According to legends preserved by the old timers on Cape Cod, Samuel Bellamy was a young English sailor who arrived in the new world colonies seeking fame and fortune. In 1715 he persuaded a wealthy patron to finance a ship and crew and sailed South to search for sunken Spanish treasure off the coast of Florida. He promised a local girl, Maria Hallet, that he would return one day sailing the longest, tallest ship ever seen hopefully, laden with gold and silver. The treasure hunt failed but Bellamy was loath to return to Massachusetts and Maria empty-handed and the step to piracy was a small one. In little more than a year Samuel, who had come to be known as Black Bellamy, was captain of a notorious pirate crew that had plundered more than 50 ships.

One morning off Cuba, Bellamy and his buccaneers captured the Whydah, a 100-foot three-masted galley packed with ivory, indigo, and thousands of silver and gold coins. He designated it as his principal pirate ship. His fortune secured, Bellamy headed for home in time to meet an April tempest off Cape Cod with 70-mph winds and 40-foot waves. The Whydah, topheavy and highly susceptible to the driving winds, was being blown ever closer to the shore. Amid scenes of mayhem the back of the vessel broke. According to local legend, Goody Hallett was condemned as a witch and her spirit still walks the clifftops of Wellfleet near the wreck. Two sailors survived. One was an Indian pilot who as a non-white has disappeared from the record, the other Thomas Davis, a Welsh carpenter, whose vivid account of the shipwreck has been preserved in Cape Cod folklore. Recently in a shallows off Wellfleet, Barry Clifford has discovered the wreck and much of its treasure.
April 26, Friday night: It was a dark and stormy night. Shipwreck of the pirate Samuel Bellamy’s prize ships Whydah and Mary Anne on Cape Cod.

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

As I was walking on the beach here in my last visit, looking for shells and pebbles, just after that storm which I have mentioned as moving the sand to a great depth, not knowing but I might find some cob-money, I did actually pick up a French crown piece, worth about a dollar and six cents, near high-water mark, on the still moist sand, just under the abrupt, caving base of the bank. It was of a dark slate color, and looked like a flat pebble, but still bore a very distinct and handsome head of Louis XV., and the usual legend on the reverse, Sit Nomen Domini Benedictum (Blessed be the Name of the Lord), a pleasing sentiment to read in the sands of the sea-shore, whatever it might be stamped on, and I also made out the date, 1741. Of course, I thought at first that it was that same old button which I have found so many times, but my knife soon showed the silver. Afterward, rambling on the bars at low tide, I cheated my companion by holding up round shells (Scutellæ) between my fingers, whereupon he quickly stripped and came off to me.
The family of Cape Cod’s Samuel Bellamy probably had originated in the Devonshire region of south-western England and may have been one of those families of peasants displaced by the enclosure of common lands. Possibly his family had been involved in Monmouth’s failed rebellion of 1685 or had held sympathies for James II (VII of Scotland), overthrown in 1689. Whatever Bellamy’s antecedents, he had been on Cape Cod in the summer of 1715 when a hurricane had sunk a dozen Spanish treasure galleons off the coast of Florida.

There had been a rush of adventurers headed for Florida to search out the remains and Bellamy had persuaded a local goldsmith, Palgrave Williams, to bear the cost of fitting out a vessel. Having failed to recover anything from any of the sunken treasure ships, Bellamy and Williams had gone “on the account”—had recourse to straightforward piracy—and in the course of 15 months had captured more than 50 ships including the recently commissioned Whydah, a 100-foot, 3-masted galley. The vessel’s name, after a harbor on the Guinea coast of Africa, bespoke her involvement in the slave trade. Bellamy and Williams had taken the ship after it had disposed of its black cargo in the Caribbean, as it was heading out for England with a payload of ivory, indigo, sugar, and coins. Late April 1717 had found Bellamy and Williams back in northern waters with a fleet of five ships. Palgrave Williams, in one of the vessels, had put into port at Block Island to visit relatives, while Bellamy aboard the Whydah continued towards Cape Cod with the other four. We have no idea what
drew Bellamy back to the Cape of his origin but folklore tells us there was an attractive local maid, Maria Hallet, to be impressed by the dashing pirate and his new pelf. The pirate flotilla was struck by a ferocious storm, complete with blinding rain, 70-mph winds, and crashing waves rising as high as 40 feet, during which the Whydah rammed a sandbar and broke her back. Of the other ships, the Mary Anne was run aground while the Fisher and the Anne survived but were severely damaged. Only nine men of the Whydah and Mary Anne would be still alive by the next morning, two of those being from the crew of 146 that had served on the Whydah. Eight would be brought to trial on charges of piracy and six would hang in chains on the admiralty mudflats of Boston Harbor (these mudflats were on Charlestown side, since on Boston side the depth of the water was 17 feet even at the lowest of the low tides, ergo no convenient mudflats at all). The 7th, Mary Anne survivor Thomas South, and Whydah survivor Thomas Davis, a Welsh carpenter, were allowed to have been pressed — they were sailors with special skills whom the pirates had forced into service. John Julian, an American native boy survivor who had been impressed to pilot the Whydah through the local shoals, we suspect would have been sold into slavery. Almost immediately the Governor sent Captain Cyprian Southack to the wreck site to report on the potential for a salvage operation, “mooncussers,” the wreck scavengers of Cape Cod, had already been working around the clock and within a couple of weeks the constantly moving sands had buried the Whydah.

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

While walking the sand cliffs of Wellfleet on or about October 11, 1849, Henry Thoreau would find a silver French coin in the sand and then, impishly, exercise his walking companion Ellery Channing with delusions of pirate treasure. The date on Thoreau’s coin was, however, 1741, indicating that it had not even been minted until a generation after this pirate was already drowned.
October 11, Tuesday: It may well have been on this day that Henry Thoreau found the 1741 silver French coin in the sands of the Wellfleet ocean beach as described in *Cape Cod*, and then proceeded impishly to exercise his walking companion Ellery Channing with delusions of pirate treasure.1
CAFE COD: In the year 1717, a noted pirate named Bellamy was led on to the bar off Wellfleet by the captain of a snow which he had taken, to whom he had offered his vessel again if he would pilot him into Provincetown Harbor. Tradition says that the latter threw over a burning tar-barrel in the night, which drifted ashore, and the pirates followed it. A storm coming on, their whole fleet was wrecked, and more than a hundred dead bodies lay along the shore. Six who escaped shipwreck were executed. "At times to this day" (1793), says the historian of Wellfleet, "there are King William and Queen Mary's coppers picked up, and pieces of silver called cob-money. The violence of the seas moves the sands on the outer bar, so that at times the iron caboose of the ship [that is, Bellamy's] at low ebbs has been seen." Another tells us that, "For many years after this shipwreck, a man of a very singular and frightful aspect used every spring and autumn to be seen travelling on the Cape, who was supposed to have been one of Bellamy's crew. The presumption is that he went to some place where money had been secreted by the pirates, to get such a supply as his exigencies required. When he died, many pieces of gold were found in a girdle which he constantly wore."

As I was walking on the beach here in my last visit, looking for shells and pebbles, just after that storm which I have mentioned as moving the sand to a great depth, not knowing but I might find some cob-money, I did actually pick up a French crown piece, worth about a dollar and six cents, near high-water mark, on the still moist sand, just under the abrupt, caving base of the bank. It was of a dark slate color, and looked like a flat pebble, but still bore a very distinct and handsome head of Louis XV., and the usual legend on the reverse, Sit Nomen Domini Benedictum (Blessed be the Name of the Lord), a pleasing sentiment to read in the sands of the sea-shore, whatever it might be stamped on, and I also made out the date, 1741. Of course, I thought at first that it was that same old button which I have found so many times, but my knife soon showed the silver. Afterward, rambling on the bars at low tide, I cheated my companion by holding up round shells (Scutella) between my fingers, whereupon he quickly stripped and came off to me.
It may well have been at this point that Thoreau visited the 88-year-old Wellfleet oysterman, John Young Newcomb, whom Thoreau took to be 60 or 70. To see the correct age, we need only inspect his tombstone:
CAPE COD: Having walked about eight miles since we struck the beach, and passed the boundary between Wellfleet and Truro, a stone post in the sand, –for even this sand comes under the jurisdiction of one town or another,—we turned inland over barren hills and valleys, whither the sea, for some reason, did not follow us, and, tracing up a Hollow, discovered two or three sober-looking houses within half a mile, uncommonly near the eastern coast. Their garrets were apparently so full of chambers, that their roofs could hardly lie down straight, and we did not doubt that there was room for us there. Houses near the sea are generally low and broad. These were a story and a half high; but if you merely counted the windows in their gable-ends, you would think that there were many stories more, or, at any rate, that the half-story was the only one thought worthy of being illustrated. The great number of windows in the ends of the houses, and their irregularity in size and position, here and elsewhere on the Cape, struck us agreeably, –as if each of the various occupants who had their cunabula behind had punched a hole where his necessities required it, and, according to his size and stature, without regard to outside effect. There were windows for the grown folks, and windows for the children, –three or four apiece; as a certain man had a large hole cut in his barn-door for the cat, and another smaller one for the kitten. Sometimes they were so low under the eaves that I thought they must have perforated the plate beam for another apartment, and I noticed some which were triangular, to fit that part more exactly. The ends of the houses had thus as many muzzles as a revolver, and, if the inhabitants have the same habit of staring out the windows that some of our neighbors have, a traveller must stand a small chance with them.
CAPE COD: Our host told us that the sea-clam, or hen, was not easily obtained; it was raked up, but never on the Atlantic side, only cast ashore there in small quantities in storms. The fisherman sometimes wades in water several feet deep, and thrusts a pointed stick into the sand before him. When this enters between the valves of a clam, he closes them on it, and is drawn out. It has been known to catch and hold coot and teal which were preying on it. I chanced to be on the bank of the Acushnet at New Bedford one day since this, watching some ducks, when a man informed me that, having let out his young ducks to seek their food amid the samphire (Salicornia) and other weeds along the river-side at low tide that morning, at length he noticed that one remained stationary, amid the weeds, something preventing it from following the others, and going to it he found its foot tightly shut in a quahog’s shell. He took up both together, carried them to his home, and his wife opening the shell with a knife released the duck and cooked the quahog. The old man said that the great clams were good to eat, but that they always took out a certain part which was poisonous, before they cooked them. “People said it would kill a cat.” I did not tell him that I had eaten a large one entire that afternoon, but began to think that I was tougher than a cat. He stated that pedlers came round there, and sometimes tried to sell the women folks a skimmer, but he told them that their women had got a better skimmer than they could make, in the shell of their clams; it was shaped just right for this purpose. –They call them "skim-alls" in some places. He also said that the sun-squawl was poisonous to handle, and when the sailors came across it, they did not meddle with it, but heaved it out of their way. I told him that I had handled it that afternoon, and had felt no ill effects as yet. But he said it made the hands itch, especially if they had previously been scratched, or if I put it into my bosom, I should find out what it was.
**Cape Cod:** The light-house keeper said that when the wind blewed strong on to the shore, the waves ate fast into the bank, but when it blowed off they took no sand away; for in the former case the wind heaped up the surface of the water next to the beach, and to preserve its equilibrium a strong undertow immediately set back again into the sea which carried with it the sand and whatever else was in the way, and left the beach hard to walk on; but in the latter case the undertow set on, and carried the sand with it, so that it was particularly difficult for shipwrecked men to get to land when the wind blowed on to the shore, but easier when it blowed off. This undertow, meeting the next surface wave on the bar which itself has made, forms part of the dam over which the latter breaks, as over an upright wall. The sea thus plays with the land holding a sand-bar in its mouth awhile before it swallows it, as a cat plays with a mouse; but the fatal gripe is sure to come at last. The sea sends its rapacious east wind to rob the land, but before the former has got far with its prey, the land sends its honest west wind to recover some of its own. But, according to Lieutenant Davis, the forms, extent, and distribution of sand-bars and banks are principally determined, not by winds and waves, but by tides.
THOREAU’S 1ST VISIT TO MANAMOYIK (CAPE COD)

1st visit, 1849
- by train
- by stage
- on foot

4th visit, 1857
- on foot
Recovery of the pirate treasure of Samuel Bellamy’s Whydah and Mary Anne began in great secrecy off Cape Cod. (While walking the sand cliffs of Wellfleet on or about October 11, 1849, Henry Thoreau had found an old silver French coin demonstrably not from that wreck of the night of April 26, 1717.)

The more than 100,000 artifacts since recovered constitute the world’s only authenticated pirate treasure. This trove includes more than 2,000 coins, the majority of them Spanish silver Reales “pieces of eight.” The hoard includes denominations which date from the 1670s to 1715. There are nine Spanish gold Escudos, better known as “Doubloons,” which date from 1688 to 1712 and include denominations of 1, 2 and 8 Escudos. Some of the gold coins were minted in Mexico, others perhaps in Lima. A smattering of British and Scottish coins indicate capture of English and Scottish vessels. The British coins include a Charles II crown dated 1667 and a couple of William III half crowns dated 1697. There is a solitary Scottish bawbee coin, but no French coins have been recovered. Other precious materials include fine examples of Akan gold jewelry and a number of gold bars and ingots. The pieces of African jewelry recovered from the Whydah amount to the earliest known collection of this art but much of it had been broken up, and the gold bars and ingots bear score marks testifying to the manner in which the plunder had been apportioned among the members of the pirate band. The weapons recovered include elegant pistols. There are nautical instruments which probably had been seized from law-abiding master mariners. Leather goods also survived in the sands of the seabed and include a pouch, and a shoe and stocking last worn almost 300 years ago. The discovery of a teapot with a human shoulder bone wedged into it testifies to the terror of the storm.
William F. Robinson commented that as he recently retraced Henry Thoreau’s steps on the sand cliffs of Wellfleet where Thoreau had found one silver French coin on or about October 11, 1849, he looked out “at a vessel where divers were, unknown to us ashore, bringing up the fabulous treasures from the wreck of the Whidah, Bellamy’s pirate ship” of the dark and stormy night of April 26, 1717.²

The more than 100,000 artifacts since recovered from Samuel Bellamy’s prize constitute the world’s only authenticated pirate treasure. This trove includes more than 2,000 coins, the majority of them Spanish silver Reales “pieces of eight.” The hoard includes denominations which date from the 1670s to 1715. There are nine Spanish gold Escudos, better known as “Doubloons,” which date from 1688 to 1712 and include denominations of 1, 2 and 8 Escudos. Some of the gold coins were minted in Mexico, others perhaps in Lima. A smattering of British and Scottish coins indicate capture of English and Scottish vessels. The British coins include a Charles II crown dated 1667 and a couple of William III half crowns dated 1697. There is a solitary Scottish bawbee coin, but no French coins have been recovered — making it rather less than likely that the coin Thoreau had picked out of the sand and so impishly exercised his traveling companion with would have been part of this pirate treasure. Other precious materials include fine examples of Akan gold jewelry and a number of gold bars and ingots. The pieces of African jewelry recovered from the Whydah amount to the earliest known collection of this art but much of it had been broken up, and the gold bars and ingots bear score marks testifying to the manner in which the plunder had been apportioned among the members of the pirate band. The weapons recovered include elegant pistols. There are nautical instruments which probably had been seized from law-abiding master mariners. Leather goods also survived in the sands of the seabed and include a pouch, and a shoe and stocking last worn almost 300 years ago. The discovery of a teapot with a human shoulder bone wedged into it testifies to the terror of the storm.

² In making this linkage, Robinson is of course exercising us in much the same manner that Thoreau himself had exercised his traveling companion on the cape, for the coin Thoreau picked up was dated 1741 and thus would not even have been minted until a generation after the body of the pirate Bellamy had vanished into the bellies of the sand sharks and other scavengers off that beach.
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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 1, 2013
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.
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.