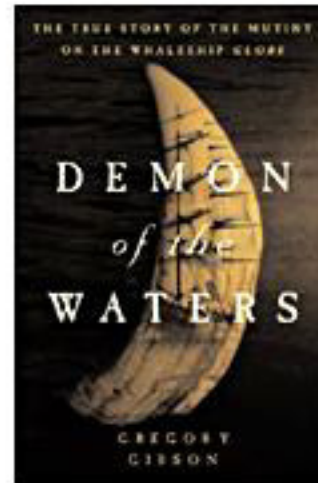
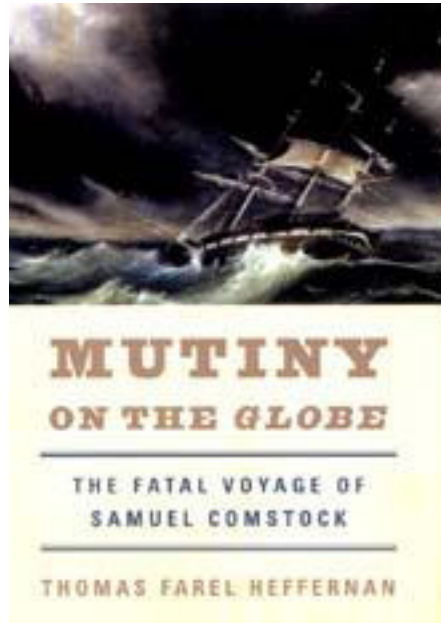


## GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM



### SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK, A QUAKER FAILURE



1776

Nathan Comstock was born in Burrillville near [Providence](#), as a birthright [Quaker](#) (the [Smithfield](#) Monthly Meeting was nearby, in what is now [Woonsocket, Rhode Island](#)).

SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

1792

There were so many [Quakers](#) by this point on [Nantucket Island](#) that it was clear it was going to be necessary to construct a 2d meetinghouse, at the island's northern end.



**SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK**

**A QUAKER FAILURE**

**GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM**

**1798**

In Edgartown, on [Martha's Vineyard](#), an elaborate residence was created for the wealthy Thomas Worth. Thomas had been born on December 10, 1742, and on April 19, 1764 had gotten married with Catherine Farmer, daughter of William and Catherine Farmer. The couple had children named Catherine, Eleanor, William, Mary, and Thomas. The older son, William Jenkins Worth, christened in this home during 1804, would take part in the War on Mexico, and it would be in his honor that a town in Texas would be named Fort Worth. The younger son, Thomas, would get chopped in the head with an ax while he lay in his cot asleep, in a mutiny, on his very 1st trip as Captain, on a whaling voyage aboard the *Globe* in 1824. The widowed mother, Catherine Farmer Worth, would die on November 16, 1835.

**RHODE ISLAND**

I have not yet discovered at this writing whether this Worth family was still Quaker in these generations, but it had been a Quaker family for a number of previous generations. It was descended from Friend Thomas Worth, who had brought over with him from Oxton, Nottingham, England to Penn's Pennsylvania colony his Bible, printed in 1636, a BIBLE which was still preserved by descendants even to the 7th generation. From the record inscribed in that volume it would appear that this founding father had been born in 1649, had left England the 21st of 2d month (which is to say April, Old Style), 1682, and had arrived at the Quaker settlement of Darby, Pennsylvania about the beginning of the 6th month following — which was even before Friend William Penn himself had set sail. Per Quaker records:

to ye monthly or Quarterly meetinges In pensivania or new Jersey  
or to Any of our friends In ye Service of Truth where our friends  
Thomas Worth and Samuell Bradshaw many Come.

Deare Friends these few lines may Signfie unto you somethinge  
of our sence and Judgment Conserninge ye aforesaid Thomas Worth  
& Samuell Bradshaw whose outward beeinge was att Oxton In ye  
County of Nottingham Amongst us theire Conversation & Manner of  
Life: ye walked Soberly Hamlesly And uprightly as becomes ye  
truth: Wee had untily with them And ye weare Concerned with us  
In Truth's Service And we know nothinge but yt ye are free &  
Cleare from any Ingagmen both Concerninge ye woman or Any other  
outward thinges: Soe In ye felling of ye pure and pretious truth  
& pure Life which floweth And stremeth from one Nation to  
Another; In the feelinge of which our hearts are Greatly  
refreshed & our Souls Mutually Comforted though wee bee  
outwardly farr Seperated one from an other: In Fresh Inoyment  
of this pure Love of our God his mercys & his Goodness which hee  
from one day to Another makees us pertakers of; And In ye psent  
feelings of his Continued presence which at this time is reveled  
And made known In this our Assembly we remaine your deare friends  
In ye service of truth.

From our Monthly meeting att ffarusfeild this 20th of ye first  
month 1682 In ye County of Nottingham  
Will Malson, Georg Cockrom, Will Watson, Robert Grace, Nathaniel  
Clay, John Lankford, Richard Bateman, Edward Asling, Mathias



## A QUAKER FAILURE

SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

[GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM](#)

Brackney, George Hopkinson, John Oldham. Will Blane-

This is to Certife to them whom it may Concerne that Isabell Davison of Annenlayes Mill; hath it In hir ming to Transport hir selfe Into Pensilvania in America: that ye said Isabell Dauinson hath walked orderly & soe far forth as wee know is Cleare from all men: Subscribed Att our monthly meetings att Branch House ye 13th day of ye 5th mon: 1682, by us whose names are heare under written.

Edmund Cartlidge; Michall Blunston; John Roades; Thomas Whittbe; John Blunston; Joseph Potter; Joshua Feare; William Day; Richard Sarson; Adam Roades; Samuell ffox; Richard Lees; Elizabeth Roades; Mary Whittbe; Mary Holland; Sarah Day.

On October 8, 1685, Friend Thomas Worth and Friend Isabella Davidson were wedded to one another in a Quaker manner:

Att a monthly meetings at Darby ye 7th day of ye 8th mo;1685, Thomas Worth & Isabel Dauinson declared theire Intentions of Marriage

George Wood, John Smith, Elizabeth Bartrum & Ann Wood to make enquire Concerniage ye Clearnes of Tho: Worth & Isabel Dauinson

Att A monthly meetings Arr darby ye 4th day of ye 9th mo; 1685, Thomas Worth and Isabel Dauinson declared theire Intentions of Marriage ye second time; thins beinge found Cleare.

This is to Certife all whom it may Concerne that Thomas Worth of ye towne of Darby in ye County of Chester, And Isable Dauinson of ye same Towne having Laid there Intentions of marriage before two monthly meetings According to ye order of truth; And things being found Cleare on both ptys; now for ye full determination of ye Marriage Above said, ye s'd Tho: Worth and Isabel Davinson upon ye 18th day of ye 9th mon;1685 In a Publique meetings of ye people of God declared as followeth: Thomas Worth standing up & takeinge Isabel Dauinson by ye hand said as followed: I doe in ye presence of The Lord & before you his people heare take Isabel Dauinson to be my wife, promising unto hir to be A loveinge husband soe Long as it shall please ye Lord to Lengthen out our dayes to gather, And the said Isabel Daunison standing up & Takeinge Thomas Worth by ye hand said as followed: I doe in ye Presence of ye Lord & before you his people take Thomas Worth to be my husband promising unto him to be a Loveinge and diligent wife. Wee whose names are under written beinge then & there present are witnesses to this marriage above written.

Thomas Worth  
Isabel Worth

Edmund Cartlidge; Michall Blunston; Georg Maries; John Smith; Georg Wood; John Blunston; John Bartram; Sam. Levis; John Wood; Tho: Hood; John Marshall; Sam: Sellers; John Roads; Ellin Garratt; Anna Sellers; Sarah Blunston; Ann Wood; Hannah Wood; Eliner Smith; Elin Gibins; Eliz. Ffearen; Sarah Sharp; John Wood

This couple had three children:



## SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

## A QUAKER FAILURE

[GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM](#)

- First, John Worth, who was born on 6/9/1686, and died on 9/23/1716, predeceasing his father but leaving surviving daughters.
- Second, Thomas Worth, who was born on 1/4/1688, got married with Mary Fawertt and had seven children Samuel, Susanna, Lydia, Rebecca, Hannah, Ebenezer, and Mary, and died on 12/19/1778.
- Third, Sarah Worth, who was born on 7/28/1691, and died on 10/8/1696 at the age of 6.

Friend Thomas Worth had been an assemblyman in 1697. Friend Isabelle Davidson Worth, wife of Friend Thomas Worth, died on 3/3/1709 at an age of about 54 years. Friend Thomas Worth died on 10th, 2d mo (April 10), 1731. He bequeathed 222 acres of land in Darby to his surviving son, Friend Thomas Worth, and 500 acres in East Bradford to the daughters of his deceased son, Friend John Worth. They sold 150 acres of the south end thereof to James Jefferis, and in 1738 they conveyed the remainder to their uncle, Friend Thomas Worth.

Per Smith's HISTORY OF DELAWARE COUNTY:

Thomas Worth was from Oxton, in county of Nottingham, England. He settled in Darby town immediately upon arrival in 1682, and subsequently higher up in the township. He was a consistent and exemplary member of the Society of Friends; and having acquired a better education than was usual in that day, his services were constantly in demand in the performance of such duties as required an expert and ready penman. He was married in 1685 to Isabell Daunison (Davison), who emigrated from the county of Darby, and probably came in the same ship with her husband, bringing with her a certificate of good Character, which she fully sustained in after-life. She died in 1709, at the age of fifty-four years. Thomas lived till 1731. In 1697 he represented Chester County in the Provincial Assemble. The descendants of this couple are numerous and respectable; those bearing the name being mostly settled in Chester County, where he had purchased a large Tract of land. He was one of the original purchasers of land in England (from William Penn). His son Thomas removed to Bradford, 1739.

**1799**

[Friends](#) on [Nantucket Island](#) began sending off their children for a guarded education in their faith, at the Nine Partners boarding school in the Hudson River valley.

[QUAKER EDUCATION](#)



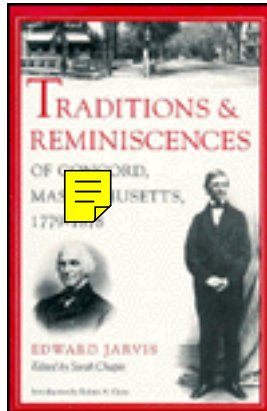
## A QUAKER FAILURE

SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1801

→ Whale oil stood at an unprecedented £66 the barrel. According to Dr. [Edward Jarvis](#)'s TRADITIONS AND REMINISCENCES OF [CONCORD](#), MASSACHUSETTS 1779-1878, pages 74-5:



→ December 10, Thursday: On this day, in the [Quaker](#) meetinghouse of Nantucket on [Nantucket Island](#), Massachusetts, Friend Nathan Comstock (birthright Quaker son of Friend Samuel Comstock of Gloucester, the south side of Burrillville, [Rhode Island](#) north of [Providence](#), and Friend Lucy his wife), and Friend Elizabeth Emmett (birthright Quaker daughter of Friend Edward Tillet Emmett of Nantucket and Friend Elizabeth Emmett his widow), “having declared their Intentions of taking each other in Marriage, before several Monthly Meetings of the people called Quakers in Nantucket, ... appeared at a public Afsembly of the aforesaid people and others, in their Meeting-house in Nantucket aforesaid, and he the said Nathan Comstock, taking the said Elizabeth Emmett by the hand, did openly declare as forthwith: Friends, I take this my friend Elizabeth Emmett to be my Wife, promising through divine assistance to be unto her a loving and faithful Husband, until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us. And the said Elizabeth Emmett did then and there in like manner declare as followeth: Friends, I take this my friend Nathan Comstock to be my Husband, promising through divine assistance to be unto him a loving and faithful Wife, until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us. — Or words of the like import. — And the said Nathan Comstock and Elizabeth Emmett, as a further confirmation thereof, have hereunto set their hands: She, after the Custom of Marriage, assuming the name of her husband. —

Nathan Comstock  
Elizabeth Comstock”

SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK



**SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK**

**A QUAKER FAILURE**

**GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM**

As far back as I can remember, in 1808 and afterwards, oil was coming into use in lamps. It was somewhat more expensive than tallow, and those who were supplied with tallow from their own beasts still used candles. Whale oil was used. This was coarse and gave an imperfect, dull light. The lamps were small and generally with only one wick. Afterwards those with two wicks were substituted. Lamps were generally of tin, japanned, which stood on pedestals more or less high but some had no pedestal, merely the lamp an egg-shaped cup with a projection at the bottom. Black tin was used at a later date and also glass. While I was in college, 1822-1826, I used two such lamps, each having two wicks. These four wicks only gave sufficient light for my study. Larger lamps, Astral, Solar, etc., were made in later years for parlors, larger rooms and on tables. Those had a better draft, burned more brilliantly and gave a much better light. Sperm oil was a richer source of light and was used by all who could afford it, a few years later than whale. Later, about 1830-1840, lard oil was used and was a good substitute for the fish oils and more economical. There were many kinds of burning fluids invented for lighting. Most of them had alcohol as a large ingredient and were very combustible. These were much praised by the manufacturers and sellers. They gave a brilliant light and were much used, yet they were liable to explosion. They took fire readily. Many accidents occurred – the glass lamps falling and breaking, the fluid taking fire, endangering the house, also the clothes of the women on their person. The vapor of this fluid, when exposed to the air, spread rapidly and would take fire, if in contact with a blaze. Some lives were lost in consequence. Nevertheless these fluids had an extensive use, until the coal oils took their places and the place of all other means of lighting in the country, excepting gas. About 1840-1850, Mr. Samuel Downes, a large refiner of whale oils, was convinced that ordinary coal oil could be purified and converted into a convenient and safe oil for ordinary lighting. After much investigation and many experiments by Mr. Merrill, his chemist, they succeeded in eliminating its dangerous and offensive elements and obtaining the very safe and brilliantly burning Kerosene oil. This is not only the cheapest means of lighting that has ever been known, but it gives a larger light than any material except gas, which can be used only in cities. Gas is very much more expensive than kerosene. Downes's kerosene is pure and safe, is sold by the barrel now, 1878, (1877 for 12 cts.) for 15 cents a gal., and at retail for 20 or 26 cents a gallon. A gallon of this oil will burn in an ordinary lamp 142-150 hours. A gallon of whale oil, costing 60 cts., will burn in an ordinary lamp with two wicks 31-33 hours. A gallon of sperm oil, costing 120 cts., will burn 30-31 hours. A pound of tallow candles, costing formerly 20 and now 14 cts., will burn 48 hours and give only about 1/15 or 1/20 as much light as the kerosene. The light given by kerosene, in [an] ordinary lamp is 12-14 times as great as that of a sperm two-wicked lamp. So it seems that the poorest of our people now enjoy 45-60 times as much light as the richest of our father and grandfathers [at] about the same cost. Kerosene oil gives a softer light, which wearies the eyes less than any other, and people are more comfortable as well as richer by this great and new blessing.



## A QUAKER FAILURE

SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1802



September: [Samuel B. Comstock](#) was born on [Nantucket Island](#). His father was Friend Nathan Comstock, who had been born during 1776 in Burrillville near [Providence](#), a birthright [Quaker](#) ([Smithfield](#) Monthly Meeting in what is now [Woonsocket, Rhode Island](#)). The father had gotten married with Friend Elizabeth Emmett, a daughter of Friend Edward T. Emmett who had been born during 1782. He became a teacher in Nantucket Island and also a cashier at the local bank. In 1811, while their firstborn Samuel was about 9, the family would relocate to New-York where for 40 years the father would be doing a business in whaling products in a firm at 191 Front Street. Friend Nathan must have been remarkably successful, since after losing \$75,000 –an extraordinary sum– in the failure of the business of Jacob Barker, he would manage to continue. This firstborn, birthright Friend Samuel, however, after having been a troublesome teenager, would on January 25, 1824, aboard the whaler *Globe*, disgrace himself by making himself the leader of a mutiny and by becoming a murderer. He would wind up being killed by another of the mutineers, with his body thrown into the ocean.

This couple, Friend Nathan and Friend Elizabeth Comstock, would produce seven other children in addition to their weebegone firstling Samuel:

2. William Comstock, born on April 24, 1804 on Nantucket Island, who would get married with Mary M. Davenport. At the age of 14 he would go along with his troublesome brother Samuel on the ill-fated voyage of the *Globe*, would refuse to take part in his older brother's mutiny, and after return would twice write the story of the mutiny (THE LIFE OF SAMUEL COMSTOCK, THE TERRIBLE WHALEMAN: CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE MUTINY, AND MASSACRE OF THE OFFICERS OF THE SHIP GLOBE, OF NANTUCKET: WITH HIS SUBSEQUENT ADVENTURES, AND HIS BEING SHOT AT THE MULGRAVE ISLANDS... / BY HIS BROTHER, WILLIAM COMSTOCK, published in Boston by James Fisher in 1840, and in addition an unpublished manuscript on the same events). He would produce a son, Augustus Comstock, who would become an author in his own right, and would die on November 20, 1882.
3. George Comstock, probably born in 1808, would also sign aboard the *Globe*, would refuse to take part in his older brother's mutiny, and would be killed by the natives of the atoll on which they landed.
4. Thomas Comstock, born during 1810, who did not marry and who would die in Brooklyn during 1855.
5. Phebe Comstock, born during 1812, who would die during 1820.
6. Martha Comstock, born during 1814, would marry first with Dr. Josiah Hopper and then with Robert Haviland, the widower of her sister Lucy Comstock, and would die in about 1892.
7. Lucy Comstock, who married Robert B. Haviland of New-York, and would die at the age of 33.
8. Elizabeth Ann Comstock, who married Joseph Comstock, son of a Dr. Comstock of Lebanon, Connecticut. The couple would have no children and she would die in 1860.

Friend Elizabeth Emmett Comstock would die during 1818 after creating the above eight children. Friend Nathan Comstock would remarry with Anne Merritt, a daughter of John Merritt of New-York, and the couple would add the following five children to the previous eight:

9. Nathan Comstock, born during January 1822 in New-York, who would be a lawyer in Brooklyn. He would get married on December 24, 1853 with Charlotte H. Cromwell, a daughter of Oliver Cromwell and Sarah Titus Cromwell. Charlotte had been born on March 31, 1832 in Canterbury,



## SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

## A QUAKER FAILURE

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

- New York and would die on March 6, 1912 in Brooklyn. He would die on January 18, 1897 in New-York.
10. John Merritt Comstock, born in 1824. He would get married with Elsie W. Hoxie, daughter of Joseph Hoxie of New York, and would serve in the US Naval Office and also at the Treasury Department in Washington DC.
  11. Louisa Comstock, who got married with Thomas W. Piggot of Manchester, England, would die in about 1891.
  12. Mary Comstock, who got married with Dr. J. O'Brien of New-York — the couple would have no children.
  13. Sarah Comstock, who got married with Theodore Moelling; in 1894 the couple would be residing in Germantown, Pennsylvania.

1811



The Comstock family of [Nantucket Island](#) relocated to New-York, where the father, Friend Nathan Comstock, would engage successfully in a business of whaling products while his eldest son, birthright Friend [Samuel B. Comstock](#), would soon join a street gang, the “Downtowners,” and develop a taste for violence. In an attempt to rescue his son, the father would find him a berth aboard a merchant ship bound for Liverpool, England, but the son would be back in four months, even the worse for this experience having acquired in addition to his taste for violence a taste for women. Continuing his effort to redeem his son, the Quaker father would send him off to the boarding school of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) at Nine Partners northeast of Poughkeepsie, New York (the school at which Friend James Mott and Friend Lucretia Coffin were teachers, a school frequently visited and ministered to by Friend Elias Hicks). Abandoning this religious education, Samuel would sail on the *Beaver* running a shipment of guns to rebels in Chile, would be captured and held for a period in a Chilean jail, and would then sign on the whaler *George*. He was turning out to be a ne'er-do-well.





## A QUAKER FAILURE

SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1815

➡ On [Nantucket Island](#), [Samuel B. Comstock](#)'s youth had been unruly. Embarking at age 13 on a voyage aboard the *Foster* to encounter the Pacific Islands, he would attempt to foment a mutiny aboard this whaler and would wind up confined under careful watch. (When they returned to their home port, however, his troublemaking proclivities would be forgiven and Samuel, with his brothers William and George, would be allowed to sign aboard the whaler *Globe*.)



1822

➡ December 15, Sunday: The 20-year-old [Nantucket Island](#) boatsteerer [Samuel B. Comstock](#) and his 18-year-old brother William and his 14-year-old brother George sailed under Captain Thomas Worth aboard the *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#), on its 4th whaling expedition. (On a previous voyage this whaler had been the 1st to take 2,000 barrels of oil.)

This voyage would evidently become very frustrating, for although the vessel initially proceeded east toward the Azore Islands and the Cape Verde Islands, in order to pick up the northeast trade winds and proceed toward Cape Horn and the Pacific Ocean and the whaling grounds there, Captain Worth would turn the ship south without stopping at any of these Atlantic islands for the refreshment and recreation of the crew. Ouch! –Then, after the vessel had rounded the Horn, Captain Worth would pass up another refreshment and recreation spot, Valparaiso on the coast of Chile. Ouch! –Then, when the vessel reached Hawaiian waters, Captain Worth would refuse to allow any of his crewmen to go ashore for their usual refreshment and recreation, but instead would have fresh supplies brought out to the ship at anchor. It was almost as if this young Captain Worth, on his first command, had other things to think about than the usual fun and games with eager little brown people!

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

*1st day 15th of 12 M / Our Morning meeting to me was a season*



## SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK


## A QUAKER FAILURE


### GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

*of [obscured]ing to me, but I have no doubt it was to many a time [obscured] savour, & appeared like it as much solemnity seemd spread in the gathering – J Dennis had a short testimony [–]er which was acceptable & D Buffum was largely [–]erned to speak of the State of Christendom as portray[ing] a corrupt state of things, when professing Christians [–] different nations engaged in War, are praying to the same God for success on their Arms. Christian pro[–]ing Ministers thus at the same time engaged –how [incon]sistent with the Doctrines & precepts of Jesus Christ [whos]e injunction was to love one another – In the Afternoon it was still to me a season of little proffit but was enabled to feel that Truth [was] prevalent amongst us – Father Rodman bore a short but acceptable testimony – & J Dennis was [eng]aged to recount the present favours of society & [con]trast it with the times of sufferings in the days [–] our valient Predicessors & endeavoured to excite the youth & others present to live near the Truth, the light [–] have, & be obedient to Known Duty –*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1823

 March: The whaler *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) was at this point rounding Cape Horn, proceeding from the Atlantic into the Pacific. Frustratingly, the vessel had proceeded past the Azore Islands and the Cape Verde Islands without stopping for rest and recreation. The next R&R spot ought to be Valparaiso on the coast of Chile — but Captain Thomas Worth would refuse to stop off there also. Double ouch! –Then, when the vessel would reach Hawaiian waters, the Captain would refuse to allow any of his crewmen to go ashore for their usual fun and games with these very large and very eager brown people, but instead would have fresh supplies brought out to the ship at anchor. It was almost as if this young Captain Worth, on his first voyage, had other things on his mind than the usual gameplaying with native populations. –Our birthright [Quaker](#) ne'er-do-well, boatsteerer [Samuel B. Comstock](#), must have been getting so frustrated!

 May: The whaler *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) was at this point entering Hawaiian waters. Frustratingly, the vessel had proceeded past the Azore Islands and the Cape Verde Islands and Valparaiso on the coast of Chile without stopping. After all this denial of the flesh Hawaii would be an ideal R&R venue — but Captain Thomas Worth was simply refusing to allow any of his crewmen to go ashore for fun and games with these very large and very eager brown people. Instead, inexplicably, he was having the natives bring the needed fresh supplies out to the ship at anchor in their canoes. Our birthright [Quaker](#) ne'er-do-well, [Samuel B. Comstock](#), figured out a way to beat the system. He stowed a likely Hawaiian woman away overnight in steerage, presenting her with a Scotch bonnet in appreciation of nighttime favors. Inexplicably, when he learned of this disobedience, the Captain did not order that his boatsteerer be tied to the mast and lashed to within an inch of his life. He forgave, and this forgiveness would not be forgiven — it was soon going to cost him his life.



## A QUAKER FAILURE

SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

### GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

➡ Summer: The *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) had voyaged halfway around the planet Earth –deep into the Southern Hemisphere and then all the way back north– and had finally reached the productive whaling grounds off Japan. Here they would spend the next almost five months chasing whales — but this time, despite their best efforts, not entirely successfully. Acting up as was his wont, [Samuel B. Comstock](#) got into a wrestling match with the whaler's 3d Mate, Nathaniel Fisher, and found himself pinned. Other ruckuses that he initiated caused one member of the crew to be clapped into irons, and caused the Captain to strike the cook. Under these circumstances, with everyone frustrated, in November the vessel would return to Hawaii.

➡ November: The canalboat *Mary and Hannah* arrived in New-York with a cargo of wheat, the first to arrive from Seneca Lake via the [Erie Canal](#). The owners were presented with an engraved urn.

When the whaler *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) reached Hawaii six of its frustrated and disappointed crewmembers deserted. Captain Thomas Worth was able to recruit seven local replacements, but of course these were not sailors of the highest quality — of these seven new crewmembers, five would be involving themselves, with [Samuel B. Comstock](#), in a mutiny.

➡ December 9, Tuesday: The *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) left Hawaiian waters to hunt whales along the Equator. When one of the new crewmembers recruited in Hawaii, Joseph Thomas, turned out to need a flogging, the troubleseeking [Samuel B. Comstock](#), it goes without saying, sided against Captain Thomas Worth and sprang to the defense of this sailor.

1824

➡ January 25, Sunday: In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*1st day 25th of 1st M 1824 / Silent Meeting, none of the Most lively to my feelings, tho' there was a good degree of Solemnity -Took tea & spent part of the evening at D Buffums. -*



## SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK

## A QUAKER FAILURE

[GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM](#)

En route between Hawaii and Tahiti, a year into the Pacific voyage of the [Martha's Vineyard](#) whaler *Globe* (renown for having been the 1st ship to take 2,000 barrels of oil), late at night there was a mutiny.



One of the ship's boatsteerers, [Samuel B. Comstock](#), was the birthright [Quaker](#) first child of a birthright Quaker father from Burrillville, [Rhode Island](#), Friend Nathan Comstock, and a Quaker mother, Friend Elizabeth Emmet Comstock, living on [Nantucket Island](#) and then in New-York. This young scion of a privileged and responsible and religious family, having been given the benefit of a guarded Quaker education at Nine Partners, having the world at his feet, had determined that none of this was enough to satisfy himself with his life. He wanted all this plus adequate carousing and swiving. He had therefore equipped himself with the sorts of things he supposed he would need in order to recreate himself as a libertine chieftain on a South Seas atoll — things such as garden seeds.

He persuaded four companions and on this night, with a hatchet, Friend Samuel laid open the head of the sleeping captain, Thomas Worth, with an ax. Silas Payne, one of the new men who had signed aboard in Hawaii, was attempting to use a knife on the ship's 1st Mate, William Beetle, and was doing such an inadequate job of it that Friend Samuel needed to join in with his ax. The other two Comstock brothers took no part in the mutiny. (This would be written up by William Lay in conjunction with Friend Cyrus Hussey, Jr., a Nantucket [Quaker](#) who survived the mutiny, but in general the incident would become another forbidden topic in the community.)



**A QUAKER FAILURE**

**SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK**

**GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM**

**DEMON OF THE WATERS.**

**THE TRUE STORY OF THE MUTINY ON THE WHALESHIP *GLOBE*.**

**BY GREGORY GIBSON.**

**ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIK RONNBERG AND GARY TONKIN.**

**BOSTON: LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY, 2002**

**Reviewed by Rob Rulon-Miller**

In a world where death is as certain as the setting sun, and is as perniciously random as the scattering of galaxies, it's no wonder that death -tragic and unexpected death- is the lifeblood of so much literature and history. I note in passing today's Sunday New York Times cover story on the horrific final minutes of those top-floor employees in the World Trade Towers as recorded in their desperate calls from cell phones or email messages - calls not so much for help as calls already from the afterlife. I also note but will not elaborate on Mr. Gibson's own life-altering foray into the nether world and back: his struggle to cope with the tragic death of his son Galen, who was murdered by a fellow student in a random act of violence at Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in 1992, a journey Mr. Gibson brilliantly recounted in his critically acclaimed *GONE BOY: A WALKABOUT* (Kondansha International, 1999).

In *DEMON OF THE WATERS*, Gibson revisits death, examining the murderous and most bloody mutiny that occurred 175 years ago on board the whaleship *Globe*, where the loved sons of mothers and fathers were savagely mauled and killed. Successive generations have been captivated by the gruesome event, and it remains, arguably, the most disturbing case in the annals of American maritime history. The *Globe* mutiny has been well-documented and often recounted in maritime anthologies as well as in contemporaneous accounts, including two by the brother of the perpetrator, William Comstock (one in manuscript, one published), and another by two of the survivors, William Lay and Cyrus Hussey. The story falls into Mr. Gibson's lap with the discovery, in Indiana of all places, of a previously unlocated



**SAMUEL B. COMSTOCK**

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journal recounting the subsequent rescue of the stranded crew on the Marshall Islands in the western Pacific.

The antagonist of the story, Samuel Comstock, is a young man - a mere teenager when we first meet him- at sixes and sevens with his Quaker upbringing on Nantucket, nothing but a burden for his family and an annoyance to any friends he might have had. When his family moved to Manhattan from Nantucket, Samuel fell in with a street gang named the Downtowners, "who passed their time battling the rival Corlears Hookers. In the manner of many troubled youths, Samuel kept his own hours and often came home late at night, bloody and bruised." To keep Samuel from straying further, his father found him a berth on a merchant ship bound for Liverpool. Four months later Samuel was home again, and to his repertoire of extracurricular activities he now added the chasing of women. The strict Quaker school he was sent to in Poughkeepsie did little more than harden him against authority. Whoring and street fighting were in his blood, and it seems there was little to do with him. Before finally shipping on the *Globe*, Comstock filled out his teenage years by sailing on the *Beaver* with a shipment of arms for rebels in Chile and then on the Nantucket whaler *George* after having spent "some months ... languishing in a Chilean jail" for gunrunning.

The captain of the *Globe* was Thomas Worth, and at age 29, it was his first command. The ship was manned by a crew of twenty, not one of them older than 26 and half of them teenagers. Samuel Comstock at the time was a mere twenty years old, although already well beyond his years. Departing Martha's Vineyard in December 1822, the *Globe* followed a usual course to the Pacific, which meant sailing east towards the Azores and the Cape Verdes, where ships would pick up the northeast trade winds that would blow them south and west towards Cape Horn. Ordinarily ships would stop in the Azores or the Cape Verdes for supplies, but because Captain Worth was delayed in leaving and anxious to get to the Pacific whaling grounds in season, he chose not to put in at either group and continued sailing towards the Horn.

In the south Atlantic the *Globe* captured its first whale, and it is here we learn from Samuel's younger brother, William, who was also on board, that "contact with the whale oil caused Samuel great distress, 'filling him with biles and inflaming his flesh.'" By March of 1823, the *Globe* rounded the Horn and headed up the South American coast towards Valparaiso, a usual stopping point for provisioning and relaxation after the arduous passage. But again, Captain Worth chose not to stop, and instead continued to head towards the rich whaling fields off the coast of Japan. By May, after five continuous months at sea, the *Globe* arrived at Hawaii; nor did she stop here. Nonetheless, provisions -including women- were brought from shore. Captain Worth forbade the women to spend the night, but Samuel Comstock disobeyed the order, and the next morning, according to William, "Lady Comstock made her appearance, emerging from steerage, with an air of great dignity, dressed in a new Scotch bonnet...." Captain Worth made no remark, and it was apparent to the rest



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of the crew that Samuel was becoming a favorite of the captain. "However," writes Gibson, "by allowing Samuel to openly flout his authority, Worth weakened his credibility and risked disrupting his relations" with the rest of the crew, and "alienated Samuel, a recipient of special privileges, from the mates."

By summer the *Globe* had reached the hallowed cruising grounds off Japan. Here, they spent nearly five months chasing whales, but it was not a very successful hunt. "During these months of hard work and unspectacular results, the situation on board the *Globe* began to deteriorate. Samuel Comstock did his best to rock the boat." A wrestling match ensued between Comstock and the third mate, Nathaniel Fisher, which Comstock lost, a humiliating defeat he did not readily forget. On another occasion, one of the crew was put in irons, and on another, the cook was struck by the captain, both incidences on account of Comstock. There were complaints all around by the crew about the meager rations; even so, the crew complained that they didn't have enough time in which to eat them. So, after not having set foot on land for nearly a year, after being confined for that long to ninety feet of boat with twenty other men, the crew of the *Globe* returned from the Japan grounds and put in at last at Hawaii. Gibson writes, "All the ingredients for insurrection were there ... indifferent success, bad food, capricious exercise of authority by an inexperienced captain, bullying and physical beatings from the officers, long confinement aboard the ship with no liberty, and the concerted, pernicious influence of a malcontent." On Hawaii six of the crew -it's amazing the number was as small as it was- deserted, and the replacements Captain Worth found ashore -"a rough set of cruel beings" in the words of George Comstock- "seemed so spectacularly ill chosen that one has to wonder about Thomas Worth's grasp of human nature." Of the seven replacements, five were eventually involved in the mutiny.

On December 9, 1823, the *Globe* departed Hawaii to hunt whales along the Equator. The captain was edgy and the crew tense. There was a flogging by Captain Worth of Joseph Thomas, who had signed on in Hawaii. Comstock took the side of Thomas, and -this being the last straw- with four other conspirators, in the very early morning hours of January 26, 1824, went down into Captain Worth's cabin and, in the sentence we've been waiting for, brought down an axe, "with such force that it nearly severed the top of the captain's head from his body." Silas Payne, who had also shipped in Hawaii, went after the first mate, William Beetle, with a knife, but he botched the job. Comstock was left to finish it by placing the axe in the mate's skull. Beetle was left "gurgling in his own blood and brains." Nor was this all. Samuel Comstock, the putative captain now, in the next twelve hours managed to shoot, bayonet, stab, disembowel, and throw overboard a total of five men, including the three mates and a black man, William Humphries, who for good measure was hanged from the foreyard for attempting to aid those who has been brutalized.



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The mutineers and the rest of the stunned and stupefied crew then sailed west to what is now Mili Atoll at the southern end of the Marshall Islands. Comstock, in what at this point in the story seems like a workaday chore, was murdered by his co-conspirator, Silas Payne, for bribing the natives with precious provisions from the ship. Less than a week later, six of the innocent crew serendipitously escaped in the *Globe* and managed to sail some 7000 miles across the Pacific to Valparaiso and safety.

Fast forward to Vevay, Indiana, where in 1978 a local book scout, Jay Small, and his younger partner, John Mullins, unearthed a handwritten account dated 1825 by a sailor on board the *Dolphin*, a United States naval vessel. The *Dolphin* had been ordered to sail to the Marshall Islands, at the insistence of no less than Presidents James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, to capture the mutineers and learn of their fate. This journal found its way into the hands of ABAA dealer Owen Kubik, who in turn sold it to Gibson. (It is now at the Kendall Whaling Museum.) It contains an eyewitness account by one Augustus Strong, midshipman, of the rescue of the only two survivors on Mili Atoll, Cyrus Hussey and William Lay, and recounts the story they told on their voyage back to civilization. Gibson's book brings the Augustus Strong account to the public for the first time, and for this reason alone the book will stand as one of the most important scholarly works on the terrible event. But, in fact, this journal occupies a minor part of the story as published, much of the recounting of its surfacing having ended up on the editor's floor. As these two expunged chapters may be of interest to our readers, they will run in concurrent issues of this Newsletter.

Gibson is becoming a seasoned, if not a flashy writer. His sentences move at an even pace, and his style is more that of a four-wheel drive Land Rover than a turbo-charged Ferrari. On the surface the facts of this story are practically unbelievable, but Gibson is very adept at making all the bizarreness and surreality of this debacle of a voyage seem possible – even plausible. He teaches us the ways of the sea and the sailor. The passion and intensity that suffuses *GONE BOY* is not so apparent here, but death on the *Globe* could never be so close and personal. Nonetheless, the recounting of the mutiny itself is gripping, and Gibson fixes it firmly in the historical context of American interests in the Pacific in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The thirty-odd pages of Notes at the back are helpful and informative, and the extensive bibliography attests to Gibson's penchant for meticulous research. If there is a flaw in the book, it may be that it was over-researched. Some of the early chapters, especially those on Quaker mores and the building of the *Globe*, seem a little ponderous, as does the chapter on the management of whaleships and the business of whaling. But my tastes notwithstanding, these arcanae must be addressed for the mutiny to be understood in full, and Gibson is successful in getting all the essential information on the page with only minor irritation. The illustrations by Erik





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Ronnberg and Gary Tonkin are appealing, if not striking, and I would have liked to have seen more illustrations from contemporary sources.



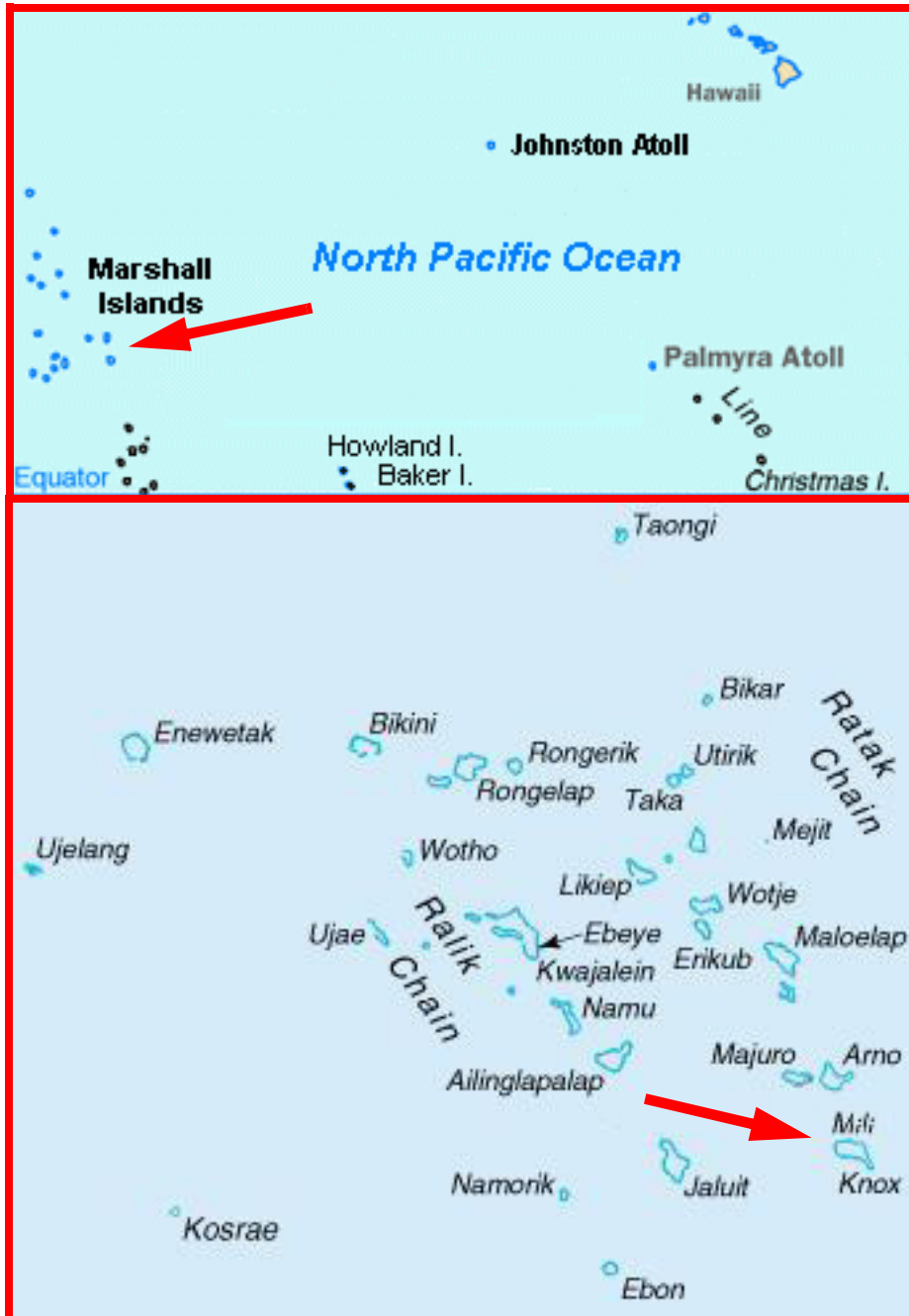
January 26, Monday: The southernmost of two routes was chosen for the Chesapeake and Delaware [Canal](#).

Aboard the *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#), after the previous night's slaughter of officers in their cots by the fun-loving [Samuel B. Comstock](#) and his accomplices, the killing was continuing. By about noon or so the three remaining mates and two others had been shot, bayoneted, stabbed or disemboweled, including William Humphries (presumably this was the ship's cook, since he was a black man). As people were being killed their bodies were being discarded overboard. Finally there was no challenge to the mutineers being in total control, and the surviving crewmembers turned to sail west toward the gorgeous tropical Marshall Islands. When they made landfall, Friend Samuel attempted to barter some ship supplies with the natives, and for some reason this irritated another of the mutineers, Silas Payne, enough to inspire him to discharge his musket and send birthright [Friend](#) Samuel to his reward.

Be careful in your choice of companions, boys and girls!

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February: Early in the month, the four remaining mutineers of the *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) compelled the other crewmen to venture with them to what is now known as Mili Atoll:





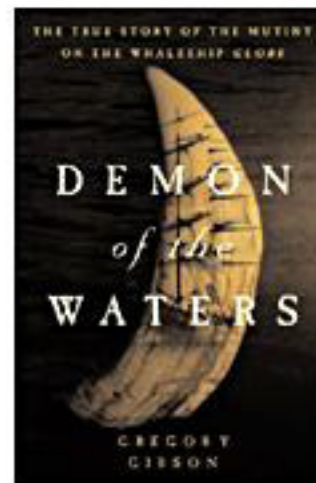
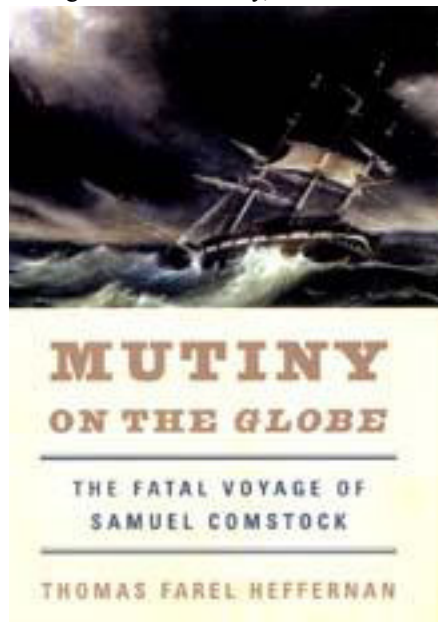
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There the mutineers incautiously put ashore to establish a settlement, and six crewmembers who had taken no part in the mutiny were able to sail the *Globe* away. They would manage to make it some 7,500 miles across the Pacific to the safety of Valparaiso. The remaining three mutineers, and other members of the innocent crew trapped on the atoll, would of course be massacred, except for a couple of young men whom the islanders would adopt/enslave.

The US Navy would send out a ship to pick up these Americans. The bronzed adoptee/slaves would be rescued by a naval party led by Lieutenant John “Mad Jack” Percival. Aboard this ship 17-year-old midshipman Augustus Strong would be keeping a journal. We can now, in addition to reviewing the various accounts published during the 19th Century, be instructed also by this retrieved journal.






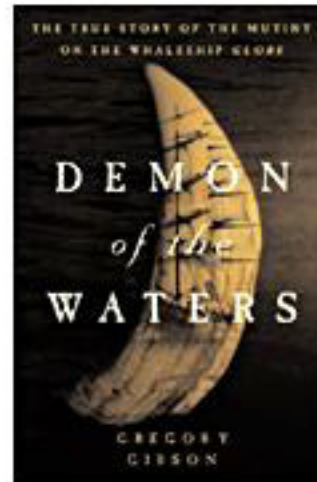
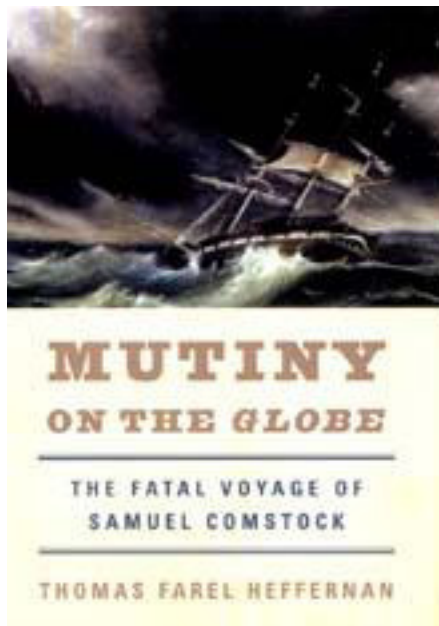
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**1828**

 NARRATIVE OF THE GLOBE, BY LAY AND HUSSEY SURVIVORS. A.D. 1828. [Herman Melville](#)(e), in the preface to *MOBY-DICK; OR, THE WHALE*, would extrapolate from this sad history: “The Whale-ship *Globe*, on board of which vessel occurred the horrid transactions we are about to relate, belonged to the island of [Nantucket](#).”



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**1840**

THE LIFE OF SAMUEL COMSTOCK, THE TERRIBLE WHALEMAN: CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE MUTINY, AND MASSACRE OF THE OFFICERS OF THE SHIP *GLOBE*, OF NANTUCKET: WITH HIS SUBSEQUENT ADVENTURES, AND HIS BEING SHOT AT THE MULGRAVE ISLANDS... / BY HIS BROTHER, WILLIAM COMSTOCK. Boston: James Fisher, 1840. Samuel Comstock’s younger brother William had been aboard the *Globe* with him, but had had of course too much sense to take any part in the mutiny. After his return from the Pacific, he was developing a career as a reporter and press writer, initially in Massachusetts but then in New York (his name is to be found in the Brooklyn city directories for 1866, 1867, 1868, 1871, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1880, 1881, and 1882). He was the father of the American author Augustus Comstock.<sup>1</sup>

Goold [believed] that if the assailants hit him with a snow ball on one cheek, it was his duty to turn and receive a patch of mud on the other. Such are the principles of the Quakers – but, unfortunately, the anger which they are forbidden to express by outward actions, finding no vent, stagnates the heart, and,



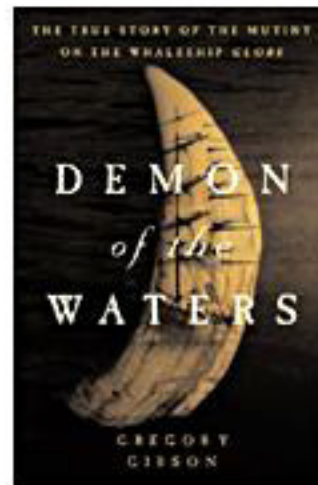
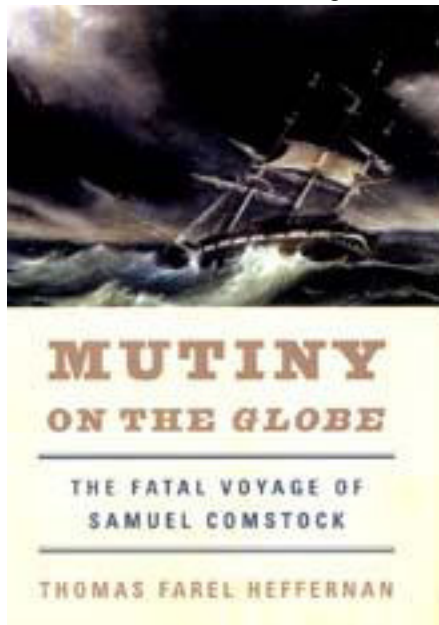
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while they make professions of love and good will to their opponents, the rancour and intense malevolence of their feelings poison every generous spring of human kindness. It is not theirs to unsheathe the sword or poise the lance, but they make use of their influence and false pretensions to respectably ruin the reputation, standing, and hopes of those they hate – pursuing their adversaries even beyond the grave, and blasting widows and orphans, “in a quiet and sober manner.” Notwithstanding their smooth professions, they are the most proud, aristocratic, selfish and spiteful people on the face of the earth.

[Herman Melville](#), in the preface to *MOBY-DICK; OR, THE WHALE*, would extrapolate from this sad history: “‘If you make the least damn bit of noise,’ replied Samuel, ‘I will send you to hell.’”



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Melville, in *MOBY-DICK*, would described the whalers as “fighting Quakers ... Quakers with a vengeance.”

1. Augustus had been born on February 14, 1837 in Charlestown, Massachusetts, but would be brought to New-York with his parents when he was 7. When 14, he would leave school to set type in the office of the [Morning Star](#). Subsequently he would work for the [Atlas](#), until by accidentally “pying” the type (upsetting a case of set type) he would get his young ass fired. He would then attempt to study for the law in the office of a relative until, abandoning this, he would go to sea. His grandfather, Nathan Comstock, would help him enlist aboard a whaler. After some years of whaling, he would return to New-York and begin to author sea tales. All his publications would be under a pen name, “Roger Starbuck.” He would enlist as a private in Durvee’s Zouaves, the 5th Regiment of New York Volunteers, and several stories of life in the Union army would appear in the [New-York Weekly](#) in 1861. On August 29, 1862, at the 2d Battle of Bull Run, he would receive a wound which would hamper his activities. After the war, in Brooklyn, he would devote himself to the writing of serials and sketches for the story papers and dime novel publishers of that period. He would also be able to place stories in [Harper’s Weekly](#) and other periodicals.



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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: December 14, 2013**



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*ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT*

*GENERATION HOTLINE*



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



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

First come first serve. There is no charge.  
Place requests with <Kouroo@brown.edu>. Arrgh.