



A PLAGUE OF AMERICAN ROGUES

Thoreau wrote in [WALDEN](#) about helping a runaway slave escape toward the northstar. He used a curious modifier, however, a modifier which now cries out for some explication. He referred to this person as a "real" runaway slave "among the rest":

[WALDEN](#): Men of almost every degree of wit called on me in the migrating season. Some who had more wits than they knew what to do with; runaway slaves with plantation manners, who listened from time to time, like the fox in the fable, as if they heard the hounds a-baying on their track, and looked at me beseechingly, as much as to say,-

"O Christian, will you send me back?"

One real runaway slave, among the rest, whom I helped to forward toward the northstar. Men of one idea, like a hen with one chicken, and that a duckling; men of a thousand ideas, and unkempt heads, like those hens which are made to take charge of a hundred chickens, all in pursuit of one bug, a score of them lost in every morning's dew, -and become frizzled and mangy in consequence; men of ideas instead of legs, a sort of intellectual centipede that made you crawl all over. One man proposed a book in which visitors should write their names, as at the White Mountains; but, alas! I have too good a memory to make that necessary.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

MUMPERY

Well then, were there others who were representing themselves as in need of assistance, who were not offering their "real" life situation? Was Thoreau indicating here that some of this was sheer pretense, designed to obtain his sympathy and assistance through a fraudulent sob story?

The answer, it would seem, is in the affirmative. In fact the America of Thoreau's era was a heaven of mountebankery, white and black. That was the era of the confidence man, commonly then termed a "[mumper](#)."



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

1693

[Bampfylde-Moore Carew](#) was born as the 3d child of the Reverend Theodore Carew, rector of Bickleigh in Devon. The Carew family had been in this area of England since the end of the 12th Century, when King Richard I had granted their ancestor the manor of Brauton. Bampfylde would during his teenage years go hunting with some buddies and chase a deer through a field of ripening grain, damaging the crop. This would induce him to run away from Blundell’s school in Tiverton. His first trick to support himself in a new life of vagabondage would involve the gullibilities of a Madam Musgrove of Monkton, who would reward him with 20 guineas for helping her locate a treasure. He informed her that a treasure lay buried beneath her laurel tree but that he needed to go away before she dug for it — lest it vanish.¹

1713

[Thomas Bell](#) was born in Boston. He would be sent to Boston Latin School and Harvard College.²

1732

December: [Thomas Bell](#) was, in the Sophomore year of his studies at Harvard College, publicly admonished for stealing. A few months later he would be expelled for “other acts of theft, particularly of stealing private Letters ... and ... a cake of chocolate,” offenses compounded by “the most notorious, complicated lying.” At this point, with only a little more than £8 in his pocket and owing £30 to his taylor, and other debts amounting to about £20, to avoid the Boston debtor’s prison, Bell fled to London and then Jamaica.

MUMPERY

1738

July: In Williamsburg, the [Virginia Gazette](#) printed a notice:

On the 2d of this instant July one [Thomas Bell](#), alias Francis Partridge Hutchinson, who was committed to the Isle of Wight Gaol, for Felony, made his Escape.... This is therefore to desire all Persons to aid and assist in taking up the said Felon, so that he may be brought to Justice.

MUMPERY

1. Such a person is a “mumper,” according to the Oxford English Dictionary, “a person who sponges on others.”

2. Tom Bell the Wild West outlaw of the 19th Century was a very different person from this the colonial American confidence man. For the 18th-Century colonial rogue, refer to Steven C. Bullock’s “A Mumper among the Gentle: Tom Bell, Colonial Confidence Man” in [The William and Mary Quarterly](#), 3rd Ser., Vol. 55, No. 2. (Apr., 1998), pp. 231-258. For the 19th-Century outlaw, see Drago, Sinclair. ROAD AGENTS AND TRAIN ROBBERS: HALF A CENTURY OF WESTERN BANDITRY (NY: Dodd, 1973); Sifakis, Carl. ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN CRIME (NY: Facts on File Inc., 1982); Secret, William B. CALIFORNIA DESPERADOES – STORIES OF EARLY OUTLAWS IN THEIR OWN WORDS.

MUMPERY

MUMPERY



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

November: [Thomas Bell](#) was convicted in New-York of “falsely, unlawfully, unjustly, knowingly, fraudulently, and deceitfully, composing, writing, and inventing a false, fictitious, Counterfeit, and invented Letter ... to Robert Levingston and Peter Levingston, ... to defraud the said Levingstons of £50 Sterling,” and was sentenced to “19 Lashes at a Cart’s Tail, and [to be] drawn through the principal Streets” of the metropolis.³

1739

[Thomas Bell](#) fled to Speightstown on the island of Barbados, and there established himself as Gilbert Burnet, son of a late Massachusetts governor and grandson of a famous English historian (such a person is a “mumper,” according to the Oxford English Dictionary, “a person who sponges on others”). Fleeing from a [Jewish](#) wedding, he was caught and beaten by guests whom he had robbed, and this assault by Jews on an elaborately attired and mannerly gentleman would prompt local Christians to torch the town’s synagogue (this synagogue burning is now characterized as “the earliest [antisemitic](#) riot on record in the New World”).

[Bampfylde-Moore Carew](#), son of a Devonshire minister, had been traveling in the southwest of England under assumed identities to bilk people of their ready cash (another of these “mumpers”). In this year the English authorities ordered him transported to [Maryland](#). There he would escape and, in Connecticut, take up again his accustomed MO: typically he would pass himself off as a Quaker in need of help, or a shipwrecked sailor, or a victim of the small pox. For a time he would associate himself with a band of Gypsies. Returning eventually to England, he would be again captured and transported to Maryland, and it seems he again made his way home to England. A genre of fiction, such as *THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF MR. BAMPFYLDE-MOORE CAREW, COMMONLY CALLED THE KING OF THE BEGGARS*, would go through many editions and keep his story in circulation. In these alleged memoirs of a confidence man, the author dared his readers to “Lay thy Hand on thy Heart and consider if thou hast not impos’d upon Mankind”:

Perhaps my Reader is some Gentleman of the Law, if so, let him consider ... if he never took in Hand a bad Cause, and assur’d his Client of the Goodness of it.... Perhaps some plodding honest Tradesman is reading my Memoirs ... but he must be much better than his Neighbours ... if he has never put off a bad Commodity for a good one, or made his Goods weigh heavier than when he bought them. In a Word, most gentle Reader, every Profession has its Fourberies and Impostures; even the Printer of these Memoirs intends to print them on a large Letter, and with a broad Margin, ... to make thee pay the more for them.

MUMPERY

3. Such a person is a “mumper,” according to the Oxford English Dictionary, “a person who sponges on others.”

MUMPERY



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

1741

Traveling in New Jersey, [Thomas Bell](#) came to understand that he resembled a famous minister, the Reverend John Rowland of Boston, whom they were expecting to arrive. Some New Jerseyans invited him into their homes and asked him to preach at their church on Sunday. As they approached the church he remembered having left his sermon at their house, and rode back. He was able to abscond with his host family's horse, money, and papers and, when the true Reverend Rowland came on the scene, he was arrested and charged with this capital crime. Fortunately the court was able to validate this minister's assertion, that on the Sunday of this theft he had in fact preached at a church in Pennsylvania.

MUMPERY

1743

February: The Pennsylvania Gazette reported, of [Thomas Bell](#), that:

He has it seems made it his Business for several Years to travel from Colony to Colony, personating different People, forging Bills, Letters of Credit, &c. and frequently pretending Distress, imposed grosly on the charitable and compassionate.

MUMPERY

1745

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF [BAMPFYLDE-MOORE CAREW](#) was published while he was still alive. Some 30 editions of this rogue's tale would be published in the following half century.

MUMPERY

1759

[Bampfylde-Moore Carew](#) died, leaving a daughter. The body is said to have been placed in an unmarked grave at Bickleigh, England.

MUMPERY

1765

[Stephen Burroughs](#), famous American confidence man or "mumper,"⁴ was born in Hanover, New Hampshire, son of a Congregational clergyman. He would grow up in New Hampshire and Vermont, acquiring the reputation of a preacher's brat.

MUMPERY

4. A "mumper," according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is "a person who sponges on others."

1779

At the age of 14, [Stephen Burroughs](#) ran away to enlist in the army. He would shortly desert, and enter [Dartmouth College](#).

MUMPERY

JOHN WHEELLOCK (president 1779-1815): John Wheelock assumed the presidency of Dartmouth upon his father's death in 1779. Neither a cleric nor an academic, Dartmouth's second and youngest president was confronted with the task of building up Dartmouth's finances and physical resources after the ravages of the Revolutionary War. While his relationship with the state legislature led to a legal crisis for the College and the controversy surrounding his latter years in office cast a shadow over his administration, Dartmouth made tremendous progress under his leadership. Two of the College's most renowned alumni, Daniel Webster (1801) and Sylvanus Thayer (1807) graduated during his tenure, and he was instrumental in founding the fourth medical school in the nation in 1797 under Dr. Nathan Smith. John Wheelock also began building the historic Dartmouth Hall, which has become one of the country's best-known collegiate buildings.⁵



1782

After two years of mischief-making at Dartmouth College, [Stephen Burroughs](#) dropped out to take up his mature life of serial con games. After signing aboard a privateer, he would represent himself as a ship's physician. Then, back on land, he would take up schoolmastering before for six months under the assumed name "Davis" performing the functions of a Congregational minister in Pelham, Massachusetts. His minister self would eventually be detected passing counterfeit money in Springfield, Massachusetts. He would escape from the Northampton, Massachusetts lockup by burning it down, would be recaptured and wind up as a prisoner on Castle Island in Boston Harbor — from which, again, he would manage to escape. Recaptured, he would serve out his term. Upon release he would go to Canada and there build a ring of counterfeiters. However, they say you can't keep a good man down — eventually Stephen would rise above his con games, converting to Catholicism and spending the remainder of his life teaching the sons of wealthy Canadians in his home, at which he would accumulate an extensive library.

MUMPERY

5. All the Dartmouth presidential portraits are in the college's Hood Museum of Art in Hanford, New Hampshire.



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

1793


By this point “Parson” Mason Locke Weems had served as rector of at least two churches in [Maryland](#) and had become a full-time book vender with, a biographer reports, “a touch of the confidence man in him.”

MUMPERY

1798

[Stephen Burroughs](#), the rogue plagiarist and counterfeiter, authored an initial volume of a MEMOIR OF MY OWN LIFE and it was printed in Hanover, New Hampshire.


MUMPERY

He included a truly offensive poem similar to the broadside THE INDIAN PEDIGREE, *SUI CAPET ILLE FACIT* which had appeared in 1794.  This effort at nastiness, published as a hymn, depicted not native Americans but the Irish as the litter of a sow that had been impregnated by Satan.

Note that this little poem is not a simple boundary transgression. A simple boundary transgression would be like the Holy Spirit descending upon the Virgin Mary. What is being described in the hymn is a boundary transgression, yes, but it is a boundary transgression described as being between the epitome of evil, Satan, and the epitome of filthiness, an old sow. The nice story being told about the Irish, therefore, is that they are not a mere boundary transgression — they are the ultimate in evilness conjoined with the ultimate in filthiness.

(We can see readily infer the conclusion of this line of reasoning: Anything that an Englishman might do to destroy an Irishman, literally anything, will be found pleasing in the eye of God.)


1804

 [Stephen Burroughs](#), the rogue plagiarist and counterfeiter, authored a 2d volume to supplement the initial volume of his MEMOIR OF MY OWN LIFE that had been published in 1798 in Hanover, New Hampshire, and this 2d volume was printed in Boston:

I consider a man’s merit to rest entirely with himself, without any regard to family, blood, or connection.

MUMPERY

1811

 MEMOIRS OF [STEPHEN BURROUGHS](#). TO WHICH ARE ADDED NOTES AND AN APPENDIX (B.D. Packard). The initial volume of this memoir had been published in Hanover, New Hampshire in 1798, and the follow-on volume in Boston in 1804. This new edition published in Albany, New York conjoined the volumes.


MUMPERY



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

1818


 John Adams wrote [Thomas Jefferson](#) and mentioned that Jesuits were traveling the country “in as many shapes and disguises as ever a king of the gypsies, [Bampfylde-Moore Carew](#) himself, assumed.”

MUMPERY

Retailers’ and distillers’ licenses no longer bore a federal tax. The distilling industry began to enjoy a tax-free era which would endure until 1862. [Jefferson](#) would rejoice –“as a moralist”– explaining that:

It is an error to view a tax on that liquor as merely a tax on the rich. It is a prohibition of its use in the middling class of our citizens, and a condemnation of them to the poison of [whiskey](#), which is desolating their houses. No nation is drunken where [wine](#) is cheap; and none sober, where the only antidote is the bane of whisky.

1825

 Tom Bell the Wild West desperado was born as [Thomas J. Hodges](#) in Rome, Tennessee.⁶

1834

 A pantomime *Bampfylde Moore Carew, Or, Harlequin King of the Beggars* was staged at the Theatre on Queen’s Ferry.

MUMPERY

6. Tom Bell the colonial American confidence man was a very different person from this Wild West outlaw of the 19th Century. For the 18th-Century colonial rogue, refer to Steven C. Bullock’s “A Mumper among the Gentle: Tom Bell, Colonial Confidence Man” in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 55, No. 2. (Apr., 1998), pp. 231-258. For the 19th-Century outlaw, see Drago, Sinclair. *ROAD AGENTS AND TRAIN ROBBERS: HALF A CENTURY OF WESTERN BANDITRY* (NY: Dodd, 1973); Sifakis, Carl. *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN CRIME* (NY: Facts on File Inc., 1982); Secret, William B. *CALIFORNIA DESPERADOES – STORIES OF EARLY OUTLAWS IN THEIR OWN WORDS*.

October 27, Monday: A royal decree stripped Don Carlos of any right to the Spanish throne.

Bronson Alcott was working himself into a state of mind in which he was comparing himself to Jesus of Nazareth:

I shall redeem infancy and childhood; and if a Savior of Adults was given, in the person of Jesus, let me, without impiety or arrogance, regard myself as the children's Savior.

Alcott was simply the kind of confidence man that, even now, one wishes one could be a friend of, and help support not only with encouragement but also with cash. But never forget in dealing with these records, he was a con man, true blue, he was a man who did know the truth of the old saying "The only thing you have to earn in this world is your own self-respect; everything else you can steal." As we watch him go through life, we cannot help but notice that wherever he went, whatever he did, he was always on the lookout for someone new to impress, someone he could draw into his circle of supporters.

MUMPERY



As to money, that you know, is one of the last of my anxieties. I have many friends, and am making more daily, and have only to be true to my principles, to get not only a useful name, but bread and shelter, and raiment.

1838

March 28, Wednesday: The black community of Wilberforce in Canada was having problems with a confidence man named Israel Lewis who was apparently making the rounds soliciting contributions for their survival, and then simply pocketing most if not all of these gifts:

ISRAEL LEWIS.

MUMPERY

Wilberforce, U.C., March 28th, 1836.

The board of managers of the Wilberforce settlement, met and passed unanimously the following resolutions - Present, Austin Steward, Philip Harris, Peter Butler, William Bell, John Whitehead, Samuel Peters.

Resolved, 1st. That we deeply regret the manner in which our friends in the States have been imposed upon by Israel Lewis; and that we hereby inform them, as a board of managers or otherwise, that we have received less than one hundred dollars of all the money borrowed and collected in the States.

Resolved, 2d. That although we have not received one hundred dollars from said Lewis, yet, when we shall have received the funds collected by our agent, the Rev. Nathan Paul, in England, we will refund as far as our abilities will allow and our friends may require, the money contributed for our supposed benefit, by them in the States.

Resolved, 3d. That we tender our sincere thanks to our beloved



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

friends, Arthur Tappan and others, who have taken such deep interest in the welfare of our little colony.

Resolved, 4th. That the foregoing resolutions be signed by the whole board, and sent to the States to be published in the New York Observer and other papers.

AUSTIN STEWARD, *President*,

PETER BUTLER, *Treasurer*,

JOHN HALMES, *Secretary*.

PHILIP HARRIS, }

WILLIAM BELL, }

JOHN WHITEHEAD, } *Managers*.

SAMUEL PETERS, }

Just prior to the election that had taken place in [Rhode Island](#), Oliver Johnson, the Corresponding Secretary of the Rhode Island Anti-Slavery Society, had written to each of the candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor expressing the views of the abolitionists by posing a series of questions. Mr. Sprague, who was elected governor, had responded from Warwick in the following vein (the answer received from Mr. Childs, who was elected lieutenant-governor, was in a similar vein):

DEAR SIR,—

Your favor of the 19th inst. requesting of me, in conformity to a resolution of the Executive Committee of the Rhode Island Anti-Slavery Society, an expression of my opinions on certain topics, was duly received. I have no motive whatever for withholding my opinions on any subject which is interesting to any portion of my fellow-citizens. I will, therefore, cheerfully proceed to reply to the interrogatories proposed, and in the order in which they are submitted.

1. Among the powers vested by the Constitution in Congress, is the power to exercise exclusive legislation, 'in all cases whatsoever,' over the District of Columbia? 'All cases' must, of course, include the case of slavery and the slave-trade. I am, therefore, clearly of opinion, that the Constitution does confer upon Congress the power to abolish slavery and the slave-trade in that District; and, as they are great moral and political evils, the principles of justice and humanity demand the exercise of that power.

2. The traffic in slaves, whether foreign or domestic, is equally obnoxious to every principle of justice and humanity; and, as Congress has exercised its powers to suppress the slave-trade between this country and foreign nations, it ought, as a matter of consistency and justice, to exercise the same powers to suppress the slave-trade between the states of this Union. The slave-trade within the states is, undoubtedly, beyond the control of Congress; as the 'sovereignty of each state, to legislate exclusively on the subject of slavery, which is tolerated within its limits,' is, I believe, universally conceded. The Constitution unquestionably recognises the sovereign power of each state to legislate on the subject within its limits; but it imposes on us no obligation to add to the evils of the system by countenancing the traffic between the states. That which our laws have solemnly pronounced to be piracy in our foreign intercourse, no sophistry can make honorable or justifiable in a domestic form. For a proof of the feelings which this traffic naturally inspires, we need but



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

refer to the universal execration in which the slave-dealer is held in those portions of the country where the institution of slavery is guarded with the most jealous vigilance.

3. Congress has no power to abridge the right of petition. The right of the people of the non-slaveholding states to petition Congress for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, and the traffic of human beings among the states, is as undoubted as any right guarantied by the Constitution; and I regard the Resolution which was adopted by the House of Representatives on the 21st of December last as a virtual denial of that right, inasmuch as it disposed of all such petitions, as might be presented thereafter, in advance of presentation and reception. If it was right thus to dispose of petitions on *one* subject, it would be equally right to dispose of them in the same manner on *all* subjects, and thus cut of all communication, by petition between the people and their representatives. Nothing can be more clearly a violation of the spirit of the Constitution, as it rendered utterly nugatory a right which was considered of such vast importance as to be specially guarantied in that sacred instrument. A similar Resolution passed the House of Representatives at the first session of the last Congress, and as I then entertained the same views which I have now expressed, I recorded my vote against it.

4. I fully concur in the sentiment, that 'every principle of justice and humanity requires, that every human being, when personal freedom is at stake, should have the benefit of a jury trial;' and I have no hesitation in saying, that the laws of this state ought to secure that benefit, so far as they can, to persons claimed as fugitives from 'service or labor,' without interfering with the laws of the United States. The course pursued in relation to this subject by the Legislature of Massachusetts meets my approbation.

5. I am opposed to all attempts to abridge or restrain the freedom of speech and the press, or to forbid any portion of the people peaceably to assemble to discuss any subject - moral, political, or religious.

6. I am opposed to the annexation of Texas to the United States.

7. It is undoubtedly inconsistent with the principles of a free state, professing to be governed in its legislation by the principles of freedom, to sanction slavery, in any form, within its jurisdiction. If we have laws in this state which bear this construction, they ought to be repealed. We should extend to our southern brethren, whenever they may have occasion to come among us, all the privileges and immunities enjoyed by our own citizens, and all the rights and privileges guarantied to them by the Constitution of the United States; but they cannot expect of us to depart from the fundamental principles of civil liberty for the purpose of obviating any temporal inconvenience which they may experience.

These are my views upon the topics proposed for my consideration. They are the views which I have always entertained, (at least ever since I have been awakened to their



vast importance,) and which I have always supported, so far as I could, by my vote in Congress; and if, in any respect, my answers have not been sufficiently explicit, it will afford me pleasure to reply to any other questions which you may think proper to propose.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your friend and fellow citizen,
WILLIAM SPRAGUE."

APPENDIX F.

The following is believed to be a correct exhibit of the legislative resolutions against the annexation of Texas – of the times at which they were passed, and of the votes by which they were passed:–

1. VERMONT.

"1. *Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives, That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representatives requested, to use their influence in that body to prevent the annexation of Texas to the Union.*

2. *Resolved, That representing, as we do, the people of Vermont, we do hereby, in their name, SOLEMNLY PROTEST against such annexation in any form."*

[Passed unanimously, Nov. 1, 1837.]

2. RHODE ISLAND.

(In General Assembly, October Session, A. D. 1837.)

"Whereas the compact of the Union between these states was entered into by the people thereof in their respective states, 'in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their posterity;' and, therefore, a Representative Government was instituted by them, with certain limited powers, clearly specified and defined in the Constitution – all other powers, not therein expressly relinquished, being 'reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.'

And whereas this limited government possesses no power to extend its jurisdiction over any foreign nation, and no foreign nation, country, or people, can be admitted into this Union but by the sovereign will and act of the free people of all and each of these United States, nor without the formation of a new compact of Union – and another frame of government radically different, in objects, principles, and powers, from that which was framed for our own self-government, and deemed to be adequate to all the exigencies of our own free republic:–

Therefore, *Resolved, That we have witnessed, with deep concern, the indications of a disposition to bring into this Union, as a constituent member thereof, the foreign province or territory of Texas.*

Resolved, That, although we are fully aware of the consequences which must follow the accomplishment of such a project, could



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

it be accomplished – aware that it would lead speedily to the conquest and annexation of Mexico itself, and its fourteen remaining provinces or intendencias – which, together with the revolted province of Texas, would furnish foreign territories and foreign people for at least twenty members of the new Union; that the government of a nation so extended and so constructed would soon become radically [changed] in character, if not in form – would unavoidably become a military government; and, under the plea of necessity, would free itself from the restraints of the Constitution and from its accountability to the people. That the ties of kindred, common origin and common interests, which have so long bound this people together, and would still continue to bind them: these ties, which ought to be held sacred by all true Americans, would be angrily dissolved, and sectional political combinations would be formed with the newly admitted foreign states, unnatural and adverse to the peace and prosperity of the country. The civil government, with all the arbitrary powers it might assume, would be unable to control the storm. The usurper would find himself in his proper element; and, after acting the patriot and the hero for a due season, as the only means of rescuing the country from the ruin which he had chiefly contributed to bring upon it, would reluctantly and modestly allow himself to be declared 'Protector of the Commonwealth.'

We are now fully aware of the deep degradation into which the republic would sink itself in the eyes of the whole world, should it annex to its own vast territories other and foreign territories of immense though unknown extent, for the purpose of encouraging the propagation of slavery, and giving aid to the raising of slaves within its own bosom, the very bosom of freedom, to be esported and sold in those unhallowed regions. Although we are fully aware of these fearful evils, and numberless others which would come in their train, yet we do not here dwell upon them; because we are here firmly convinced that the free people of most, and we trust of all these states, will never suffer the admission of the foreign territory of Texas into this Union as a constituent member thereof – will never suffer the integrity of this Republic to be violated, either by the introduction and addition to it of foreign nations or territories, one or many, or by dismemberment of it by the transfer of any one or more of its members to a foreign nation. The people will be aware, that should one foreign state or country be introduced, another and another may be, without end, whether situated in South America, in the West India islands, or in any other part of the world; and that a single foreign state, thus admitted, might have in its power, by holding the balance between contending parties, to wrest their own government from the hands and control of the people, by whom it was established for their own benefit and self-government. We are firmly convinced, that the free people of these states will look upon any attempt to introduce the foreign territory of Texas, or any other foreign territory or nation into this Union, as a constituent member or members thereof, as manifesting a willingness to prostrate the Constitution and dissolve the Union.



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

Resolved, That His Excellency, the Governor, be requested to forward a copy of the foregoing resolutions to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, and to each of the Executives of the several states, with a request that the same may be laid before the respective Legislatures of said states."

[The Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted, Nov. 3, 1837.]

3. OHIO.

"Resolved, by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, That in the name, and on behalf of the people of the State of Ohio, we do hereby SOLEMNLY PROTEST against the annexation of Texas to the Union of these United States.

And be it further resolved, That the Governor be requested to transmit to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, and to the Governors of each of the States, a copy of the foregoing resolution, with a statement of the votes by which it was passed in each branch of the Legislature."

[Passed by 64 out of 72, the whole number in the House of Representatives – unanously in the Senate. Feb. 24, 1838.]

4. MASSACHUSETTS.

"Resolves against the annexation of Texas to the United States. Whereas a proposition to admit into the United States as a constituent member thereof, the foreign nation of Texas, has been recommended by the legislative resolutions of several States, and brought before Congress for its approval and sanction; and whereas such a measure would involve great wrong to Mexico, and otherwise be of evil precedent, injurious to the interests and dishonorable to the character of this country; and whereas its avowed objects are doubly fraught with peril to the prosperity and permanence of this Union, as tending to disturb and destroy the conditions of those compromises and concessions, entered into at the formation of the Constitution, by which the relative weights of different sections and interests were adjusted, and to strengthen and extend the evils of a system which is unjust in itself, in striking contrast with the theory of our institutions, and condemned by the moral sentiment of mankind; and whereas the people of these United States have not granted to any or all of the departments of their Government, but have retained in themselves, the only power adequate to the admission of a foreign nation into this confederacy; therefore, *Resolved, That we, the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, do in the name of the people of Massachusetts, earnestly and solemnly protest against the incorporation of Texas into this Union, and declare, that no act done or compact made, for such purpose by the government of the United States, will be binding on the States or the People.*

Resolved, That his Excellency the Governor be requested to forward a copy of these resolutions and the accompanying report to the Executive of the United States, and the Executive of each State and also to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, with a request that they present the resolves to both Houses of Congress."



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

[Passed MARCH 16, 1838, UNANIMOUSLY, in both Houses.]

* * * * *

5. MICHIGAN.

Whereas, propositions have been made for the annexation of Texas to the United States, with a view to its ultimate incorporation into the Union:

"And whereas, the extension of this General Government over so large a country on the south-west, between which and that of the original states, there is little affinity, and less identity of interest, would tend, in the opinion of this Legislature, greatly to disturb the safe and harmonious operations of the Government of the United States, and put in imminent danger the continuance of this happy Union: Therefore,

Be it resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, That in behalf, and in the name of the State of Michigan, this Legislature doth hereby dissent from, and solemnly protest against the annexation, for any purpose, to this Union, of Texas, or of any other territory or district of country, heretofore constituting a part of the dominions of Spain in America, lying west or south-west of Louisiana.

And be it further Resolved, by the Authority aforesaid, That the Governor of this State be requested to transmit a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolve, under the great seal of this state, to the President of the United States; also, that he transmit one copy thereof, authenticated in manner aforesaid, to the President of the Senate of the United States, with the respectful request of this Legislature, that the same may be laid before the Senate; also, that he transmit one copy thereof to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States, authenticated in like manner, with the respectful request of this Legislature, that the same may be laid before the House of Representatives; and also, that he transmit to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, one copy thereof, together with the Report adopted by this Legislature, and which accompanies said preamble and resolves."

[Passed nearly if not quite unanimously, April 2, 1838].

* * * * *

6. CONNECTICUT.

"Resolved, That we, the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened, do, in the name of the people of this State, solemnly protest against the annexation of Texas to this Union."

[Passed, it is believed, unanimously in both houses.]

* * * * *

(Those which follow were passed by but one branch of the respective Legislatures in which they were introduced.)

7. PENNSYLVANIA.



Resolutions relative to the admission of Texas into the Union.
"Whereas the annexation of Texas to the United States has been advocated and strongly urged by many of our fellow-citizens, particularly in the southern part of our country, and the president of Texas has received authority to open a correspondence with, and appoint, a commissioner to our government to accomplish the object; - *And whereas* such a measure would bring to us a dangerous extension of territory, with a population generally not desirable, and would probably involve us in war; - *And whereas* the subject is now pressed upon and agitated in Congress; therefore,
Resolved, &c, That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representatives requested, to use their influence and vote against the annexation of Texas to the territory of the united States.
Resolved, That the Governor transmit to each of our Senators and Representatives a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions."

[Passed the Senate March 9, 1835, by 22 to 6. Postponed indefinitely in the House of Representatives, April 13, by 41 to 39.]

* * * * *

8. MAINE.

"*Resolved,* That the Legislature of the State of Maine, on behalf of the people of said state, do earnestly and solemnly protest against the annexation of the Republic of Texas to these United States; and that our Senators and Representatives in Congress be, and they hereby are, requested to exert their utmost influence to prevent the adoption of a measure at once so clearly unconstitutional, and so directly calculated to disturb our foreign relations, to destroy our domestic peace, and to dismember our blessed Union."

[Passed in the House of Representatives, March 22, 1838, by 85 to 30. Senate (same day) refused to concur by 11 to 10.]

* * * * *

9. NEW-YORK.

"*Resolved,* (if the Senate concur,) That the admission of the Republic of Texas into this Union would be entirely repugnant to the will of the people of this state, and would endanger the union of these United States.
Resolved, (if the Senate concur,) That this Legislature do, in the name of the people of the State of New York, solemnly protest against the admission of the Republic of Texas into this Union.
Resolved, (if the Senate concur.) That his Excellency the Governor be requested to transmit a copy of the foregoing resolutions to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, and also to the governors of each of the United States, with a request that the same be laid before their respective Legislatures."

[These resolutions passed the House of Representatives in April,



by a large majority – the newspapers say, 83 to 13. They were indefinitely postponed in the Senate, by a vote of 21 to 9.]

APPENDIX G.

The number of petitioners for abolition in the District of Columbia, and on other subjects allied to it, have been ascertained (in the House of Representatives) to be as follows:–

	Men.	Women.	Total.
For abolition in the District,	51,366	78,882	130,248
Against the annexation of Texas,	104,973	77,419	182,392
Rescinding the gag resolution,	21,015	10,821	31,836
Against admitting any new slave state,	11,770	10,391	22,161
For abolition of the slave-trade between the states,	11,864	11,541	23,405
For abolition of slavery in the territories,	9,129	12,083	21,212
At the extra session for rescinding the gag resolution of Jan. 21, 1837,	3,377		3,377

Total, 213,494 201,137 414,631
The number in the Senate, where some difficulty was interposed that prevented its being taken, is estimated to have been about two-thirds as great as that in the House.

APPENDIX H.

[On the 1st of December, one of the secretaries of the American Anti-Slavery Society addressed a note to each of the Governors of the slave states, in which he informed them, in courteous and respectful terms, that he had directed the Publishing Agent of this society, thereafter regularly to transmit to them, free of charge, the periodical publications issued from the office of the society. To this offer the following replies were received:–]

GOVERNOR CAMPBELL'S LETTER.

JAMES G. BIRNEY, Esq., *New York*
"RICHMOND, Dec. 4, 1837.

SIR, – I received, by yesterday's mail, your letter of the 1st instant, in which you state that you had directed the publishing agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society, hereafter, regularly to transmit, free of charge, by mail, to all the governors of the slave states, the periodical publications issued from that office.

Regarding your society as highly mischievous, I decline receiving any communications from it, and must request that no publications from your office be transmitted to me.

I am, &c,
DAVID CAMPBELL."



GOVERNOR BAGBY'S LETTER.

"TUSCALOOSA, *Jan. 6, 1838*

SIR, - I received, by due course of mail, your favor of the 1st of December, informing me that you had directed the publishing agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society to forward to the governors of the slaveholding states the periodicals issued from that office. Taking it for granted, that the only object which the society or yourself could have in view, in adopting this course, is, the dissemination of the opinions and principles of the society - having made up my own opinion, unalterably, in relation to the whole question of slavery, as it exists in a portion of the United States, and feeling confident that, in the correctness of this opinion, I am sustained by the entire free white population of Alabama, as well as the great body of the people of this Union, I must, with the greatest respect for yourself, personally but not for the opinions or principles advocated by the society - positively decline receiving said publications, or any others of a similar character, either personally or officially. Indeed, it is presuming a little too much, to expect that the chief magistrate of a free people, elected by themselves, would hold correspondence or give currency to the publications of an organized society, openly engaged in a scheme fraught with more mischievous consequences to their interest and repose, than any that the wit or folly of mankind has heretofore devised.

I am, very respectfully,

Your ob't servant,

A.P. BAGBY"

JAMES G. BIRNEY, *Esq., New York.*

* * * * *

GOVERNOR CANNON'S LETTER.

[This letter required so many alterations to bring it up to the ordinary standard of epistolary, grammatical, and orthographical accuracy, that it is thought best to give it in *word and letter*, precisely as it was received at the office.]

"EXECUTIVE DEPT.-

NASHVILLE. *Dec. 12th, 1837.*

Sir

I have rec'd yours of the 1st Inst notifying me, that you had directed, your periodical publications, on the subject of Slavery to be sent to me free of charge &c - and you are correct, if sincere, in your views, in supposing that we widely differ, on this subject, we do indeed widely differ, on it, if the publications said to have emanated from you, are honest and sincere, which, I admit, is possible.

My opinions are fix'd and settled, and I seldom look into or examine, the, different vague notions of others who write and theorise on that subject. Hence I trust you will not expect me to examine, what you have printed on this subject, or cause to have printed. If you or any other man are influenced by feelings of humanity, and are laboring to relieve the sufferings, of the human race, you may find objects enough immediately around you,



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where you are, in any nonslaveholding State, to engage your, attention, and all your exertions, in that good cause.

But if your aim is to make a flourish on the subject, before the world, and to gain yourself some notoriety, or distinction, without, doing good to any, and evil to many, of the human race, you are, pursuing the course calculated to effect. Such an object, in which no honest man need envy. Your honours, thus gaind, I know there are many such in our country, but would fain hope, you are not one of them. If you have Lived, as you state forty years in a Slave holding State, you know that, that class of its population, are not the most, miserable, degraded, or unhappy, either in their feelings or habits, You know they are generally governd, and provided for by men of information and understanding sufficient to guard them against the most, odious vices, and hibets of the country, from which, you know the slaves are in a far greater degree, exempt than, are other portions of the population. That the slaves are the most happy, moral and contented generally, and free from suffering of any kind, having, each full confidence, in his masters, skill means and disposition to provide well for him, knowing also at the same time that *it is his interest to do it*. Hence in this State of Society more than any other, Superior intelligence has the ascendancy, in governing and provideing, for the wants of those inferior, also in giveing direction to their Labour, and industry, as should be the case, superior intelligence Should govern, when united with Virtue, and interest, that great predominating principle in all human affairs. It is my rule of Life, when I see any man labouring to produce effects, at a distance from him, while neglecting the objects immediately around him, (in doing good) to suspect his sincerity, to suspect him for some selfish, or sinister motive, all is not gold that glitters, and every man is not what he, endeavours to appear to be, is too well known. It is the duty of masters to take care of there slaves and provide for them, and this duty I believe is as generally and as fully complyd with as any other duty enjoind on the human family, for next to their children their own offspring, their slaves stand next foremost in their care and attention, there are indeed very few instances of a contrary character.

You can find around you, I doubt not a large number of persons intemix'd, in your society, who are entirely destitute of that care, and attention, towards them that is enjoyed by our slaves, and who are destitute of that deep feeling of interest, in guarding their morals and habits, and directing them through Life in all things, which is here enjoyd by our slaves, to those let your efforts be directed immediately around you and do not trouble with your vague speculations those who are contented and happy, at a distance from you.

Very respectfully yours,

N. CANNON."

Mr. JAS. G. BIRNEY, Cor. Sec. &c.

[The letter of the Secretary to the governor of South Carolina was not *answered*, but was so inverted and folded as to present



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the *subscribed* name of the secretary, as the *superscription* of the same letter to be returned. The addition of *New York* to the address brought it back to this office.

Whilst governor Butler was thus refusing the information that was proffered to him in the most respectful terms from this office, he was engaged in another affair, having connection with the anti-slavery movement, as indiscreet, as it was unbecoming the dignity of the office he holds. The following account of it is from one of the Boston papers:-]

"*Hoaxing a Governor.*- The National Aegis says, that Hollis Parker, who was sentenced to the state prison at the late term of the criminal court for Worcester county, for endeavoring to extort money from governor Everett, had opened an extensive correspondence, previous to his arrest, with similar intent, with other distinguished men of the country. Besides several individuals in New York, governor Butler, of South Carolina, was honored with his notice. A letter from that gentleman, directed to Parker, was lately received at the post office in a town near Worcester, enclosing a check for fifty dollars. So far as the character of Parker's letter can be inferred from the reply of governor Butler, it would appear, that Parker informed the governor, that the design was entertained by some of our citizens, of transmitting to South Carolina a quantity of 'incendiary publications,' and that with the aid of a little money, he (Parker) would be able to unravel the plot, and furnish full information concerning it to his excellency. The bait took, and the money was forwarded, with earnest appeals to Parker to be vigilant and active in thoroughly investigating the supposed conspiracy against the peace and happiness of the South.

The Aegis has the following very just remarks touching this case:- 'Governor Butler belongs to a state loud in its professions of regard for state rights and state sovereignty. We, also, are sincere advocates of that good old republican doctrine. It strikes us, that it would have comported better with the spirit of that doctrine, the dignity, of his own station and character, the respect and courtesy due to a sovereign and independent state, if governor Butler had made the proper representation, if the subject was deserving of such notice, to the acknowledged head and constituted authorities of that state, instead of holding official correspondence with a citizen of a foreign jurisdiction, and employing a secret agent and informer, whose very offer of such service was proof of the base and irresponsible character of him who made it.'"

* * * * *

GOVERNOR CONWAY'S LETTER.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, *March 1, 1838.*
Sir - A newspaper, headed '*The Emancipator,*' in which you are announced the 'publishing agent,' has, for some weeks past, arrived at the post office in this city, to my address. Not having subscribed, or authorized any individual to give my name as a subscriber, for that or any such paper, it is entirely *gratuitous* on the part of its publishers to send me a copy; and not having a favorable opinion of the *intentions* of the *authors*



MUMPERS

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and founders of the 'American Anti-Slavery Society;' I have to request a discontinuance of 'The Emancipator.'
Your ob't servant, "J.S. CONWAY."
R. G. WILLIAMS, Esq., New York.

* * * * *

[NOTE.— The following extract of a letter, from the late Chief Justice Jay to the late venerable Elias Boudinot, dated Nov. 17, 1819, might well have formed part of Appendix E. Its existence, however, was not known till it was too late to insert it in its most appropriate place. It shows the view taken of some of the *constitutional* questions by a distinguished jurist, — one of the purest patriots too, by whom our early history was illustrated.]

"Little can be added to what has been said and written on the subject of slavery. I concur in the opinion, that it ought not to be *introduced, nor permitted* in any of the *new states*; and that it ought to be gradually diminished, and finally, abolished, in all of them.

To me, the *constitutional authority* of the Congress to prohibit the *migration and importation* of slaves into any of the states, does not appear questionable.

The first article of the Constitution specifics the legislative powers committed to Congress. The ninth section of that article has these words:— 'The *migration or importation* of such persons as any of the *now existing* states shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year 1808 — but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation not exceeding *ten dollars* for each person.'

I understand the sense and meaning of this clause to be, That the power of the Congress, although *competent to prohibit such migration and importation*, was not to be exercised with respect to the THEN existing states, and *them only*, until the year 1808; but that Congress were at liberty to make such prohibition as to any *new state* which might in the *meantime* be established. And further, that from and after *that* period, they were authorized to make such prohibition as to *all the states, whether new or old*.

Slaves were the persons intended. The word slaves was avoided, on account of the existing toleration of slavery, and its discordancy with the principles of the Revolution; and from a consciousness of its being repugnant to those propositions to the Declaration of Independence:— 'We hold these truths to be self-evident — that all men are created equal — that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights — and that, among these, are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'"

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

4th day 28th of 3 M 1838 / I am still poorly as to bodily health there are Mitigations of the disorder under which I have suffered & no extremity as some weeks ago, yet I am not clear from it, & find myself unable to be much about — I am favoured with quietness of mind — I have some outward concerns which might



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be closer settled, but nothing that would give much trouble were they settled by others

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

April 25: Texas-American Boundary Convention.

The black community in New-York, victimized by the charitable collections of a black confidence man named Israel Lewis who was apparently making the rounds soliciting contributions for the survival of the black Wilberforce colony in Canada, and then simply pocketing most if not all of these gifts, attempted to spread the word as to this man's activities:

New York, April 25th, 1836.

At a public meeting of the colored citizens of New York city, held in Phoenix Hall, Thomas L. Jennings in the Chair, and Charles B. Ray, Secretary, the following resolutions were passed unanimously:

Resolved, That the thanks of this meeting be tendered to the Rev. Samuel E. Cornish, for the able and satisfactory report of his mission to Upper Canada, especially to the Wilberforce settlement.

Resolved, That this meeting deem it their imperative duty, to announce to the public, that in view of facts before them, Israel Lewis⁷ has abused their confidence, wasted their benevolence, and forfeited all claim to their countenance and respect.

Resolved, That a committee of ten, be appointed to give publicity to the foregoing resolutions; also, to the communication from the managers of the Wilberforce settlement, as they may deem necessary in the case.

THOMAS L. JENNINGS, *Chairman*, CHARLES B. RAY, *Secretary*.

Arthur Tappan was also warning New-Yorkers about this con — but Israel Lewis would turn it all around, and sue the New-York businessman for defamation of character, and filed a nuisance lawsuit against Austin Steward in Wilberforce:

It will now appear that I was not the only unfortunate individual who had difficulty with Mr. Lewis. Mr. Arthur Tappan made known through the press, about this time, that Israel Lewis was not a man to be fully relied upon in his statements regarding the Wilberforce colony; and also, if money was placed in his hands for the benefit of the sick and destitute among the settlers, it would be doubtful whether it was faithfully applied according to the wishes of the donors.

For this plain statement of facts, Mr. Lewis commenced a suit against Mr. Tappan, for defamation of character; laying the damages at the round sum of ten thousand dollars. It appeared that Lewis valued his reputation highly now that he had elevated himself sufficiently to commence a suit against one of the best and most respectable gentlemen in New York city; a whole souled abolitionist withal; one who had suffered his name to be cast out as evil, on account of his devotion to the colored man's cause — both of the enslaved and free; one who has, moreover, seen his own dwelling entered by an infuriated and pro-slavery mob; his expensive furniture thrown into the street as fuel for

7. It necessarily follows that the public should withhold their money from his subordinate agents.



MUMPERS

MUMPERS

the torch of the black man's foe; and, amid the crackling flame which consumed it, to hear the vile vociferations of his base persecutors, whose only accusation was his defence of the colored man. This noble hearted, Christian philanthropist, who took "joyfully the spoiling of his goods" for the cause of the oppressed, was the chosen victim of Lewis' wrath and violent vituperation; and that too, where he was well known as a most honorable, humane gentleman; and all for naming facts which were quite generally known already.

Lewis returned to Wilberforce, flushed and swaggering with the idea of making his fortune in this speculation of a law-suit against Mr. Tappan; and to remove all obstacles, he sent a man to me, to say that if I would publish nothing, and would abandon the interests of the colonists, he would give me a handsome sum of money. I soon gave him to understand that he had applied to the wrong person for anything of that kind; and he then laid a plan to accomplish by fraud and perjury, what he had failed to do by bribery.

I have before mentioned the fact of my having taken up a note of twenty-five dollars for Mr. Lewis, on condition that he would soon refund the money. I did it as a favor, and kept the note in my possession, until about a year afterward, when I sued him to recover my just due on the note. We had then began to differ in our public business, which led to other differences in our transaction of both public and private matters relating to the colony. He of course gave bail for his appearance at court, and it ran along for some time until he found he could not bribe me to enter into his interests, and then for the first time, he declared that I had stolen the note! And finally succeeded in getting me indicted before the grand jury!

In this I suppose Lewis and his confederates had two objects: first, to get rid of me; secondly, that they might have a chance to account for my continued hostility, by saying that it arose in consequence of a private quarrel, and not for any true interest I had in their collecting money deceptively.

Lewis appeared so bent on my destruction, that he forgot it was in my power to show how I came by the note. The Court of King's Bench met, but in consequence of the cholera, was adjourned, and of course, the case must lie over until another year.

When the time for the trial drew near, I was, in the midst of my preparations to attend it, counseled and advised by different persons to flee from the country, which I had labored so hard and so conscientiously to benefit, and received in return nothing but detraction and slander. But conscious of my innocence, I declared I would not leave; I knew I had committed no crime; I had violated no law of the land, - and I would do nothing to imply guilt. He who hath formed the heart, knoweth its intent and purpose, and to Him I felt willing to commit my cause. True, the court might convict, imprison, and transport me away from my helpless family of five small children; if so, I was determined they should punish an innocent man. Nevertheless, it was a dark time; I was not only saddened and perplexed, but my spirit was grieved, and I felt like one "wounded in the house of his friends," - ready to cry out, "had it been an enemy I could have borne it," but to be arraigned,



MUMPERS

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for the **first** time in my life, as a **criminal**, by one of the very people I had spent my substance to benefit, was extremely trying. Guiltless as I knew myself to be, still, I was aware that many incidents had transpired, which my enemies could and would construe to my disadvantage; moreover, Lewis had money, which he would freely distribute to gain his point right or wrong, and to get me out of his way.

In due time the trial came on, and I was to be tried for **theft!** Lewis had reported all through the settlement that on a certain time I had called at his house, and from a bundle of papers which his wife showed me, I had purloined the note, which had caused me so much trouble. To prove this it was necessary to get his wife to corroborate the statement. This was not an easy matter. Mrs. Lewis, indignant and distressed by her husband's unkindness, had left him and taken up her abode in the family of a hospitable Englishman. After Lewis had been sent out as an agent for the colony, finding himself possessed of sufficient funds to cut a swell, he associated and was made a great deal of, by both ladies and gentlemen in high stations of life; the consequence of which was, he looked now with disdain upon his faithful, but illiterate wife, who like himself had been born a slave, and bred on a Southern plantation; and who had with him escaped from the cruel task-master, enduring with him the hardships and dangers of the flying fugitive.

Now her assistance was necessary to carry forward his plans, and he endeavored in various ways to induce her to return, but in vain. When he sent messengers to inform her how sorry he felt for his past abuse, she said she feared it was only some wicked plot to entice her away from the peaceable home she had found. Lewis saw that he must devise some other method to obtain her evidence. He therefore called on the brother of the Englishman in whose family Mrs. Lewis was, and in a threatening manner told him that he understood his brother was harboring his wife, and that he intended to make him pay dear for it. The brother, to save trouble, said he would assist him to get his wife, and that night conducted Lewis to her residence. No better proof can be given that Mrs. Lewis possessed the true heart of a woman, than that the moment her husband made humble concessions, and promised to love and protect her henceforth, she forgave him all his past infidelity and neglect, and looked with hope to a brighter future. In return Lewis presented her with a note, telling her to take it to a certain person and present it, and he would give her twenty dollars on it. This would, he doubtless thought, leave her in his power.

As Mrs. Lewis could not read, the unsuspecting wife presented the paper all in good faith. The gentleman looked at her sharply, suspiciously, – and then asked her, if she was not aware that she was presenting him a paper completely worthless! The poor woman was mortified and astonished; and instead of returning to her husband, fled to Wilberforce, and called at our house. Knowing how disastrous to me would be her false statement, and ignorant of her state of mind, I asked her if she had come to assist Mr. Lewis by swearing against me. I saw at once, that she had not yet been informed of her husband's design.

"Swear against you, Mr. Steward!" said she. "I know nothing to



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MUMPERS

swear that would injure you; I have always known you as an honest, upright man, and you need not fear my turning against an innocent person, for the benefit of one I know to be guilty. Nor would I have left my place, had I known what I now do." So all help and fear was ended in that quarter.

When at length the appointed morning arrived, I arose early, but with a saddened heart. I looked upon my wife and helpless family, reflecting that possibly this might be the last time we should all assemble around the breakfast table in our hitherto quiet home, and I could scarcely refrain from weeping. I, however, took my leave, and a lad with me, to bring back a message of the result, if the court found sufficient cause to detain me for trial. But when I found that I must be tried, I felt too unhappy to make others so, and kept out of the lad's way. He returned without a message; and I took my seat in the prisoner's box. I had just taken a letter out of the post office, from Rochester, containing recommendations and attestations from the first men in the city, of my good character, which relieved my feelings somewhat: nevertheless, my heart was heavy, and especially when, soon after I took my seat, a trap-door was opened and a murderer was brought up and seated by my side!

Chief Justice Robinson, made his appearance in great pomp — dressed in the English court style—then the crier, in a shrill voice, announced the opening of the court, and finished by exclaiming, "God save the King!" His lordship then called the attention of the jury to the law of the land; particularly to that portion relating to their present duty; and the grand jury presented me to the court, for feloniously taking a certain promissory note from the house of Israel Lewis. The King's Attorney had but one witness, and that was Lewis. He was called to the stand, permitted to relate his story, and retire without any cross-examination on the part of my Attorney; but that gentleman called up three respectable white men, all of whom swore that they would not believe Israel Lewis under oath! Then submitted the case to the jury without remark or comment, and the jury, without leaving their seats, brought in a verdict of "NOT GUILTY." Thus ended my first and last trial for theft! Oh, how my very soul revolted at the thought of being thus accused; but now that I stood justified before God and my fellow-men, I felt relieved and grateful; nor could I feel anything but pity for Lewis, who, like Haman, had been so industriously engaged in erecting "a gallows fifty cubits high" for me, but found himself dangling upon it. He raved like a madman, clutched the arm of the Judge and demanded a new trial, but he shook him off with contempt and indignation, as though he had been a viper. In his wild fury and reckless determination to destroy my character, he had cast a foul stain upon his own, never to be effaced. I had felt bound to preserve my reputation when unjustly assailed, but it had been to me a painful necessity to throw a fellow-being into the unenviable and disgraceful attitude in which Lewis now stood; and yet, he would not, and did not yield the point, notwithstanding his ignominious defeat. He very soon began to gather his forces for another attack upon me, and followed the same direction for his accusation, — the land purchase.



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The reader will recollect without further repetition, that as I could purchase no land of the Canada Company, because of their indignation against Lewis, I was glad to accept of the contract he had made with Mr. Ingersoll, for lot number four in the colony; that I paid the sum demanded, and took his assignment on the back of the contract, and as we then were on good terms, it never occurred to me that a witness was necessary to attest to the transaction. But after his failure to prove me a thief; his next effort was to convict me of forgery! It will be remembered that Lewis after selling out to me, returned the contract to Mr. Ingersoll, and that I had lost by the means, the land, and at least five hundred dollars' worth of improvements. Then I brought a suit against Lewis, to recover the money I had paid him for the contract; and then it was that he asserted and attempted to prove, that I had forged the assignment, and therefore, had no just claim on him for the amount paid. But in this, as in the other case, he met a defeat and made an entire failure. I recovered all that I claimed, which, was only my just due. One would suppose that after so many unsuccessful attempts to ruin me, he would have left me alone, – but not so with Lewis: he had the ambition of a Bonaparte; and doubtless had he possessed the advantages of an education, instead of having been born and bred a slave, he might, like an Alexander or Napoleon, have astonished the world with his deeds of daring. I am, however, no admirer of what the world call "great men," – one humble, self-sacrificing Christian, like Benjamin Lundy, has far greater claim on my respect and reverence. Lewis, failing in his second attack, backed up as he had been in all his wicked course, by a friend wearing the sacred garb of a minister of the gospel, cooled off, and it became evident to all, that he was meditating some different mode of warfare. To this concealed confederate, I must attach great blame, on account of the influence his station and superior learning gave him, not only over Mr. Lewis, but the colonists generally, and which should have been exerted for the good of all, in truth and honesty.

1840

January 28: [Stephen Burroughs](#) died in Three Rivers, Canada.

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1846

May 13, Wednesday: The US Congress having been informed a couple of days before by President [James Knox Polk](#), that a state of war existed between the United States of American and its southern neighbor, [Mexico](#), it recognized the existence of a state of war with [Mexico](#) and voted to authorize the President to solicit volunteers for the purpose of prosecution of that de facto war. What had happened was that the US had staged a provocation, inducing army soldiers to don stolen [Mexican](#) uniforms and stage a mock attack upon their own garrison post near the border. Word of this “Gulf of Tonkin” fraud would soon leak out of government circles and the war upon [Mexico](#) would become the 1st, but not the last, widely protested war in our history.⁸

WAR ON MEXICO

Medical standards were so nonexistent that a fraud like [Dr. Thomas J. Hodges](#) would have no trouble performing the duties of a US Army surgeon during this foreign campaign. “Which leg?”

MUMPERY

1848

Republication in Philadelphia of [Stephen Burroughs](#)'s MEMOIRS.

MUMPERY

1849



[William Thompson](#) was arrested in New-York after a career in which he approached the well-to-do, gained their confidence on the basis of his easy manner and meticulous attire, and got them to place money or their watch in his custody. The case would be a useful source for [Herman Melville](#)'s novel THE CONFIDENCE-MAN, to be published in 1857. When the New-York [Herald](#) dubbed Thompson “the confidence man,” this was in fact the 1st known use of that term. Arrest of the Confidence Man.—For the last few months a man has been traveling about the city, known as the “Confidence Man,” that is, he would go up to a perfect stranger in the street, and being a man of genteel appearance, would easily command an interview. Upon this interview he would say after some little conversation, “have you confidence in me to trust me with your watch until tomorrow;” the stranger at this novel request, supposing him to be some old acquaintance not at that moment recollected, allows him to take the watch, thus placing “confidence” in the honesty of the stranger, who walks off laughing and the other supposing it to be a joke allows him so to do. In this way many have been duped, and the last that we recollect was a Mr. Thomas McDonald, of No. 276 Madison street, who, on the 12th of May last, was met by this “Confidence Man” in William Street, who, in the manner as above described, took

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8. A Representative from [Illinois](#), Abraham Lincoln, would 1st rise to the nation's attention when he would begin to make public demands of the President, that we be informed of the “exact location” at which Mexico had allegedly invaded the United States. That Representative would learn that such anti-war antics did nothing to help the personal career and agenda of an American politician and, the next time the occasion offered, he would not attempt this stunt but instead would stay safely on the “loyal” pro-war side of the fence.

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

MUMPERS

MUMPERS

from him a gold lever watch valued at \$110; and yesterday, singularly enough, Mr. McDonald was passing along Liberty street, when who should he meet but the “Confidence Man” who had stolen his watch. Officer Swayse, of the Third Ward, being near at hand, took the accused into custody on the charge made by Mr. McDonald. The accused at first refused to go with the officer; but after finding the officer determined to take him, he walked along for a short distance, when he showed desperate fight, and it was not until the officer had tied his hands together that he was able to convey him to the police office. On the prisoner being taken before Justice McGrath, he was recognized as an old offender by the name of Wm. Thompson, and is said to be a graduate of the college at Sing Sing. The magistrate committed him to prison for a further hearing. It will be well for all those persons who have been defrauded by the “Confidence Man” to call at the police court Tombs and take a view of him.

At about this point [Samuel Stillman Osgood](#) painted [Melville](#)’s portrait. This is not it, but a portrait by Joseph Oriel Eaton which now hangs in the Houghton Library of Harvard University.⁹





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1850

The census lists a [Thomas J. Hodges](#), age 24, born in Tennessee, as living in the household of a George M. Bell and family of Washington Township, Yolo County, California.

MUMPERY

1855

[Thomas J. Hodges](#) was doing hard time for robbery in the prison on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay. He and Bill Gristy escaped and, using the name "[Tom Bell](#)," he joined with Gristy and three others to take up a career in stagecoach robbing.

MUMPERY

1856

[Herman Melville](#)'s THE PIAZZA TALES included a slightly edited reprinting of [BARTLEBY, THE SCRIVENER: A STORY OF WALL STREET](#). In addition, this year Melville finished THE CONFIDENCE MAN: HIS MASQUERADE and in October began to journey abroad alone, for his health.¹⁰ From Scotland he went to Liverpool where he attempted one last meeting with [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) (whom he told he had "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated"), and then sojourned on in Malta, Greece, [Egypt](#), Palestine, and [Italy](#). "Give me a condor's quill! Give me [Vesuvius](#)' crater for an inkstand!"

MUMPERY

VOLCANISM

August 12: The [Tom Bell/Bill Gristy](#) gang made an attempt on a stagecoach that was conveying \$100,000 in gold bullion between Camptonville and Maryville in California. During the robbery a female passenger was killed and two male passengers wounded. The stagecoach guards managed to protect the shipment of gold. A statewide manhunt would ensue.

MUMPERY

Late September: Bill Gristy, captured and threatened with lynching, to save himself provided authorities with the location of his colleague "[Tom Bell](#)."

MUMPERY

9. Osgood had also painted a portrait of [Edgar Allan Poe](#). Was this portrait painter related to the Osgood who married Ellen Devereux Sewall, or to the female poet Frances Sargent Osgood to whom Poe sent a handmade Valentine's Day card?

10. His father-in-law Lemuel Shaw loaned him \$1,500 for this journey, which would be the equivalent today of loaning someone \$150,000 without security so that they could go off on a world tour (in other words, this was not something that anyone in their right mind would contemplate doing without having some really good reason—even if they never tell anyone what their reason is—some reason such as "I need to get you the hell away from my daughter."). You may consult a record of this journey in JOURNAL UP THE STRAITS, OCTOBER 1, 1856-MAY 5, 1857, which has been published in 1935.



MUMPERS

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October 4, day: The Sheriff of Stockton was approaching Nevada City to take the outlaw “[Tom Bell](#)” into custody, when he came upon his hanged body. The outlaw had been, to appearances, a victim of vigilante justice. Bell’s Valley in Yuba County, California is allegedly named after this outlaw (or perhaps after the Bell family with which he was hiding).

MUMPERY

A story by [Louisa May Alcott](#) appeared in Boston’s [Saturday Evening Gazette](#), entitled “The Lady and the Woman.”



Oct. 4. *Helianthus tuberosus*, apparently several days, in Reynolds’s yard (the butcher’s).

P.M. — Down river.

Wind from northeast. Some water milkweed flying. Its pods small, slender, straight, and pointed perfectly upright; seeds large with much wing. The hibiscus gone to seed, and pods opened showing the seed, opposite Ostrya Island or Rock below Battle-Ground.

Ira an article on the alligator in *Harper’s Magazine* for December, 1854, it is said that mosquitoes “surround its head in clouds; and we have heard the negroes assert that the reptile opened its mouth until its interior was fully lined, and suddenly closing it up, would swallow the accumulated marauders, and then set its huge jaws as a trap for more.” This reminds me of the swarms of mosquitos about frogs and, I think, turtles.¹¹

In another article, of May, 1855, on “The Lion and his Kind,” the animals are placed in this order: the domestic cat, wildcat, the ocelot or tiger-cat of Peru and Mexico, the caracal of Asia and Africa, the lynx of North America, the chetah of India and Africa, the ounce of India (perhaps a rough variety of the leopard), the leopard, the jaguar, the cougar, the tiger, the lion. “The Cougar is the American lion — at least it bears a closer resemblance to that noble brute than any other of the feline family, for it is destitute of the stripes of the tiger, the spots of the leopard, and the rosettes of the jaguar; but when full-grown possesses a tawny-red color, almost uniform over the whole body, and hence the inference that it is like the lion.” “Cougar is a corruption of the Mexican name.” Ranges between Paraguay and the Great Lakes of North America. “In form it is less attractive than the generality of its species, there being an apparent want of symmetry; for it is observable that its back is hollow, its legs short and thick, and its tail does not gracefully taper; yet nature has invested the cougar with other qualities as a compensation, the most remarkable of which is an apparent power to render itself quite invisible; for so cunningly tinged is its fur, that it perfectly mingles with the bark of trees — in fact, with all subdued tints — and stretched upon a limb, or even extended upon the floor of its dimly lighted cage, you must prepare your eye by considerable mental resolution to be assured of its positive presence.” Its flesh is eaten by some. Mrs. Jane Swisshelm kept one which grew to be nine feet long, and, according to her, in this writer’s words, “If in exceeding good-humor he would purr; but if he wished to intimidate, he would raise his back, erect his hair, and spit like a cat. In the twilight of the evening the animal was accustomed to pace back and forth to the full extent of his limits, ever and anon uttering a short, piercing shriek, which made the valley reverberate for half a mile or more in every direction. Mrs. Swisshelm says these sounds were the shrillest, and at the same time the most mournful she ever heard. They might, perhaps, be likened to the scream of a woman in an agony of terror.” He once sprang at her, but was brought up by his chain. When preparing to spring, his eyes were “green and blazing, and the tip of his tail moving from side to side.” This paper describes “a full-grown royal tiger, measuring four feet seven inches from the nose to the insertion of the tail.... Unlike the miserable wretches we see in our menageries, etc.” The Brattleboro paper makes the panther four feet eleven inches, so measured!! I hear that a Captain Hurd, of Wayland or Sudbury, estimates the loss of river meadow-hay this season in those two towns on account of the freshet at twelve hundred tons.

CAT

11. You may inspect this article, but only by subscribing to [Harper’s Magazine](http://www.harpers.org/subjects/Alligators) online, at <http://www.harpers.org/subjects/Alligators>.

1858

April 5, Monday: Incensed at Massachusetts Senator Wilson’s speech of March 20th in praise of Helperism, Senator Asa Biggs of North Carolina responded in the US Senate with an attack upon the personal character of Hinton Rowan Helper. That turncoat Southern white nongentleman, he revealed, rather than being any sort of authority on the national racial and economic situation, was just another “mumper” (con artist). He had, Senator Biggs insisted, changed his name from “Helper,” and the reason that he had changed his name was that he had been caught in the South committing a petty theft! When he would be told of this senatorial assault upon his personal integrity, Helper would arm himself with a Colt revolver and a Bowie knife and set out for the District of Columbia to take vengeance.



1924

A reprint of the MEMOIRS OF THE NOTORIOUS [STEPHEN BURROUGHS](#) OF NEW HAMPSHIRE with a preface by Robert Frost was issued by Dial Press of New York.

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1934

October: The pyramid artist Charles Ponzi was deported to [Italy](#).

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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: May 31, 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.