, where, from the eastern bank of the river, they were able to spy a group of natives on the opposite bank in [Rhode Island](#). The horsemen dashed up the river to a fording-place, crossed, and came back to mount a sudden attack. The group, caught between the horsemen on the west bank and the foot soldiers on the east bank, hid in a swamp. Several of them were killed and a boy was captured, with two horses and some guns and ammunition. In this action one horseman was killed and Lieutenant Jacob Elliot was wounded in the hand.

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

1730



At this point, before other towns were set off, there were at least three [Baptist](#) churches within the limits of the town of [Providence, Rhode Island](#): one established in 1706 in that district which was to become the separate community of [Smithfield](#), another established in 1725 in that district which was to become the separate community of [Scituate](#), plus of course the central one in beautiful downtown Providence. In addition there were Baptist churches in Johnston, [Cranston](#), [Pawtucket](#), [Pawtuxet](#), [East Greenwich](#), and perhaps elsewhere. It was at this point, however, that Scituate became a separated town. [Foster](#) was incorporated with Scituate, forming the western section of that township, and would remain such until 1781, when it would be set off as a distinct and separate township.



1788

J.P. Brissot de Warville provided an impression of [Rhode Island](#) as he encountered it.

J.P. BRISSOT DE WARVILLE

In the earliest attempt to manufacture [cotton](#) cloth in [Providence](#), Daniel Anthony, Andrew Dexter, and Lewis Peck constructed a spinning-jenny in a private home on the basis of an English model they found in Beverly, Massachusetts and went into partnership to make “homespun” (this machinery would be moved to the market-house chamber in Providence). They would construct also a carding-machine and a spinning-frame. Joseph Alexander, a native of Scotland, would show them how to set up a loom. They would move the spinning-frame to [Pawtucket](#) so it could operate by water-power, and sell it to [Moses Brown](#) of Providence. None of this machinery worked very well, and William Almy and Smith Brown carried on this business for Moses Brown until it was recognized to be an unprofitable arrangement.⁵

1789

September 13, Sunday: [Samuel Slater](#) embarked from London for the US, carrying trade secrets of textile manufacturing he had learned from observing the operation of machines invented by Arkwright and Hargreaves.



5. Bear in mind that in early periods the Southern states of the United States of America produced no significant amount of [cotton](#) fiber for export — such production not beginning until 1789. In fact, according to page 92 of Seybert’s STATISTICS, in 1784 a small parcel of cotton that had found its way from the US to Liverpool had been refused admission to England, because it was the customs agent’s opinion that this involved some sort of subterfuge: it could not have originated in the United States.

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November 18, Wednesday: Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre was born.

[Samuel Slater](#) arrived in New-York.



December 2, Wednesday: In [Providence](#) and [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#), [cotton](#) from the slave plantations of the American South and from the slave plantations of the West Indies was being woven into cloth for resale to its growers. The operation, run by the merchant [Moses Brown](#), was on a small scale. On this date [Samuel Slater](#),



a young man recently arrived from England after working in cotton spinning mills, applied for a job with Brown. Slater alleged an intimate knowledge of the British thread-spinning machinery: "I flatter myself that I can give the greatest satisfaction in making machinery, making as good yarn, either for stocking or twist, as any that is made in England."



Samuel [Slater] was a stalwart, handsome, rosy-cheeked youth of twenty-one when he came to America. Moses Brown sent him to [Oziel Wilkinson's](#), in Pawtucket, as a suitable place for him to board. When he entered Wilkinson's house Hannah and another of Oziel's daughters were working in the kitchen. Seeing a stranger, girl-like, they fled to an inner room; but Hannah, with maidenly curiosity, looked through a hole in the door and was favorably impressed with the young Englishman's appearance. Samuel saw the eyes and resolved to win them. The young people were both smitten, but the Wilkinsons were [Friends](#) and did not approve of Hannah's marrying a man of another faith. They proposed to send



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her away to school, but Samuel declared he would follow the girl to the ends of the earth if need be. The parents wisely concluded to withdraw their opposition and the lovers were allowed to marry. In the words of Slater's biographer, Hannah was a "lodestone" that kept him in Pawtucket. Had it not been for her influence and sympathy, he might have given away to discouragement at the many difficulties he was obliged to encounter in making the new machines and running them successfully. In telling the story of Slater we must not forget the woman who assisted him in winning his great success. The machines are supposed to have been started up temporarily in October, 1790, but the first record of their work commences with December 20, 1790.

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

QUAKER DISOWNMENT

1791

Colonel Timothy Pickering, Canandaigua lawyer Thomas Morris, the Reverend Kirkland, Horatio Jones, and Jasper Parrish negotiated with native headmen Red Jacket, Cornplanter, and Good Peter (the Indian preacher) and local tribes at New Town point (Elmira, New York). Nearly 500 Senecas encamped at Friend's Landing on Seneca Lake. At the request of Good Peter, "Universal Friend" [Jemimah Wilkinson](#) made an appearance. Her topic was "Have We Not All One Father?" Good Peter's sermon following her sermon, "Universal Friend" requested that his words be interpreted. Good Peter declined to provide this interpretation, commenting succinctly "if she is Christ, she knows what I said."

Following this conference, a delegation of Seneca headmen set out to visit President George Washington at the nation's capital, Philadelphia.

Noting "the great advantages which had resulted to Boston from the bank established there," [Moses Brown](#) and [John Brown](#) helped a group of wealthy merchants found, and John served as the chief executive officer, and Moses served as a director of, the first bank in [Rhode Island](#), incorporated in [Providence](#) and named the "Providence." (During June 1865 this institution would be reorganized as a national bank and renamed the "Providence National Bank.")

Four guys –[Samuel Slater](#), and a woodworker, and an elderly black employee of the merchant [Moses Brown](#), and the ironmaster [David Wilkinson](#) of Slater Mill in [Pawtucket](#) (meaning "waterfall") near North Providence, – bankrolled by a 5th guy, said Friend Moses, and using the water power of the [Blackstone River](#), with children working his "spinning jennies" in the production of yarn made of [cotton](#) from slave plantations, were at this point able to begin the farming out the large quantities of manufactured yarn to local women who were to work in their homes for piecework wages, weaving this yarn into cloth on consignment. The English thread-spinning technology had been duplicated entirely from Slater's memory.

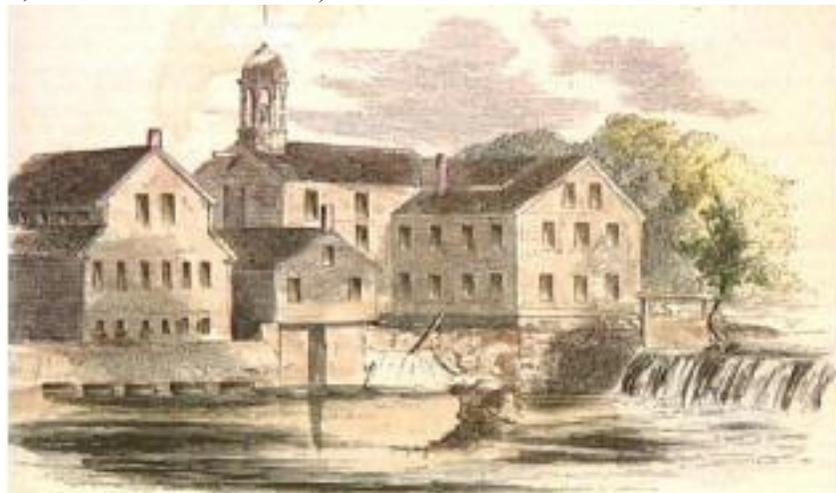
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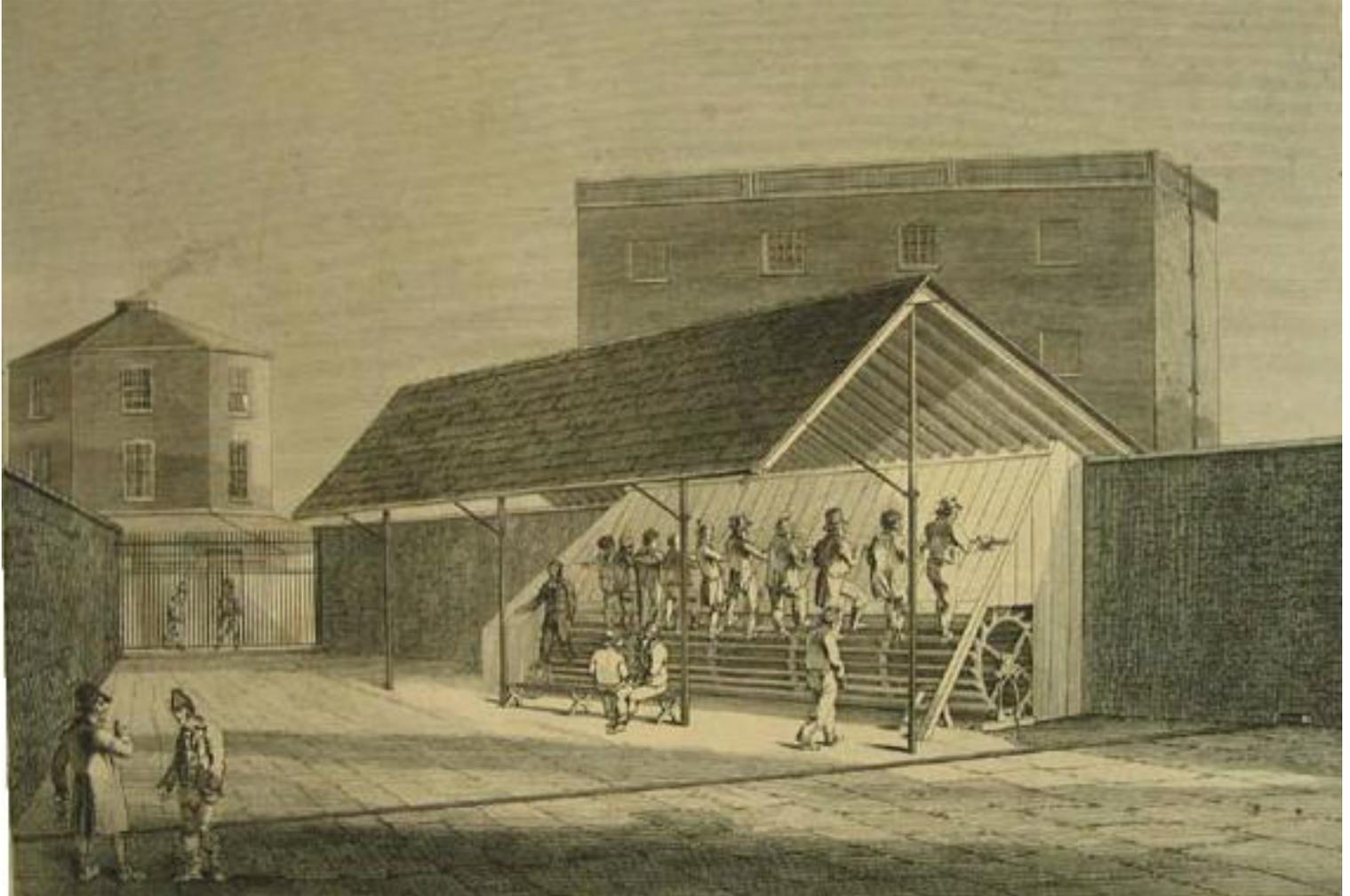
This mill would begin to operate satisfactorily as soon as they had made a correction in the slope of the carder teeth he had specified.



(Obviously, our Bill of Rights was arriving, in this former colony that had been the very last to ratify the Constitution, not one instant too soon. :-)



Water power would replace at least for the most part the brute labor that had been being provided by animal and human treadmills:



(The treadmill illustrated above was one in use for punishment at the Brixton House of Correction in 1821. Prisoners walked the treadmill for ten minutes and then had a five minute breather. Talking was forbidden. Although the treadmill at Coldbath Fields prison drove a flour-mill, in other prisons the power produced was not utilized. Of course, in factories the treadmill was not for punishment and the power was always utilized.)



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Mr. [Samuel Slater](#) was able to get his hands on eight children between the ages of 7 and 12 as his first work crew in his factory at Slater Mills, to tend his water-powered carding and spinning machines — machines which were utterly lacking in any safety guards over their power belts and pulleys. Clearly, the only families which would put their children to this sort of dangerous labor were families which were desperate to get food on their table and shelter over their heads. Get this, such children might otherwise be destitute and victimizable! Slater made no agreements that these children, who should have been in school, would be trained as apprentices in any craft: they were not indentured to learn a lifetime skill, but were to be mere low-wage machine fodder without a future, in his dark Satanic mill. You can visit this mill today. It's right off the freeway but now it is deceptively lovely and lonely and silent there. There is nothing whatever about the place which might cause child abuse to spring to one's mind.

Get ready, here comes the unholy alliance of “the lords of the lash and the lords of the loom”!
By 1810 the United States would boast 87 such cotton mills, able to provide employment for 4,000 workers, some 3,500 of whom would be women and children who might otherwise be destitute and victimizable.⁶

We owe so much to technology and the profit motive! (Don't let Adam Smith's invisible hand slap you in the face. :-)

White imitation slaves are infinitely superior to black real ones, because there's never any agitation to [emancipate](#) the imitation white ones — if they get old or sick or get caught in the machinery and injure themselves, you can just tell them to get lost!

By 1796 there would be three forges, a tanning mill, three snuff mills, an oil mill, a clothiers works, three fulling mills and two nail mills, at this falls on the [Pawtucket](#) River, all being run by water power rather than muscle power. Human workers were being allowed to use their brains rather than their brawn — isn't that superior?

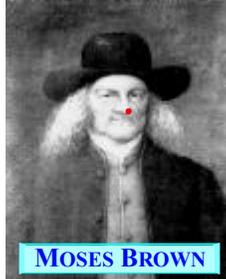
6. As [Friend Moses Brown, Rhode Island](#)'s premiere industrialist, had pointed out,

“As the manufactory of the mill yarn is done by children from 8 to 14 years old it is a near total saving of labor to the country.”

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November 12, Saturday: [Moses Brown](#) and [Oziel Wilkinson](#) registered their deed to an irregular plot of seven acres,



bearing two dwelling houses, a barn, and a corncrib, with water rights (this is the essential phrase: “with water rights”), on the bank of the [Blackstone River](#) next to the steepest waterfall there, where [Samuel Slater](#)’s mill was to be constructed.



Although now this land is part of the town of [Pawtucket](#) (the town’s name meaning “waterfall”), the two capitalists registered their deed as then part of North [Providence](#). The price paid had been “\$350 Spanish mill

dollars” and Brown owned three shares in the property to Wilkinson’s one share.



RHODE ISLAND





1794

In New York, John Stevens demonstrated a steamboat.

David Wilkinson, a son of [Oziel Wilkinson](#), in company with Elijah Ormsbee, also built a steamboat, in which they made a trip of three and a half miles, from Winsor's Cove to [Providence, Rhode Island](#). They did not seem impressed with the idea that the scheme could be made of practical value and after their "frolic" (as Wilkinson called it) was over, they dismantled the boat. In the course of his reminiscences, sent, in after years, to the society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry, Wilkinson says that while they were engaged in the construction of this steamboat a young man from Connecticut, who gave the name of Daniel French, came to his shop in [Pawtucket](#), and asked and obtained leave to look over the steamboat. He examined everything carefully, and seemed greatly interested. Many years afterward, while riding by rail from Utica to Albany, Mr. Wilkinson says, he fell into a conversation with a gentleman regarding Fulton's steamboat, and the gentleman declared that Fulton never would have succeeded had he not kept an ingenious Connecticut Yankee locked in for several weeks to draw plans for him. On inquiring the name of the Connecticut Yankee, Mr. Wilkinson was told it was "Daniel French."

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

1799

Samuel Patch was born to Greenleaf Patch, a ne'er-do-well opportunist prone to "[drunkenness](#) and melancholy," and Abigail McIntire Patch, an unfortunate young woman from a respectable rural family. The Patches would be forced to move around on the edge of poverty and eventually would need to settle in woebegone [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#). There they would send this son Samuel whom they had not bothered to baptize, at age 7 or 8, not to school but into a monotonous and dangerous cotton mill perched on the edge of the falls of the Blackstone River ([Samuel Slater's](#) White Mill, before its expansion). Eventually the lad would become a boss spinner, working the spinning mule. After hours, in his late teens, he and others would enjoy jumping off a bridge and a high rooftop into a pool of aerated or "soft" water at the base of Pawtucket Falls. He would become known by a renown catchphrase, "Some things can be done as well as others."⁷

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

[Henry Thoreau](#) would at least implicitly mention [Sam Patch](#) in [WALDEN](#), by deploying the expression "maggot in his head," an idiom that had in fact been coined in order to describe Sam:



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WALDEN: Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no self-respect, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

LAFAYETTE
SAM PATCH

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.

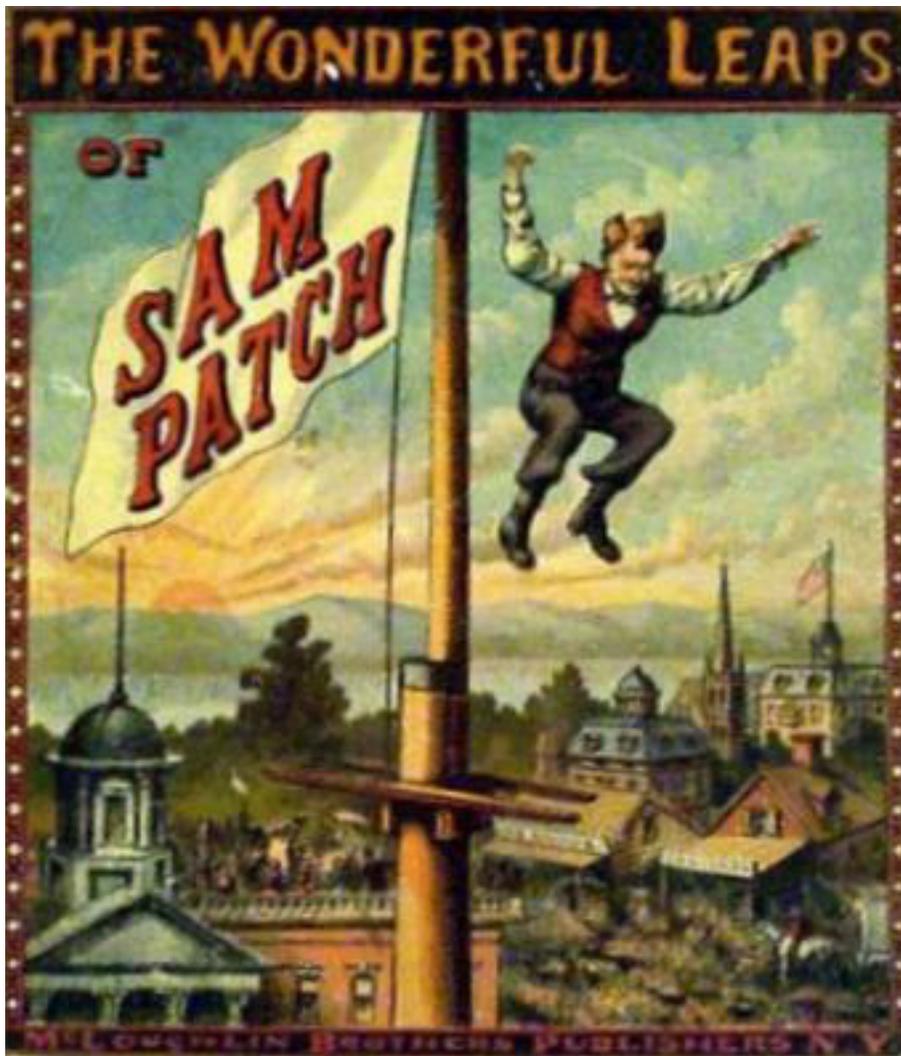
READ THE ENTIRE PIECE OF DOGGEREL

- 7. Paul E. Johnson's [SAM PATCH](#), THE FAMOUS JUMPER (NY: Hill & Wang).



1807

➡ The Patch family (Mayo Greenleaf Patch and Abigail McIntire Patch, with their children Polly, Greenleaf, Nabby, Samuel, and Isaac) moved on, from Marblehead MA to [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#). It would have been at this point that at age 7 or 8, [Sam Patch](#), instead of being sent to school, would be sent into the monotonous and dangerous cotton mill perched on the edge of the falls of the Blackstone River. Eventually he would become a boss spinner, working the spinning mule. After hours, in his late teens, he and others would enjoy jumping off a bridge and a high rooftop into a pool of aerated or “soft” water at the base of Pawtucket Falls. He would become known by a renown catchphrase, “Some things can be done as well as others.”



(Life is, after all, the art of the possible. Life wasn't being especially kind to Sam but he would be making the best of it that he could.)



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 A flood washed away all the minor mills on the [Blackstone River](#). It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good: water rights on this river would be available for purchase, for more modern uses such as to drive factory machinery.

 April: [Abigail McIntire Patch](#) and her daughter [Molly Patch](#) were baptized at the 1st Baptist Church in [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#).

1809

 [Nicholas Brown, Jr.](#) established the largest [cotton](#) manufactory in the USA, on the [Blackstone River](#).

1810

By this point there were over 100 mills along the Blackstone River outside Providence similar to the cotton mill set up in 1791 by Samuel Slater and Friend Moses Brown.⁸ The amount of money the Rhode Island



Friends had set aside for Quaker education had at this point grown to nearly \$8,000.

Henry A. Howland of Providence was keeping careful track of his life.

HENRY A. HOWLAND

8. That sounds just hunky-dory, but on the downside, these alterations being made in the Blackstone River were, as one might imagine, destroying its migrating and spawning fish. ("You can never do just one thing.")

1812

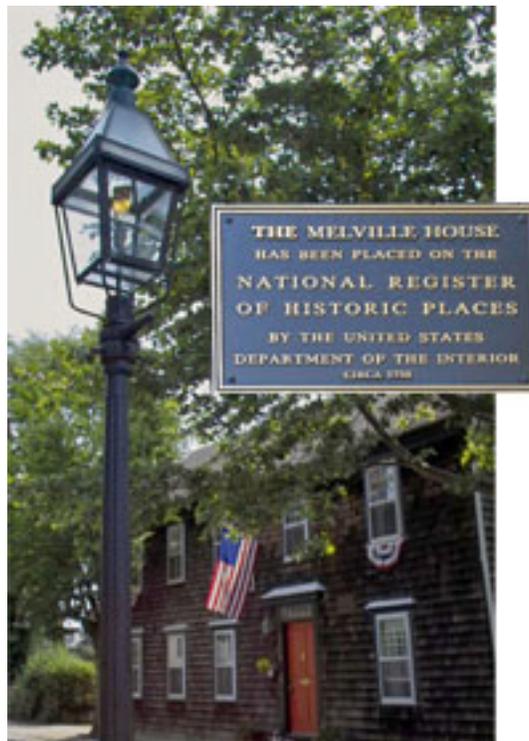
➡ John Lauris Blake received an AB degree at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

Henry Cogswell Knight, graduating from Brown University, described Rhode Island.

HENRY COGSWELL KNIGHT

The National Light and Heat Company was founded. The first coal-gas street lighting would begin two years later.

David Melville was in this year lighting his home in Newport, and the street itself, and his factory in Pawtucket, by means of coal gas. This was attracting considerable attention.



➡ The Pawtucket Engine Company No. 2 of volunteer firemen was founded (the village of Pawtucket was then a part of the town of Seekonk, Massachusetts, which included the area that would eventually become East Providence, Rhode Island). The bylaws of this association required:

Whenever fire is cryed each member shall repair immediately to the place where the Engine is kept and assist in collecting the apparatus and convey the Engine to the fire, and after the fire



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is extinguished every member of the Company shall return with the Engine to the place where it is kept, and assist in putting it up in its place in proper order, on failure Thereof to pay a fine of fifty cents.

 In [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#), [Mayo Greenleaf Patch](#) abandoned his wife and children.

1815

 The Reverend [John Lauris Blake](#), a Congregational minister, had become interested in the Episcopal Church. In this year Bishop Griswold ordained him as a deacon of the Episcopal Church. Soon he would organize a parish in [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#) which would be called St. Paul's Church.

1817

 July 1, Tuesday: New President James Monroe, after visiting points of interest in [Providence, Rhode Island](#), and touring the "original cotton mill" at [Pawtucket](#), proceeded toward [Boston](#).



1823



October 7, Tuesday: The volunteer firemen of the Pawtucket Engine Company No. 2 (the village of Pawtucket was then a part of the town of Seekonk, Massachusetts, which included the area that would eventually become East Providence, Rhode Island) “retired in good order after partaking of some excellent brandy and rum presented by Mr. J. Burbank when he was honorably discharged from the Company.”

In Newport, Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

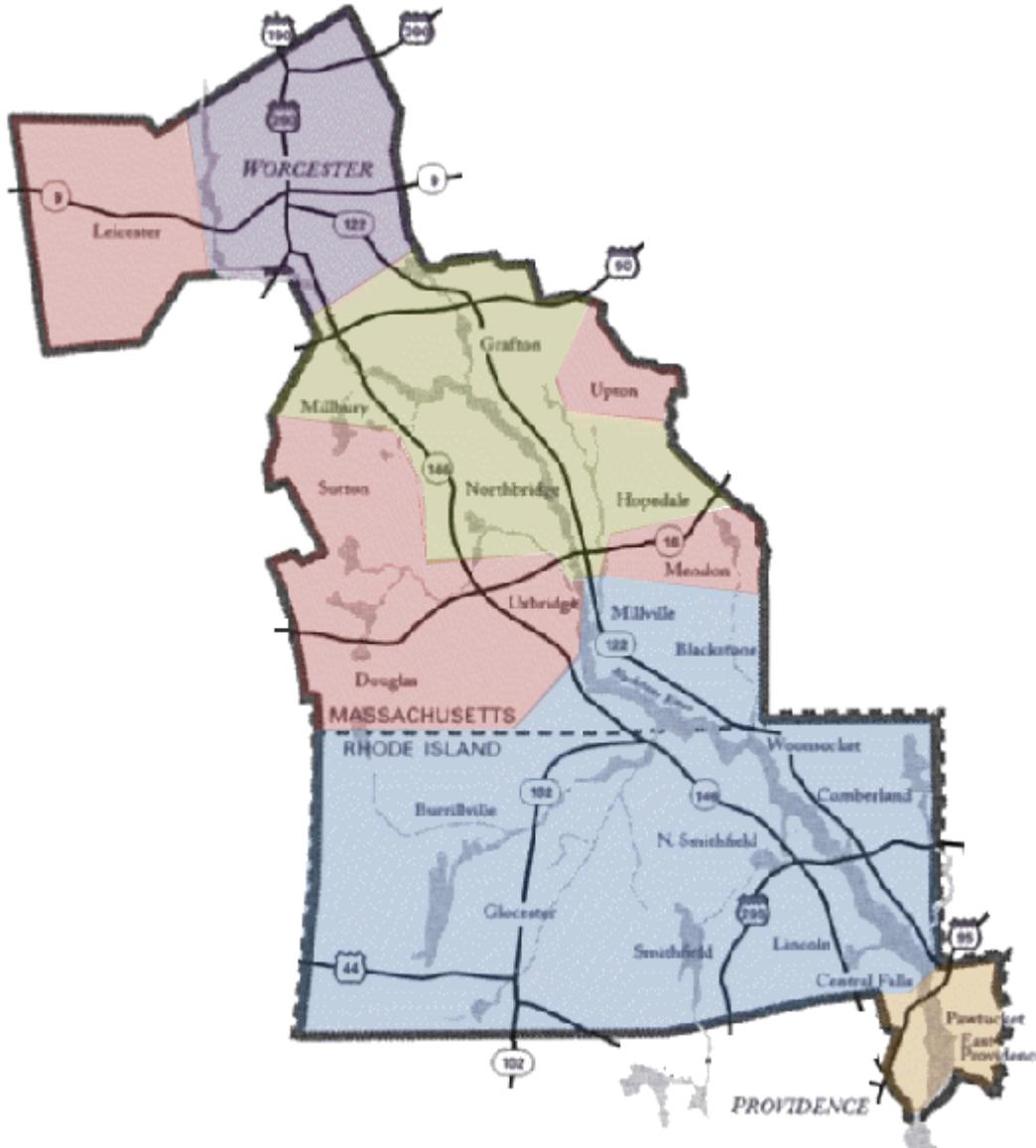
3rd day 7 of 10 M / This Afternoon we attended the funeral of Mary Lee wife of Robert P Lee. She is a young woman whose loss is much lamented, of an Amiable & innocent life, cut short at the Age of 26 years & married one Year & about ten Months. - early in life she was Baptized in Water, according to the Sabatarian Society, but at her Marriage with R P Lee she was Satisfied to attend Friends Meeting with him. The funeral was conducted according to the order of Friends & her remains were interd in the upper burying place in the Medow Field. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



1824

 The [Blackstone Canal](#) was being dug by hand. It would be completed in 1828 and would remain in operation until 1843. Sections can still be seen along the foot of Smith Street at Canal Street, and in the northwest corner of the North Burial ground off North Main Street, and alongside Lorraine Mills off Mineral Spring Avenue in [Providence, Rhode Island](#). The best preserved rural section is north of Ashton (Quinnville, Lincoln) to Lonsdale. Only two of the original 49 locks on the original 45 miles of this canal yet remain (not, of course, operational), in Uxbridge and in Millville, Massachusetts.



A charter was issued for the Morris Canal. The Pennsylvania state legislature appointed a [canal](#) commission — the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Internal Improvements in the Commonwealth.

A survey of the proposed Rideau [Canal](#) was carried out by the Royal Engineers.



THE BLACKSTONE OR

PAWTUCKET RIVER

The Chesapeake and Ohio [Canal](#) Company was formed.

Ohio retained Judge David Stanhope Bates to survey two of Geddes' routes, which will become the Ohio and Erie [Canal](#) and the Miami and Erie [Canal](#).

Construction began on New Jersey's Morris [Canal](#).

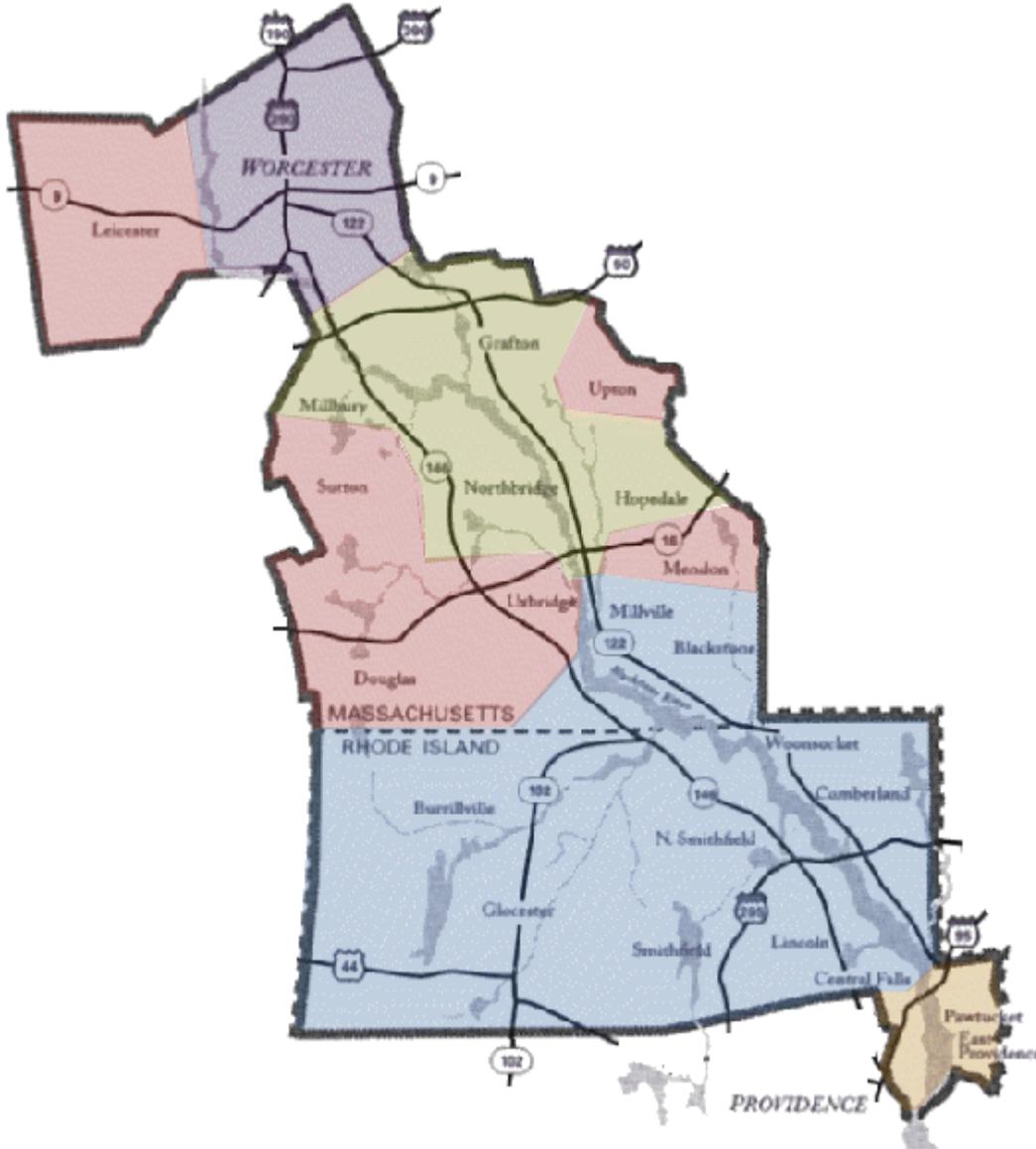
Horatio Allen became a resident engineer on the Chesapeake and Delaware [Canal](#).

Justus Post and Rene Paul recommend five possibilities for a [canal](#) between Lake Michigan and the Illinois River.

The US Supreme Court, in Gibbons v. Ogden, gave the Federal government control of all US rivers — the first of the Rivers and Harbors acts.

1826

Construction began on the Millville, Massachusetts lock of the [Blackstone Canal](#).





1827

 July 14, Saturday, dawn: A [duel](#) took place just off the [Providence/Pawtucket](#) turnpike, about a mile into the countryside to the east of [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#). The participants, their seconds, and their surgeons had two days earlier arrived by stage from [Boston](#). Both duelists were speaking French and we have no clue as to their quarrel. They fired pistols at each other at a distance of nine feet (the usual distance for a pistol duel was “ten paces,” amounting I suppose to some 25 feet). One of them suffered a leg wound whereupon the other made haste to the docks of [Providence](#) and boarded that morning’s packet for New-York.

1828

 October 7, Tuesday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

3rd day 7 of 10 M / The day has been pleasant & this Afternoon my frd Wm Jenkins called to see me yet it is the first time I have seen him since he returned from his important mission to Ohio on the yearly Meeting committee of Conference - We sympathized with each other, & I did most feelingly & sincerely so with him in his sufferings bodily & mentally both while on the journey to Ohio & while attending that Y Meeting. - And his experience I trust is greatly enlarged & I have no doubt he has deepened in the root of Truth. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

THE BLACKSTONE OR

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Isaiah Thomas (1749-1831), “the first American capitalist of the printing business,” witnessed the 1st canal barge from Providence, Rhode Island arriving at its Worcester dock at Thomas Street, on property which he personally had donated to the city.

The barge that was the 1st to travel the entire length of the new waterway opening up the center of Massachusetts was the *Lady Carrington*. One official guest had fallen overboard and had had to be rescued with a boat hook. The Blackstone Canal’s depth was a minimum of 3½ feet, and it descended 451½ feet by way of a series of 62 locks to its outlet in Providence. Until this canal opened, it cost more to freight Boston

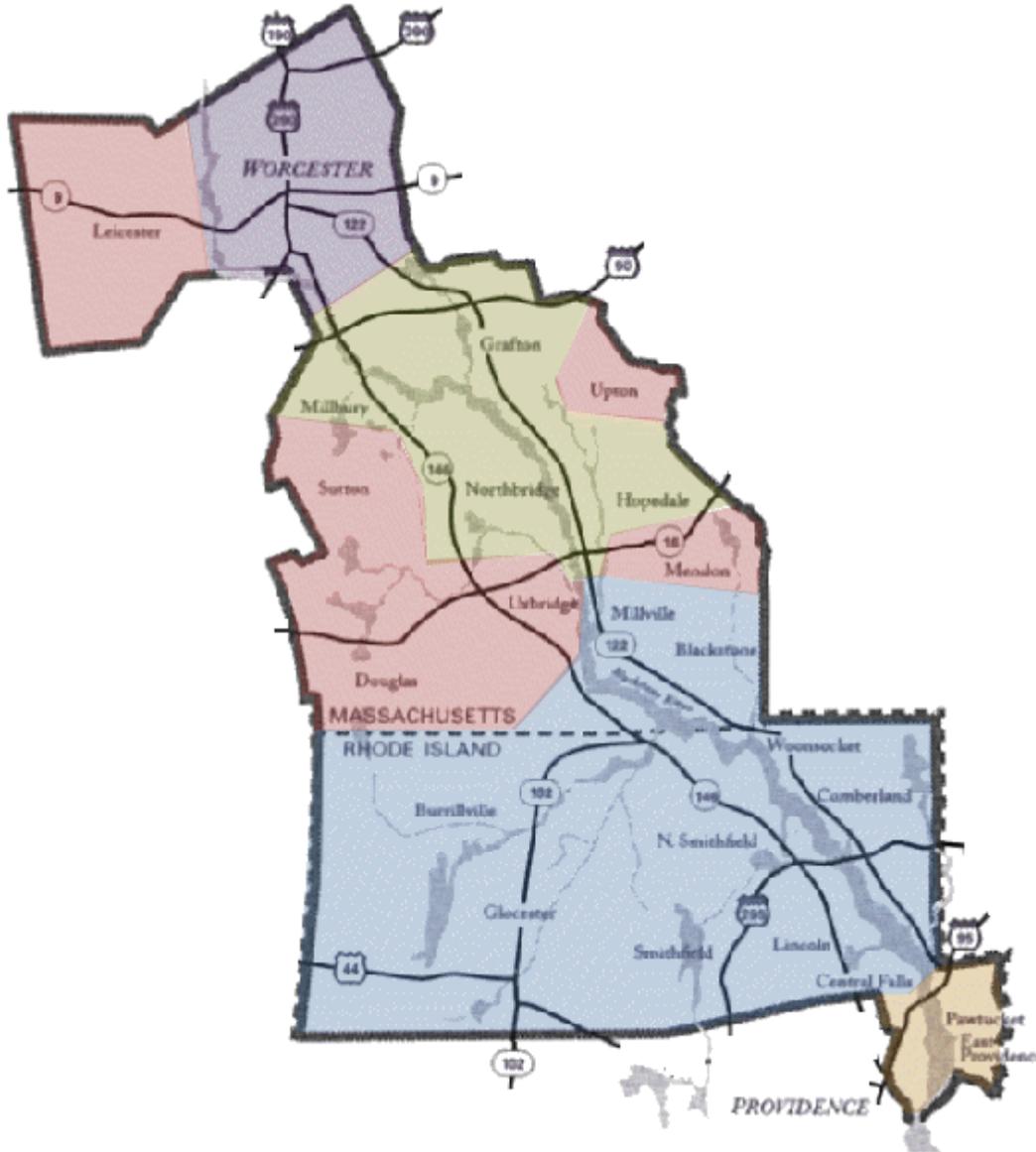


goods 40 miles overland to Worcester than it did to ship them the 3,000 miles across the Atlantic to Liverpool,

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PAWTUCKET RIVER

England. The new canal was 45 miles long.

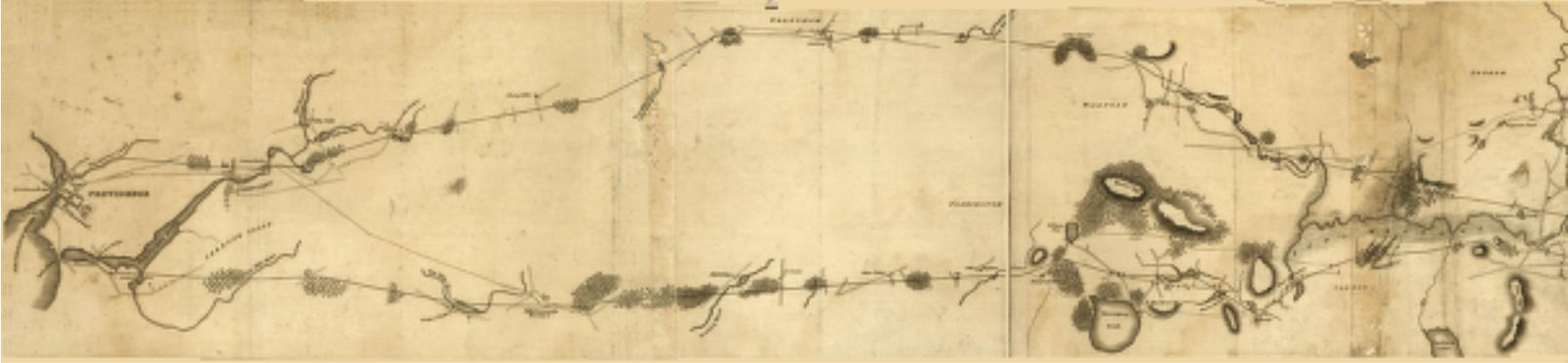


There not being enough water in the [Blackstone River](#) watershed to supply both the canal and the mills along the way, a river mill faction would dump boulders into the canal and a canal faction would conspire to burn down mills. (What a coup! —Providence would be a commerce winner for 19 entire years, until the steam-powered railroad which was just being proposed, and its route explored, would come along in 1835 and

THE BLACKSTONE OR

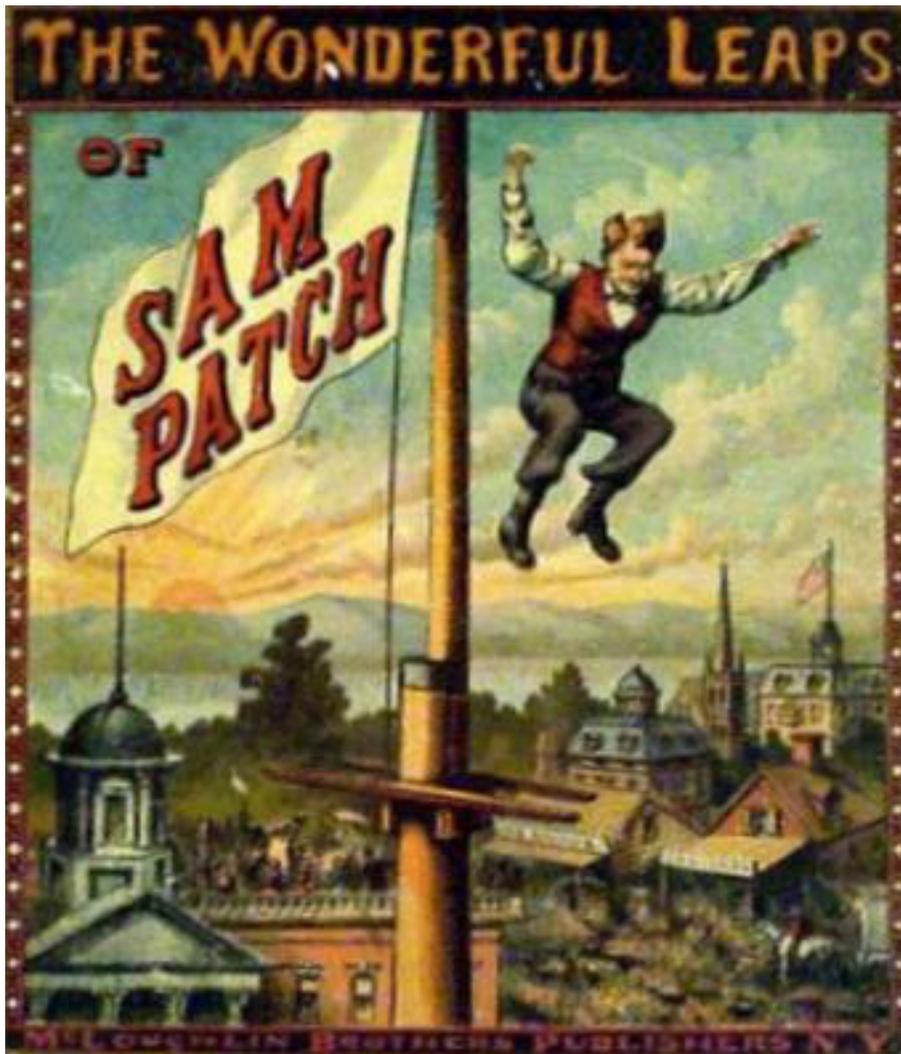
PAWTUCKET RIVER

instantly obsolete the old mills along the river, and this canal and its single terminus.)



1829

➡ November 21, Saturday: New-York's The Constellation commented that Sam Patch was "indisputably the most distinguished man of his day, with the exception of Miss Fanny Wright." The Providence, Rhode Island Daily Advertiser outed Sam by revealing that he had been doing honest work for a day's pay as a mule spinner in a mill in Pawtucket "until his vaulting ambition o'r-lept itself and the loss of his life has been the consequence."



Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

7th day 21st of 11 M 1829 / It is one year this day of the week, & of the Month, tomorrow, Sice we left our home in Newport & arrived at this house early in the Afternoon. - We commemorate the day & on looking back feel abundant cause of gratitude - in that we have been favoured to get along (at least) pretty well - no very thorny parth has fallen to our lot & yet we have not



THE BLACKSTONE OR

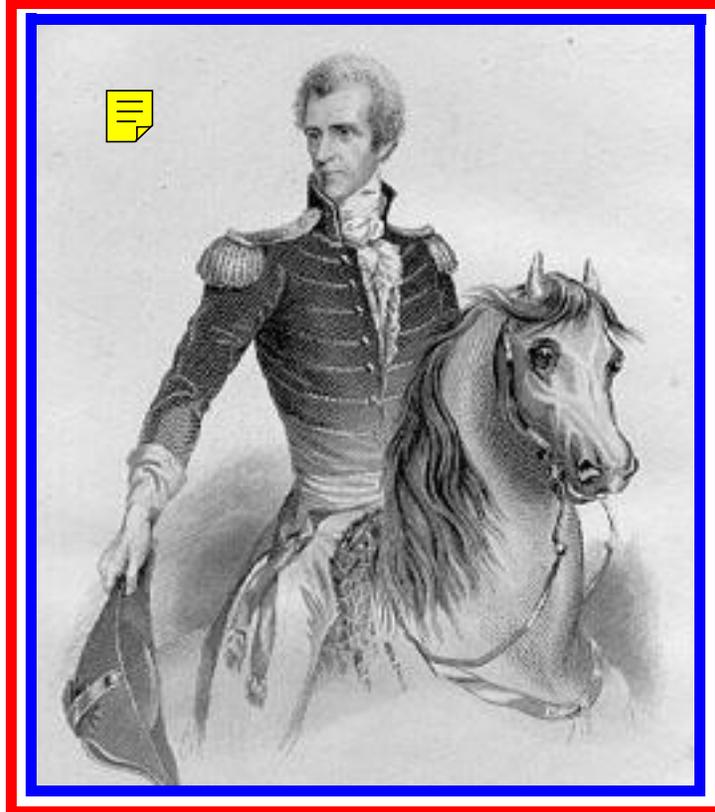
PAWTUCKET RIVER

*been devoid of trials –
The Year has been passed as pleasantly as generally falls to the
lot of Mortals & if we can finish our course here as well as we
have begun it we may well count ourselves as highly favoured. –
May we ascribe all to the Goodness & Mercy of Him who was with
Moses in the Bush. –*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

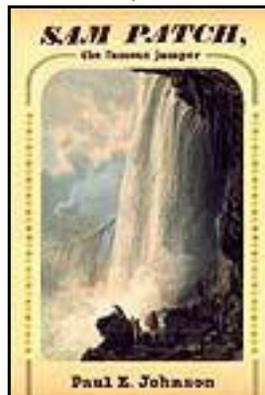
1833

June: The city of Philadelphia presented President Andrew Jackson with a white horse. He was immediately limned, astride this animal, by Ralph Eleaser Whiteside Earl.



This horse was named, or he named it, "Sam Patch," after the famous Pawtucket, Rhode Island "jumper," and it would become his favorite.⁹ He would ride it every morning at the Hermitage during his retirement. When the horse eventually would die, its body would be buried at the Hermitage with full military honors. This

9. Paul E. Johnson's SAM PATCH, THE FAMOUS JUMPER (NY: Hill & Wang).





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happens to be is one Sam Patch's, but not the other Sam Patch's, gravestone (and from the dates on this inscription you ought to be able to figure out for yourself, whether it marks the buried body of the man, who received no funeral, or the buried body of the horse, which was buried with full military honors):



President Jackson also made himself during this year the first American president to ride on a railroad train (the Baltimore & Ohio RR, completed in 1830) — the first American president, that is, other than the presidents of the various railroad companies.

During this year, also, “Long Knife” Jackson stopped by Norwich, Connecticut to dedicate a memorial to Uncas, the man who had inspired [James Fenimore Cooper](#)'s THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS. Next to the stone commemorating the sachem, there are stones for the sachem's grandchildren — so much for this romantic idea that Uncas was the end of his line! —Perhaps it was just a fantasy, perhaps this was just what the white man secretly wanted?

The Compromise Tariff Act, written by Henry Clay, was passed by the United States Congress, and signed into law by President Jackson. The law was meant to resolve the bitter conflict concerning “nullification,” inspired by the Tariff of Abominations (1828), between industrialists in the north and cotton exporters of the South. It stipulated that by 1842, no tariff was to exceed 20%.

President Jackson pursued the banking system with a vengeance. During this year he forced the removal of the federal deposits from the national bank vaults, distributing them among a select group of “pet banks,” a move that led the Senate to adopt formal resolutions censuring his actions as arbitrary and unconstitutional. Excessive retrenchment by the bank's president, Nicholas Biddle, created a financial depression in 1834 sufficient to win Jackson another victory over a new opposition party, the Whigs, which in the congressional elections of 1834 represented themselves as the combined forces of all anti-Jacksonians protesting the tyrannies of “King Andrew I.” Jackson was equally successful in foreign affairs. In 1830 a long dispute with Britain had been ended with the reopening of British West Indian ports to American commerce. France would be brought to heel in 1836 after resisting payment of spoliation claims dating from 1815, and in 1837, Jackson would formally recognized the independence of Texas, although he would resist attempts at annexation in order to avoid splitting the Democratic party on the slavery question. Jackson's last months in office would be clouded by the consequences of his destruction of the national bank. That would be followed by wildcat expansion of paper money, land speculation, and inflation, which Jackson would attempt to halt with the Specie Circular of 1836, requiring payment of federal obligations in gold or silver. This measure likely would help precipitate the Panic of 1837, but by that time Jackson would have yielded office to his successor, Van Buren, whose victory in 1836 over a disorganized Whig party would be in large measure a testimony to the political invincibility of his patron.

1834



At the institution of higher education which would become [Brown University](#), the original College Edifice of 1770, which is on the right in the postcard image below, had been supplemented in 1822 by the Hope College structure on the left. In this year Manning Hall was being added, between these two edifices.)



A [Providence](#) lawyer named [Thomas Dorr](#) was elected to the [Rhode Island](#) legislature.



READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

At this point the [Providence, Rhode Island Baptists](#) renovated their meetinghouse, removing the 126 square pews on the main floor. They tore out the old pulpit and sounding board and installed a pulpit having long slips.

[Zachariah Allen](#) invented an automatic steam-engine cutoff.

A facetious monody on [Sam Patch](#) of [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#) was issued by Robert C. Sands in his



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WRITINGS, in volume 2, on page 347.



Robert C. Sands

ROBERT C. SANDS

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 May 20, Tuesday: Students smashed the furniture of the Greek recitation room at [Harvard College](#), and later that day they stoned dormitory windows.

Abba Alcott had a miscarriage and came close to dying. [Bronson Alcott](#) moved back in with his family.

Once did I wander a little way from the Kingdom of Heaven, but childhood's sweet and holy voice hath recalled me, and now I am one with them in this same Kingdom, a child redeemed.



[Lafayette](#) died in Paris. At his order, trunkloads of soil he had brought back from Bunker Hill would be used to top off his grave.¹⁰ Whence [Henry Thoreau](#)'s sarcasm:

WALDEN: Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no self-respect, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

LAFAYETTE
SAM PATCH



10. Hence the WWI slogan which is sometimes translated as "Lafayette, you are icky." :-)



Americans would learn of their French hero's death on June 19th:

civilized world to mourn the loss of a great patriot and a good man. The following we copy from the Liverpool Journal:

DEATH OF LAFAYETTE.

General Lafayette died on Tuesday morning at five o'clock. The close of his earthly career is an event which will be duly recorded in the history of France. During the last 15 years of his life he was the only individual alive who had taken a leading part, and figured in a conspicuous manner, in the event of the first revolution. His political career is so well known, that it would be hardly necessary to enter into any thing like an account of it here. Up to his last hour he retained the fullest possession of his mental faculties. The infirmities of age had only visited his physical frame. Both he and his intimate friends had perceived many months ago that he had begun to sink. The decay of nature, however, was more rapid with him than it had threatened when its first decided symptoms became visible. The venerable General was born on the 1st of September, 1757, and consequently wanted little more than three months to complete the age of 77. The wonderful scenes in both the New World and Old, in which the name of Lafayette was prominently distinguished, are among the most remarkable in the annals of mankind, and no man ever (without entering into abstract opinions on political doctrines) that history does not in all her records possess a name which has passed through the searching ordeal of public opinion, even in the darkest and most tempestuous times, more pure and unsullied than his whose death his country is called upon to deplore. The Chamber of Deputies paid him on Monday the distinguished compliment of sending in its name to inquire after the state of his health.



Where would [Henry Thoreau](#) get the idiom “maggot in his head” that he would use in [WALDEN](#) in regard to patriotism? He would get it from a bit of doggerel published in this year by Seba Smith about [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#)’s famous “jumper,” [Sam Patch](#):

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.

[READ THE ENTIRE PIECE OF DOGGEREL](#)

[PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN](#)

1835



In [Providence](#) and [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#)’s mills were rapidly developing. In this year 55% of the workers were children. (Such child abuse would not be outlawed until the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.) The Children’s Friend Society, an orphanage for white children only, was established.

[Zachariah Allen](#) had built mills in North [Providence](#) and Smithfield, close to existing turnpikes. During the depression of 1835 he set out to reduce the insurance premium on his [Rhode Island](#) mills by making property improvements that would minimize the chance of fire loss. At that time, insurance premium increases for losses were shared among all insureds, regardless of individual loss history. Although widely accepted today, the concept of loss prevention and control was virtually unheard of at the time. To Allen, a proactive approach to preventing losses made good economic sense. After making considerable improvements to his mill, Allen requested a reduction in his premium, but was denied. He called upon other local textile mill owners who shared his loss prevention philosophy to create a mutual insurance company that would insure only “good risk” factories. (Today, these are known as highly protected risks, or HPR properties.) This would result in fewer losses, he reasoned, and hence, smaller premium payments. Whatever premium remained at the end of the year would be returned to policyholders in the form of dividends. Sold on the concept, the group agreed, and by year’s end, formed the Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Company, the oldest predecessor of FM Global. During the company’s first 14 years, the mill owners and mutual policyholders of Manufacturers Mutual enjoyed an average 50% reduction in premium compared with what other insurance companies were charging. As Allen predicted, proper fire prevention methods, monitored by regular fire inspections for mill policyholders, resulted in fewer losses. Despite its initial success, one problem remained for the pioneer



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mutual insurance company: a single mutual insurance company could not withstand the financial cost of the loss of an entire plant. More capacity was needed, so in 1848, Allen formed another mutual insurance company, Rhode Island Mutual. In 1850, Boston Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Company, the third-oldest FM Global predecessor, was created when Allen convinced a Boston merchant with significant cotton-mill ownership to form his own mutual insurance company with like-minded Boston mill owners. Throughout the next 20 years, other mutual insurance companies were added to the group roster. Together, these companies and the ones that later evolved soon became known as the Associated Factory Mutual Fire Insurance Companies, or the Factory Mutuals, for short. The Factory Mutuals' loss record was enviable; losses were less frequent and less severe than those experienced by most other non-mutual insurers. Losses were examined to determine how they were caused and what could have been done to prevent them from occurring. Inspection teams even examined non-policyholder losses to help increase the Factory Mutuals' knowledge base. This vital loss information helped identify specific industry hazards and was essential to developing loss control recommendations for policyholders with similar occupancies. Such information was shared among all the Factory Mutual (FM) insurance companies, and was particularly critical to the inspection teams, which were staffed separately by each individual company. Nearly two centuries after Zachariah Allen's "simple" premise of making property improvements to reduce risk, FM Global has emerged as an international property insurance and loss prevention engineering leader with more than US\$7 billion in assets, US\$3+ billion in policyholders' surplus, and the resources to serve clients in more than 100 countries.

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 Reformers in [Northampton](#) began a local antislavery society, and soon ran afoul of the town’s summer tourist trade, which catered to, among others, vacationing Southerner [slaveholders](#) — accompanied of course, it need hardly be mentioned, by their personal servants. One of the town’s two newspapers would lead a violent opposition to this antislavery society, nor was the other newspaper at all friendly toward them. Just to make certain that they understood that their racial attitudes were not welcome among neighbors, their meetings would periodically be disrupted.

The death knell was rung for the recently dug [Blackstone Canal](#), as a railroad began to connect the town to other towns.



Construction of a couple of America’s 1st railroad stations, a small doric Temple carrying the track through a colonnade in Lowell MA, and, in [Boston](#), the terminus of the Boston & Lowell RR. Boston’s first powered railroad was the Boston and Worcester, a 45-mile track with four trains pulling “burthen” carriages per day each way (these “burthen” cars tolling that knell, of course, for the [Middlesex Canal](#)), plus each noon one mixed train containing passenger coaches as well.

1838

On the other side of the globe, the new viceroy in Canton, [China](#) was destroying the illegal [opium](#) imports of the British East India Company, a total of 2,640,000 pounds of suspicious vegetable substances, and in consequence Britain was going on the warpath, seizing [Hong Kong](#), forcing trade concessions, and garnering much loot. Meanwhile, in [Rhode Island](#), the governor was William Sprague II and [Perry Davis](#) was removing



from Westport, Massachusetts to [Pawtucket](#) and then to Taunton, Massachusetts while engaged in the development of his invention, of a mill for grinding grain. In Taunton he would fall ill and would study the effects of certain drugs upon the human system, and he would experiment in the various uses of these drugs, mostly [ethanol](#) and [opiates](#), until he became able to concoct a dose capable of curing his own maladies. This Mr. Davis would later vend the following story: "I told my wife that she could not expect to have me with her much longer. A cold settled on my lungs. A hard cough ensued, with pains in my side. My stomach soon became sore, my digestive organs became weak, consequently my appetite failed; my kidneys had become affected. The canker in my mouth became troublesome.... I searched the globe in my mind's eye for a cure during my illness and selected the choicest gums and healing herbs. These were carefully compounded creating a medicine to soothe the nerves and a balm to heal the body. I commenced using my new discovered

medicine with no hope other than handing me gently to the grave.”



→ June 18, Monday: Representative John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts continued his speech before the US House of Representatives, on the expansive topic of [Texas](#), for a 4th day.

Having undergone a total of four blasphemy trials, and Massachusetts Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw having come to the opinion that the Commonwealth was obligated to protect its citizens against “an intended design to calumniate and disparage the Supreme Being, and to destroy the veneration due to him,” the convicted atheist and blasphemer Abner Kneeland was consigned to 60 days in the [Boston](#) lockup. (Presumably while there he was of incredible benefit to other prisoners, by instructing them in the tenets of Universalist doctrine.) Presumably it was while he was there that he prepared A REVIEW OF THE TRIAL, CONVICTION, AND FINAL IMPRISONMENT IN THE COMMON JAIL OF THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK OF ABNER KNEELAND FOR THE ALLEGED CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY. The Reverend [William Ellery Channing](#) put together a petition for his pardon based

HDT

WHAT?

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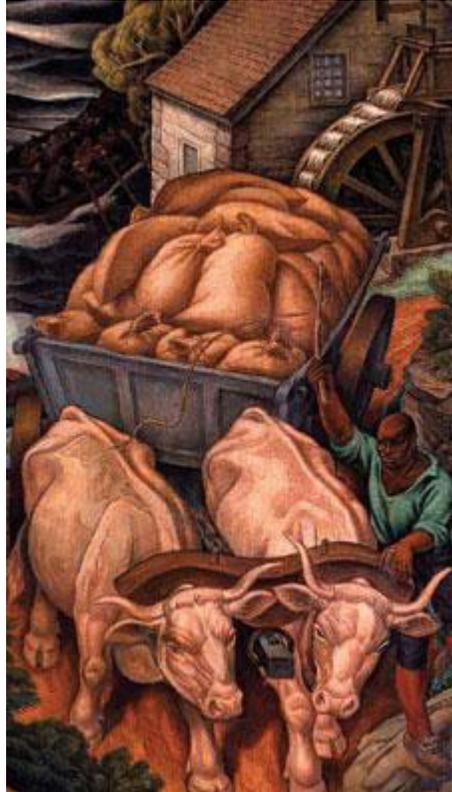
upon the principles of freedom of speech and press, which was signed by many prominent people, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, George Ripley, William Lloyd Garrison, and Bronson Alcott. The Reverend Hosea Ballou, who did not sign the petition, did visit his old friend in jail. When the jail doors opened, Kneeland relocated to Iowa to initiate a small utopian community that was to be known as Salubria (it was near what is now Farmington).



During his childhood in Alton, Illinois, [John Stetson Barry](#) had determined to prepare himself for the ministry. In this year he returned to Massachusetts to study under the Reverend Hosea Ballou in [Boston](#) (there was no Universalist College). After his ordination he would initially serve the Universalist congregation of West Amesbury MA (has become Merrimac), but would begin to serve instead Weymouth in 1839, West Scituate in 1841, [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#) in 1844, and finally Needham beginning in 1855.

1842

A minister in [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#) put out a 36-page, illustrated publication entitled A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF [CATO PEARCE](#), A MAN OF COLOR: TAKEN VERBATIM FROM HIS LIPS AND PUBLISHED FOR HIS BENEFIT.



Abigail McIntire Patch bought a house on Main Street in [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#).

SAM PATCH

1844

The historian [George Bancroft](#), from his summer “cottage” Roseclyffe at [Newport](#) (see following screen), weighed into [Rhode Island](#)’s “Dorr War” on the side of Governor [Thomas Wilson Dorr](#).

BANCROFT AND DORR



The Reverend [John Stetson Barry](#) began to serve the Universalist congregation of [Pawtucket](#), [Rhode Island](#).

At the foot of Meeting Street at the corner of Town Street, the [Friends](#) put what had been their 2d meetinghouse in [Providence](#) (*Moshasuck*), [Rhode Island](#) on heavy sledges and had it tugged (by a team of horses, we are told, although perhaps it was oxen) over snow down Town Street, then up Wickenden Street on Fox Point, and then uphill to 77 Hope Street, where it became a 2-family residence. Thus its century-and-a-quarter old foundation was cleared, to hold up the west half of a new larger meetinghouse (the east half of this 3d structure would be on top of a crawl space). This 3d meeting house would last us 112 years, until the city of Providence needed a central site for a proposed new Fire Station. Another site would be available to the city, but a brick building on it would be more expensive to clear and its location between North Main Street and Canal Street would

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offer inferior access for fire equipment. So we would sell our lot to the City, and erect a 4th-generation brick meetinghouse with a slate roof at the top of College Hill, at the corner of Olney and Morris on Friend Moses Brown’s donated property, in about 1952.

Belatedly recognizing the dangers of freebasing in your home kitchen in the presence of your children, [Perry Davis](#) purchased a building on Pond Street in which to mix up his patent vegetable painkiller consisting of [opiates](#) and [ethanol](#). It would be asserted that freebie “cases of Davis’ medicine were shipped with every [Baptist](#) missionary bound for [India](#) and [China](#).”



(Doesn’t that seem a bit like carrying coal to Newcastle? But it is not at all unusual –or so I have heard– for drug pushers to offer young people free samples in order to get them on the hook.)

1853

The federal Congress authorized Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to spend \$150,000 for the Corps of Topographical Engineers “to make such explorations and surveys as he [Davis] may deem advisable, to ascertain the most practical and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.” (Until the completion of these four railroad surveys neither the government nor the public would have any clear understanding of the wealth of natural resources or the beauty of the national terrain.)

The huge earthworks above the town of Altoona PA, the “horseshoe” which was to function as the first switchback in American railroad history, was completed after a truly enormous amount of sun-up to sun-down labor at \$0.²⁵ per day.¹¹

The Baltimore & Ohio RR began to collect its own history.

There was a very bad head-on crash of two trains near [Pawtucket](#), Rhode Island, that was caused by an error in timekeeping. It was becoming apparent that the development of railroad travel would necessitate considerable improvement in coordination and in the standardization of timekeeping.

11. This massive earthwork still lofts 60 to 70 trains per day into the skies.



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1854

“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”¹²

DATE	PLACE	TOPIC
November 21, 1854, Tuesday; 7:30PM	Spring Garden Institute, Philadelphia PA	“The Wild”
December 6, 1854, Wednesday; 7:30PM	Providence ; Railroad Hall	“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”
December 26, 1854, Tuesday; 7:30PM	New Bedford ; Lyceum	“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”

12. From Bradley P. Dean and Ronald Wesley Hoag’s “THOREAU’S LECTURES AFTER WALDEN: AN ANNOTATED CALENDAR.”



NARRATIVE OF EVENT: On or about October 18th, [Henry Thoreau](#) received a letter from [Asa Fairbanks](#) asking if he would allow his name to appear in a program of reform lectures scheduled to commence in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) on November 1st. Fairbanks informed Thoreau that “*every Lecturer will choose his own Subject, but we expect all ... will be of a reformatory Character*” (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 345). After indicating that remuneration to the course lecturers would be an expected “expenses and fifteen to twenty dollars” or “perhaps better,” Fairbanks pressed the issue of reform as a required topic:

The Anthony Burns affair and the Nebraska bill, and other outrages of Slavery has done much to awaken the feeling of a class of Minds heretofore quiet, on all questions of reform[.] In getting up these popular Lectures we thought at first, it would not do as well to have them too radical, or it would be best to have a part of the Speakers of the conservative class, but experience has shown us in Providence surely, that the Masses who attend such Lectures are better suited with reform lectures than with the old school conservatives.
(THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 346)

The independent Thoreau may have bristled at the reform stipulation, as the editors of his correspondence suggest, but he responded within a short time and accepted the offer.

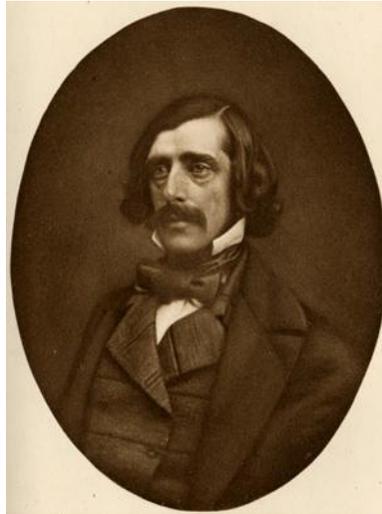
[Asa Fairbanks](#)’s letter of November 6th suggests that letters had passed between him and Thoreau in which efforts to establish a date were being made:

I am in receipt of yours of the 4th inst, You stating explicitly that the 6th December would suit you better than any other time.... Had you named the last Wednesday in Nov. or the second Wedn[e]sday in December, I could have replied to you at once or any time in Janu[a]ry or Feb[ruary] it would have been the same[.] I shall regret the disappointment very much but must submit to it if you have such overtures as you cannot avoid. (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, pages 348-49)

[Asa Fairbanks](#)’s cryptic reference to “such overtures as you cannot avoid” is no doubt an indication that Thoreau’s schedule for the next four months was so full that he could not be as flexible as Fairbanks wished. He was scheduled to deliver one of his two “WALKING, OR THE WILD” lectures in Philadelphia on 21 November; and he was planning to make a western lecture tour in late December, January, and—if the demand he encountered warranted an extension—February. Very likely, then, December 6th was the only Wednesday between mid-November 1854 and February 1855 that he expected to be available. Interestingly enough, on November 17th Thoreau wrote to a William E. Sheldon announcing that he was “still at liberty” to read “a lecture either on the Wild or on Moosehunting as you may prefer” before an unspecified “Society” on the evening of December 5th, the day before his Providence engagement (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 351). There is no record of this proposed lecture taking place (see Appendix A below). Moreover, on November 27th, Andrew Whitney wrote from [Nantucket Island](#) in response to a letter Thoreau had sent two days earlier: “We cannot have you between the 4 & 15th of Dec. without bringing two lecturers in one week — which we wish to avoid if possible” (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 352). This suggests that as late as November 25th Thoreau did not regard the December 6th Providence engagement as firmly established.

On December 6th, [Henry Thoreau](#) took the train to Providence, where, his journal reports, he was “struck with the Providence depot, its towers and great length of brick” (JOURNAL, 7:79). The depot’s hall was also the site of his evening talk. A month earlier, on 2 November, the [Providence DAILY JOURNAL](#) had cautioned that the new building’s steep entry with no handrail was a peril, especially to ladies during the impending winter. It is not known if the problem had been corrected by the date of the lecture. Advertisements in the LIBERATOR and

in all four of Providence's major newspapers indicate that Thoreau's lecture was the fourth of a scheduled ten, commencing with the Reverend Theodore Parker and including talks by the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Cassius M. Clay, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and others. Tickets for the entire course cost one dollar, while single-lecture admission cost twenty-five cents. The doors to Railroad Hall opened Wednesday evening at 6:30 for the lecture, which was scheduled to begin an hour later. Thoreau made the most of his two-day Providence visit by inspecting "Roger Williams's Rock" on the [Blackstone River](#) and an old fort overlooking [Narragansett Bay](#), both in the company of [Waldo Emerson](#)'s friend Charles King Newcomb, and by walking through the countryside west of Providence (JOURNAL, 7:79-80).



The only indications of how the audience responded to the lecture come, rather obliquely, from Thoreau himself. In a journal entry of that evening, he wrote:

After lecturing twice this winter I feel that I am in danger of cheapening myself by trying to become a successful lecturer, *i.e.*, to interest my audiences. I am disappointed to find that most that I am and value myself for is lost, or worse than lost, on my audience. I fail to get even the attention of the mass. I should suit them better if I suited myself less. I feel that the public demand an average man, -average thoughts and manners, -not originality, nor even absolute excellence. You cannot interest them except as you are like them and sympathize with them. I would rather that my audience come to me than that I should go to them, and so they be sifted; *i.e.*, I would rather write books than lectures. That is fine, this coarse. To read to a promiscuous audience who are at your mercy the fine thoughts you solaced yourself with far away is as violent as to fatten geese by cramming, and in this case they do not get fatter. (JOURNAL, 7:79-80)

This appraisal of what his audiences demanded of him and what he was willing to give suggests that "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" may not have been well received in [Providence](#). Moreover, Thoreau was out of sorts from having been forced to abandon his plans for a lecture tour and from having spent most of the preceding four months at his desk writing lectures for "promiscuous" audiences. Indeed, his unusually rigorous schedule had prevented him even from seeing the winter come in. "I see thick ice and boys skating all the way to



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Providence,” he wrote in his journal on December 6th, “but [I] know not when it froze, I have been so busy writing my lecture” (JOURNAL, 7:79). And two days later he complained:

Winter has come unnoticed by me, I have been so busy writing. This is the life most lead in respect to Nature. How different from my habitual one! It is hasty, coarse, and trivial, as if you were a spindle in a factory. The other is leisurely, fine, and glorious, like a flower. In the first case you are merely getting your living; in the second you live as you go along. (JOURNAL, 7:80)

[Thoreau](#)'s reference to writing lectures as “merely getting your living” is a fine touch of self-directed irony, for in almost the entire first half of “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” –the very lecture he had just finished writing and delivering– he argues that “A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread.”¹³ Subsequently, in a 19 December 1854 letter to H.G.O. Blake, Thoreau punningly testified to his “truly providential meeting with Mr T Brown; providential because it saved me from the suspicion that my words had fallen altogether on stony ground, when it turned out that there was some Worcester soil there” (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 354). Since Thoreau had yet to give his Worcester lecture, he here clearly refers to Theophilus Brown's fortuitous presence in his [Providence](#) audience.

13. Quoted from the reconstructed text of “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” in Bradley P. Dean, “Reconstructions of Thoreau's Early 'Life without Principle' Lectures,” p. 323.



RAILROAD HALL; PROVIDENCE RI

Courtesy of Bradley P. Dean

ADVERTISEMENTS, REVIEWS, AND RESPONSES: The lecture was advertised in the LIBERATOR on 1 December and, the day before and the day of the lecture, in all four of [Providence](#)'s major newspapers — the DAILY POST, DAILY JOURNAL, BULLETIN, and DAILY TRIBUNE. The LIBERATOR remarked that “The people are anticipating the remaining lectures with a great deal of interest, and the names of the lecturers are a sufficient guarantee that their anticipations will not be disappointed.” On the day [Henry Thoreau](#) lectured the POST and the TRIBUNE also ran brief articles in which Thoreau was described as “a young man of high ability, who built his house in the woods, and there lived five years for about \$30 a year, during which time he stored his mind with a **vast amount of useful knowledge** — setting an example for poor young men who thirst for learning, showing those who are determined to get a good education how they can have it by pursuing the right course.”

In a diary entry of 11 December 1854, Bronson Alcott wrote, “*Monday 11. I pass the morning and dine with Thoreau, who read me parts of his new Lecture lately read at Philadelphia and Providence[.]*”¹⁴ Alcott was mistaken about Thoreau having read “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” in Philadelphia: Bradley P. Dean’s detailed study of Thoreau’s composition process for the lecture,¹⁵ and Thoreau’s own journal remark about being extremely busy writing his lecture, indicate that he was just able to finish writing the lecture before delivering it in [Providence, Rhode Island](#). It is also unlikely that Thoreau would have changed the lecture topic that had been advertised in the Philadelphia newspapers (see lecture 45 above).

DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC: Using textual and physical evidence from the extant lecture manuscripts, as well as newspaper summaries of Thoreau’s several deliveries of “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” and its later (1859-60, see lectures 64 and 72 below) manifestation, “LIFE MISSPENT”, Bradley P. Dean was able to trace in remarkable detail Thoreau’s composition process from the time Thoreau first conceived of the lecture to the time he mailed the final draft of “LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE” to James Thomas Fields, editor of [The Atlantic Monthly](#) magazine. “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” contained precisely one hundred paragraphs, fifty-four of which remained in the text and were eventually published in “Life without Principle.”¹⁶

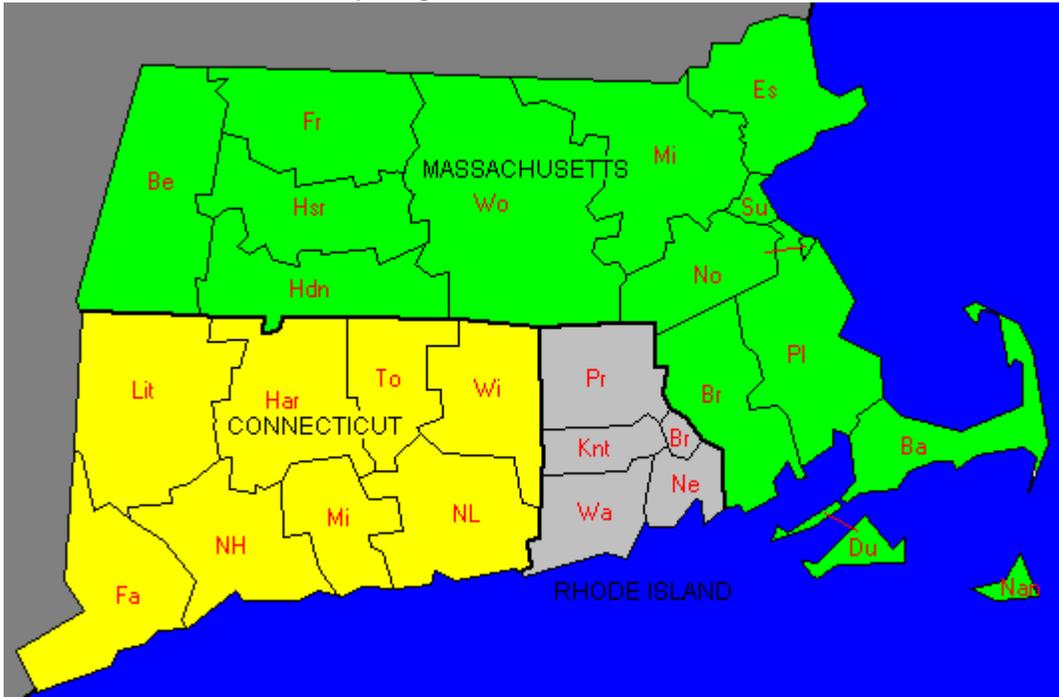
14. Bronson Alcott, “Diary for 1854,” entry of 11 December, MH (*59M-308).

15. Bradley P. Dean’s study is summarized in his “Reconstructions of Thoreau’s Early ‘Life without Principle’ Lectures,” pp. 286-91; for its more detailed counterpart, see the first volume of his two-volume MA thesis, “The Sound of a Flail: Reconstructions of Thoreau’s Early ‘Life without Principle’ Lectures,” Eastern Washington University, 1984. Copies of Dean’s thesis are available at WaChenE; CtU; the Thoreau Textual Center, CU-SB; and the Thoreau Society Archives, MCo.

16. Seven of these fifty-four lecture paragraphs [Thoreau](#) conflated to three paragraphs in the essay. Dean’s “Reconstructions of Thoreau’s Early ‘Life without Principle’ Lectures,” p. 337, contains a graph showing the structural changes between the lectures and the essay.

1862

The Massachusetts town of [Pawtucket](#) (east of the Blackstone River) was acquired by [Rhode Island](#) in exchange for the Rhode Island town of Fall River (home of the Borden family of “gave her mommy forty whacks” fame). Part of Pawtucket, the part formerly known as Seekonk, was set off at this time to form a community to be known as East Providence. Here is what the county map of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island had resolved into, by this point in time:



1863

August: [Sam Patch](#) of [Pawtucket](#), [Rhode Island](#) was gone but not forgotten. There was a report of the death of a young Civil War lieutenant who had recently written home, to his mother:

“I shall rival Sam Patch at a leap, and jump to the head at once. Three months is enough to make a colonel of me.”¹⁷



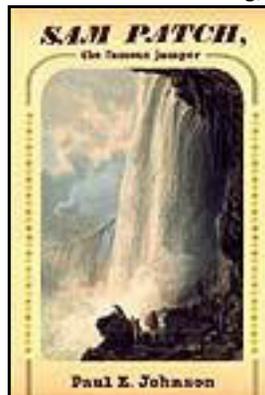
Still Dead, Still an Inspiration



1881

Spring: At this point, foreign-born adult male citizens were still required under the constitution of [Rhode Island](#) to be the registered owners of real estate taxed for at least \$134 [*sic*, presumably that was a misprint for “\$1.34”], in order to cast a ballot. Native-born adult male citizens who were not being taxed for \$1.34, of either real or personal property, could not vote in any Rhode Island town or city, on any question involving the expenditure of the money or the imposition of a tax, nor could they vote in the state capital for members of the city council. Such native-born adult male citizens, if they desired to exercise the voting franchise, were required to register their names with the city or town clerk on or before the last day of December, in the year next preceding the time of voting, and to pay \$1 as a registry-tax. During this season an Equal Rights Association was formed in Providence, having for its objects the repeal of such property qualifications for voting, and the procuring of equal political standing for all adult male citizens. “The main organization is in [Providence](#), and there are branches in [Pawtucket](#), [Newport](#), and several of the towns. The membership is not large, and the movement appears to meet with but little favor.”

17. Johnson, Paul E. [SAM PATCH](#), THE FAMOUS JUMPER. NY: Hill & Wang, 2003

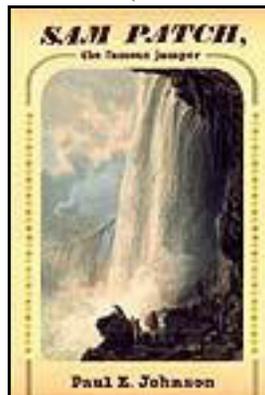


1891

By the time that Pawtucket, Rhode Island celebrated its Cotton Centennial, a high guard rail had been erected on the bridge over the river – preventing bold children from jumping from the bridge into the river below the falls in imitation of Sam Patch. However, there was a parade in honor of Samuel Slater, and Patrick Devlin seized the occasion to maneuver past this guard rail and accomplish the imitative leap.¹⁸

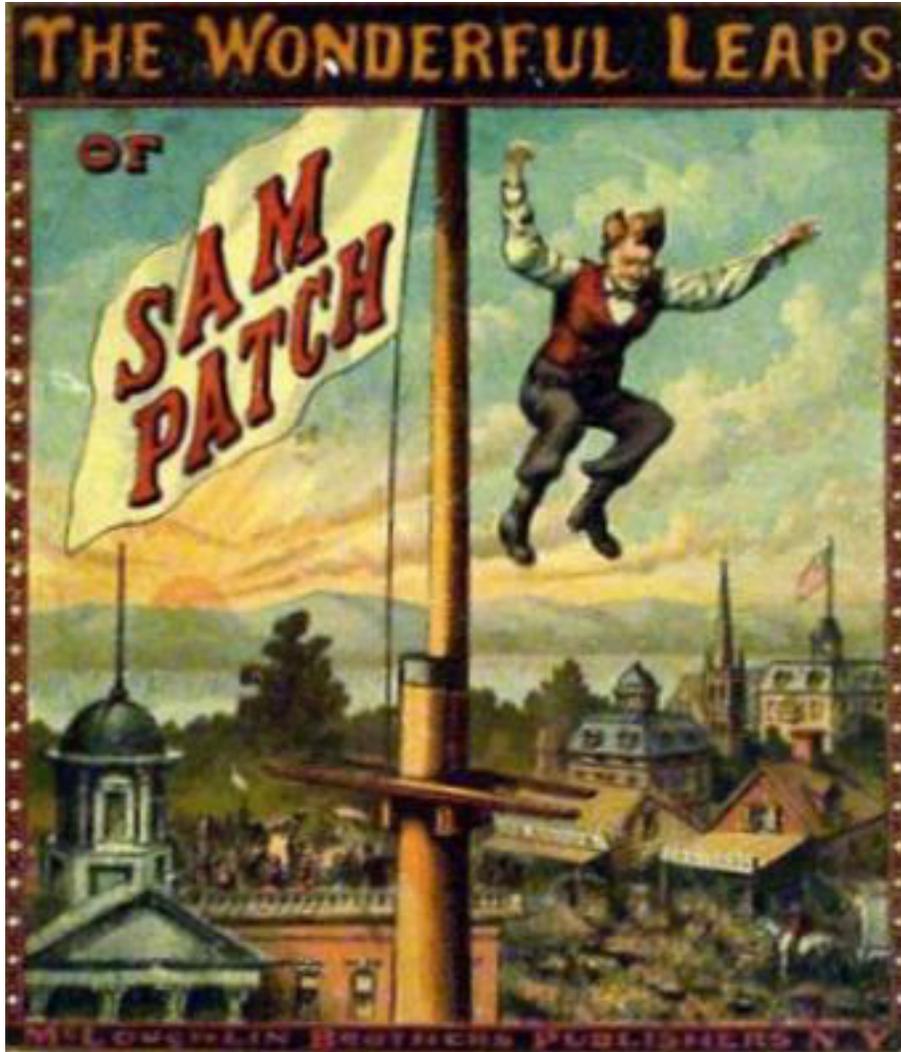


18. Paul E. Johnson’s SAM PATCH, THE FAMOUS JUMPER (NY: Hill & Wang).



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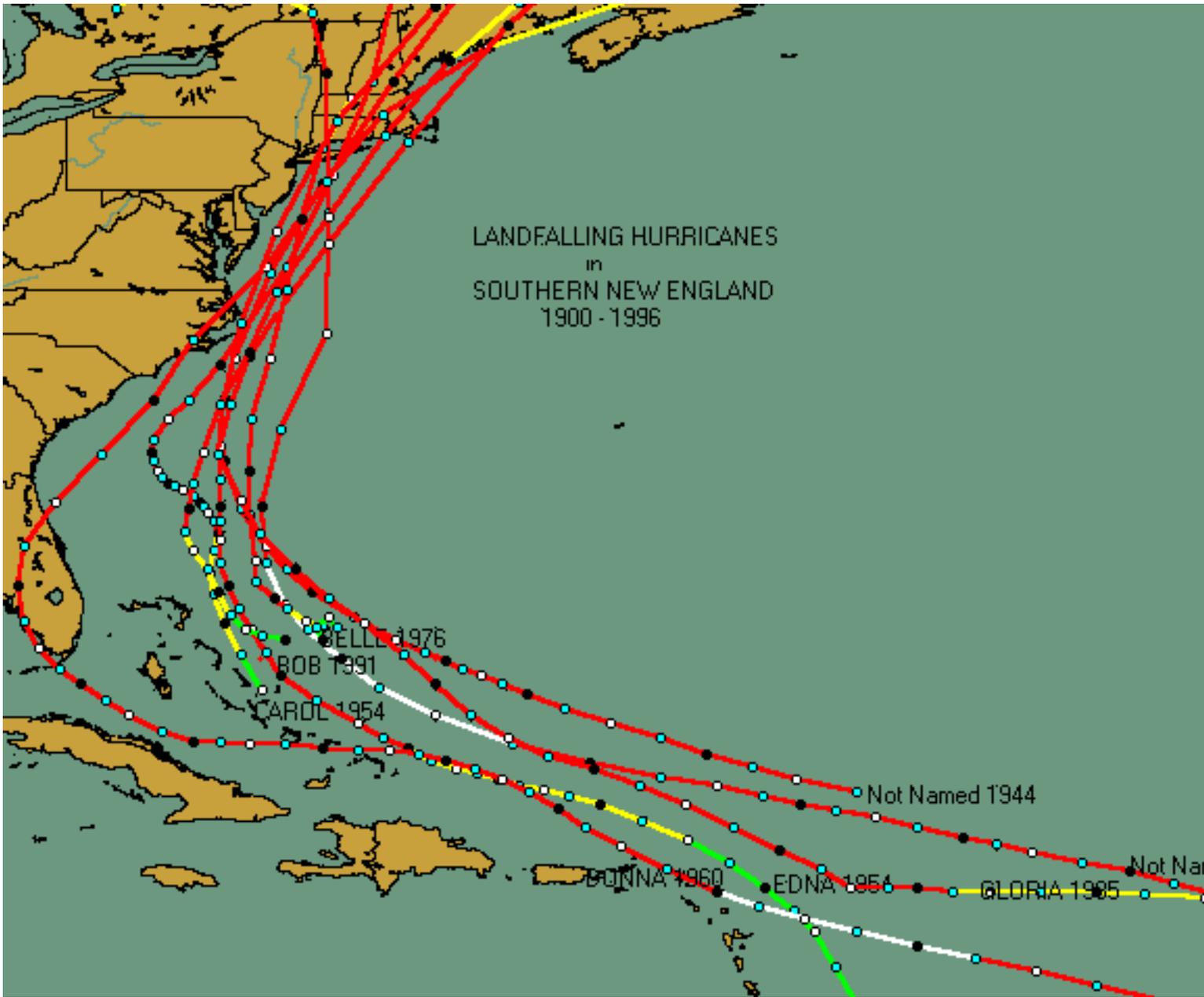
PAWTUCKET RIVER



There's Always One More Idiot

1955

During the mid-1950s, hurricanes hitting the New England coast decimated many of the vacant, decaying, flimsily constructed military structures on various of the islands of Boston harbor, such as the POW barracks of the World War II detainment camp for Italians at Fort Andrews on Peddocks Island.



During this year "Hurricane Diane" so badly damaged the ugly and inappropriate concrete bridge over the [Concord River](#) on the site of the [Old North Bridge](#), joining the [Battle Monument](#) on the east bank to the [Daniel Chester French](#) statue of "[The Minuteman](#)" on the west bank, that the sturdy structure would need to be

demolished. In the following year a replica of the original bridge would be erected, based upon the Amos Doolittle engraving of the 1775 battle.



There is further indication of the wrath of “Diane” near the present Causeway Bridge, just below the Ox-Bow of the Sudbury River, where you can still see the remains of a stone bridge. The western end of this “Stone’s Bridge” (erected in 1857 and discussed by Thoreau in 1859 as a new bridge) was taken out, though the ox-bow upstream endured through this flood still intact.

As the waters surged down the [Blackstone River](#) they took out all its bridges except one — the stone bridge anchored in bedrock that can be seen just below the dam.

The above has to do only with the hurricanes that came ashore in New England. There were other damaging hurricanes. For instance, in this year hurricane Janet destroyed 75% of the [nutmeg](#) trees of Grenada. This

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represented, at the time, 40% of the world's nutmeg supply.

SPICE



1980

April 18, Friday: Pawtucket, Rhode Island, began a baseball game against Rochester. The game would end in a tie — several days later.

SPORTS

Lebanese Moslems kidnapped 3 UN soldiers, a reporter, and a photographer. They executed two of the Irish soldiers and injured the third. The 3 still alive were released.

The Inter-American Commission for Human Rights of the OAS reported that over the previous decade at least 6,000 people had been kidnapped, tortured, and murdered in Argentina, by the government.

Ländler for thirteen strings by Wolfgang Rihm was performed for the initial time, in Baden-Baden. Also premiered was Rihm's Nature Morte -- Still Alive for thirteen strings.

April 23, Wednesday: The Pawtucket/Rochester baseball ended after 3 days, 8 hours and 25 minutes of play, with Pawtucket winning 3-2. (This is the longest professional baseball game to date.)

SPORTS
RHODE ISLAND

1994

Hasbro, a [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#) firm which had come to own the [Milton Bradley](#) Company, revised “The Game of Life” for the generation of the baby-boomers. There was no longer, as there had been during the 19th Century, any pretense that playing this game was going to lead to the encouragement of virtuous conduct.



Bradley avowed that his game would promote virtue.

At the [Moses Brown School](#) of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) on the East Side of [Providence, Rhode Island](#), monthly, and then weekly, required meeting for worship in the Upper School was instituted (“Lower School and Middle School had regular daily and weekly worship for many years”).

The [Quaker](#) monthly meeting at Stony Brook near Princeton, New Jersey formally took the “Friends School” educational institution on its premises under its spiritual care. (The school’s by-laws at that time required that a majority of the school’s trustees be members of the [Religious Society of Friends](#).)



2006

March 16, Thursday: In [Providence, Rhode Island](#)'s "ProJo," the [Providence Journal](#), Paul Davis's series about the days of [slavery](#) and the [international slave trade](#) continued:

Brown vs. Brown: Brothers Go Head to Head

In 1770, the Rev. Samuel Hopkins preached his first sermon against [slavery](#) and the slave trade, calling them terrible sins. His message surprised church members, some of them slave traders. One family left the church. The notion that slavery was immoral was slow to take hold.

The [Quakers](#) were among the first to question the practice and, in 1773, they asked members to free their slaves. Not everyone agreed. Wealthy businessman Abraham Redwood and even a long-term [Rhode Island](#) governor refused to free their slaves and were disowned by the group.

Although the Quakers would help federal officials prosecute slave traders in the 1790s, they were seen as a quirky fringe group. A century earlier, the Puritans in Boston hanged Quakers and Roger Williams called them heretics.

* * *

By 1797, [John Brown](#) had burned the British ship *Gaspee*, co-founded [Providence](#)'s first bank, sent a trade ship to China and laid the cornerstone of Brown University's administration building.

He was, says a biographer, one of America's leading merchants. But the federal government had other words for him: illegal slave trader. Agents seized his ship, the *Hope*, for violating the U.S. Slave Trade Act of 1794. Brown was the first Rhode Islander -possibly the first citizen in the new nation- to be tried under the law which forbid the trading of slaves in foreign ports.

On Aug. 5, in District Court in [Newport](#), Judge Benjamin Bourn outlined the reasons for seizing the *Hope*. Brown and others had "fitted, equipped, loaded, and prepared" the ship that sailed from Providence to Africa and on to Havana "for the purpose of carrying on a trade and traffic in Slaves" which was contrary to the Statute of the United States, Judge Bourn wrote.

Federal authorities learned of John Brown's activities from his own brother [Moses Brown](#) and other anti-slavery radicals.

John and Moses had been at odds over the slave trade for more than a decade. Moses, in fact, had helped push for the federal law after an earlier state law to stop the trade was not enforced.

Now, in the late 1790s, the Providence Abolition Society was suing merchants for breaking the federal law. The group's strategy was a simple one: if the slavers agreed to quit the trade, they would drop their suits.

John Brown, one of America's leading merchants in the late 1700s, vigorously fought government efforts to end the slave trade. Moses Brown, a devout Quaker after quitting the slave trade, was an abolitionist who pressed the government to end



slavery.

One of Providence's biggest slave traders, Cyprian Sterry, buckled under the group's pressure, and agreed to stop selling Africans.

But John wouldn't.

After months of out-of-court wrangling, the two sides failed to reach an agreement.

In court, John lost one round but won another.

The judge decreed that the *Hope*, along with "her tackle, furniture, apparel and other appurtances" be sold at an India Point auction on Aug. 26.

But, in a second court appearance, John triumphed over the abolitionists. In Newport, the center of the state slave trade, jurors were reluctant to convict a vocal defender of the African trade.

In a 1798 letter to his son James, John Brown said he had won a verdict for costs against his prosecutors whom he called a "Wicked and abominable Combination."

The state's anti-slavery foes, he said, were "Running Round in the Rain... I tell them they had better be Contented to Stop ware they are, as the Further they go the wors they will fail."

It wasn't the first time John Brown clashed with his brother and Rhode Island's other slavery foes.

And it wouldn't be the last.

* * *

The two brothers did not always quarrel.

As young men, they learned the sea trade and manufacturing from their uncle Obadiah. With their brothers Joseph and Nicholas, they formed a family firm, Nicholas Brown and Company in 1762. The brothers shipped goods to the West Indies, made candles from the oil of sperm whales and later produced pig iron at Hope Furnace in Scituate.

Each man brought a different skill to the partnership. Nicholas was methodical and plodding, John was bold and reckless, Joseph was a good technician and Moses was erudite, says Brown family biographer James B. Hedges.

In 1764, the four brothers invested in their first slave voyage. It was a financial disaster; more than half of the slaves died before they could be sold in the West Indies. The Browns never financed another slave trip together. But John, anxious to expand his business interests, struck out on his own. In 1769, he outfitted another slave ship to Africa.

The family dynamic changed forever.

* * *

After the death of his wife and a daughter, Moses embraced the spiritual beliefs of the Quakers. In 1773, following their example, he freed the six slaves he owned and relinquished his interest in four others who worked at the family's candle works. He invited his family and several Quakers to hear his explanation. "Whereas I am clearly convinced that the buying and selling of men of what color soever as slaves is contrary to the Divine Mind," he began, "I do therefore ... set free the following negroes being all I am possessed of or any ways interested in." Moses promised to oversee the education of the youngest slaves and he gave each of the men the use of an acre of land from his farm. Consider me a friend, he told them.



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For generations, the Browns had been [Baptist](#) ministers and churchmen. But a year after he freed his slaves, Moses officially converted to Quakerism. He was sure his wife Anna's death in 1773 was God's way of punishing him for his role in the slave trade.

Almost immediately, he and other Quakers began prodding local and federal lawmakers to ban both slavery and the slave trade. In 1774, the General Assembly passed a law prohibiting the importation of slaves into Rhode Island, an amended version of a bill advanced by Moses Brown that would have ended the slave trade altogether. In fact, it included a loophole that allowed slaves who could not be sold elsewhere to be brought into Rhode Island for one year. In addition, the proposed fines for importing slaves were omitted.

The "law proved totally ineffectual," says historian Christy Millard Nadalin.

The Brown family's influence is still evident on Providence's East Side from the stately family mansions to the university that bears their name. The institution's first building was built by slaves.

The first act calling for the freeing of slaves in Rhode Island came in 1784. But the General Assembly did not want it done quickly. Under the act, children born to slave mothers after March 1, 1784 would be free when they became adults. The law, says Nadalin, "required no real sacrifice on the part of the slave owners, and it did nothing to curb the actual trade in slaves."

In 1787, the General Assembly made it illegal for any Rhode Islander to be involved in the African slave trade – the first such law in America. But, again, it was ignored; in the next three years, 25 ships sailed to Africa. Two years later, Moses Brown, the Rev. Samuel Hopkins of Newport, and about 180 others organized the Abolition Society. Its mission, according to J. Stanley Lemons, history professor at Rhode Island College, was to enforce the laws against the slave trade.

* * *

Just as the abolitionists were organizing, a bitter attack against them erupted in the Providence [Gazette](#).

The society, a critic wrote, was "created not to ruin only one good citizen but to ruin many hundreds within the United States" who have all or part of their property in slaves and the slave trade.

These people you are calling "Negro-dealers" and "kidnappers" are some of the "very best men" in Rhode Island, he wrote.

"This traffic, strange as it appears to the conscientious Friend or Quaker, is right, just and lawful, and consequently practiced every day."

The diatribe was signed "A Citizen."

It was John Brown.

Brother Moses and other abolitionists responded, accusing John and other defenders of slavery as selfish, ignorant and pitiful. Moses publicly refuted a number of the "Citizen's" arguments, including the assertion that Africans were better off as slaves in America because they would have been killed back home.

The "Citizen" had his facts wrong, Moses countered. But if his argument were right, wouldn't it be an even greater act of



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humanity to grant the captives their freedom after arriving in America?

The battle was the "most bitter and unrestrained controversy" in the state's early history, says Moses Brown biographer Mack Thompson. What started as a discussion about the pros and cons of the slave trade "soon degenerated into an acrimonious debate in which politics and personalities became the main subject." Moses eventually withdrew from the public debate.

But, privately, he continued to plead for an end to the state's slave trade. "Confronted with public apathy, inefficient state officials, and the power of the slave traders," Moses and his fellow abolitionists had little impact, says biographer Thompson.

Moses couldn't even convince his own brother that slave trading was evil. So he and others turned to U.S. Attorney Ray Greene, who dragged John and other slave traders into court. John lost his ship but never publicly apologized.

* * *

In 1800, two years after he was elected to Congress, John Brown was one of only five congressmen to vote against a bill to strengthen the 1794 law under which he had been prosecuted.

Speaking against the measure, he offered three familiar arguments. First, he said, it was wrong to deny to American citizens the benefits of a trade that was open to Europeans. Second, the trade was not immoral because the condition of those enslaved was "much bettered." Finally, he argued that the trade would bring much-desired revenue to the nation's treasury.

"Why should a heavy fine and imprisonment be made the penalty for carrying on a trade so advantageous?" he asked.

The abolitionist Moses, meanwhile, joined [Samuel Slater](#) and made cloth in a mill in [Pawtucket](#). They made clothes from cotton picked by slaves on plantations in the South.

* * *

[John Brown](#) never changed his mind about profits and [slavery](#), says Joaquina Bela Teixeira, executive director of the [Rhode Island](#) Black Heritage Society in Providence. "His sense of morality never shifted." He tried to fix tobacco prices and filed false insurance claims, she says, "yet he's touted as one of Providence's patriots."

But the Browns "aren't big slave traders," says James Campbell, history professor at Brown University.

They play a big role in the state's slave trading history, in part, because they are major historical figures, kept meticulous records and have a name linked to a major university.

"Slavery was a fact of life. Yet, what is compelling about that late 18th-century moment is that you get this new moral sensibility. At some point, people acted against the slave trade. Not everyone did, and not everyone acted at the same time. But through the Browns you can see these deep historical currents" that ran through the era, Campbell says.

It's also important to understand that, despite their public arguments, the two brothers cared about each other, Campbell says.

"In private correspondence, they are very frank with one another. My sense is that they loved one another. In one letter, Moses says, 'John, I'm doing this for you.'"



2007

Spring: Hasbro, a [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#) firm which had come to own the [Milton Bradley](#) Company, re-revised its “The Game of Life” as “The Game of Life: Twists and Turns.”



Like all earlier spiral race games, the Game of Life is essentially about fate, but it’s so relentlessly amoral and cash-conscious that a nineties redesign team, eager to make it less so, pretty much gave up. The new Twists & Turns game has no goal. In it, life is aimless, and each player receives a Life-Visa brand “credit card” to keep track of Life Points.



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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: 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.



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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.