

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN CAPE COD:



JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY



**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

CAPE COD: In the summer and fall sometimes, hundreds of blackfish (the Social Whale, *Globicephalus melas* of De Kay; called also Black Whale-fish, Howling Whale, Bottle-head, &c.), fifteen feet or more in length, are driven ashore in a single school here. I witnessed such a scene in July, 1855. A carpenter who was working at the light-house arriving early in the morning remarked that he did not know but he had lost fifty dollars by coming to his work; for as he came along the Bay side he heard them driving a school of blackfish ashore, and he had debated with himself whether he should not go and join them and take his share, but had concluded to come to his work. After breakfast I came over to this place, about two miles distant, and near the beach met some of the fishermen returning from their chase. Looking up and down the shore, I could see about a mile south some large black masses on the sand, which I knew must be blackfish, and a man or two about them. As I walked along towards them I soon came to a huge carcass whose head was gone and whose blubber had been stripped off some weeks before; the tide was just beginning to move it, and the stench compelled me to go a long way round. When I came to Great Hollow I found a fisherman and some boys on the watch, and counted about thirty blackfish, just killed, with many lance wounds, and the water was more or less bloody around. They were partly on shore and partly in the water, held by a rope round their tails till the tide should leave them. A boat had been somewhat stove by the tail of one. They were a smooth shining black, like India-rubber, and had remarkably simple and lumpish forms for animated creatures, with a blunt round snout or head, whale-like, and simple stiff-looking flippers. The largest were about fifteen feet long, but one or two were only five feet long, and still without teeth. The fisherman slashed one with his jackknife, to show me how thick the blubber was, -about three inches; and as I passed my finger through the cut it was covered thick with oil. The blubber looked like pork, and this man said that when they were trying it the boys would sometimes come round with a piece of bread in one hand, and take a piece of blubber in the other to eat with it, preferring it to pork scraps. He also cut into the flesh beneath, which was firm and red like beef, and he said that for his part he preferred it when fresh to beef. It is stated that in 1812 blackfish were used as food by the poor of Bretagne. They were waiting for the tide to leave these fishes high and dry, that they might strip off the blubber and carry it to their try-works in their boats, where they try it on the beach. They get commonly a barrel of oil, worth fifteen or twenty dollars, to a fish. There were many lances and harpoons in the boats, -much slenderer instruments than I had expected. An old man came along the beach with a horse and wagon distributing the dinners of the fishermen, which their wives had put up in little pails and jugs, and which he had collected in the Pond Village, and for this service, I suppose, he received a share of the oil. If one could not tell his own pail, he took the first he came to.

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As I stood there they raised the cry of "another school," and we could see their black backs and their blowing about a mile northward, as they went leaping over the sea like horses. Some boats were already in pursuit there, driving them toward the beach. Other fishermen and boys running up began to jump into the boats and push them off from where I stood, and I might have gone too had I chosen. Soon there were twenty-five or thirty boats in pursuit, some large ones under sail, and others rowing with might and main, keeping outside of the school, those nearest to the fishes striking on the sides of their boats and blowing horns to drive them on to the beach. It was an exciting race. If they succeed in driving them ashore each boat takes one share, and then each man, but if they are compelled to strike them off shore each boat's company take what they strike. I walked rapidly along the shore toward the north, while the fishermen were rowing still more swiftly to join their companions, and a little boy who walked by my side was congratulating himself that his father's boat was beating another one. An old blind fisherman whom we met, inquired, "Where are they, I can't see. Have they got them?" In the mean while the fishes had turned and were escaping northward toward Provincetown, only occasionally the back of one being seen. So the nearest crews were compelled to strike them, and we saw several boats soon made fast, each to its fish, which, four or five rods ahead was drawing it like a race-horse straight toward the beach, leaping half out of water blowing blood and water from its hole, and leaving a streak of foam behind. But they went ashore too far north for us, though we could see the fishermen leap out and lance them on the sand. It was just like pictures of whaling which I have seen, and a fisherman told me that it was nearly as dangerous. In his first trial he had been much excited, and in his haste had used a lance with its scabbard on, but nevertheless had thrust it quite through his fish.

I learned that a few days before this one hundred and eighty blackfish had been driven ashore in one school at Eastham, a little farther south, and that the keeper of Billingsgate Point light went out one morning about the same time and cut his initials on the backs of a large school which had run ashore in the night, and sold his right to them to Provincetown for one thousand dollars, and probably Provincetown made as much more. Another fisherman told me that nineteen years ago three hundred and eighty were driven ashore in one school at Great Hollow. In the Naturalist's Library, it is said that, in the winter of 1809-10, one thousand one hundred and ten "approached the shore of Hvalfiord, Iceland, and were captured." De Kay says it is not known why they are stranded. But one fisherman declared to me that they ran ashore in pursuit of squid, and that they generally came on the coast about the last of July.

About a week afterward, when I came to this shore, it was strewn as far as I could see with a glass, with the carcasses of blackfish stripped of their blubber and their heads cut off; the latter lying higher up. Walking on the beach was out of the question on account of the stench. Between Provincetown and Truro they lay in the very path of the stage. Yet no steps were taken to abate the nuisance, and men were catching lobsters as usual just off the shore. I was told that they did sometimes tow them out and sink them; yet I wondered where they got the stones to sink them with. Of course they might be made into guano, and Cape Cod is not so fertile that her inhabitants can afford to do without this manure, -to say nothing of the diseases they may produce.



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After my return home, wishing to learn what was known about the Blackfish, I had recourse to the reports of the zoölogical surveys of the State, and I found that Storer had rightfully omitted it in his Report on the Fishes, since it is not a fish; so I turned to Emmons's Report of the Mammalia, but was surprised to find that the seals and whales were omitted by him, because he had had no opportunity to observe them. Considering how this State has risen and thriven by its fisheries, -that the legislature which authorized the Zoölogical Survey sat under the emblem of a codfish,- that Nantucket and New Bedford are within our limits, -that an early riser may find a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars' worth of blackfish on the shore in a morning, -that the Pilgrims saw the Indians cutting up a blackfish on the shore at Eastham, and called a part of that shore "Grampus Bay," from the number of blackfish they found there, before they got to Plymouth, -and that from that time to this these fishes have continued to enrich one or two counties almost annually, and that their decaying carcasses were now poisoning the air of one county for more than thirty miles, -I thought it remarkable that neither the popular nor scientific name was to be found in a report on our mammalia, - a *catalogue* of the productions of our land and water.

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1792

October 12, Friday: [Joshua Coffin](#) was born in [Newbury, Massachusetts](#). He would reside, for part of his life, in a house built there by his ancestor [Tristram Coffin, Jr.](#) in about 1676/1677:



[James Ellsworth De Kay](#) was born in Lisbon, Portugal, the 1st son of George De Kay and Catherine Coleman De Kay. The father was a New Yorker of Dutch descent who had been sent by the US Navy to Portugal, and the mother was an Irish girl, from Cork, whom this sea captain had met at a dance in Lisbon.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

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1794

The family of George De Kay and Catherine Coleman De Kay sailed to America from Portugal while [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) was a toddler, arriving at Scarsdale, New York.

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1798

Catherine Coleman De Kay, mother of [James Ellsworth De Kay](#), died.



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1802



George De Kay died, leaving his son [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) with an annuity amounting to some \$3,000, enabling him to live the life of a gentleman scholar (such an annual income would have been equivalent to the paychecks of some six American laboring households).

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





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1807



Thomas Smith Grimké, one of [Sarah Moore Grimké](#) and [Angelina Emily Grimké](#)'s brothers, returned from [Yale College](#) as a convert to the Reverend [Timothy Dwight's](#) brand of revivalism. His father Judge John Fauchereau Grimké insisted, however, that instead of studying for the ministry and making of himself an evangelist, his son needed to read for the law.

[James Ellsworth De Kay](#) matriculated at [Yale](#) (he would repeat his junior year but then fail to graduate).

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1812

 [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) left [Yale College](#) without a degree.

After an apprenticeship to a printer, [Leonard Withington](#) entered [Yale](#) as a sophomore.

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1818

 [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) matriculated at the University of Edinburgh, [Scotland](#). (Although at the time medicine was a three year course of study he would receive his MD in the following year, so it seems that he must have already somehow acquired some medical training in New-York and Berlin.)

[James Hogg](#)'s [THE BROWNIE OF BOBSBECK; AND OTHER TALES](#) (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and John Murray).

[Susan Edmonstone Ferrier](#)'s MARRIAGE (anonymous).

MARRIAGE, A NOVEL

MARRIAGE, A NOVEL

MARRIAGE, A NOVEL

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1819



[James Ellsworth De Kay](#) graduated from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland as a physician. His 21-page thesis *DE ERRORIS SCATURIGINE IN EXPERIMENTIS PHYSIOLOGICIS* “On observational errors in physiological experiments” seems not to have been of consequence.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1821

 Dr. [James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s initial scientific paper, "Observations on the *Pennatula fleche* (*P. sagitta* of Lamarck) in the cabinet of Dr. Mitchill" ([American Journal of Science](#) Volume 4, Number 1:87-89).

THE SCIENCE OF 1821

 July 31, Tuesday: Dr. [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) got married with Janet Eckford.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1823



Dr. [James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s "On a new and beautiful species of *Sertularia*" (American Journal of Science Volume 6, Number 2:361), "Cetaceous animals." (*ibid*, 362), "*Ophisaurus*, from the borders of Lake Michigan" (*ibid*, 363), and "Descriptions of *Balaenopterus acuto-rostratus* ... near Sandy Hook" (*ibid*, 364-5). His "On the supposed animality of spores." (*ibid*, Volume 7, Number 1:171), "On two worms inhabiting the body of the common cricket *Ascaris grylli* and *Fissula grylli*" (*ibid*, 172), "On the *Scutella quinquefora*, and on the *Ophiura tetragona*," and "On the literary history and anatomy of fishes" (*ibid*, 173).



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1824



Dr. [James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s "A notice of the *Testudo ferox*, Penant" ([Papers on Natural History](#) Volume 1 Number 2:30), and his and James Renwick's "Observations on the structure of *Trilobites* and description of an apparently new genus by J.E. De Kay; with notes on the geology of Trenton Falls, by James Renwick" ([Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York](#) Volume 1 Number 1:174-185).



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

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1825



[James Ellsworth De Kay](#) became Curator of the Literary and Philosophical Society of New York. His “Note on the organic remains termed *Bilobites*, from the Catskill Mountains” ([Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York](#) Volume 1 Number 1:45-49), “An account of the *Phoca cristata* recently taken in the vicinity of this city” (*ibid*, 94-99), his and W. Cooper’s “Account of a discovery of the skeleton of the *Mastodon giganteum*” (*ibid*, 143-147; extracted from a “report” made by Mssrs. Cooper, Van Renssler, and De Kay of a skeleton found at Eatontown, Mammoth County, New Jersey), and his “Observations on a fossil crustaceous animal of the order *Branchiopoda*” (*ibid*, Number 2, 375-377). His “Descriptions of *Trilobites* in the cabinet of the Society” ([American Journal of Science](#) Volume 9 Number 2:389), “On animal torpidity” (*ibid*, 389), and “Observations on the *Stylophorus chordatus* of Shaw” (*ibid*, 390-391).



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1826

 [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) became Librarian of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York (he would be one of the 1st to recognize that we needed to create a uniform system of nomenclature so that scientists such as himself might be confident of receiving due credit for their discoveries and descriptions of species).

 February: [James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS ON THE PROGRESS OF THE NATURAL SCIENCES IN THE UNITED STATES, DELIVERED BEFORE THE LYCEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY OF NEW YORK (G. & C. Carvill, 78 pages).

THE SCIENCE OF 1826

The Pennsylvania legislature authorized a [Main Line Canal](#) between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. A tunnel was completed on the [Main Line Canal](#) west of Lebanon, Pennsylvania.



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1828

 [James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s "On the supposed transportation of rocks" (American Journal of Science Volume 13 Number 2:348-350); "On the *Lepidopus caudatus*" (*ibid*, 379); "On the fossil tooth of an elephant found near the shore of Lake Erie, and on the skeleton of a Mastodon lately discovered in the Delaware and Hudson Canal" (*ibid*, Volume 14 Number 1:31-33); "On a singular mal-formation observed in the teeth of the *Arctomys monax*" (*ibid*, Volume 15 Number 2:359); "Description of a large species of *Squalus* recently captured on the American coast" (*ibid*, 359); "Report on several fossil multiocular shells from Delaware; with observations on a second specimen of the new fossil, genus *Eurypterus*" Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York Volume 2:273-279); "Notes on a fossil skull in the Cabinet of the Lyceum, of the genus *Bos*, from the banks of the Mississippi; with observations on the American species of that Genus" (*ibid*, 280-291).

THE SCIENCE OF 1828



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1829



[James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s "On two fossil Ammonites from the Red River and Cahawba (Alabama)" ([American Journal of Science](#) Volume 16 Number 1:206); "Amended description of the *Amia calva* of Linn" (*ibid*, 206). "Description of a new reptile ... *Leposternum oxygynchus*" (*ibid*, 207); "Description of a fresh water fish of the Linnean genus *Gadus* from Lake Superior" (*ibid*, 207); "Remarks on certain phenomena exhibited upon the surface of the primitive rocks in the vicinity of this city" (*ibid*, Number 2:357).

THE SCIENCE OF 1829



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1830



[James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s "On the remains of the extinct reptiles of the genera *Mosasaurus* and *Geosaurus* found in the Secondary formation of New Jersey; and on the occurrence of the substance recently named Coprolite by Dr. Buckland, in the same locality" ([Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York](#) Volume 3:134-141); "Observations of a fossil jaw of a species of *Gavial*, from West Jersey" (*ibid*, 156-165); "Additional observations on the teeth of *Mosasaurus*" ([American Journal of Science](#) Volume 19 Number 1:159).



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

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1831



Dr. [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) sailed to Turkey with his father-in-law, as surgeon aboard a frigate built for the Sultan of Constantinople's navy. He would have an opportunity to study the [Asiatic cholera](#), something that was in that period still entirely mysterious — and develop a pet theory of his own which was entirely wrong.

[De Kay](#)'s and W. Cooper's; J.A. Smith and [J.E. De Kay](#)'s "Report of Messr. ... to the N.Y. Lyceum Natural History, on a collection of fossil bones, disinterred at Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, in September 1830, and recently brought to New York" ([American Journal of Science](#) Volume 20 Number 2:370-372); [De Kay](#)'s and W. Cooper's, J.A. Smith's and [J.E. De Kay](#)'s "On the collection of fossil bones, disinterred at Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, in September 1830, and recently brought to this city (New York)" [Papers on Natural History](#) Volume 1 Number 1:43-44).

THE SCIENCE OF 1831

1832

➡ On the Isle of [Jersey](#) in the English Channel, there was an outbreak of the Asian [cholera](#).



[James Fenimore Cooper](#), in Paris with his family when the scourge hit that metropolis, commented upon how the gardens of the Tuileries suddenly became deserted.

In America, white settlements were not enjoying good health but the Mandan and Hidatsa were being utterly destroyed. Take a look at the discussion by Richard Batman beginning on page 320 of James Pattie's WEST: THE DREAM AND THE REALITY (in hardcover, titled AMERICAN ECCLESIASTES: THE STORIES OF JAMES PATTIE. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1986) having to do with the new and terrifying plague of [cholera](#) sweeping the settled east about the same time. Physicians would reject the [contagion](#) theory (with the exception of smallpox), until in the latter part of the 19th Century work on cholera finally would show that it and other such diseases were indeed, like smallpox, contagious.



Dr. [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) returned from Turkey to New-York, where he began to prescribe port wine as a remedy for [cholera](#) and quickly earned for himself a nickname, "Dr. Port." Saloon customers would be able to ask the bartender to pour them "a Dr. DeKay." Soon he settled at Oyster Bay on Long Island, where he would study natural history, contribute to New-York newspapers, and cultivate literary friendships. Among the

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THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

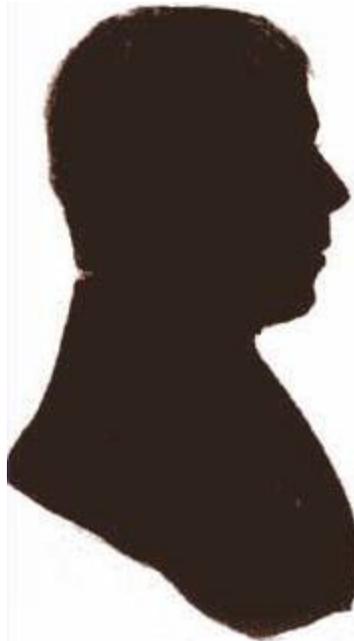
JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

romantic literary types whom he would seek to cultivate would be [Washington Irving](#), Joseph Rodman Drake, [James Fenimore Cooper](#), and Fitz-Greene Halleck.



(You will notice instantly that the exigencies of class would make it quite impossible for him ever to cultivate the likes of Henry Thoreau as part of such a clique.)

When the 1st person died of the [cholera](#) in his town, [Friend John Cadbury](#) the [chocolate](#) maker insisted on following in his “broad-brimmed hat and flowing Quaker frock-coat” as the hired laborers carried the coffin to the graveyard. This was at a time when other people were shunning the victims of the [infection](#). Such burial workers smoked [tobacco](#) constantly while on such details, as their effort to ward off the disease or at least somewhat relieve their anxieties.

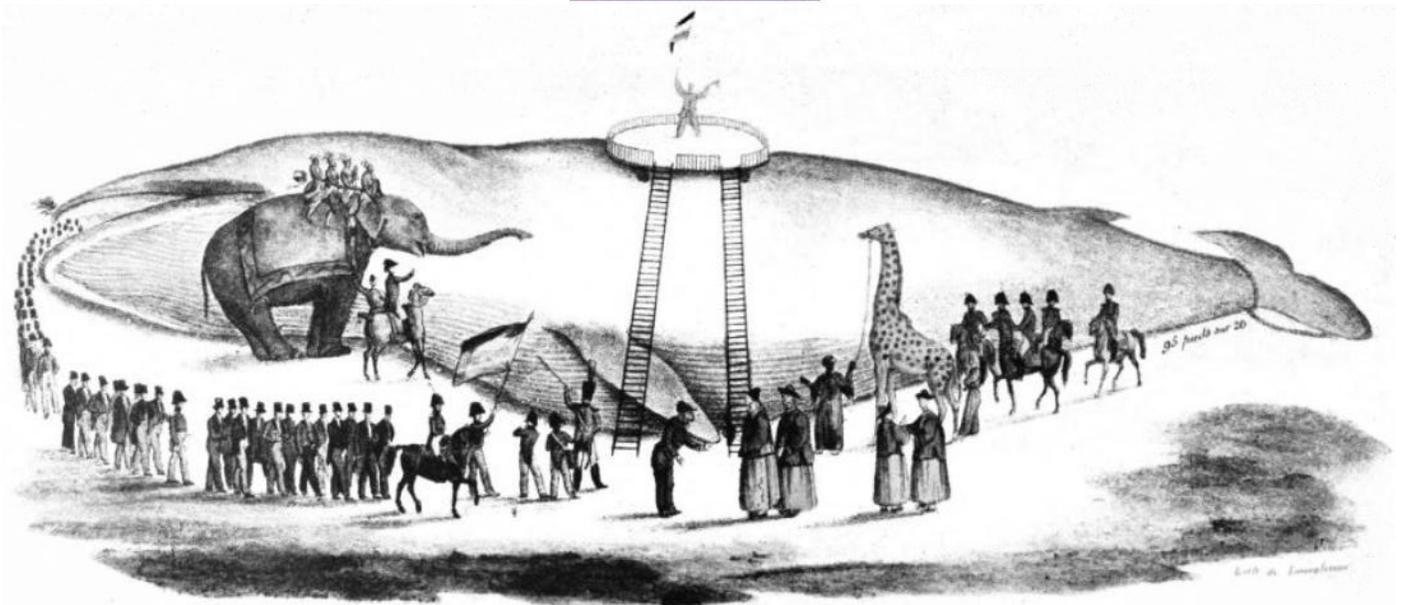
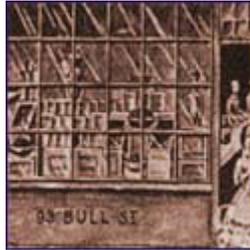


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[Friend](#) John had installed a window made of panes of plate glass in his shop (rather than using the conventional panes of crown glass), one of the 1st local businesses to do so, and was employing an authentic Chinaman attired in an authentic [Chinese](#) national costume, to sit on display in the window and weigh and pack his [tea](#). Hoo-hah!

[GLASS WINDOWS](#)

La Baleine d'Orlando

Visitee par l'Elephant, la Giraffe, les Orages et les Chinois.

George W. Warren would write of the activities of his father Josiah Warren (1798-1874) the anarchist, during the public crisis of this year:

Then in 1832 the [cholera](#) first made its appearance, and I well remember how my father set up his type and printed hand-bills cautioning the people how to live during the prevalence of that disease. These bills described the symptoms and how to treat them. Then I was allowed to go with my father to scatter the bills of caution along the streets, and I remember how proud I was when those who saw what my father was doing, shook hands with him so warmly.

What with his work of printing precautionary notices and attending a large number of funerals with masonic lodges, firemen and other organizations requiring bands, my father was kept busy for days and weeks and months; there was scarcely an hour that a funeral didn't take place. Time went on, so did



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deaths, but our family lived through it. Fortunately the writer, being only six years of age, could not realize the state of affairs, nor the horror of the situation – he trotting along, scattering [and] broadcasting the “caution” notices, proud of telling how many papers he had given to the people each day. If the city records of 1832-1834 were not destroyed during the destruction of the court house some years ago, the thanks of the city alderman to him will be found recorded to Josiah Warren if I mistake not.

A New York City peddler brought [cholera](#) up the canal to Rochester, New York, population 11,000, and 400 to 500 of them died, filling many of the city’s small cemeteries such as the 3 1/2 acre graveyard on Buffalo Street. One local resident, Ashbel Riley, buried 80 of the victims unaided. The Rochester Board of Health was established. The Monroe County Jail, called the “Blue Eagle Jail,” was built off Court St. between the west bank of the river and the Carroll-Fitzhugh raceway. It had a walled courtyard not only for prisoner exercise but also for executions.

[Professor Richard Harlan](#) was a member of a commission of Philadelphia physicians to Montréal, to collect information on the effective treatment of [cholera](#). He became surgeon to the Philadelphia hospital.

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In this year [Friend](#) Charles Farquhar, Sr. graduated from the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania and opened a practice in Alexandria, Virginia, where the city council immediately put this new physician in charge of their town's struggle to deal with the ongoing epidemic.

The cholera outbreak of this year would give rise to at least one monument. It is atop a hill in Sheffield, England and commemorates 402 victims buried in grounds between Park Hill and Norfolk Park adjoining Clay Wood. The monument was designed by M.E. Hadfield and sculpted by Earp and Hobbs and would be complete in 1835. Its plaque names John Blake, Master Cutler, one of the victims, and notes that the foundation stone was laid by a poet, James Montgomery:



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1833

→ James Ellsworth De Kay's SKETCHES OF TURKEY IN 1831 AND 1832 BY AN AMERICAN, published anonymously. His impressions of Turkey and its institutions were favorable enough to draw howls of protest from those Americans who favored Greece in its ongoing struggle for independence from Turkish misrule.

Robert Walter Weir painted the gentlemen of the Greenwich Boat Club, up to their usual stormy-weather-homosociality-along-a-shore, striking nice poses in nice outfits while relaxing in each other's young-manly company. Our James has seated himself on a comfortable rock and is writing in the foreground.



The dog, I think, has the right attitude toward all this. Let us respect the dog's judgment.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1834



[James Ellsworth De Kay](#) became Recording Secretary of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York. His "Examination of the facts and arguments by which it is attempted to prove that lava has not been subjected to great elevations of temperature" ([American Journal of Science](#) Volume 27 Number 1:148).

THE SCIENCE OF 1834

Mary Somerville's THE CONNECTION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES.

Mary Roberts's THE CONCHOLOGIST'S COMPANION.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

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1835



April 18, Saturday: William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne replaced Sir Robert Peel as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Responding to the lobbying campaign of the Lyceum of Natural History and of the Albany Institute, and to the needs of the mining industry, the Legislature of the state of New York approved a Geological Survey of New York — a compilation which was specified to include the preservation of specimens of what the bill termed “zoological productions.”

GEOLOGY



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1836

 [Henry Root Colman](#) was selected to conduct an investigation of the agricultural conditions and resources of Massachusetts.

The Geological Survey of New York was established in Albany, New York (this would make it the oldest continuously functioning geological and zoological survey in the New World).

 July: The Geological Survey of New York hired [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) as its zoologist, with an annual salary of \$1,500. He would interpret his task quite liberally, and soon would be including, among the fauna of New York although marked as “extra-limital” (*sic*), virtually anything that had come to his attention on or around the North American continent, such as the manatee of Florida and the blind cavefish *Amblyopsis spelaeus* (*spelaea*) of Mammoth Cave in Kentucky:

The State of New-York is connected on its southern border with the ocean, and its numerous products; at the north will be found many inhabitants of the arctic regions; while the rivers on its south-western frontier will be found to connect it with the great valley of the Mississippi. From its magnitude and geographical position, it will therefore be found to comprise in all probability, more than two-thirds of all animal species existing within the limits of the United States.

 Winter: [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) studied the specimens he had collected as Zoologist for the Geological Survey of New York and employed a draftsman, John W. Hill, to draw those of particular interest.

[Louis Agassiz](#) and [Karl Friedrich Schimper](#) developed the theory of a sequence of glaciations. They mainly drew upon the preceding works of Goethe, of [Ignaz Venetz](#), of [Jean de Charpentier](#) and on their own fieldwork. There are indications that Agassiz was already familiar with [Albrecht Reinhard Bernhardt](#)'s paper at that time.

[OUR MOST RECENT GLACIATION](#)



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1837

 [James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s "Report on the Zoological Department (Made December 3, 1836)" in the initial ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY OF NEW YORK FOR 1836, pages 11-13. This would be reviewed in the [American Journal of Science](#) Volume 32:186-190.

THE SCIENCE OF 1837

In New-York, [De Kay](#) and his romantic literary friends began an "Authors Club" in which [Washington Irving](#) would serve as president, and Fitz-Greene Halleck as vice-president (this club would not be continuous either with the Authors Club of Boston, or with the Authors Club of New York, as they exist today).



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1838

[James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s "Zoological Dept" SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE STATE MADE FEBRUARY 20, 1838. Albany, New York (abstracted and reviewed in the [American Journal of Science](#) Volume 36:1-49).

The former recipient of the village Poor Relief, the successful "fossilist" Mary Anning, was awarded an annuity by the British Association of the Advancement of Science and a stipend by the Geological Society. She would become the initial honorary member of the newly founded Dorset County Museum — which today is at the site of the cottage in which she had been born.



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1839

April: [James Ellsworth De Kay](#), Zoologist for the Geological Survey of New York, had created by this point full descriptions and drawings for 700 of the nearly 2,300 New York animals he had collected or observed.

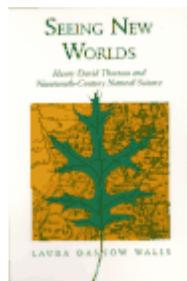
THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1840

1840s, 1850s: In this timeframe several scientists were glimpsing chromosomes under the microscope, but not having the slightest clue what it was that they were looking at.

Laura Dassow Walls has pointed out in *SEEING NEW WORLDS: THOREAU AND HUMBOLDTIAN SCIENCE* that to enact the agenda of exploration and investigation being recommended by [Alexander von Humboldt](#) would require an army of workers — which on the continent of North America was indeed created, in the form of the tax-funded Corps of Topographical Engineers established by the federal government of the United States of America.



There were in the first half of the 19th Century a multitude of Congress-sponsored scientific expeditions and the control of our new federal government was extended in this manner over much of North America. Geological or natural history surveys funded by state governments had begun in North Carolina in 1823, and by the end of the 1830s such surveys had been initiated by 13 states. In addition the federal government had been funding or assisting with exploration since the expedition of Lewis and Clark, but throughout the 1840s and 1850s the great reconnaissance of the American West was being conducted by Army officers. Lieutenant [John Charles Frémont](#) led only three of these numerous expeditions across the western regions of the North



American continent. Between 1840 and 1860, the US government published 60 enormously expensive multi-volume double-folio or oversize treatises on the American West, in addition to 15 treatises on global naval expeditions and uncounted reports of the Coast and Geodetic Survey. Very little of our incessant contemporary dialog about the “free enterprise system” dates back to that era, and the cost of all this seems to have amounted to from 1/4th to 1/3d of the annual federal budget without having in any way set off alarm bells in the minds of the ideologues of the right of the political spectrum!¹ Since Humboldt was very much in touch with these activities, a number of the explorers, scientists, and artists of the period may safely be characterized as

1. NASA, eat your heart out.

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“Humboldt’s Children”:² personages such as [Karl Bodmer](#), [George Catlin](#), Frederic Edwin Church, [John](#)



[Charles Frémont](#), and [Professor Thomas Nuttall](#). However, [Louis Agassiz](#) would also need to be characterized as having been a protégé of Humboldt, and [Charles Darwin](#), Professor [Asa Gray](#), and [Arnold Henri Guyot](#). Humboldt corresponded with and was visited by American scientists such as vice-president of the Boston Society of Natural History [Charles T. Jackson](#), academic scholars such as Harvard professor [George Ticknor](#), and popular writers such as [Washington Irving](#) (to whom in this year we were offering the position of Secretary of the Navy).

[Dr. Augustus Addison Gould](#) of Massachusetts General Hospital became a corresponding member of the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia, of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, of the National Institute in Washington DC, and of the American Statistical Association. He published a pioneering work in the United States on the geographical distribution of species, “Results of an Examination of the Shells of Massachusetts and their Geographical Distribution,” in the [Boston Journal of Natural History](#) (Volume 3, Art. xviii, pp. 483-494).

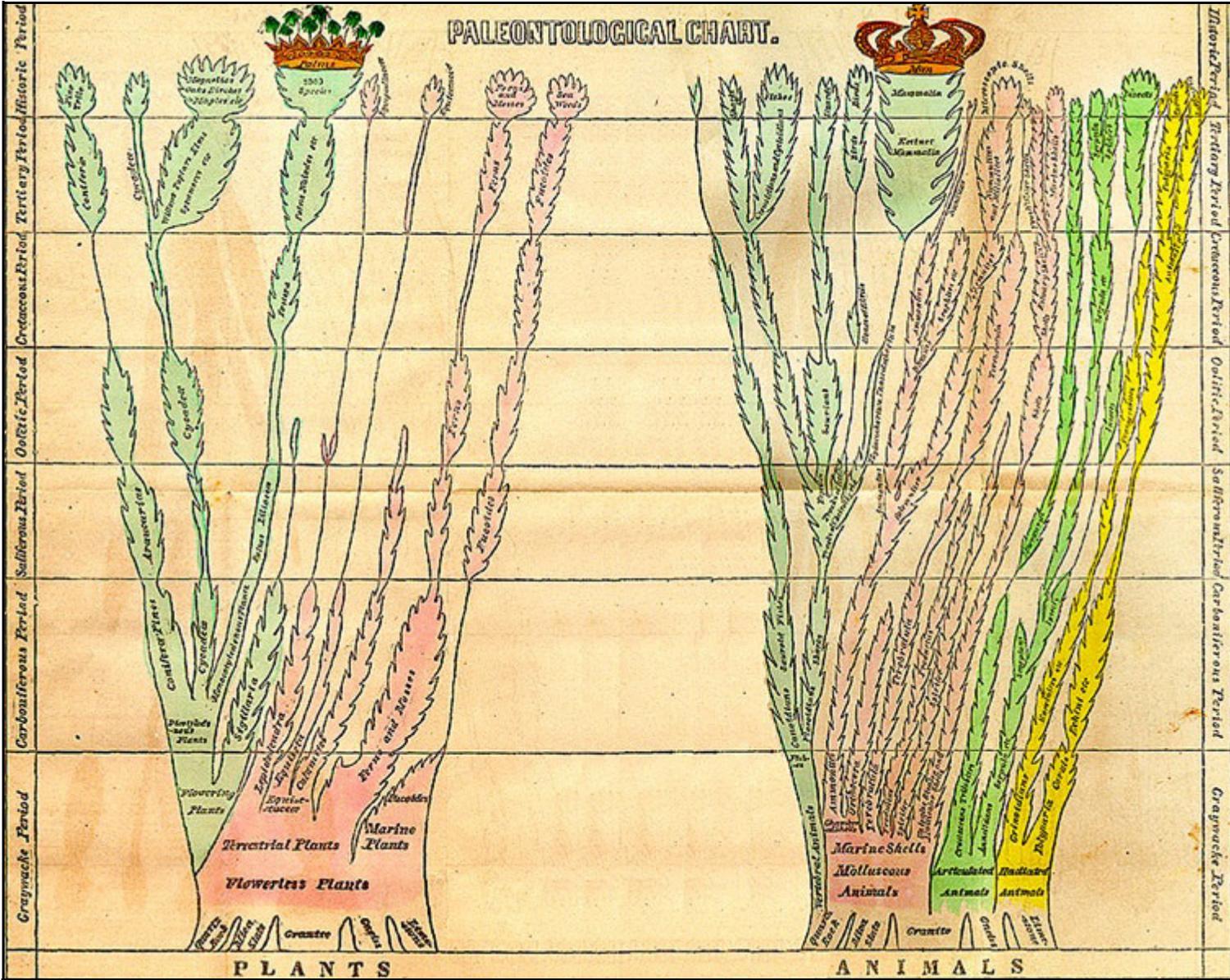
[James Ellsworth De Kay](#) became First Vice-President of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York. His CATALOGUE OF THE ANIMALS BELONGING TO THE STATE OF N.Y. AS FAR AS THEY HAVE BEEN FIGURED AND DESCRIBED (made May 7, 1839) appeared on pages 7-14 of the FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE STATE MADE JANUARY 24, 1840 (484 pages, New York Assembly Document #50) and was reviewed in the [American Journal of Science](#) (Volume 40:73-85). (His “Report of the zoological dept” appeared on pages 15-36 of that same document.)

2. Goetzmann, William H. NEW LANDS, NEW MEN, AMERICA AND THE SECOND GREAT AGE OF DISCOVERY. NY: Viking, 1986

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The Reverend Professor [Edward Hitchcock](#) was awarded the degree of LL.D. by Harvard University. His *DYSPEPSY FORESTALLED AND RESISTED, OR, LECTURES ON DIET, REGIMEN, AND EMPLOYMENT*. Also, his textbook *ELEMENTARY GEOLOGY* (of which there would be 31 editions):



ELEMENTARY GEOLOGY

(You may be forgiven, I suppose, as modern types, for initially presuming that the colored paleontological chart on the previous screen, revealing as it does the branchings of genera and species over immense eras of time, had something or other to do with “evolution of species” — in fact, however, it did not have anything at all to do with anything of that sort! Looking backward to the 1840s through our eyes, it is easy for us to be guilty of “presentism” — of, that is to say, supposing that the sorts of scientific understanding we now take for granted were being somehow prefigured or anticipated in the minds of yesteryear when they most definitely were not.)

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1842

James Ellsworth De Kay's ZOOLOGY OF NEW-YORK, OR THE NEW-YORK FAUNA; COMPRISING DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE ANIMALS HITHERTO OBSERVED WITHIN THE STATE OF NEW-YORK, WITH BRIEF NOTICES OF THOSE OCCASIONALLY FOUND NEAR ITS BORDERS, AND ACCOMPANIED BY APPROPRIATE ILLUSTRATIONS (Albany: Printed by W. & A. White & J. Visscher). Henry Thoreau would consult later volumes at the Society of Natural History Library in Boston and at the Astor Library in New York in 1856.

- MAMMALIA, VOLUME I
- REPTILES, AMPHIBIA VOL. III
- FISHES, VOLUME IV



A review of the initial volumes of this, MAMMALIA, VOLUME 1 (bound with Governor Seward's introduction to Survey reports). REPTILES AND AMPHIBIA, VOLUME 3. FISHES, VOLUME 4, appeared in the American Journal of Science (45:397-9) and also in the Boston Society of Natural History Proceedings (1:120-23).



Fig. 1. the Cottontail

The five folio volumes of this, the final of which would appear in 1844, would cost the state of New York the astronomical sum of approximately \$130,000. Later volumes were to cover mollusks, crustaceans, and birds



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(but not insects, etc.), totaling 1,107 species. In the course of this all of 95 new species would be discovered and described!

The author also presented during this year a paper on the “Historical progress of ichthyology in the United

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States” (NAT. HIST N.Y. Div. 1., ZOOLOGY pt. 3, FISHES, pref. 3-8).



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CAPE COD: In the summer and fall sometimes, hundreds of blackfish (the Social Whale, *Globicephalus melas* of De Kay; called also Black Whale-fish, Howling Whale, Bottle-head, &c.), fifteen feet or more in length, are driven ashore in a single school here. I witnessed such a scene in July, 1855. A carpenter who was working at the light-house arriving early in the morning remarked that he did not know but he had lost fifty dollars by coming to his work; for as he came along the Bay side he heard them driving a school of blackfish ashore, and he had debated with himself whether he should not go and join them and take his share, but had concluded to come to his work. After breakfast I came over to this place, about two miles distant, and near the beach met some of the fishermen returning from their chase. Looking up and down the shore, I could see about a mile south some large black masses on the sand, which I knew must be blackfish, and a man or two about them. As I walked along towards them I soon came to a huge carcass whose head was gone and whose blubber had been stripped off some weeks before; the tide was just beginning to move it, and the stench compelled me to go a long way round. When I came to Great Hollow I found a fisherman and some boys on the watch, and counted about thirty blackfish, just killed, with many lance wounds, and the water was more or less bloody around. They were partly on shore and partly in the water, held by a rope round their tails till the tide should leave them. A boat had been somewhat stove by the tail of one. They were a smooth shining black, like India-rubber, and had remarkably simple and lumpish forms for animated creatures, with a blunt round snout or head, whale-like, and simple stiff-looking flippers. The largest were about fifteen feet long, but one or two were only five feet long, and still without teeth. The fisherman slashed one with his jackknife, to show me how thick the blubber was, -about three inches; and as I passed my finger through the cut it was covered thick with oil. The blubber looked like pork, and this man said that when they were trying it the boys would sometimes come round with a piece of bread in one hand, and take a piece of blubber in the other to eat with it, preferring it to pork scraps. He also cut into the flesh beneath, which was firm and red like beef, and he said that for his part he preferred it when fresh to beef. It is stated that in 1812 blackfish were used as food by the poor of Bretagne. They were waiting for the tide to leave these fishes high and dry, that they might strip off the blubber and carry it to their try-works in their boats, where they try it on the beach. They get commonly a barrel of oil, worth fifteen or twenty dollars, to a fish. There were many lances and harpoons in the boats, -much slenderer instruments than I had expected. An old man came along the beach with a horse and wagon distributing the dinners of the fishermen, which their wives had put up in little pails and jugs, and which he had collected in the Pond Village, and for this service, I suppose, he received a share of the oil. If one could not tell his own pail, he took the first he came to.

PEOPLE OF
CAPE COD

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY



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As I stood there they raised the cry of "another school," and we could see their black backs and their blowing about a mile northward, as they went leaping over the sea like horses. Some boats were already in pursuit there, driving them toward the beach. Other fishermen and boys running up began to jump into the boats and push them off from where I stood, and I might have gone too had I chosen. Soon there were twenty-five or thirty boats in pursuit, some large ones under sail, and others rowing with might and main, keeping outside of the school, those nearest to the fishes striking on the sides of their boats and blowing horns to drive them on to the beach. It was an exciting race. If they succeed in driving them ashore each boat takes one share, and then each man, but if they are compelled to strike them off shore each boat's company take what they strike. I walked rapidly along the shore toward the north, while the fishermen were rowing still more swiftly to join their companions, and a little boy who walked by my side was congratulating himself that his father's boat was beating another one. An old blind fisherman whom we met, inquired, "Where are they, I can't see. Have they got them?" In the mean while the fishes had turned and were escaping northward toward Provincetown, only occasionally the back of one being seen. So the nearest crews were compelled to strike them, and we saw several boats soon made fast, each to its fish, which, four or five rods ahead was drawing it like a race-horse straight toward the beach, leaping half out of water blowing blood and water from its hole, and leaving a streak of foam behind. But they went ashore too far north for us, though we could see the fishermen leap out and lance them on the sand. It was just like pictures of whaling which I have seen, and a fisherman told me that it was nearly as dangerous. In his first trial he had been much excited, and in his haste had used a lance with its scabbard on, but nevertheless had thrust it quite through his fish.

I learned that a few days before this one hundred and eighty blackfish had been driven ashore in one school at Eastham, a little farther south, and that the keeper of Billingsgate Point light went out one morning about the same time and cut his initials on the backs of a large school which had run ashore in the night, and sold his right to them to Provincetown for one thousand dollars, and probably Provincetown made as much more. Another fisherman told me that nineteen years ago three hundred and eighty were driven ashore in one school at Great Hollow. In the Naturalist's Library, it is said that, in the winter of 1809-10, one thousand one hundred and ten "approached the shore of Hvalfiord, Iceland, and were captured." De Kay says it is not known why they are stranded. But one fisherman declared to me that they ran ashore in pursuit of squid, and that they generally came on the coast about the last of July.

About a week afterward, when I came to this shore, it was strewn as far as I could see with a glass, with the carcasses of blackfish stripped of their blubber and their heads cut off; the latter lying higher up. Walking on the beach was out of the question on account of the stench. Between Provincetown and Truro they lay in the very path of the stage. Yet no steps were taken to abate the nuisance, and men were catching lobsters as usual just off the shore. I was told that they did sometimes tow them out and sink them; yet I wondered where they got the stones to sink them with. Of course they might be made into guano, and Cape Cod is not so fertile that her inhabitants can afford to do without this manure, -to say nothing of the diseases they may produce.



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After my return home, wishing to learn what was known about the Blackfish, I had recourse to the reports of the zoölogical surveys of the State, and I found that Storer had rightfully omitted it in his Report on the Fishes, since it is not a fish; so I turned to Emmons's Report of the Mammalia, but was surprised to find that the seals and whales were omitted by him, because he had had no opportunity to observe them. Considering how this State has risen and thriven by its fisheries, -that the legislature which authorized the Zoölogical Survey sat under the emblem of a codfish,- that Nantucket and New Bedford are within our limits, -that an early riser may find a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars' worth of blackfish on the shore in a morning, -that the Pilgrims saw the Indians cutting up a blackfish on the shore at Eastham, and called a part of that shore "Grampus Bay," from the number of blackfish they found there, before they got to Plymouth, -and that from that time to this these fishes have continued to enrich one or two counties almost annually, and that their decaying carcasses were now poisoning the air of one county for more than thirty miles, -I thought it remarkable that neither the popular nor scientific name was to be found in a report on our mammalia, - a *catalogue* of the productions of our land and water.



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1843

[James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s ZOOLOGY OF NEW-YORK, OR THE NEW-YORK FAUNA; COMPRISING DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE ANIMALS HITHERTO OBSERVED WITHIN THE STATE OF NEW-YORK, WITH BRIEF NOTICES OF THOSE OCCASIONALLY FOUND NEAR ITS BORDERS, AND ACCOMPANIED BY APPROPRIATE ILLUSTRATIONS. Volume 1, Mammalia, and Volume 4, Fishes, had already been distributed in the previous year. Google Books seems to have so far omitted to scan Volume 3, Reptiles and Amphibia. In this year, in Albany, White & Visscher published Volume 5, Mollusca. [Henry Thoreau](#) would be consulting later volumes at the Society of Natural History Library in Boston and at the Astor Library in New York in 1856.

MAMMALIA, VOLUME I

REPTILES, AMPHIBIA VOL. III

FISHES, VOLUME IV

MOLLUSCA, VOLUME V





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1844

[James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s ZOOLOGY OF NEW-YORK, OR THE NEW-YORK FAUNA; COMPRISING DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE ANIMALS HITHERTO OBSERVED WITHIN THE STATE OF NEW-YORK, WITH BRIEF NOTICES OF THOSE OCCASIONALLY FOUND NEAR ITS BORDERS, AND ACCOMPANIED BY APPROPRIATE ILLUSTRATIONS. Volume 1, Mammalia, Volume 4, Fishes, and Volume 5, Mollusca, had already been published in 1842/1843. Google Books has not scanned Volume 3, Reptiles and Amphibia. In this year White & Visscher published Volume 2, Birds and Volume 6, Crustacea, completing the set of six volumes. [Henry Thoreau](#) would consult later volumes at the Society of Natural History Library in Boston and at the Astor Library in New York in 1856 and make entries in his Fact Book and his Indian Notebook #9.

MAMMALIA, VOLUME I

BIRDS, VOLUME II

REPTILES, AMPHIBIA VOL. III

FISHES, VOLUME IV

MOLLUSCA, VOLUME V

CRUSTACEA, VOLUME VI





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1848

[Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury](#)'s ABSTRACT LOG FOR THE USE OF AMERICAN NAVIGATORS.

Richard Owen described “homologies” — similarities of design in bird wings, fish fins and human hands.

The AAAS, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, was founded after the model of a British Association for the Advancement of Science which had been in existence for some 17 years. [Lt. Maury](#) of the [US Naval Observatory](#) was present for its initial meeting. Joseph Henry (1797-1898), who had been appointed the 1st secretary of the [Smithsonian Institution](#) in 1846, became its 1st Secretary. In this year was issued the 1st publication of the new Smithsonian Institution, [Ephraim George Squier](#)'s and Edwin H. Davis's ANCIEN MONUMENTS OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY. Thoreau would in 1849 copy the following materials into his Indian Notebook #3:³

Arrowheads, differing from each other only in variety of stone of which they are composed, are discovered in all quarters of the globe. They have been found in ... Liberia, in the tombs of Egypt ... upon the plains of Greece ... and in the rude monuments of ancient Scandinavia.

A simple heap of earth or stones seems to have been the first monument which suggested itself to man; the Pyramid, the arch, and the obelisk are evidences of a more advanced state. But rude as are these primitive memorials, they have been but little impaired by time, while other more imposing structures have sunk into shapeless ruins.

We do not, unfortunately, have electronic copy of the 1848 printing that Thoreau saw, but we do have Google Books electronic copy for the 1847 edition from the same publisher (New York: Bartlett & Welford) and have reason to expect this to be equivalent.

EPHRAIM GEORGE SQUIER

[James Ellsworth De Kay](#) became a member of this new entity, the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

THE SCIENCE OF 1848

This association established [Science Magazine](#), which was to become one of the world's foremost science journals.

3. The original notebooks are held by the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, as manuscripts #596 through #606. There are photocopies, made by Robert F. Sayre in the 1930s, in four boxes at the University of Iowa Libraries, accession number MsC 795. More recently, Bradley P. Dean, PhD and Paul Maher, Jr. have attempted to work over these materials.



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1851

November 21, Friday: [James Ellsworth De Kay](#) died at Oyster Bay on Long Island at the age of 57 (not an unusually short lifespan for that period). The family had produced eight children, four still alive. He had left everything to his wife Janet Eckford De Kay. The body would be buried in St. Georges Churchyard in Hempstead, New York.



November 21, Friday: My mother says that visiting once at Capt. Pulcifer's at the North End, two sea-captains' wives told the girl, when the things were carried out to be replenished, not to turn out their slops as it would drown their husbands who were at sea.

Frank Brown shewed me today the velvet duck (White winged coot) & the surf duck— These two as well as the Scaup? duck he says are called coots.

Saw also a fine brant a shore lark—a pine gross-beak [**Pine Grosbeak**  *Pinicola enucleator*] —kittiwake gull & buonaparte's do—(the last very like the first but smaller) all shot at Clarke's island. Also a little brown creeper with a woodpecker tail & curved bill, killed here.

Old Mr. Joseph Hosmer, who lives where Hadley did—remembers when there were two or three times as many inhabitants in that part of the town as there are now— A blacksmith with his shop in front where he now lives—a Goldsmith (Oliver Wheeler?) at the fork in the road just beyond him, one **in front** of Tarbel's—one in the orchard on the S side of the lane in front of Tarbels—one further Nathan Wheeler on the right of the old road by the Balm of Gilead—3 between Tarbels & J P Brown's, a tavern at Lorings—a store at The Dodge cottage that was burnt also at Derby's?—&c &c The farms were smaller then— One man now often holds 2 or 3 old farms. We walk in a deserted country.

The Major Heywood & Mill road together turn out of the Marl. Road just beyond the Desert—the the former keeps the left to the Powdermills—the Latter the right to the saw-mill.

The main Road beyond Lorings used to be called Law's path—where is Laws brook (S branch of Nagog—i.e. Fort Pond?)

The old roads furrow the 2nd division woods like trenches.

Better men never lecture than they hire to come here. Why don't they ask Edmund Hosmer or George Minot? I would rather hear them decline than most of these hirelings lecture.

EDMUND HOSMER

GEORGE MINOTT

PANTRY BROOK

CLARK'S ISLAND

BOSTON HARBOR

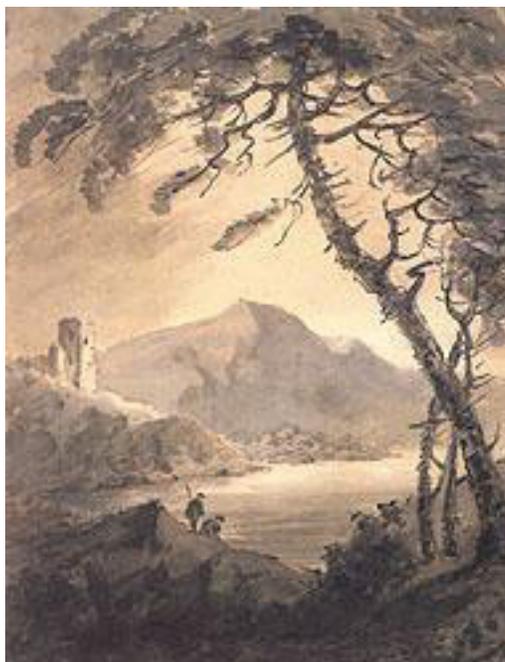


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1852

May 24, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), OBSERVATIONS ON THE RIVER WYE, AND SEVERAL PARTS OF SOUTH WALES, &C. RELATIVE CHIEFLY TO PICTURESQUE BEAUTY: MADE IN THE SUMMER OF THE YEAR 1770. BY [WILLIAM GILPIN](#), ... (London: printed by A. Strahan, for T. Cadell junior and W. Davies, 1800), which had initially appeared in 1782 although subsequently it had gone through numerous editions.



He would copy from this into his Fact Book. He also checked out [Gilpin](#)'s OBSERVATIONS ON SEVERAL PARTS OF THE COUNTIES OF CAMBRIDGE, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK & ESSEX AND ON SEVERAL PARTS OF NORTH WALES (London, 1809).



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He also checked out the 2d of the ten volumes of [Carolus Linnaeus](#) (1707-1778)'s *AMOENITATES ACADEMICAE* (1749-1769).



He also checked out, from the Society of Natural History Library in Boston, Part 1 "Mammalia" of [James Ellsworth De Kay](#)'s ZOOLOGY OF NEW-YORK, OR THE NEW-YORK FAUNA; COMPRISING DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE ANIMALS HITHERTO OBSERVED WITHIN THE STATE OF NEW-YORK, WITH BRIEF NOTICES OF THOSE OCCASIONALLY FOUND NEAR ITS BORDERS, AND ACCOMPANIED BY APPROPRIATE ILLUSTRATIONS (White & Visscher, 1842).

MAMMALIA, VOLUME I



May 24. The cooing of a dove reminded me of an owl this morning. Counted just fifty violets (*pedata*) in a little bunch, three and a half by five inches, and as many buds, there being six plants close together; on the hill where Billington climbed a tree.

A calabash at Pilgrim Hall nearly two feet high, in the form of a jar, showed what these fruits were made for. Nature's jars and vases.

[Holbrook](#) says the *Bufo Americanus* is the most common in America and is our representative of the *Bufo communis* of Europe; speaks of its trill; deposits its spawn in pools.

N. A. HERPETOLOGY

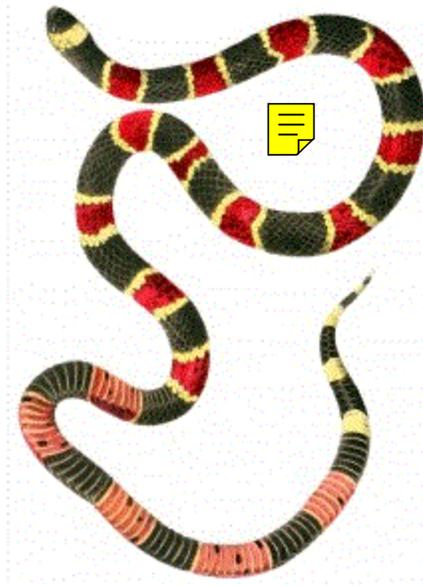
Found in College Yard *Trifolium procumbens*, or Yellow clover.
Concord. Celandine in blossom, and horse-chestnut.



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(While at the Society of Natural History in Boston, [Thoreau](#) had consulted Volume IV of the 2d edition of [Dr. John Edwards Holbrook](#)'s NORTH AMERICAN HERPETOLOGY: OR A DESCRIPTION OF THE REPTILES INHABITING THE UNITED STATES.)





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June 5, Saturday: Evelina E. Vannevar Slack wrote to Charles Wesley Slack about family matters.

[Henry Thoreau](#) made an entry in his journal that he was later to copy into his early lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” as:

[Paragraph 82] Pray let us live without being drawn by dogs –Esquimaux fashion– a scrambling pack tearing over hill and vale — & biting each other’s ears. What a despicable mode of progressing to be drawn by a pack of dogs –Why not by a flock of mice?

DOG

He also made an entry in his journal in regard to lupines which indicates some familiarity, picked up somewhere in some context of his life not yet documented, with the BOOK OF JOB:

The lupine is now in its glory. It is the more important because it occurs in such extensive patches even an acre or more together – and of such a pleasing variety of colors, purple – pink or lilac – and white – especially with the sun on it, when the transparency of the flower makes its color changeable. It paints a whole hill side with its blue – making such a field – (if not meadow) as Proserpine might have wandered in. Its leaf was made to be covered with dew drops– I am quite excited by this prospect of blue flowers in clumps with narrow intervals– Such a profusion of the heavenly – the elysian color – as if these were the elysian fields. They say the seeds look like babies’ faces and hence the flower is so named. No other flowers exhibit so much blue. That is the value of the lupine The earth is blue with them. Yet a third of a mile distant I do not detect their color on the hill side– Perchance because it is the color of the air. It is not **distinct** enough. You passed along here perchance a fortnight ago & the hill-side was comparatively barren – but now you come & these glorious redeemers appear to have flashed out here all at once. Who planted the seeds of lupines in the barren soil? Who watereth the lupines in the fields?

At about this point [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#) wrote to Father [Isaac Hecker](#).

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s UNCLE TOM’S CABIN.



June 5. The medcoia has blossomed in a tumbler. I seem to perceive a pleasant fugacious fragrance from its rather delicate but inconspicuous green flower. Its whorls of leaves of two stages are the most remarkable. I do not perceive the smell of the cucumber in its root.

To Harrington’s, P.M. The silver cinquefoil (*Potentilla argentea*) now, a delicate spring-yellow, sunny-yellow (before the dog-days) flower; none of the fire of autumnal yellows in it. Its silvery leaf is as good as a flower. Whiteweed.

The constant inquiry which nature puts is: “Are you virtuous? Then you can behold me.” Beauty, fragrance, music, sweetness, and joy of all kinds are for the virtuous. That I thought when I heard the telegraph harp to-day. Raspberry some days since. The leaves of young oaks are full-grown. The *Viburnum lentago*, if that edged petiole marks it enough. The *Veratrum viride*, with its green and yellowish flower. Umbelled thesium, which has shown its buds so long. The *Viola lanceolata* now, instead of the *V. blanda*. In some places the leaves of the last are grown quite large. The sidesaddle-flowers. The *Thalictrum anemonoides* still. The dwarf cornel by Harrington’s road looks like large snowflakes on the hillside, it is so thick. It is a neat, geometrical flower, of a pure white, sometimes greenish, or green. The white spruce cones are an inch and a half long. The larch cones appear not so red yet as they will be. Can it be that. earliest potentilla that now stands up so high in open pine woods and wood-paths, -a foot high? The *simplex* variety? There is now froth on the white and pitch pines, at the base of the new shoots, which are from three to six inches long. Some meadows are quite white with the cotton-grass. White clover now. Some rye-fields are almost fully grown, where it appears to have sown itself. It is commonly two feet high. Those great roots belong to the yellow lily. Some poet must sing in praise of the bulbous arethusa.

AEOLIAN HARP

The lupine is now in its glory. It is the more important because it occurs in such extensive patches, even an acre or more together, and of such a pleasing variety of colors, -purple, pink, or lilac, and white, - especially with the



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

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sun on it, when the transparency of the flower makes its color changeable. It paints a whole hillside with its blue, making such a field (if not meadow) as Proserpine might have wandered in. Its leaf was made to be covered with dewdrops. I am quite excited by this prospect of blue flowers in clumps with narrow intervals. Such a profusion of the heavenly, the elysian, color, as if these were the Elysian Fields. They say the seeds look like babies' faces, and hence the flower is so earned. No other flowers exhibit so much blue. That is the value of the lupine. The earth is blued with them. Yet a third of a mile distant I do not detect their color on the hillside. Perchance because it is the color of the air. It is not *distinct* enough. You passed along here, perchance, a fortnight ago, and the hillside was comparatively barren, but now you come and these glorious redeemers appear to have flashed out here all at once. Who planted the seeds of lupines in the barren soil? Who watereth the lupines in the fields?

Distinguished the *Geum rivale*, water avens, in James P. Brown's meadow, a drooping, half-closed, purplish-brown flower, with a strawberry-looking fruit. The *Erigeron bellidifolius*, robin's-plantain (may it be the *E. Philadelphicus?*), that rather rose-purple flower which looks like an early aster. A rather delicate and interesting flower, flesh-colored.

Pray let us live without. being drawn by dogs, Esquimaux-fashion, a scrambling pack tearing over hill and vale and biting each other's ears. What a despicable mode of progressing, to be drawn by a pack of clogs! Why not by a flock of mice?

De Kay, of the New York Report, says the bream "is of no value as an article of food, but is often caught for amusement!" I think it is the sweetest fish in our river.

Richardson says that white bears and arctic foxes frequent the most northern land discovered.

DOG

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1855

September 29, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was sent, by [Ticknor & Co.](#) in Boston, a royalty payment for the sale of 344 copies of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) in the amount of \$51.⁶⁰ along with an expression of corporate condolences:

Boston, Sept. 29, 1855

*H. D. Thoreau
In a/c with W.D. Ticknor & Co
Walden—
On hand last settlement 600 Cops.
Sold Since last a/c 344
remaining on hand—256 Cops
Sales 344 Cops @ 15¢ is \$51.60*

*Dear Sir,
We regret, for your sake as well as ours, that a larger
number of Walden has not been sold.
We enclose our check for Fifty One⁶⁰/₁₀₀ Dollars for sales
to date.*

*Ever Respy
W. D. Ticknor & Co.
Henry D. Thoreau Esq
Concord
Mass.*



**Men who regretted for Thoreau's sake as well as their own
that a larger number of Walden has not been sold.**

On this day [Thoreau](#) was studying [James Ellsworth De Kay's](#) MOLLUSCA OF NEW YORK.

MOLLUSCA, VOLUME V



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

Soon he would be reading in [George Bancroft's](#) A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, FROM THE DISCOVERY OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT,



George Bancroft

BANCROFT'S US, I

BANCROFT'S US, II

BANCROFT'S US, III

in [Richard Hildreth's](#) THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FROM THE DISCOVERY OF THE CONTINENT TO THE ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT UNDER THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 82, Cliff Street, 1848-1852),

HILDRETH'S US, I

HILDRETH'S US, II

HILDRETH'S US, III

in the 4th volume of the [Reverend Samuel Purchas's](#) *HAKLUYTUS POSTHUMUS* OR PURCHAS HIS PILGRIMES, CONTAYNING A HISTORY OF THE WORLD, IN SEA VOYAGES, & LANDE TRAVELS, BY ENGLISHMEN AND OTHERS, or perhaps A RELATION OR IOURNALL OF THE BEGINNING AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE ENGLISH PLANTATION FETTLED AT PLIMOTH, IN NEW-ENGLAND, BY CERTAINE ... (Imprinted at London for Henry

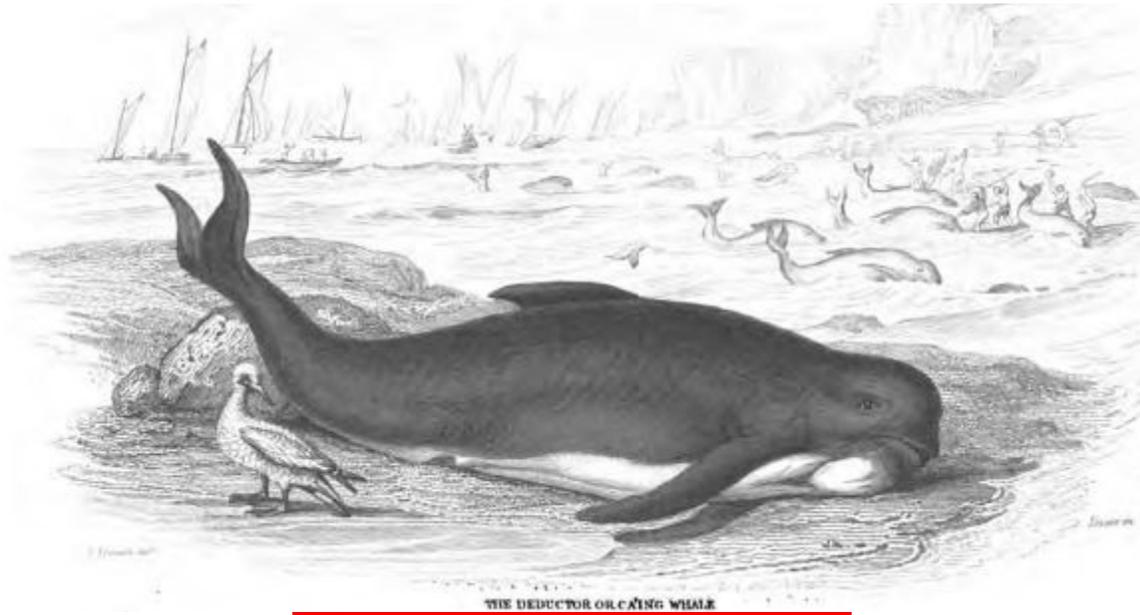
THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

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Fetherstone at ye Signe of the Rose in Pauls Churchyard, 1625), or perhaps THE PRINCIPAL NAVIGATIONS, VOYAGES, TRAFFIQUES & DISCOVERIES OF THE ENGLISH NATION: MADE BY SEA OR OVERLAND TO THE REMOTE & FARTHEST DISTANT QUARTERS OF THE EARTH AT ANY TIME WITHIN THE COMPASSE OF THESE 1600 YEARS BY [RICHARD HAKLUYT](#) VOLUME FOUR (London: J.M. Dent & Co.; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.)

PURCHAS'S VOLUME IV

and in the 26th volume of [Sir William Jardine](#)'s edition THE NATURALIST'S LIBRARY, a volume on whales and other mammals that had been authored by [Robert Hamilton, Esq., M.D., F.R.S.E., M.W.S., Etc.](#)⁴ (Edinburgh: W.H. Lizars; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1852 [that edition being electronically unavailable, I am forced to render for you the previous edition, of 1843]).



MAMMALIA. WHALES, ETC.

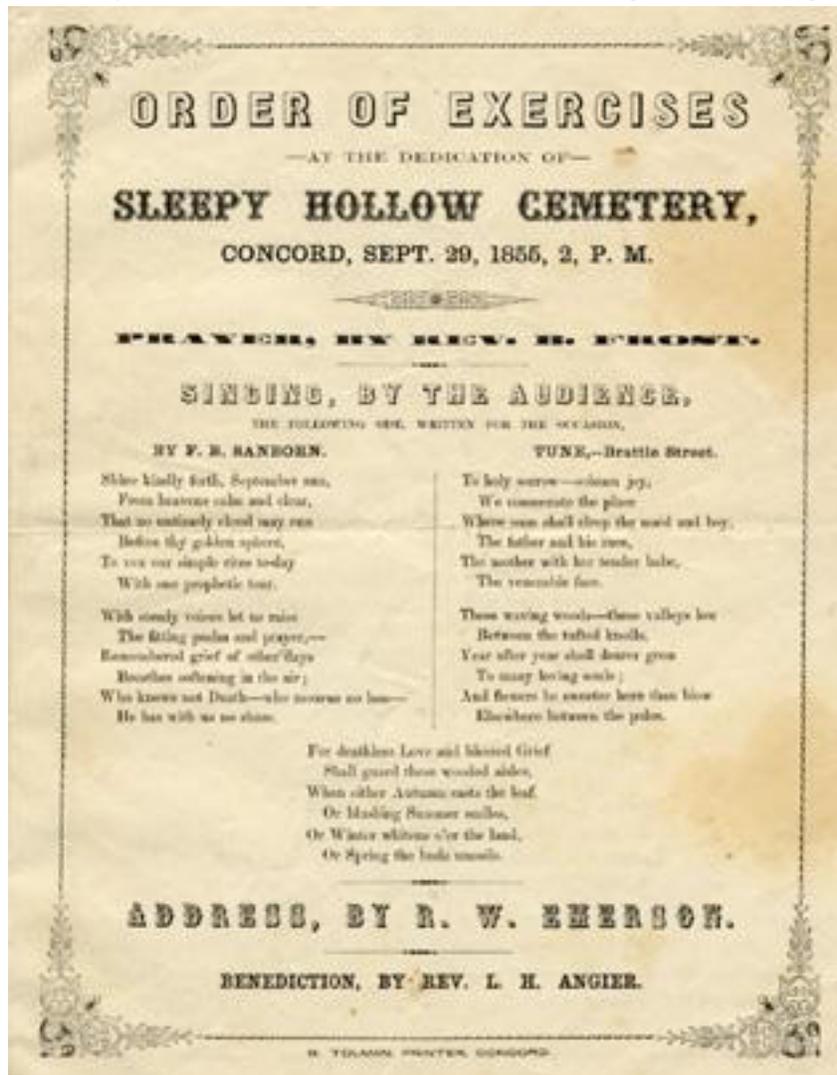
4. Some of this material on whales would find its way into CAPE COD.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

Additional cemetery land was consecrated in “Sleepy Hollow” adjoining Concord’s New Burial Ground, the Middlesex County Courthouse, the Concord Townhouse, and the grounds of the Agricultural Society.



[Waldo Emerson](#) dedicated the new garden cemetery as “the palm of Nature’s hand.”

“Address at the Consecration of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery”

... They have thought that the taking possession of this field ought to be marked by a public meeting and religious rites: and they have requested me to say a few words which the serious and tender occasion inspires....

The life of a tree is a hundred and a thousand years; its decays ornamental; its repairs self-made: they grow when we sleep, they grew when we were unborn. Man is a moth among these longevities....

... when these acorns, that are falling at our feet, are oaks overshadowing our children in a remote century, this mute green bank will be full of history....

Our use will not displace the old tenants. The well-beloved birds will not sing one song less, the high-holding woodpecker, the meadow-lark, the oriole, the robin, purple finch, bluebird,



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thrush and red-eyed warbler, the heron, the bittern will find out the hospitality and protection from the gun of this asylum, and will seek the waters of the meadow...

We shall bring hither the body of the dead, but how shall we catch the escaped soul?

[Also (Baker, Charles, EMERSON AMONG THE ECCENTRICS, Penguin Books, New York, 1996, pp. 397-398): "I have heard that when we pronounce the name of man, we pronounce the belief in Immortality."

"The real evidence is too subtle, or is higher than we can write down in propositions... All sound minds rest on a certain preliminary conviction, namely, that if it be best that conscious personal life shall continue, it will continue; if not best, then it will not."

"In this quiet valley, as in the palm of Nature's hand, we shall sleep well when we have finished our day."]

[Thoreau](#) had measured for the new artificial pond in the cemetery, termed "Cat Pond."

[John Shepard Keyes](#) had been active in the creation of this cemetery.

During this summer and fall almost alone and unaided I laid out the cemetery according to Cleveland's plan, so far as was feasible, and with my own hands drove the stakes for the lots and saved as many trees as possible from cutting. Made all the arrangements for dedication and had a memorable address from Emerson a poem from Sanborn, an ode by Channing all delivered on a lovely September day in the glen by the lot I afterwards selected. This was followed by a sale of lots the choice for the first bringing \$50. from W^m Monroe and realizing more than I expected some fifty lots sold, and the undertaking successful. Thanks to me we have a 'Sleepy Hollow' cemetery I am quite content to take my long sleep in— and for my only epitaph "The Founder of This Cemetery"

J.S. KEYES AUTOBIOGRAPHY

[Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) had been scheduled to visit Concord again and spend time with [Henry](#), but had canceled the visit when he learned that [Ellery Channing](#) had moved to Dorchester and would not be available in Concord. So [Henry](#), not standing on dignity, went off to [New Bedford](#):



Clear fine day, growing gradually cooler. Henry D. Thoreau of Concord arrived about 1¹/₂ o'clock.



September 29: Go to Daniel Ricketson's, New Bedford.

At Natural History Library saw Dr. Cabot, who says that he has heard either the hermit, or else the olivaceous, thrush sing, — very like a wood thrush, but softer. Is sure that the hermit thrush sometimes breeds hereabouts. De Kay, in the New York Reports, thus describes the blackfish— [The quotation is somewhat abridged.]

"FAMILY DELPHINIDÆ.
Genus *Globicephalus*. Lesson.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

The Social Whale.
Globicephalus melas.
Delphinus melas. Trail, Nicholson's Journal.
D. globiceps. Cuvier, Mem. Mus. Vol. 19.
D. deductor. Scoresby, Arct. Regions.
D. intermedius. Harlan.
Phocena globiceps. Sampson, Am. Journal."

"Length 15 to 20 feet;" "shining, bluish black above;" a narrow light-gray stripe beneath; "remarkable for its loud cries when excited."

"Black Whale-fish," "Howling Whale," "Social Whale," and "Bottle-head." Often confounded with the grampus. Not known why they are stranded. In 1822 one hundred stranded in one herd at Wellfleet. First described in a History of Greenland. In the Naturalists' Library, Jardine, I find *Globicephalus deductor* or *melas*, "The Deductor or Ca'ing Whale." First *accurately* described by Trail in 1809. Sixteen to twenty-four feet long. In 1799 two hundred ran ashore on one of the Shetland Isles. In the winter of 1809-10, one thousand one hundred and ten "approached the shore of Hvalfiord, Iceland, and were captured." In 1812 were used as food by the poor of Bretagne. They visit the neighborhood of Nice in May and June.

Got out at Tarkiln Hill or Head of the River Station, three miles this side of New Bedford. Recognized an old Dutch barn. R.'s sons, Arthur and Walton, were just returning from tautog fishing in Buzzard's Bay, and I tasted one at supper, — singularly curved from snout to tail.⁵

THE SLEEPY HOLLOW CEMETERY — OLD GRAVES

([Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#))

My arrival to reside in Concord was at the time when old customs were changing for new ones. The settlement of Waldo Emerson here in 1834, after his return from Europe, and his first acquaintance with Thomas Carlyle, had something to do with these changes, especially after his friends began to gather round him here — the Thoreaus, John and Henry, in 1836; Alcott in 1840; Hawthorne in 1842; Ellery Channing in 1843; Margaret Fuller from 1836 to 1845 (though she never resided but only visited in Concord); and the Ripley family in 1845, inheriting the Old Manse, and receiving there Mrs. Ripley's brother, George Bradford, who had been with Hawthorne at Brook Farm, and at Plymouth with Marston Watson at his garden and nursery of "Hillside," which Thoreau surveyed and mapped for the Watsons in 1854. Mrs. Marston Watson (Mary Russell, a sister of William and Thomas Russell, Boston lawyers) had also lived in the Emerson family before her marriage, and was "The Maiden in the East" to whom Thoreau inscribed an early poem. These friends and among the Concord residents, the Hoar, Whiting and Bartlett families, and Edmund Hosmer, a sturdy farmer, with his daughters and kindred, all made up a circle especially intimate with Emerson, Alcott and Thoreau, though by no means all agreeing with the social, religious and political reformers, to which class belonged Garrison, Phillips, Theodore Parker, the Brook Farm and Fruitlands residents, and many visitors from America and Europe. Among these soon appeared Henry James, Charles Newcomb, the May family, Frederick Douglass, and other fugitive slaves, whom Mrs. Brooks, the Thoreaus, and other anti-slavery households received and cherished — helping them on their way to freedom, when pursued, as they sometimes were. My school grew in numbers during its first term, and much more in its first full year, 1855-56, near the beginning of which, in September, 1855, I was called on to make my first public appearance as a citizen — not as a voter; for I still had a voting residence in

5. [Refer to DANIEL RICKETSON AND HIS FRIENDS, page 337.]



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

New Hampshire, where my brother and I had aided in voting down the pro-slavery Democratic party, whose leader at the time was Hawthorne's college friend, Gen. Pierce, then President of the United States. One evening, early in September, I was sitting in our Channing apartment with my sister, when Mr. Emerson called for an errand surprising to me. The Sleepy Hollow Cemetery had been purchased and was to be dedicated, and Emerson was to give the address. He was also on the Town Committee to arrange for the exercises at the grove, where the prayers, hymns and poems were read and sung; and it was in that capacity he called on me. He said, "I asked Mr. Channing for a poem on this occasion, and he has sent me a good poem, but they tell me it cannot be sung. Now will you not write for us verses that will go to some familiar tune?" He had seen some of my college verses, and others which were made to be sung, and had been sung, and he inferred from that, a capacity to do the same for Concord. I assented, and presently showed him these lines:

Ode.

Shine kindly forth, September sun,
From heavens calm and clear,
That no untimely cloud may run
Before thy golden sphere,
To vex our simple rites today
With one prophetic tear.
With steady voices let us raise
The fitting psalm and prayer;—
Remembered grief of other days
Breathes softening in the air:
Who knows not Death — who mourns no loss,—
He has with us no share.
To holy sorrow, solemn joy,
We consecrate the place
Where soon shall sleep the maid and boy,
The father and his race,
The mother with her tender babe,
The venerable face.
These waving woods, these valleys low,
Between the tufted knolls,
Year after year shall dearer grow
To many loving souls;
And flowers be sweeter here than blow
Elsewhere between the poles.
For deathless Love and blessed Grief
Shall guard these wooded aisles,
When either Autumn casts the leaf,
Or blushing Summer smiles,
Or Winter whitens o'er the land,
Or Spring the buds uncoils.

The day proved to be that prayed for; these lines were sweetly sung to the tune of St. Martin's; and in the choir I recognized the voices of some of my new friends. Mr. Emerson liked them, and printed them afterward in his "Parnassus," as he did Channing's poem, which as poetry was much better, and which also appears in "Parnassus," and in the XIth volume of the Centenary edition of Emerson, as here:

Sleepy Hollow. (W.E. Channing)

No abbeyes gloom, no dark cathedral stoops,
No winding torches paint the midnight air;
Here the green pine delights, the aspen droops

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THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

Along the modest pathways, and those fair
Pale asters of the season spread their plumes
Around this field, fit garden for our tombs.
And thou shalt pause to hear some funeral bell
Slow stealing o'er thy heart in this calm place;
Not with a throb of pain, a feverish knell,
But in its kind and supplicating grace
It says, "Go, Pilgrim, on thy march! be more
Friend to the friendless than thou wast before:"
Learn from the loved one's rest, serenity!
Tomorrow that soft bell for thee shall sound,
And thou repose beneath the whispering tree,
One tribute more to this submissive ground:—
Prison thy soul from malice, bar out pride!
Nor these pale flowers, nor this still field deride.
Rather to those accents of Being turn,
Where a ne'er-setting sun illumines the year
Eternal: and the incessant watch-fires burn
Of unspent holiness and goodness clear,—
Forget man's littleness, — deserve the best,—
God's mercy in thy thought and life confest!

Seldom has a finer poem been read on such an occasion. My own verses were favorably received, and the late Judge Keyes, whose daughter Annie had become one of my pupils, said that I was now a citizen of Concord, and, like some French poet whom he named, as rewarded with a grave at Pere la Chaise, ought to have a burial lot granted me wherever I chose. Long afterward I bought my present lot, in which my poet-son is buried with a slab of marble from Athens above him, inscribed with a Greek line from a Roman tomb in Boetia, of the early Christian period.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1856

October 25, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) arrived at the [Eagleswood](#) community, about a mile west of Perth Amboy, [New Jersey](#) on the shore of Raritan Bay. He reported in his journal a visit to the Astor Library in New-York (while there he inspected the 1850 reprinting of the 2-volume 1840 edition of [Professor Sir William Jackson Hooker's](#) *FLORA BOREALI-AMERICANA*). He would write his sister Sophia that he was “constantly engaged in surveying” from Monday through Saturday.

BOTANY



Oct. 25. Saw, at Barnum's Museum, the stuffed skin of a cougar that was found floating dead in the Hudson many years ago. The stuffed jaguar there looks rather the largest. Had seen a clergyman in Worcester the previous afternoon (at Higginson's) who told me of one killed near the head of the Delaware, in New York State, by an acquaintance of his. His dog had treed it or found it on a tree on a mountainside, and the hunter first saw it as he came up from below, stretched out on a limb and looking intently at him, ready to spring. He fired and wounded it, but, as usual, it sprang as soon as struck, in the direction it was pointing. It struck seventy feet down the mountain from the tree, or a hundred feet distant, tearing off the sleeve of the hunter's very thick and stout coat, as it passed, and marking his arm from shoulder to hand. It took to a tree, and again, and this time approaching it from above, he shot it. The specimens I have seen were long-bodied. Looked into De Bay's Report at the Astor Library. He describes one, the largest “of which we have any account,” killed in Lake Fourth, Herkimer County. “it had a total length of 11 feet 3 inches.” He says that Vanderdonk speaks of lions and their skins, only the latter seen by Christians, meaning panthers. According to D., haunts ledges of rocks called “panther ledges.” There is no well-authenticated account of their having attacked a man, and it is not well established that the northern and southern species are the same.⁶

De Kay describes the *Sorex Dekayi*, “nearly allied to *brevicaudus*, but is larger and more robust in its form.” From Massachusetts to Virginia. “Cheek teeth 16/10,” instead of 18/10 in *S. brevicaudus*. The color resembles the fur of the star-nosed mole. Length of head and body, 4.8 inches; tail, .8; to end of hairs, .9. He never met with *S. brevicaudus* in New York. Is not this my sorex of July 12th, 1856? Or is mine possibly the *Sorex Fosteri*, whose cheek teeth are 18/10; and total length, 4; tail, 1.5.

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

Arrived, at Eagleswood, Perth Amboy, Saturday, 5 P.M., October 25th.

6. Apparently a panther was killed after this, this fall in Rhode Island.

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THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY



1857

July 20, Monday: At the Society of Natural History in Boston, [Henry Thoreau](#) consulted Volume I of the 2d edition of [Dr. John Edwards Holbrook](#)'s NORTH AMERICAN HERPETOLOGY: OR A DESCRIPTION OF THE REPTILES INHABITING THE UNITED STATES.

N. A. HERPETOLOGY



July 20. TO BOSTON ON WAY TO MAINE WOODS.

At Natural History Library. [Holbrook](#) makes the *Emys terrapin* to be found from Rhode Island to Florida and South America. "The only Emys common to North and South America." So did not know it was found at New Bedford. Was not my Freetown turtle (*vide* April 13th) Holbrook's *Kinosternon Pennsylvanicum*? In his plate



the edges of the scales are of more waving lines than those of the *Sternotherus*; it has more brown or reddish yellow both above and below; its tail appears more sharply horny. There is no yellow line on its neck. The sternum is considerably larger (in proportion to carapax) as well as broader behind, and the plates connecting it with the upper shell are much wider. In the generic: account the difference from the *Sternotherus* is that the jaws are hooked (I see no difference in the plates) and the "sternum subdivided into three sections, anterior and posterior movable; "and the "supplemental plates very large." Under this species he says the shell is "ecarinate;" "vertebral plates depressed, sub-imbricate." "Length of shell, 3 1/2 inches; breadth of shell, 2 inches 10 lines; elevation, 1 3/4 inches; length of sternum, 3 inches 2 lines." "The living animal has a slight odour of musk that is not disagreeable." Found in Atlantic States from Florida to latitude 41°. Thinks Hitchcock mistook it for *Sternotherus* in his Geology. Found in the West, and Say says, high up the Missouri.

According to De Kay, it is found sparingly in the southern counties of New York, and he says, "It has a strong musky smell." Of the *Sternotherus* he says, "There appear to be two varieties, of which one is smooth on the shell, while the other is sub-carinate." Length of shell of *Sternotherus*, 2 5/10 inches; height, 1 2/10; of

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Kinosternon, 4 and 1 8/10. (*Vide* April 13th.)



De Kay does not describe the *Cistuda Blandingii* as found in New York.

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

5 P.M. — Take cars for Portland. Very hot and dusty; as much need of a veil in the cars to exclude cinders as in the woods to keep off mosquitoes. Riding in the cars this weather like sitting in the flue of a chimney. Take steamer at Portland. Delayed by fog in night off coast of Maine.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1858

May 27, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), [Père Louis Hennepin](#)'s *DESCRIPTION DE LA*



DESCRIPTION DE LA LOUISIANE

LOUISIANE, NOUVELLEMENT DECOUVERTE AU SUD'OUEST DE LA NOUVELLE FRANCE, PAR ORDRE DU ROY. AVEC LA CARTE DU PAYS: LES MŒURS & LA MANIERE DE VIVRE DES SAUVAGES, DEDIEE À SA MAJESTÉ PAR LA R. P. LOUIS HENNEPIN, MISSIONNAIRE RÉCOLLET & NOTAIRE APOSTOLIQUE (Paris: Chez la Veuve Sebastien Huré,

HDT

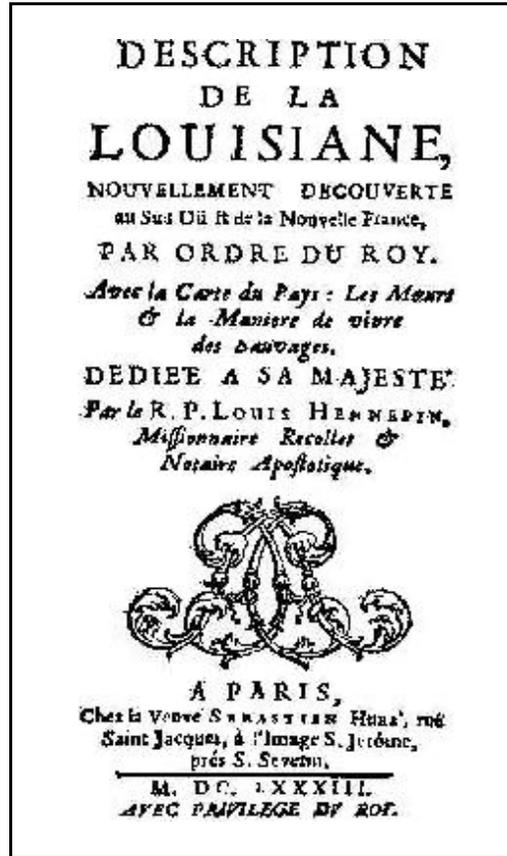
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THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1683).⁷



7. May we presume that Thoreau was never aware that this book has subsequently been exposed as a plagiarism from Abbé Claude Bernou's *RELATION DES DÉCOUVERTES ET DES VOYAGES DU SIEUR DE LA SALLE, SEIGNEUR ET GOUVERNEUR DU FORT DE FRONTENAC, AU-DELÀ DES GREND LACS DE LA NOUVELLE FRANCE, FAITS PAR ORDRE DE MONSIEUR COLBERT, 1679, 1680 ET 1681*, which was itself secondhand information accumulated by a non-traveler?

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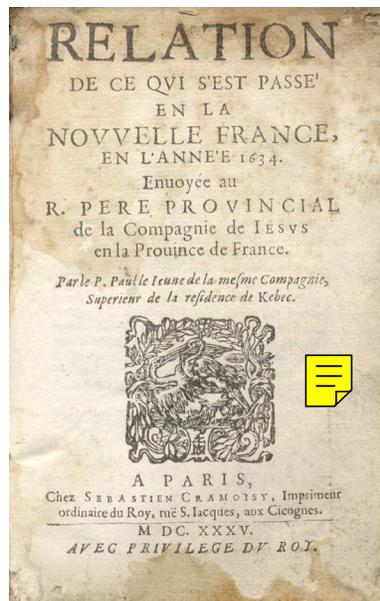
JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

(It had been in this volume, in 1684, that the first report had been made, of a gigantic waterfall between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario in New York — [Niagara Falls](#). However, no illustration had been provided, and the illustration below, although the 1st, would not appear until another book at another time.)



Having already perused the JESUIT RELATION volumes for the years 1633-1643, and the volumes numbered 11 through 26, and the volumes for the years 1662-1663 and for 1663-1664, [Thoreau](#) also checked out the volumes for the years 1669-1670, 1670-1671, and 1671-1672.⁸

<http://www.canadiana.org>



8. Cramoisy, Sebastian (ed.). *RELATION DE CE QUI S'EST PASSE' EN LA NOUVELLE FRANCE IN L'ANNE'E 1636: ENVOYÉE AU R. PERE PROVINCIAL DE LA COMPAGNIE DE JESUS EN LA PROVINCE DE FRANCE, PAR LE P. PAUL LE JEUNE DE LA MESME COMPAGNIE, SUPERIEUR DE LA RESIDENCE DE KÉBEC.* A Paris: Chez Sebastian Cramoisy..., 1637

THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

"There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away"
— Emily Dickinson

Thoreau consulted, at the [Boston Society of Natural History](#), [Thomas Bell](#)'s A HISTORY OF BRITISH REPTILES ILLUSTRATED BY MORE THAN 40 WOODCUTS (London: J. Van Voorst). He would copy from this into his 2d Commonplace Book.

THE BRITISH REPTILES



May 27. At Boston, Cambridge, and Concord.

De Kay describes the *Esox fasciatus*, which is apparently mine of May 11th. As I count, the rays are the same in number, viz. "P. 13, V. 9, D. 14, A. 13, C. 20." He says it is from six to eight inches long and abundant in New York; among other things is distinguished by "a muddy tinge of the roundish pectoral, abdominal, and ventral fins; and by a broad concave or lunated tail." I do not observe the peculiarity in the tail in mine, now it is in

spirits.

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

FISHES, VOLUME IV

Ed. Emerson shows me an egg of a bittern (*Ardea minor*) (**Green-backed Heron *Butorides striatus***) from a nest in the midst of the Great Meadows, which four boys found, scaring up the bird, last Monday, the 24th. It was about a foot wide on the top of a tussock, where the water around was about one foot deep. I will measure the egg.



[It is clay-colored, one and seven eights inches long by one and nine sixteenths, about the same size each end.] They were a little developed. Also an egg of a turtle dove, one of two in a nest in a pitch pine, about six feet from the ground, in Sleepy hollow Cemetery, by the side of a frequented walk, on a fork on a nearly horizontal limb. The egg is milk-white, elliptical, one and three sixteenths inches long by seven eighths wide.



1859

June 2, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) provided an indication in his journal that –although we do not have other record of his having consulted the ornithological work of [Charles-Lucien Jules Laurent Bonaparte](#)– he was indeed conversant with that material.



June 2, Thursday: I hear that Farmer shot on the 28th *ult.* two marsh hawks, male and female, and got their four eggs, in which the young were moving.

P.M.–To Flint’s Pond.

Red maple seed is partly blown off. Some of it is conspicuously whitish or light-colored on the trees.

Examine a small striped snake, some sixteen inches long. Dark-brown above, with a grayish dorsal line and squarish black spots in the brown; then lighter-brown or dead-leaf color on the sides, chocolate-brown still lower, and light or pale-cream brown beneath. A dark-brown spot on each side of each abdominal plate. The sides yellowish forward. This is apparently a striped snake, but not yellow-striped as described.

Strawberries reddening on some hills.

Found within three rods of Flint’s Pond a rose-breasted grosbeak’s nest. [And one fresh egg (three on the 4th).]

It was in a thicket where there was much cat-briar, in a high blueberry bush, some five feet from the ground, in the forks of the bush, and of very loose construction, being made of the dead gray extremities of the cat-briar, with its tendrils (and some of this had dropped on the ground beneath), and this was lined merely with fine brown stems of weeds like pinweeds, without any leaves or anything else, — a slight nest on the whole. Saw the birds. The male uttered a very peculiar sharp clicking or squeaking note of alarm while I was near the nest. The egg is thickly spotted with reddish brown on a pale-blue ground (not white ground as Buonaparte and the New York ornithologist say), like a hermit thrush’s, but rounder; very delicate.

AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY
AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY
AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY
AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

(This should be a serious warning to us that in those cases in which we lack a record of Thoreau having been familiar with a particular work, we should not infer from negative evidence that he would have been unfamiliar with it. The elaborate records we have of Thoreau’s reading list, despite their exhausting elaborateness, must be recognized to be partial and with omissions.)



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

1952

March: [Kenneth Walter Cameron](#)'s "Emerson, [Thoreau](#), and the Society of Natural History" ([American Literature](#), Volume 24, Number 1, pages 21-30).

"MAGISTERIAL HISTORY" IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



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

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



Prepared: September 17, 2014



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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.

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious



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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@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.