

## PEOPLE MENTIONED IN CAPE COD

### PEOPLE MENTIONED IN CAPE COD:

#### PROFESSOR PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR



In dealing with this scientist, who from summer to summer rented the Orchard House in Concord, Thoreau must certainly have been aware that he was encountering another person like himself, a product of the great Huguenot diaspora out of France.

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



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

CAPE COD: The Greeks would not have called the ocean ἀτρύγετος, or unfruitful, though it does not produce wheat, if they had viewed it by the light of modern science, for naturalists now assert that "the sea, and not the land, is the principal seat of life,"—though not of vegetable life. Darwin affirms that "our most thickly inhabited forests appear almost as deserts when we come to compare them with the corresponding regions of the ocean." Agassiz and Gould tell us that "the sea teems with animals of all classes, far beyond the extreme limit of flowering plants"; but they add, that "experiments of dredging in very deep water have also taught us that the abyss of the ocean is nearly a desert";—"so that modern investigations," to quote the words of Desor, "merely go to confirm the great idea which was vaguely anticipated by the ancient poets and philosophers, that the Ocean is the origin of all things." Yet marine animals and plants hold a lower rank in the scale of being than land animals and plants. "There is no instance known," says Desor, "of an animal becoming aquatic in its perfect state, after having lived in its lower stage on dry land," but as in the case of the tadpole, "the progress invariably points towards the dry land." In short, the dry land itself came through and out of the water on its way to the heavens, for, "in going back through the geological ages, we come to an epoch when, according to all appearances, the dry land did not exist, and when the surface of our globe was entirely covered with water." We looked on the sea, then, once more, not as ἀτρύγετος, or unfruitful, but as it has been more truly called, the "laboratory of continents."

PEOPLE OF  
CAPE COD

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

AGASSIZ & GOULD

CHARLES DARWIN



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1811



February 13, Wednesday: [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) was born at Friedrichsdorf, near Frankfort-on-Main and Homburg, son of Christine Albertine Foucar Desor and Jean Desor, a manufacturer. (The family was of Huguenot descent, chased out of France in 1685, and its name had originated as “Des Horts,” meaning “of the gardens.” He was an autodidact who studied paleontology and glacial phenomena. He studied at the University of Giessen and then at Heidelberg before studying in the College of France at Paris. In early years he was an associate of [Professor Louis Agassiz](#), and his contributions to glaciology derive from Agassiz’s Ice Age concept and from summers he spent with Agassiz on the Unteraar glacier. He studied echinoderms of the Jurassic period. He investigated the old lake-habitations of Switzerland. He made observations on the physical features of the Sahara desert. He would visit the locale in France from which his Protestant ancestors had been exiled during the great diaspora. Eventually he inherited property, retired to Combe Varin in Val Travers, Switzerland, and died on vacation in Nice, France.)

The publication of Jan Ladislav Dussek’s Three Piano Sonatas C.240-242 was entered at Stationer’s Hall, London.

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

*4th day 13 of 2 Mo// My feelings have been Sweetly tendered for  
which I desire to be thankful - Oh how I love to feel tender in  
Spirit - Sister Ruth set the eveng*

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RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1832



[Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) was studying law at Giessen and Heidelberg, and became compromised in the republican movements of 1832/1833, escaping to France (he was, after all, despite the place of his birth and his linguistic fluency, a Frenchman rather than a German). At the College of France in Paris he studied natural history under Eifer and his attention became drawn to geology. He went on excursions with Élie de Beaumont.

[Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat](#)'s *OBSERVATIONS SUR HISTOIRE DES MONGOLS ORIENTAUX, DE SSANANG-SSETSEN* (Paris).

In this year and the following one, the branch of the Institute of France known as the “Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques,” which had been suppressed by Napoleon, was being revived by [Professor François Pierre Guillaume Guizot](#) through the intercession of King Louis Philippe. Some of the old members of this learned body –Talleyrand, Sieyès, Roederer and Lakanal– again took their seats there, and a host of more recent celebrities were added by election for the free discussion of the great problems of political and social science. The Société de l’histoire de France was founded for the publication of historical works; and a vast publication of medieval chronicles and diplomatic papers was undertaken at the expense of the state.

**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.**



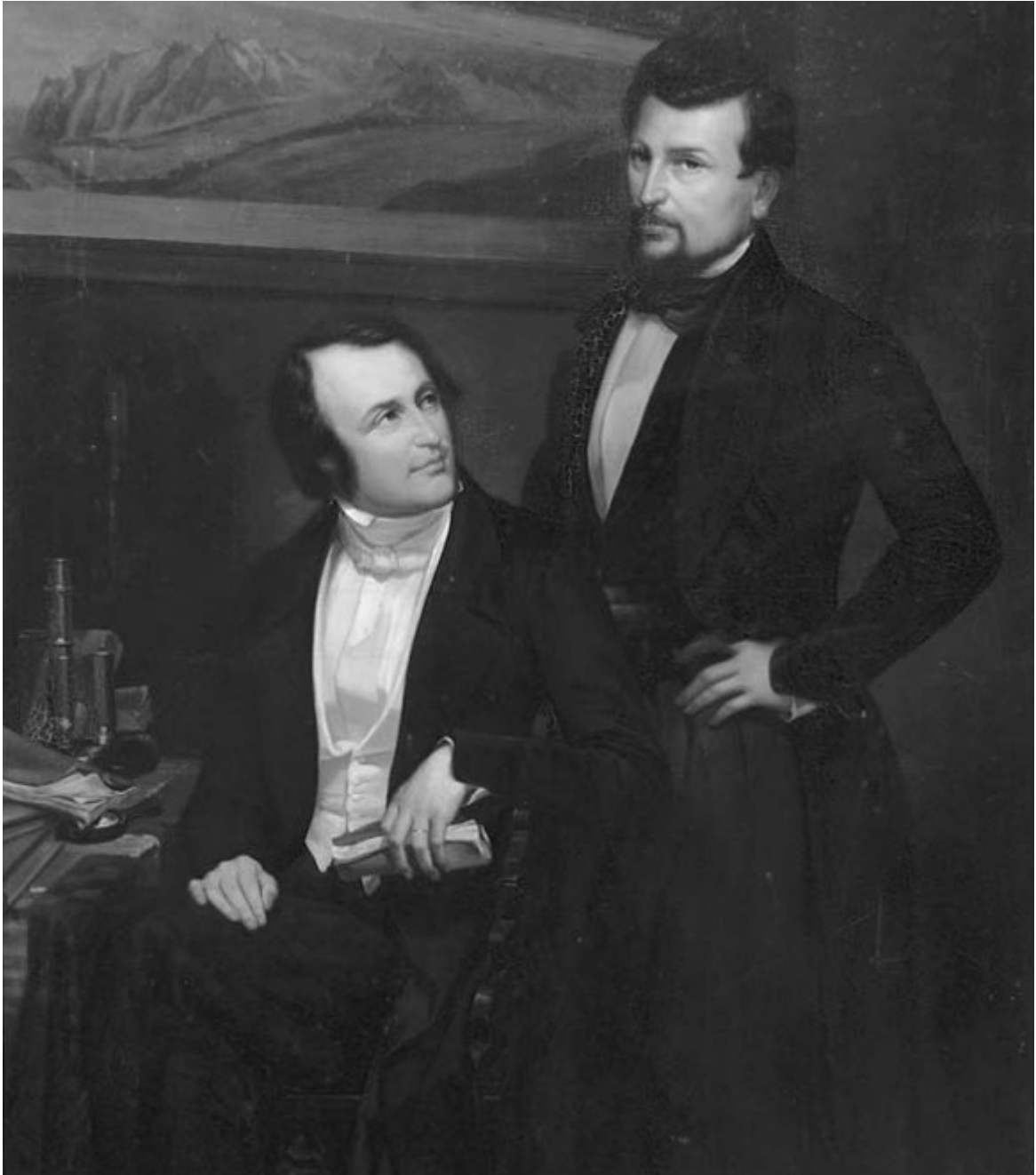
## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1837**



At a meeting of naturalists in Neuchâtel, [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) (standing) met [Professor Louis Agassiz](#), four years his senior (gazing).



Talk about made in heaven!

HDT

WHAT?

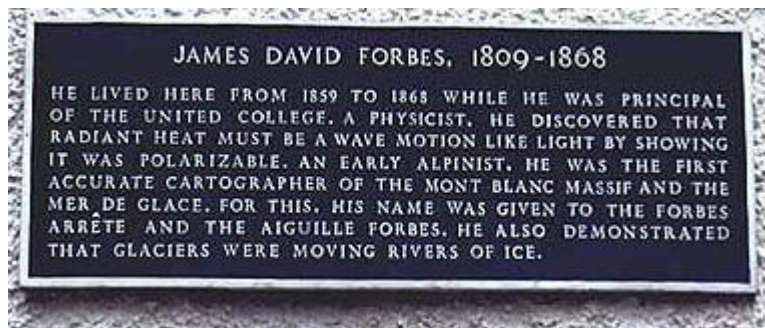
INDEX

## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1841**

[Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) and [James David Forbes](#) climbed Jungfrau.<sup>1</sup>



1. Which made [Forbes](#) the first Brit to stand atop this particular mountain.



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1842**

[Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) contribute material to Volume III of [Professor Louis Agassiz](#)'s *MONOGRAPHIES D'ÉCHINODERMES VIVANTS ET FOSSILES* (Neuchâtel).

### THE SCIENCE OF 1842

Based on [Professor Agassiz](#)'s theory of an Age of Ice, [Charles Maclaren](#) pointed out in a newspaper article that substantial ice sheets in the northern hemisphere would have lowered global sea levels (as can be seen in this globe as the exposure of the continental shelves).



OUR MOST RECENT GLACIATION

William Thomson's *ON THE UNIFORM MOTION OF HEAT IN HOMOGENEOUS SOLID BODIES* expressed a concern with the physics of cooling bodies that would draw him into debates concerning the age of the Earth (in 1846 he would calculate that the Earth could be no more than 100,000,000 years old).

Large numbers of Americans paid to see Phineas Taylor Barnum's "Feejee Mermaid."





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

August 8, Monday: [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) was among those in a guided party, on the 1st-ever ascent of Lauteraarhorn.



On this day and the following one, [Frederick Douglass](#) spoke before the Bristol County Anti-Slavery Society in [New Bedford](#).

On the day that [Joseph Smith, Jr.](#) was arrested as a suspected accomplice in the attempted murder of Lilburn W. Boggs, former governor of Missouri, by Orrin Porter Rockwell, former [Danite](#) and later a member of the [Mormon](#) Council of Fifty, the founder achieved his insight into secret sacred underwear that had had “oil poured on them, and then a mark or hole cut in the breasts of their shirts ... to keep the Destroying Angel from them and their families” (when released from that arrest by the Nauvoo Municipal Court, Smith would travel into Iowa and go into hiding).

Secretary of State [Daniel Webster](#) wrote eloquently to Lord Ashburton:

**Mr. Webster to Lord Ashburton.**





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

Department of State, Washington, August 8, 1842.

My Lord,—We have had several conversations on the subject of impressment, but I do not understand that your Lordship has instructions from your government to negotiate upon it, nor does the government of the United States see any utility in opening such negotiation, unless the British government is prepared to renounce the practice in all future wars.

No cause has produced to so great an extent, and for so long a period, disturbing and irritating influences on the political relations of the United States and England, as the impressment of seamen by British cruisers from American merchant-vessels. From the commencement of the French Revolution to the breaking out of the war between the two countries in 1812, hardly a year elapsed without loud complaint and earnest remonstrance. A deep feeling of opposition to the right claimed, and to the practice exercised under it, and not unfrequently exercised without the least regard to what justice and humanity would have dictated, even if the right itself had been admitted, took possession of the public mind of America, and this feeling, it is well known, co-operated most powerfully with other causes to produce the state of hostilities which ensued.

At different periods, both before and since the war, negotiations have taken place between the two governments, with the hope of finding some means of quieting these complaints. At some times, the effectual abolition of the practice has been requested and treated of; at other times, its temporary suspension; and at other times, again, the limitation of its exercise, and some security against its enormous abuses.

A common destiny has attended these efforts; they have all failed. The question stands at this moment where it stood fifty years ago. The nearest approach to a settlement was a convention proposed in 1803, and which had come to the point of signature, when it was broken off in consequence of the British government insisting that the **narrow seas** should be expressly excepted out of the sphere over which the contemplated stipulation against impressment should extend. The American Minister, Mr. King, regarded this exception as quite inadmissible, and chose rather to abandon the negotiation than to acquiesce in the doctrine which it proposed to establish.

England asserts the right of impressing British subjects, in time of war, out of neutral merchant-vessels, and of deciding by her visiting officers who, among the crews of such merchant-vessels, are British subjects. She asserts this as a legal exercise of the prerogative of the crown; which prerogative is alleged to be founded on the English law of the perpetual and indissoluble allegiance of the subject, and his obligation under all circumstances, and for his whole life, to render military service to the crown whenever required.

This statement, made in the words of eminent British jurists, shows at once that the English claim is far broader than the basis or platform on which it is raised. The law relied on is English law; the obligations insisted on are obligations existing between the crown of England and its subjects. This law



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

and these obligations, it is admitted, may be such as England may choose they shall be. But then they must be confined to the parties. Impressment of seamen out of and beyond English territory, and from on board the ships of other nations, is an interference with the rights of other nations; is further, therefore, than English prerogative can legally extend; and is nothing but an attempt to enforce the peculiar law of England beyond the dominions and jurisdiction of the crown. The claim asserts an extra-territorial authority for the law of British prerogative, and assumes to exercise this extra-territorial authority, to the manifest injury and annoyance of the citizens and subjects of other states, on board their own vessels, on the high seas.

Every merchant-vessel on the seas is rightfully considered as part of the territory of the country to which it belongs. The entry, therefore, into such vessel, being neutral, by a belligerent, is an act of force, and is, **prima facie**, a wrong, a trespass, which can be justified only when done for some purpose allowed to form a sufficient justification by the law of nations. But a British cruiser enters an American merchant-vessel in order to take therefrom supposed British subjects; offering no justification, therefore, under the law of nations, but claiming the right under the law of England respecting the king's prerogative. This cannot be defended. English soil, English territory, English jurisdiction, is the appropriate sphere for the operation of English law. The ocean is the sphere of the law of nations; and any merchant-vessel on the seas is by that law under the protection of the laws of her own nation, and may claim immunity, unless in cases in which that law allows her to be entered or visited.

If this notion of perpetual allegiance, and the consequent power of the prerogative, was the law of the world; if it formed part of the conventional code of nations, and was usually practised, like the right of visiting neutral ships, for the purpose of discovering and seizing enemy's property, then impressment might be defended as a common right, and there would be no remedy for the evil till the national code should be altered. But this is by no means the case. There is no such principle incorporated into the code of nations. The doctrine stands only as English law, not as a national law; and English law cannot be of force beyond English dominion. Whatever duties or relations that law creates between the sovereign and his subjects can be enforced and maintained only within the realm, or proper possessions or territory of the sovereign. There may be quite as just a prerogative right to the property of subjects as to their personal services, in an exigency of the state; but no government thinks of controlling by its own laws property of its subjects situated abroad; much less does any government think of entering the territory of another power for the purpose of seizing such property and applying it to its own uses. As laws, the prerogatives of the crown of England have no obligation on persons or property domiciled or situated abroad.

"When, therefore," says an authority not unknown or unregarded



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

on either side of the Atlantic, "we speak of the right of a state to bind its own native subjects everywhere, we speak only of its own claim and exercise of sovereignty over them when they return within its own territorial jurisdiction, and not of its right to compel or require obedience to such laws, on the part of other nations, within their own territorial sovereignty. On the contrary, every nation has an exclusive right to regulate persons and things within its own territory, according to its sovereign will and public polity."

The good sense of these principles, their remarkable pertinency to the subject now under consideration, and the extraordinary consequences resulting from the British doctrine, are signally manifested by that which we see taking place every day. England acknowledges herself overburdened with population of the poorer classes. Every instance of the emigration of persons of those classes is regarded by her as a benefit. England, therefore, encourages emigration; means are notoriously supplied to emigrants, to assist their conveyance, from public funds; and the New World, and most especially these United States, receive the many thousands of her subjects thus ejected from the bosom of their native land by the necessities of their condition. They come away from poverty and distress in over-crowded cities, to seek employment, comfort, and new homes in a country of free institutions, possessed by a kindred race, speaking their own language, and having laws and usages in many respects like those to which they have been accustomed; and a country which, upon the whole, is found to possess more attractions for persons of their character and condition than any other on the face of the globe. It is stated that, in the quarter of the year ending with June last, more than twenty-six thousand emigrants left the single port of Liverpool for the United States, being four or five times as many as left the same port within the same period for the British colonies and all other parts of the world. Of these crowds of emigrants, many arrive in our cities in circumstances of great destitution, and the charities of the country, both public and private, are severely taxed to relieve their immediate wants. In time they mingle with the new community in which they find themselves, and seek means of living. Some find employment in the cities, others go to the frontiers, to cultivate lands reclaimed from the forest; and a greater or less number of the residue, becoming in time naturalized citizens, enter into the merchant service under the flag of their adopted country.

Now, my Lord, if war should break out between England and a European power, can any thing be more unjust, any thing more irreconcilable to the general sentiments of mankind, than that England should seek out these persons, thus encouraged by her and compelled by their own condition to leave their native homes, tear them away from their new employments, their new political relations, and their domestic connections, and force them to undergo the dangers and hardships of military service for a country which has thus ceased to be their own country? Certainly, certainly, my Lord, there can be but one answer to



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

this question. Is it not far more reasonable that England should either prevent such emigration of her subjects, or that, if she encourage and promote it, she should leave them, not to the embroilment of a double and contradictory allegiance, but to their own voluntary choice, to form such relations, political or social, as they see fit, in the country where they are to find their bread, and to the laws and institutions of which they are to look for defence and protection?

A question of such serious importance ought now to be put at rest. If the United States give shelter and protection to those whom the policy of England annually casts upon their shores,—if, by the benign influences of their government and institutions, and by the happy condition of the country, those emigrants become raised from poverty to comfort, finding it easy even to become landholders, and being allowed to partake in the enjoyment of all civil rights,—if all this may be done, (and all this is done, under the countenance and encouragement of England herself,) is it not high time that, yielding that which had its origin in feudal ideas as inconsistent with the present state of society, and especially with the intercourse and relations subsisting between the Old World and the New, England should at length formally disclaim all right to the services of such persons, and renounce all control over their conduct?

But impressment is subject to objections of a much wider range. If it could be justified in its application to those who are declared to be its only objects, it still remains true that, in its exercise, it touches the political rights of other governments, and endangers the security of their own native subjects and citizens. The sovereignty of the state is concerned in maintaining its exclusive jurisdiction and possession over its merchant-ships on the seas, except so far as the law of nations justifies intrusion upon that possession for special purposes; and all experience has shown, that no member of a crew, wherever born, is safe against impressment when a ship is visited.

The evils and injuries resulting from the actual practice can hardly be overstated, and have ever proved themselves to be such as should lead to its relinquishment, even if it were founded in any defensible principle. The difficulty of discriminating between English subjects and American citizens has always been found to be great, even when an honest purpose of discrimination has existed. But the lieutenant of a man-of-war, having necessity for men, is apt to be a summary judge, and his decisions will be quite as significant of his own wants and his own power as of the truth and justice of the case. An extract from a letter of Mr. King, of the 13th of April, 1797, to the American Secretary of State, shows something of the enormous extent of these wrongful seizures.

"Instead of a few, and these in many instances equivocal cases, I have," says he, "since the month of July past, made application for the discharge from British men-of-war of two hundred and seventy-one seamen, who, stating themselves to be Americans, have claimed my interference. Of this number, eighty-six have



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

been ordered by the Admiralty to be discharged, thirty-seven more have been detained as British subjects or as American volunteers, or for want of proof that they are Americans, and to my applications for the discharge of the remaining one hundred and forty-eight I have received no answer; the ships on board of which these seamen were detained having, in many instances, sailed before an examination was made in consequence of my application.

"It is certain that some of those who have applied to me are not American citizens, but the exceptions are, in my opinion, few, and the evidence, exclusive of certificates, has been such as, in most cases, to satisfy me that the applicants were real Americans, who have been forced into the British service, and who, with singular constancy, have generally persevered in refusing pay or bounty, though in some instances they have been in service more than two years."

But the injuries of impressment are by no means confined to its immediate subjects, or the individuals on whom it is practised. Vessels suffer from the weakening of their crews, and voyages are often delayed, and not unfrequently broken up, by subtraction from the number of necessary hands by impressment. And what is of still greater and more general moment, the fear of impressment has been found to create great difficulty in obtaining sailors for the American merchant service in times of European war. Seafaring men, otherwise inclined to enter into that service, are, as experience has shown, deterred by the fear of finding themselves ere long in compulsory military service in British ships of war. Many instances have occurred, fully established by proof, in which raw seamen, natives of the United States, fresh from the fields of agriculture, entering for the first time on shipboard, have been impressed before they made the land, placed on the decks of British men-of-war, and compelled to serve for years before they could obtain their release, or revisit their country and their homes. Such instances become known, and their effect in discouraging young men from engaging in the merchant service of their country can neither be doubted nor wondered at. More than all, my Lord, the practice of impressment, whenever it has existed, has produced, not conciliation and good feeling, but resentment, exasperation, and animosity between the two great commercial countries of the world.

In the calm and quiet which have succeeded the late war, a condition so favorable for dispassionate consideration, England herself has evidently seen the harshness of impressment, even when exercised on seamen in her own merchant service, and she has adopted measures calculated, if not to renounce the power or to abolish the practice, yet at least to supersede its necessity by other means of manning the royal navy more compatible with justice and the rights of individuals, and far more conformable to the spirit and sentiments of the age.

Under these circumstances, the government of the United States has used the occasion of your Lordship's pacific mission to review this whole subject, and to bring it to your notice and





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

that of your government. It has reflected on the past, pondered the condition of the present, and endeavored to anticipate, so far as might be in its power, the probable future; and I am now to communicate to your Lordship the result of these deliberations.

The American government, then, is prepared to say that the practice of impressing seamen from American vessels cannot hereafter be allowed to take place. That practice is founded on principles which it does not recognize, and is invariably attended by consequences so unjust, so injurious, and of such formidable magnitude, as cannot be submitted to.

In the early disputes between the two governments on this so long contested topic, the distinguished person to whose hands were first intrusted the seals of this department [Mr. Jefferson] declared, that "the simplest rule will be, that the vessel being American shall be evidence that the seamen on board are such."

Fifty years' experience, the utter failure of many negotiations, and a careful reconsideration, now had, of the whole subject, at a moment when the passions are laid, and no present interest or emergency exists to bias the judgment, have fully convinced this government that this is not only the simplest and best, but the only rule, which can be adopted and observed, consistently with the rights and honor of the United States and the security of their citizens. That rule announces, therefore, what will hereafter be the principle maintained by their government. In every regularly documented American merchant-vessel the crew who navigate it will find their protection in the flag which is over them.

This announcement is not made, my Lord, to revive useless recollections of the past, nor to stir the embers from fires which have been, in a great degree, smothered by many years of peace. Far otherwise. Its purpose is to extinguish those fires effectually, before new incidents arise to fan them into flame. The communication is in the spirit of peace, and for the sake of peace, and springs from a deep and conscientious conviction that high interests of both nations require this so long contested and controverted subject now to be finally put to rest. I persuade myself that you will do justice to this frank and sincere avowal of motives, and that you will communicate your sentiments in this respect to your government.

This letter closes, my Lord, on my part, our official correspondence; and I gladly use the occasion to offer you the assurance of my high and sincere regard.

DANIEL WEBSTER.

LORD ASHBURTON, &c., &c., &c.



Monday Aug. 8th 1842.

Gray was not a poet only a lover of poetry. He cultivated poetry but the plant did not thrive.

He did no doubt possess a natural vein of poetry, but this was not so rich or deep but that it was all expended upon the imagery and ornament. Enough to smooth the sound but not to guild the sense.



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

In the Churchyard the muse was a little more prevalent with him and it will always be popular, though the machinery is bare, because it retains the atmosphere and tone of poetry.  
How grand are mountains — by their elevation they are placed at an infinite distance.  
In the morning you see the distinct form of every tree and creep happily along the dank roads like some new creation of her exuberance. The morning hour is as private as the evening— Not such privacy as the day leaves but such as the day has not prophaned.

**DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.**



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1844

Pierre Jean Édouard Desor's *EXCURSIONS ET SEJOURS DANS LES GLACIERS ET LES HAUTES REGIONS DES ALPES*  
DE M. AGASSIZ ET DE SES COMPAGNONS DE VOYAGE (Neuchâtel).

THE SCIENCE OF 1844

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

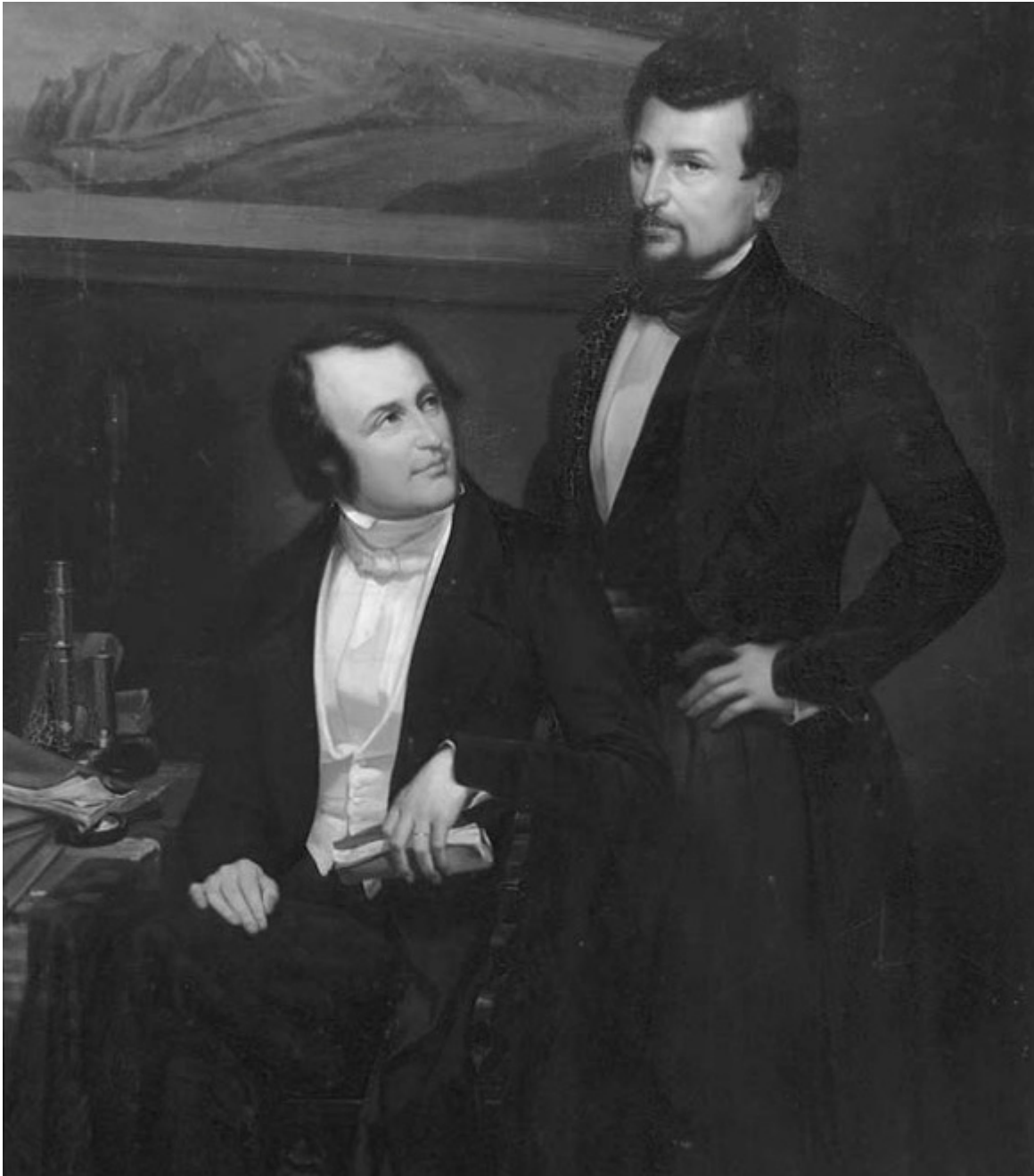


## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1846**

After spending a few years in the north of Europe, primarily analyzing the puzzles of the Scandinavian moraine topography, [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) followed [Professor Louis Agassiz](#) to the United States.



1847

[Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) found work with Josiah Dwight Whitney, [John Wells Foster](#), and Desorand Rogers in the US Coast Survey of the important copper-extraction region of Lake Superior, under the leadership of [Charles T. Jackson](#), United States Geologist for the Lake Superior land district.



[Jackson](#)'s stewardship would prove disastrous, he would be dismissed from his position, and in 1850 Foster and Whitney would be left to complete his survey.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

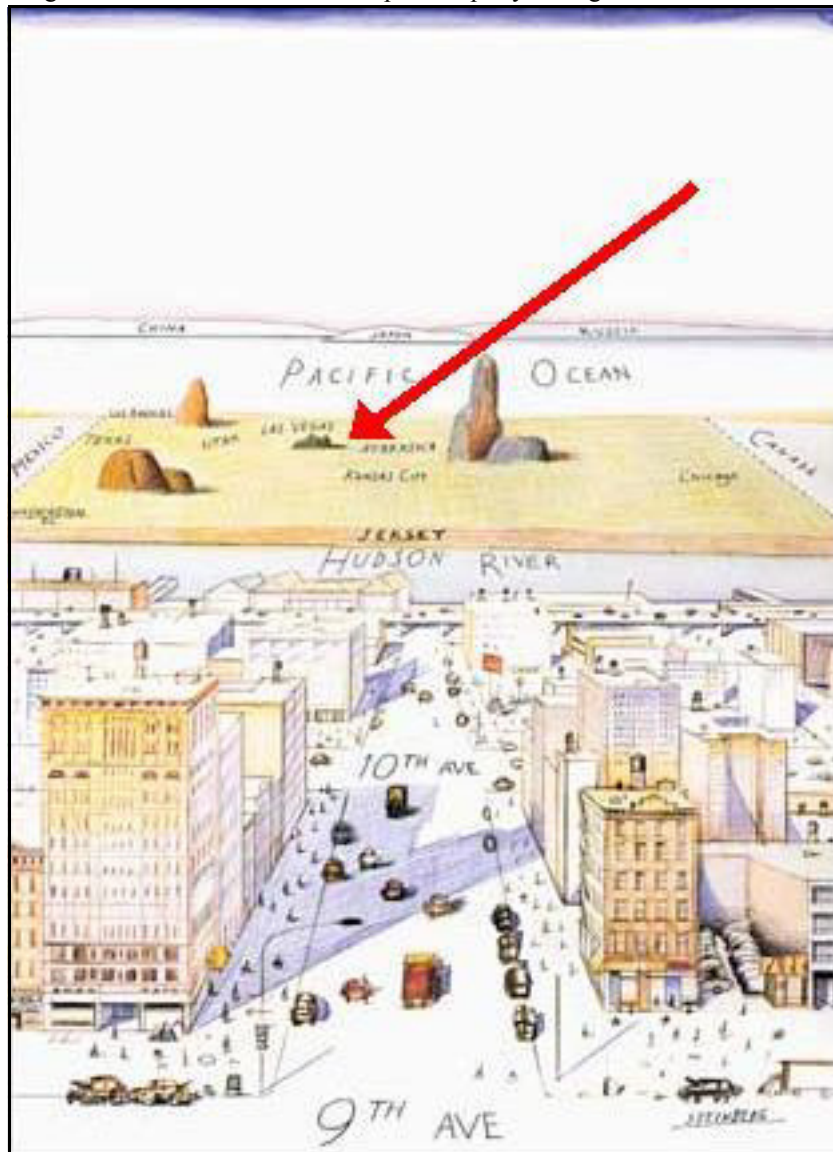
## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1848**

December 5, Tuesday: Agreement was reached in Cambridge that [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) and [Professor Louis Agassiz](#) were to submit a difficulty to arbitration.

President [James Knox Polk](#) assured the nation that the reports of gold in California were reliable. In the following months “Gold Fever” would spread rapidly through the United States.





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1849

February 9, Friday: An arbitrated decision was recorded in Boston in regard to the dispute between [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) and [Professor Louis Agassiz](#), by Thomas B. Curtis, John Amory Lowell, and D. Humphreys Storer — the decision involved Agassiz paying to Desor the sum of \$100.

Because [Pope Pius IX](#) had fled south in disguise from the Papal States to Gaeta, Italy, republican strugglers were able to form a new government under the motto “[Dio e Popolo](#)” (God and People), a new government under which any religion, not merely Catholicism or Judaism, might be freely practiced. Rule was to be by a triumvirate under a constitution. The constitution specified the abolition of capital punishment. The Pope was asked to return, as the head of the Holy Roman Catholic Church (without temporal power).<sup>2</sup>

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [George A. Thatcher](#).

Concord Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> 1849

Dear Cousin,

*California, mad dogs, and rail-roads are still the great topics here as everywhere. About half a dozen are gone and going to California from Concord. Mr Hoar's second son Edward, who was a lawyer in New York, has just taken leave of his friends here to go to the new Ophir. Many are going from the neighborhood of Boston of whom one would not have expected it. For my part, I should rather have gone before the gold was found. I think that those who have delayed thus long will be prudent if they wait a little longer and hear from their acquaintances who went out early. It is impossible yet to tell what is truth. After all we have had no quite trustworthy and available report yet. We shall have some rich stories to read a year or two hence.*

*I am interested in George's progress in Engineering. I should say let him begin with Algebra at once, and soon, or at the same time, if convenient, take up Geometry—it is all important that he be well grounded in this. In due time will come Trigonometry & Nat. Philosophy.— A year hence he might profitably commence Surveying. I talked lately with Samuel Felton, Chief Engineer and Superintendent of the Fitchburg RR, and brother of Prof. Felton of Cambridge, with reference to George. He considers “Davies' Surveying”—a West Point book—the best. This is the one I used in teaching Surveying eight or nine years ago. It is quite simple & thorough—and to some extent national or American.*

*I would have George study without particular reference to the Sci-*

2. Leona Rostenberg, “Margaret Fuller's Roman Diary,” [he Journal of Modern History](#) 12.2 for June 1940, pages 209-220.



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

*entific School and so he will be best prepared to suck its whole me at in the shortest time—*

*There is “Bigelows Technology” a popular and not expensive book in 2 vols. used, recently at least, at Cambridge. I am sure that it will interest him if he has a taste for mechanics. He never need study it, but only read it from time to time, as study and practice make it more intelligible. This is one of the best books for him to own that I know of. There is a great deal of interesting & valuable matter for his or any body’s reading in the Penny Magazine—the best periodical of the kind that was ever printed.*

*In the mean time he should improve his opportunities to visit machine shops of all kinds. It should be a part of every mans education today to understand the Steam Engine. What right has a man to ride in the cars who does not know by what means he is moved? Every man in this age of the world may and should understand pretty thoroughly—the Saw and Grist mill—Smelting—casting—and working in iron—cotton and woollen machinery—the locomotive & rail-road—the Steamboat—the telegraph &c &c A man can learn from a few hours of actual inspection what he can never learn from books—and yet if he has not the book-knowledge to generalize & illuminate his particulars he will never be more than a journeyman & cannot reach the head of his profession.*

*I lately spent a day at the repair shop of the Eastern RR. company, East Boston, and at Hinckley & Drury’s in Boston— the largest Locomotive manufactory in this country. They turn out 7 a month worth from 8 to 9000 dollars apiece. I went into it, and knowing the principle before, saw and understood the use of every wheel & screw, so that I can build an engine myself when I am ready. I now read every paragraph in which the word locomotive occurs with greater interest and profit than before.*

*I have no news to send respecting Helen She is about the same that she has been for some months, though it may be a little weaker, as she thinks; Her spirits are very good and she is very comfortable for a sick person. Sophia & Mother would perchance be sick if Helen were not.*

*I look wishfully towards the woods of Maine, but as yet I feel confined here.*

*Please remember me to Rebecca Jane?? Cousins Charles & Mary &c yrs truly  
Henry D. Thoreau*

*PS.— I have just received your letter for which I thank you. I should be glad to come to Bangor.— I hope that I shall so conduct as to deserve your good wishes— Excuse my business like scroll.*



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

June: 7th issue of the [Massachusetts Quarterly Review](#):

- [The Methodology of Mesmerism]
  1. *The Zoöist for 1848*. London.
  2. *Journal du Magnetisme*: Quatrième Année. Paris. 1848.
  3. *Blätter aus Prevorst*. Stuttgart. 1833-39.
- "The Ocean and its Meaning in Nature," by [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#).

**REFERRED TO IN CAPE COD**

**CAPE COD**: The Greeks would not have called the ocean ἀτρύγετος, or unfruitful, though it does not produce wheat, if they had viewed it by the light of modern science, for naturalists now assert that "the sea, and not the land, is the principal seat of life,"—though not of vegetable life. Darwin affirms that "our most thickly inhabited forests appear almost as deserts when we come to compare them with the corresponding regions of the ocean." Agassiz and Gould tell us that "the sea teems with animals of all classes, far beyond the extreme limit of flowering plants"; but they add, that "experiments of dredging in very deep water have also taught us that the abyss of the ocean is nearly a desert";—"so that modern investigations," to quote the words of Desor, "merely go to confirm the great idea which was vaguely anticipated by the ancient poets and philosophers, that the Ocean is the origin of all things." Yet marine animals and plants hold a lower rank in the scale of being than land animals and plants. "There is no instance known," says Desor, "of an animal becoming aquatic in its perfect state, after having lived in its lower stage on dry land," but as in the case of the tadpole, "the progress invariably points towards the dry land." In short, the dry land itself came through and out of the water on its way to the heavens, for, "in going back through the geological ages, we come to an epoch when, according to all appearances, the dry land did not exist, and when the surface of our globe was entirely covered with water." We looked on the sea, then, once more, not as ἀτρύγετος, or unfruitful, but as it has been more truly called, the "laboratory of continents."

PEOPLE OF  
CAPE COD

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

AGASSIZ & GOULD

CHARLES DARWIN

- *The History of England, from the Accession of James II.* By T.B. MACAULAY, ESQ. London. 1848-9. 2 vols. 8vo.
- Short Reviews and Notices
  1. *Madonna Pia, and Other Poems*. By JAMES GREGOR GRANT. In two volumes. London: Smith, Elder & Co., Cornhill. 1848. pp. x. 320, xiv. 350.
  2. *Die Gegenwart*. 18tes Heft. Leipzig. 1849. (Graf Pelegrino Rossi.)
  - 3/1. *Hin Forna lögbók Islendinga, sem nefnist Járnsida edv Hákonarbók. Codex Juris Islandorum*



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

- antiquus, qui nominatur Jarnsida seu Liber Haconis. Cum interpretatione Latina, etc.* HAVNIÆ, Sumptibus Legati Arnæ Magnæani. 1847. 4to. pp. XLIV. and 291.
- 3/2. *Islenzkir Annálar, sive Annales Islandici ab anno Christi 803 ad annum 1403. Cum interpretatione Latina, etc.* HAVNIÆ, Sumptibus Legati Arnæ Magnæani. 1847. 4to. pp. L. and 478.
4. *The Nemesis of Faith.* By J.A. FROUDE, M.A., Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. London. 1849. 12mo. pp. 228.
5. *Kavanagh, a Tale.* By HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW. Boston. 1849. 12mo. pp. 188.
6. *Wilhelm Von Humboldt's Gesammelte Werke.* Boston. 1841-1848. 8vo. Vol. I. to VI.
7. *The Life of Maximilian Robespierre; with extracts from his unpublished Correspondence.* By G.G.H. Lewis, &c., &c. London. 1849. 12mo. pp. XII and 392.
8. *A Discourse delivered before the Rhode Island Historical Society, on the evening of February 1st, 1849.* By GEORGE WASHINGTON GREENE, &c., &c. Published at the request of the Society. Providence. 1849. 8vo. pp. 24.
- 9/1. *Cosmos: Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe.* By ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT, &c., &c., &c. Translated under the superintendence of LIEUT. COL. SABINE, &c., &c. Seventh Edition. London. 1849. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 356 and CXXXVII; and 360 and CXLIL.
- 9/2. *Cosmos: &c.* Translated from the German. By E.C. OTTE, &c. &c. London. 1842-9. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. XLIV and 766.
10. *The Gospel of Labor: a Poem, delivered before the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association, on the occasion of their Twenty-ninth Anniversary, February 22, 1849.* By A.J.H. DUGANNE, an honorary member. Boston. 1849. 8vo. pp. 16.
11. *Poems.* By JAMES T. FIELDS. Boston. 1844. 12mo. pp. VI. and 100.
12. *To the Parishioners of Calvary Church.* New York. 1848. A Pastoral from the Rector to the Parishioners of Calvary Church, New York. 12mo. pp. 24.
12. [sic] *A Letter of the celebrated John Foster to a young minister, on the duration of Future Punishment:* with an introduction and notes, consisting chiefly of extracts from orthodox writers; and an earnest appeal to the American Tract Society in regard to the character of its publications. Boston. 1849. 12mo. pp. 120.
13. *Human Life: illustrated in my Individual Experience as a Child, a Youth, and a Man.* By HENRY CLARKE WRIGHT. 12mo. pp. 414. Boston: Bela Marsh, 25 Cornhill. 1849.
14. *Two Sermons of the Moral and Spiritual Condition of Boston.* By THEODORE PARKER, &c., &c., &c. Boston. 1849. 12mo. pp. 74.
- New Publications Received.

**CONSULT THIS ISSUE**





THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1850

Summer: For this summer, as well as we suspect for some other summers, [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) was renting the Orchard House in [Concord](#).



THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT

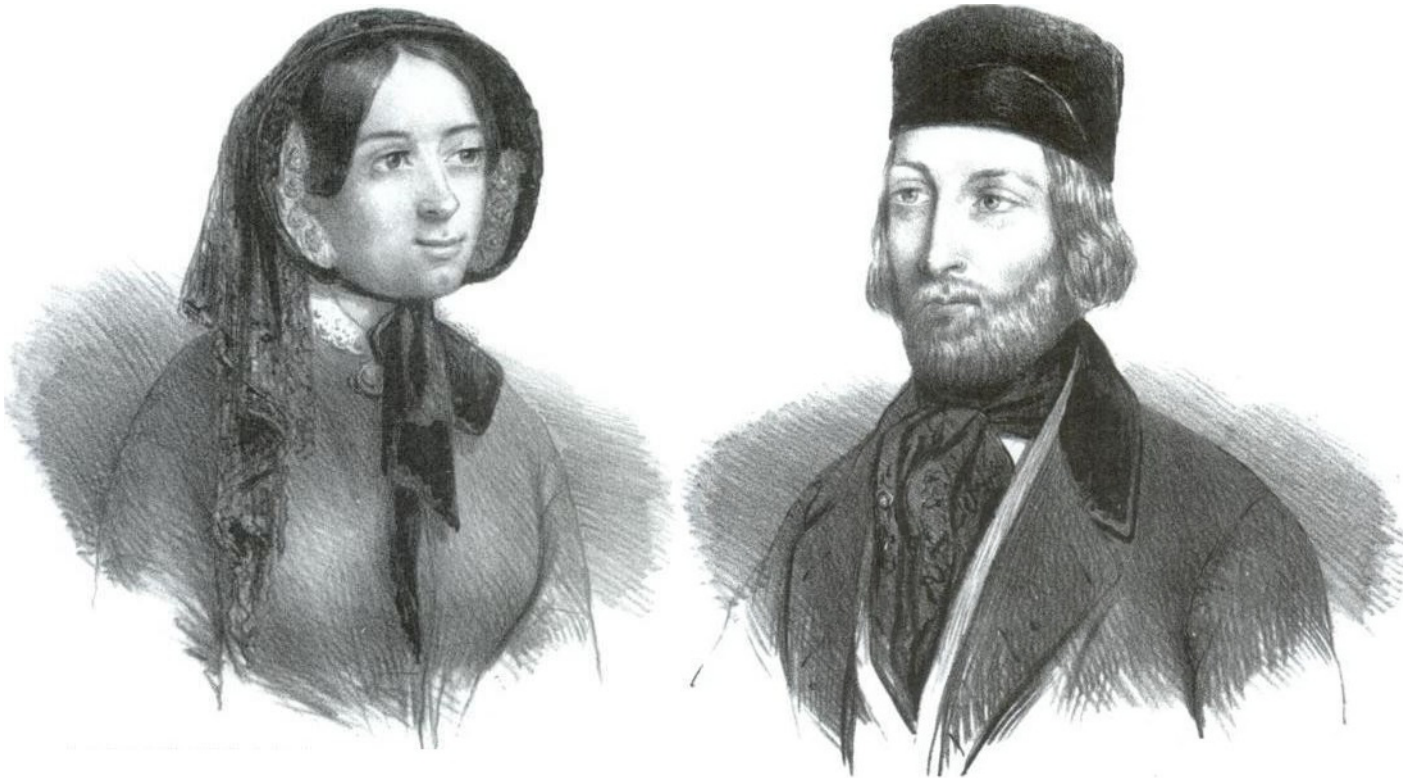




## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

November 20, Wednesday: In order to obtain urgently needed money, Belgian count Hippolyte Visart de Bocarmé invited his one-legged young brother-in-law Gustave Fougny to dinner at his château of Bury, Belgium and, with the help of his wife Lydie Victoire Josèphe Fougny, countess of Bocarmé, poisoned him (previously, using a false name, he had consulted a professor of chemistry and had conducted experiments on cats and ducks to verify that the sort of alkaloids present in *Nicotiana tabacum* would indeed induce death, and had prepared two wine bottles containing concentrated nicotine). The husband would be guillotined but the wife would be spared because evidently under duress from her husband.



Henry Thoreau was written to again by Josiah Pierce, Jr. of the Portland Lyceum, to confirm change of the date of his lecture from December 11th to January 15th per Thoreau's request.

*Portland. Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> 1850.*

*Dear Sir,*

*You may perhaps believe that I am writing to you from Ireland and not from Portland, making [a] blunder even in the date of the letter, when you read that this is for the purpose of apologizing for and correcting another error— I [intended] and ought to have designated the evening of January. 15<sup>th</sup> and not of January 8<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>, as that on which we hoped to hear a lecture from you[ . ]*

*With the wish that this newly appointed time, the fifteenth of January next, may be equally acceptable to you, I am*

## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

*with great respect [ , ]*  
*Yours truly*  
*J. Pierce [ . ] Jr*

Here occurs the only mention we have in Thoreau's JOURNAL of the fellow who would make so many comments about him and his dealings in Concord after his death, Horace Rice Hosmer. Hosmer had picked "a different and better kind of cranberry." Thoreau explores this without mentioning any relationship with this former pupil of the Thoreau brothers at the Concord Lyceum and former meal-mate at the Thoreau boardinghouse, as one "of those instances in which the farmer detects a new species and makes use of the knowledge from year to year in his profession, while the botanist devoted to such investigation has failed to observe it." This well bears out what Hosmer himself said about their relationship, that "Henry never spoke to me out of school till I was nearly 20 [which would indeed have been in about this year of 1850, so it is very likely that this is the precise conversation to which Hosmer was referring], that I remember." Other instances of such a cultivation phenomenon within Thoreau's cultural context might include the Baldwin apple discovered and developed by John Ball of Woburn MA and publicized by Loammi Baldwin, and the Concord fox grape discovered and developed by [Ephraim Wales Bull](#). I do not know that the Hosmer cranberry ever became a select variety:



November 20: It is a common saying among country people that if you eat much fried hasty pudding it will make your hair curl –my experience which was considerable did not confirm this assertion. Horace Hosmer was picking out today half a bushel or more of a different & better kind of cranberry as he thought, separating them from the rest– They are very dark red shaded with lighter –harder & more oblong somewhat like the fruit of the sweetbriar, or a canada red plum though I have no common cranberry to compare with them. He says that they grow apart from the others. I must see him about it. It may prove to be one more



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

of those instances in which the farmer detects a new species –and makes use of the knowledge from year to year in his profession while the botanist expressly devoted to such investigations has failed to observe it. The farmer in picking over many bushels of cranberries year after year finds at length or has forced upon his observation a new species of that berry, and avails himself thereafter of his discovery for many years before the naturalist is aware of the fact.

Desor who has been among the Indians at Lake Superior this summer told me the other day that they had a particular name for each species of tree, as of the maple –but they had but one word for flowers– They did not distinguish the species of the last.

It is often the unscientific man who discovers the new species– It would be strange if it were not so. But we are accustomed properly to call that only a scientific discovery which knows the relative value of the thing discovered –uncovers a fact to mankind.

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND  
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1851

August 1, Friday: We learn from a couple of incidental mentions in the journal, that at this point [Henry Thoreau](#) was in the process of studying the 16 volumes of the [Baron Cuvier](#)'s THE ANIMAL KINGDOM,<sup>3</sup>

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 1

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 2

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 3

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 4

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 5

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 6

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 7

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 8

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 9

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 10

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 11

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 12

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 13

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 14

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 15

ANIMAL KINGDOM, 16



[Louis Agassiz](#) and Augustus A. Gould's PRINCIPLES OF ZOOLOGY, and [Peter Kalm](#)'s TRAVELS INTO NORTH AMERICA. He stopped by the Boston Society of Natural History to return 2 books, one of them Volume I of the MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, new series, and check out the MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, Volume IV, Part 1, and Friend [William Bartram](#)'s [botanical](#) TRAVELS THROUGH NORTH AND SOUTH CAROLINA, GEORGIA, EAST AND WEST FLORIDA, THE CHEROKEE COUNTRY, THE EXTENSIVE TERRITORIES OF THE MUSCOGULGES, OR CREEK CONFEDERACY, AND





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

3. In 1827 the initial five volumes were printed, the 1st four as THE CLASS MAMMALIA / ARRANGED BY THE BARON CUVIER, WITH SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIONS BY EDWARD GRIFFITH, CHARLES HAMILTON SMITH AND EDWARD PIDGEON and the 5th as SYNOPSIS OF THE SPECIES OF THE CLASS MAMMALIA, AS ARRANGED WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR ORGANIZATION BY CUVIER AND OTHER NATURALISTS: WITH SPECIFIC CHARACTERS, SYNONYMA, &C. &C. In 1829 volumes 6, 7, and 8 appeared as THE CLASS AVES / ARRANGED BY THE BARON CUVIER, WITH SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIONS BY EDWARD GRIFFITH AND EDWARD PIDGEON, THE ADDITIONAL SPECIES INSERTED IN THE TEXT OF CUVIER BY JOHN EDWARD GRAY. In 1830 the 11th volume appeared out of sequence, as THE FOSSIL REMAINS OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM / BY EDWARD PIDGEON. In 1831 the 9th volume appeared as THE CLASS REPTILIA / ARRANGED BY THE BARON CUVIER, WITH SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIONS BY EDWARD GRIFFITH AND EDWARD PIDGEON. In 1832 the 14th and 15th volumes appeared out of sequence, as THE CLASS INSECTA / ARRANGED BY THE BARON CUVIER, WITH SUPPLEMENTARY ADDITIONS TO EACH ORDER BY EDWARD GRIFFITH AND EDWARD PIDGEON, AND NOTICES OF NEW GENERA AND SPECIES BY GEORGE GRAY. In 1833 the 13th volume appeared out of sequence, as THE CLASSES ANNELIDA, CRUSTACEA, AND ARACHNIDA / ARRANGED BY THE BARON CUVIER, WITH SUPPLEMENTARY ADDITIONS TO EACH ORDER BY EDWARD GRIFFITH AND EDWARD PIDGEON. In 1834 the 10th volume appeared as THE CLASS PISCES / ARRANGED BY THE BARON CUVIER, WITH SUPPLEMENTARY ADDITIONS BY EDWARD GRIFFITH AND CHARLES HAMILTON SMITH and the 12th volume appeared as THE MOLLUSCA AND RADIATA / ARRANGED BY THE BARON CUVIER, WITH SUPPLEMENTARY ADDITIONS TO EACH ORDER BY EDWARD GRIFFITH AND EDWARD PIDGEON. The final, 16th, volume of the set, of which I am unable at present to provide electronic copy, was unnumbered and undated and bore the title A CLASSIFIED INDEX AND SYNOPSIS OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM ARRANGED IN CONFORMITY WITH ITS ORGANIZATION, BY THE BARON CUVIER ..., WITH SUPPLEMENTARY ADDITIONS TO EACH ORDER, BY EDWARD GRIFFITH ... AND OTHERS (this final volume included "A tabular view of the classification of animals adopted by the Baron Cuvier; with specific examples").

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

THE COUNTRY OF THE CHACTAWS.



PEOPLE OF  
WALDEN

**WALDEN:** The customs of some savage nations might, perchance be profitably imitated by us, for they at least go through the semblance of casting their slough annually; they have the idea of the thing, whether they have the reality or not. Would it not be well if we were to celebrate such a "busk," or "feast of first fruits," as Bartram describes to have been the custom of the Mucclasse Indians? "When a town celebrates the busk," says he, "having previously provided themselves with new clothes, new pots, pans, and other household utensils and furniture, they collect all their worn out clothes and other despicable things, sweep and cleanse their houses, squares, and the whole town, of their filth, which with all the remaining grain and other old provisions they cast together into one common heap, and consume it with fire. After having taken medicine, and fasted for three days, all the fire in town is extinguished. During this fast they abstain from the gratification of every appetite and passion whatever. A general amnesty is proclaimed; all malefactors may return to their town.-"

"On the fourth morning, the high priest, by rubbing dry wood together, produces new fire in the public square, from whence every habitation in the town is supplied with the new and pure flame."

They then feast on the new corn and fruits and dance and sing for three days, "and the four following days they receive visits and rejoice with their friends from neighboring towns who have in like manner purified and prepared themselves."

The Mexicans also practised a similar purification at the end of every fifty-two years, in the belief that it was time for the world to come to an end.

I have scarcely heard of a truer sacrament, that is, as the dictionary defines it, "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," than this, and I have no doubt that they were originally inspired directly from Heaven to do thus, though they have no biblical record of the revelation.

AUGUSTINE

WILLIAM BARTRAM

NOAH WEBSTER

## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR



### WM. BARTRAM'S BOOK



left at 9 AM Aug. 1st

After Kingston –came Plympton Halifax & Hanson all level with frequent cedar swamps especially the last – also in Weymouth.

Desor & Cabot think the jelly-fish (oceania tubulosa are buds from a polyp of Genus Lyncoryne.) Desor accounting for suspended moisture or fogs over sand banks (or shoals) says the heat being abstracted by radiation the moisture is condensed in form of fog.

Lieut Walsh lost his lead & wire when 34,200 or more than 6 statute miles had run out perpendicularly.

I could make a list of things ill-managed– We Yankees do not deserve our fame. viz:

I went to a menagerie the other day. The proprietors had taken wonderful pains to collect rare and interesting animals from all parts of the world. And then placed by them –a few stupid and ignorant fellows who knew little or nothing about the animals & were unwilling even to communicate the little they knew. You catch a rare creature interesting to all mankind & then place the first biped that comes along with but a grain more reason in him to exhibit & describe the former– At the expense of Millions this rare quadruped from the sun is obtained, and then Jack Halyard or Tom Coach Whip is hired to explain it. Why all this pains taken to catch in Africa –and no pains taken to exhibit in America? Not a cage was labelled– There was nobody to tell us how or where the animals were caught –or what they were– Probably the proprietors themselves do not know –or



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

what their habits are— But hardly had we been ushered into the presence of this choice this admirable collection —than a ring was formed for Master Jack & the poney. Were they **animals** then who had caught and exhibited these —& who had come to see these? Would it not be worth the while to learn something? to have some information imparted?

The absurdity of importing the behemoth & then instead of somebody appearing tell which it is —to have to **while away the time** —though your curiosity is growing desperate —to learn one fact about the creature —to have Jack and the poney introduced!!!

GEORGES CUVIER

Why I expected to see some descendant of Cuviers there to improve this opportunity for a lecture on Nat. Hist. That is what they should do make this an —occasion for communicating some solid information —that would be fun alive that would be a sunny day —a sun day in one's existence not a secular day of shetland ponies —not jack and his poney & a tintinnara of musical instruments —and a man with his head in the lions mouth. I go not there to see a man hug a lion —or fondle a tiger —but to learn how he is related to the wild beast— There'll be All-fool days enough without our creating any intentionally. The presumption is that men wish to behave like reasonable creatures —that they do not need and are not seeking relaxation —that they are not dissipated. Let it be a travelling zoological garden —with a travelling professor to accompany it— At present foolishly the professor goes alone with his poor painted illustrations of animated— While the menagerie takes another road without its professor only its keepers.

I see June & co or Van Amberg & Co —are engaged in a pecuniary speculation in which certain wild beasts are used as the counters

Cuvier & co are engaged in giving a course of lectures on Nat. History. Now why could they not put head & means together for the benefit of mankind —and still get their living. The present institution is imperfect precisely because its object is to enrich Van amburg & co —& their low aim unfits them for rendering any more valuable service —but no doubt the most valuable course would also be the most valuable in a pecuniary sense—

No doubt a low self interest is a better motive force to these enterprises than no interest at all but a high self interest —which consists with the greatest advantage of all would be a better still.

Item 2nd Why have we not a decent pocket map of the State of Mass? There is the large map why is it not cut into half a dozen sheets & folded into a small cover for the pocket? Are there no travellers to use it? Well to tell the truth there are but few, & that's the reason why. Men go by rail road —& state maps hanging in bar rooms are small enough— The state has been admirably surveyed at a great cost —and yet Dearborne's Pocket map is the best one —we have!

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

CAPE COD: The Greeks would not have called the ocean ἀτρύγετος, or unfruitful, though it does not produce wheat, if they had viewed it by the light of modern science, for naturalists now assert that "the sea, and not the land, is the principal seat of life,"—though not of vegetable life. Darwin affirms that "our most thickly inhabited forests appear almost as deserts when we come to compare them with the corresponding regions of the ocean." Agassiz and Gould tell us that "the sea teems with animals of all classes, far beyond the extreme limit of flowering plants"; but they add, that "experiments of dredging in very deep water have also taught us that the abyss of the ocean is nearly a desert";—"so that modern investigations," to quote the words of Desor, "merely go to confirm the great idea which was vaguely anticipated by the ancient poets and philosophers, that the Ocean is the origin of all things." Yet marine animals and plants hold a lower rank in the scale of being than land animals and plants. "There is no instance known," says Desor, "of an animal becoming aquatic in its perfect state, after having lived in its lower stage on dry land," but as in the case of the tadpole, "the progress invariably points towards the dry land." In short, the dry land itself came through and out of the water on its way to the heavens, for, "in going back through the geological ages, we come to an epoch when, according to all appearances, the dry land did not exist, and when the surface of our globe was entirely covered with water." We looked on the sea, then, once more, not as ἀτρύγετος, or unfruitful, but as it has been more truly called, the "laboratory of continents."

PEOPLE OF  
CAPE COD

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

AGASSIZ & GOULD

CHARLES DARWIN



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1852**

Having completed a study of the Atlantic shelf and of Lake Superior, [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) returned to Switzerland,<sup>4</sup> where he would become Professor of Geology in the Gymnasium and in the Academy at Neuchâtel.



He investigated, with Amanz Gressly, potential economic uses for sites in the Jura Mountains, such as for instance the likely rock formations to be encountered in a potential tunnel through a mountain range.

4. His brother, who had married rich, had fallen seriously ill. Édouard would care for him for the remainder of his life and then fall heir to the fortune.





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1853**

August 24, Wednesday: The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) wrote to [Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#), mentioning how tolerant he was of Spiritualism and Swedenborgianism.



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1856

June 17, Tuesday: The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) wrote to Dr. Fuster, a Viennese professor, mentioning news of [Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#).

In Worcester, [Henry Thoreau](#), H.G.O. Blake, and Theophilus Brown needed to use a carriage when they went out to Quinsigamund Pond, because they were being accompanied by [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#).

[Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) abandoned [Newport, Rhode Island](#) to visit [Concord](#) to see Henry, unaware that Henry had gone to Worcester. The father [John Thoreau](#) must have been very short indeed, for a man who himself stood 5'3" to have pronounced him "very short":



*Left Newport this morning at five o'clock for Concord, Mass., via Providence and Boston, and arrived at C. about 12 M. The sail up the Providence or Blackstone River was very fine, the morning being clear and the air very refreshing. My object in coming to Concord was to see H.D. Thoreau, but unfortunately I found him on a visit at Worcester, but I was received with great kindness and cordiality by his father and mother, and took tea with them. Mrs. Thoreau, like a true mother, idolizes her son, and gave me a long and interesting account of his character. Mr. Thoreau, a very short old gentleman, is a pleasant person. We took a short walk together after tea, returned to the Middlesex Hotel at ten. Mrs. T. gave me a long and particular account of W.E. Channing, who spent so many years here.*

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

ELLERY CHANNING

DUNBAR FAMILY

PROVIDENCE



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1857

Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor's *GEOLOGISCHE BESCHREIBUNG DER NEUFCHATELER JURA* (with Amanz Gressly).



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1858

Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor's *SYNOPSIS DES ECHINIDES FOSSILES* (Paris).





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1860**

May 12, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed the boundary between Moses Prichard's woods skirting the river, which were furnished with winding walks and rustic seats and formed an attractive and cool retreat, and the Joseph Holbrook houselots on Main Street in Concord. Thoreau's charge was \$1.<sup>50</sup>. Holbrook's house was on the site of the house of common entertainment that belonged to William Buss in 1660, almost opposite the site that is now the [Concord Free Public Library](#). This survey shows that the garbage disposal of that day was the pig, for Thoreau included the "piggery." Thoreau's charge was \$0.<sup>25</sup>. Joseph Holbrook also owned land in Great Meadows and part of Frosty Poplar Hollow near Gowing's Swamp and Copan.



View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

[http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau\\_Surveys/Thoreau\\_Surveys.htm](http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm)

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

[http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau\\_Surveys/55.htm](http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/55.htm)

A group of 105 white miners were trekking toward Pyramid Lake, seeking retribution against the redskins for their having massacred the five white rapists at Williams Station, when the Payute intercepted the group, managing to kill roughly half of them.

Two days after the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s death, Dr. B. Appleton (a Boston physician who had been in attendance during his last months) and Parker's close friend Professor [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) performed an autopsy, removing the brain and the heart. Expecting the corpse to be shipped back to Massachusetts for reburial, they sealed it in a lead casket, packed tightly in hemp and pickled in strong spirits. The brain and heart were put in separate boxes and sent on ahead, perhaps assuming that after the organs were studied they would be interred in the casket with the rest of Parker's corpse. Parker's widow, however, considered that moving his

## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

## PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

corpse would violate one of his final wishes, and would have the remainder interred in the Protestant cemetery



in Firenze in which Elizabeth Barrett Browning would be being interred in the following year, and Thoreau's friend Thomas Cholmondeley in 1864:

So have I seen a pine tree in the woods, old, dry at its roots, capped with age-resembling snow; it stood there, and seemed to stand; but a little touch of wind drove it headlong, and it fell with a long, resounding crash.

—Theodore Parker

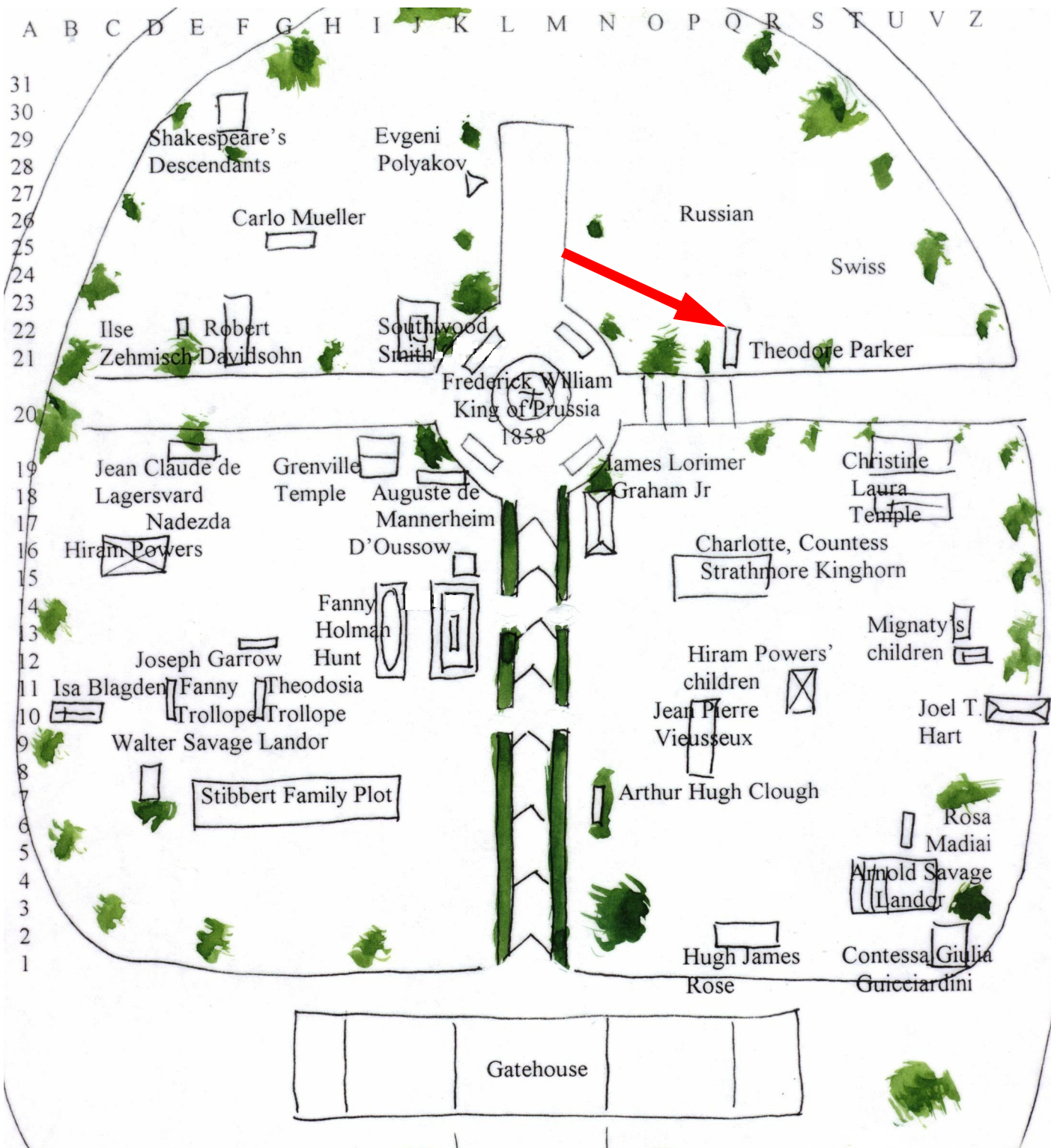
We know that his brain was sent to [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) at the Perkins School for the Blind, for a sailor would show up at the Howes' door unexpectedly with a brain in a box. The cover letter had been lost in transit, so [Julia Ward Howe](#) stuck the box and its grisly contents in a closet on the top floor of the Perkins School (one of the Howe daughters would reminisce about being terrified of that closet as a child). Dr. Howe, meanwhile, would not mention the disgusting matter to anyone; for years, even Mrs. Parker would not know where her husband's brain had gotten to. What happened to the box containing the heart is even more unclear; it may have been sent to Dr. Samuel Cabot, Parker's physician and president of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).

Parker's gravestone in [Italy](#) is of marble, about 4 feet high, and is topped by an "eternal flame" in a lamp that resembles a Unitarian-Universalist chalice. The stone provides a side view of Parker's bust, with laurel wreath. The stone has become tilted and someday may fall and shatter. The cemetery is opened for visitors from 10AM to 1PM, except on Sundays and Mondays.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR





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**THEODORE PARKER  
THE GREAT AMERICAN PREACHER  
BORN AT LEXINGTON MASSACHUSETTS  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AUGUST 24 1810  
DIED AT FLORENCE ITALY  
MAY 10 1860  
HIS NAME IS ENGRAVED IN MARBLE  
HIS VIRTUES IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE HE  
HELPED TO FREE FROM SLAVERY  
AND SUPERSTITION**



May 12. Celandine. Very hot.

2.30 P. M.—81°.

We seek the shade to sit in for a day or two. The neck-cloth and single coat is too thick; wear a half-thick coat at last [?].

The sugar maple blossoms on the Common resound with bees.

Ostrya flower commonly out on Island, how long? Maybe a day or two.

First bathe in the river. Quite warm enough.



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River five and one half plus inches below summer level.

Very heavy dew and mist this morning; plowed ground black and moist with it. The earth is so dry it drinks like a sponge.



THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1862

Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor's *BE L'OROGRAPHIE DES ALPES DANS SES RAPPORTS AVEC LA GEOLOGIE*  
(Neuchâtel).



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1863**

Winter: [Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) visited Algeria and the Sahara Desert with Hans Conrad Escher von der Linth and Charles-Frédéric Martins.



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1864**

[Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) returned from journey of exploration into North Africa, with the news that the Sahara was the elevated bed of a former sea.

A volume of *MÉDITATIONS SUR L'ESSENCE DE LA RELIGION CHRISTIENNE* was one of the French Protestant [François Pierre Guillaume Guizot](#)'s final works.







## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

1865

Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor's *AUS SAHARA UND ATLAS* (Leipsic) and *DER GEBIRGSBAU DER ALPEN*.



Professor Desor's *LES PALAFITTES, OU CONSTRUCTIONS LACUSTRES DU LAC DE NEUFCHÂTEL* (Paris, 1865; German, Leipsic, 1866) alleged that "The Phœnicians certainly knew the use of iron, and it can scarcely be conceived why they should have excluded it from their commerce on the Scandinavian coasts.... The Etruscans, moreover, were acquainted with the use of iron as well as the Phœnicians, and it has already been seen that the composition of their bronzes is different, since it contains lead, which is entirely a stranger to our bronze epoch.... We must look, then, beyond both the Etruscans and Phœnicians in attempting to identify the commerce of the Bronze Age of our palafittes. It will be the province of the historian to inquire whether, exclusive of Phœnicians and Carthaginians, there may not have been some maritime and commercial people who carried on a traffic through the ports of Liguria with the populations of the age of bronze of the lakes of Italy before the discovery of iron. We may remark, in passing, that there is nothing to prove that the Phœnicians were the first navigators. History, on the contrary, positively mentions prisoners, under the name of Tokhari, who were vanquished in a naval battle fought by Rhamses III in the thirteenth century before our era, and whose physiognomy, according to Morton, would indicate the Celtic type. Now there is room to suppose that if these Tokhari were energetic enough to measure their strength on the sea with one of the powerful kings of Egypt, they must, with stronger reason, have been in a condition to carry on a commerce along the coasts of the Mediterranean, and perhaps of the Atlantic. If such a commerce really existed before the time of the Phœnicians, it would not be limited to the southern slope of the Alps; it would have extended also to the people of the age of bronze in Switzerland. The introduction of bronze would thus ascend to a very high antiquity, doubtless beyond the limits of the most ancient European races."



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1866**

Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor's *DIE PFAHLBAUTEN DES NEUENBURGER SEES*. He founded, and became the 1st president, of the Société d'Histoire de Neuchâtel. He became the president, also, of the International Congress of Anthropology and Prehistoric Archaeology.





## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1868**

[Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#)'s *ECHINOLOGIE HELVÉTIQUE*, Volume I (Paris, with P. de Loriol).



At some point (not necessarily in this particular year), having been awarded the “burger-right” of the community of Ponts, [Professor Desor](#) would be elected a member of the grand federal council of Switzerland, of which he would indeed become for a time president. He would also be a member of the Nationalrath (Parliament).



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

**PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR**

**1873**

Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor's *ECHINOLOGIE HELVÉTIQUE*, Volume II (Paris, with P. de Loriol).



At about this point his health would begin to fail.

## 1882

February 23, Thursday: [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) died while spending the winter, on his physician's advice, at Nice, France. A mountain and a city street would be named after him — as well as any number of fossil echinoderms, and sharks' teeth such as *Isurus desori*.

PALEONTOLOGY

*Isurus desori* (Agassiz,  
1844)



The Mississippi River at Memphis began another rise that would culminate in a crest of 35.15 feet on March 9th.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR



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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 25, 2014





THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

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.



## THE PEOPLE OF CAPE COD:

PIERRE JEAN ÉDOUARD DESOR

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@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.



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