

## WASHINGTON GOODE



This Goode case directly involved Henry David Thoreau, in that although he carried a clemency petition around Concord he apparently could not persuade his own father to sign that petition. There is therefore a tentacle that reaches from this execution, backward in time to a similar execution that had taken place in Concord at the turn of the century, the hanging of a burglar after a church service – the Smith hanging, in which his father may well as a child have been a participant. There is also a tentacle that reaches forward from this Washington Goode case to the famous execution in beautiful downtown Boston a few years later of a Harvard professor, for the murder of Doctor George Parkman (a case that would come tangentially to involve Charles T. Jackson, a semi-crazed member of Emerson's extended family).

Had Henry been successful in saving the life of this negro seaman, he might effectively also have prevented the hanging of this privileged-class murderer, Professor John White Webster, but that was not to be ...



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

1846

Michigan became the first state to abolish [capital punishment](#), for all crimes except treason. Later, [Rhode Island](#) and Wisconsin would abolish the death penalty for all crimes. However, some states were making more crimes punishable by death, especially when the culprit was a slave. By the end of the century, the countries of Venezuela, Portugal, Netherlands, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Ecuador would have abolished the death penalty.

[COLDBLOODED MURDER](#)



Fall-Winter 1846-1847: ... Certain things are absolute necessities of life in some circles –the most helpless and diseased –in others certain other or fewer things –and in others fewer still –and still what the absolutely indispensable are has never been determined I know a robust and hearty mother who thinks that her son who died abroad –came to his end by living too low, as she had since learned that he drank only water– Men are not inclined to leave off hanging men –today –though they will be to-morrow. I heard of a family in Concord this winter which would have starved, if it had not been for potatoes –& tea & coffee. — ...

ESSENCE IS BLUR. SPECIFICITY,  
THE OPPOSITE OF ESSENCE,  
IS OF THE NATURE OF TRUTH.



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

1847

In Brooklyn, a city renowned for its compassion –rather than pull the usual sack over a condemned person’s head before applying the hangman’s noose –officials experimented by first rendering the condemned unconscious through the use of sulfuric ether.<sup>1</sup>

HANGING

### WOMEN HANGED IN ENGLAND DURING 1847

Date	Name	Age	Place of execution	Crime
17/04	Catherine Foster	18	Bury St Edmunds	Murder of husband
30/07	Mary Ann Milner <sup>a</sup>		Lincoln Castle	Murder

a. She managed to hang herself in the waiting cell for the condemned, and subsequent to this a more careful watch would be instituted.

1. Almost a century later, in our nation’s first experiment with cyanide gas for execution, we would attempt to administer the gas in the condemned man’s cell as he slept — and this attempt would fail.



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

1848

In Boston, a white imbecile named Daniel H. Pierson who had murdered his wife and children was sentenced to be hanged.

COLDBLOODED MURDER

### WOMEN HANGED IN ENGLAND DURING 1848

Date	Name	Age	Place of execution	Crime
21/02	Harriet Parker	28	Newgate	Murder of daughter
14/08	Mary May	38	Chelmsford	Murder of brother

ESSENCES ARE FUZZY, GENERIC, CONCEPTUAL;  
ARISTOTLE WAS RIGHT WHEN HE INSISTED THAT ALL TRUTH IS  
SPECIFIC AND PARTICULAR (AND WRONG WHEN HE CHARACTERIZED  
TRUTH AS A GENERALIZATION).



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

June 25, Sunday: In bloody street fighting, French government troops began to force the revolutionary workers from their strongholds. In Paris, Charles A. Dana arrived at the *Gare St. Lazare* railroad station at 5PM and made his way around blockades and guarded streets down the *Champs-Élysées* through the *Place de la Concorde* and across an unguarded bridge over the *Seine* to the Left Bank and into the eastern part of the municipality, just in time to witness the June Days fight and file a letter report with [Horace Greeley](#) of the [Tribune](#). Unlike other reporters, Dana met and discoursed with actual socialists and dismissed the reports that they were demons as somewhat of an exaggeration. Greeley would find, however, that he could not appreciate his intrepid reporter's observations. This simply wasn't what he wanted to hear and wasn't what he wanted the American public to be told. Dana would need to move on, eventually to become renowned as "Dana of the [Sun](#)."

In [Boston](#), the seaman Thomas Harding went on port liberty. At some point within the next few days he would visit and pay attention to a woman, Mary Ann Williams the wife of a seaman who was absent on a 2-year voyage, and he would present to her one silk handkerchief. As the [Boston Post](#) eventually would report, Mrs. Williams's "invisible charms" were about to "cost Harding his life" — because, as it would turn out, there was another seaman not her husband, [Washington Goode](#), a cook's helper, who also was considering Mary Ann to be, during the lengthy absence of her husband, to be "his girl." Does this sound deadly? Does this sound like a recipe for disaster? —Stay tuned.

**NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE JUNE 25TH, 1848 AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFFY AT BEST).**

June 28, Wednesday: There was a quarrel in [Boston](#) port between the two seamen Thomas Harding and [Washington Goode](#) in regard to a silk handkerchief Harding had given to Mary Ann Williams. Goode tore up the handkerchief in the presence of Harding.

On this day, also, the Dearborn Block in Federal Street in downtown [Boston](#) suddenly collapsed.

At a radical Whig meeting in Worcester protesting the nomination of General Zachary Taylor as the Whig candidate for President of the United States of America, Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar of Concord introduced the slogan "Free Soil, Free Speech, and Free Men" which would become the platform of the newly forming Republican Party before the Civil War, while Charles Sumner introduced the slogan "unhallowed union... between the lords of the lash and the lords of the loom":

[Sumner's Speech] Mr. President and Fellow-Citizens: —  
At the close of a day crowded with exciting interest and full of best auguries, I feel that I can add little to what you have already heard. What can I say that shall enforce the great cause so successfully commended by my friend from Ohio [Mr. Giddings], and, lastly, by my friend [Mr. Adams] who has just spoken, with

Washington Goode

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

the voice of the American Revolution on his lips? One thing, at least, I can do: I can join them in renunciation of party relations, so plainly inconsistent with the support of Freedom. They have been Whigs; and I, too, have been a Whig, though "not an ultra Whig." I was a Whig because I thought this party represented the moral sentiments of the country, — that it was the party of Humanity. It has ceased to sustain this character. It represents no longer the moral sentiments of the country. It is not the party of Humanity. A party which renounces its sentiments must expect to be renounced. In the coming contest I wish it understood that I belong to the party of Freedom, — to that party which plants itself on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

The transactions in which we are now engaged recall an incident of French history. It was late in the night, at Versailles, that a courtier of Louis the Sixteenth, penetrating the bed-chamber of his master, and arousing him from slumber, communicated the intelligence, big with destiny, that the people of Paris, smarting under wrong and falsehood, had risen in their might, and, after a severe conflict with hireling troops, destroyed the Bastille. The unhappy monarch, turning upon his couch, said.

"It is an insurrection." "No, Sire," answered the honest courtier, "it is a revolution." And such is our movement to-day. It is a Revolution, — not beginning with the destruction of a Bastille, but destined to end only with the overthrow of a tyranny differing little in hardship and audacity from that which sustained the Bastille of France, — I mean the Slave Power of our country. Do not start at this similitude. I intend no unkindness to slaveholders, many of whom are doubtless humane and honest. Such also was Louis the Sixteenth; and yet he sustained the Bastille, with the untold horrors of its dungeons, where human beings were thrust into companionship with toads and rats.

By the Slave Power I understand that combination of persons, or, perhaps, of politicians, whose animating principle is the perpetuation and extension of Slavery, with the advancement of Slaveholders. That such a combination exists is apparent from our history. It shows itself in the mildest, and perhaps the least offensive form, in the undue proportion of offices held by Slaveholders under the National Constitution. It is still worse apparent in a succession of acts by which the National Government has been prostituted to Slavery. Mindful of the Missouri Compromise, with its sanction of Slavery, — mindful of the annexation of Texas, with its fraud and iniquity, — mindful also of the war against Mexico, in itself a great crime, where wives and sisters have been compelled to mourn sons, husbands, and brothers untimely slain, — as these things, dark, dismal, atrocious, rise before us, may we not brand their unquestionable source as a tyranny hateful as that which sustained the Bastille? The Slave Power is the criminal.

This combination is unknown to the Constitution; nay, it exists in defiance of that instrument, and of the recorded opinions uttered constantly by its founders. The Constitution was the



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

crowning labor of the men who gave us the Declaration of Independence. It was established to perpetuate, in organic law, those rights which the Declaration had promulgated, and which the sword of Washington had secured. "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Such are the emphatic words which our country took upon its lips, as it first claimed its place among the nations of the earth. These were its baptismal vows. And the preamble of the Constitution renews them, when it declares its objects, among other things, to "establish justice, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." Mark: not to establish injustice, not to promote the welfare of a class, or of a few slaveholders, but the general welfare; not to foster the curse of slavery, but to secure the blessings of liberty. And the declared opinions of the fathers were all in harmony with these two charters. "I can only say," said Washington, "that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting." ^ Patrick Henry, while confessing that he was the master of slaves, said: "I will not, I cannot justify it. However culpable my conduct, I will so far pay my devoir to Virtue as to own the excellence and rectitude of her precepts, and lament my want of conformity to them. I believe a time will come, when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil." 1 And Franklin, as President of the earliest Abolition Society of the country, signed a petition to the first Congress, in which he declared himself "bound to use all justifiable endeavors to loosen the bands of slavery, and promote a general enjoyment of the blessings of freedom." ^ Thus the soldier, the orator, and the philosopher of the Revolution, all unite in homage to Freedom. Washington, wise in council and in battle, Patrick Henry, with tongue of flame, Franklin, with heaven-descended sagacity and humanity, all bear testimony to the times in which they lived, and the institutions they helped to establish. It is plain that our Constitution was formed by lovers of Human Freedom, — that it was animated by their divine spirit, — that Slavery was regarded by them with aversion, so that, if covertly alluded to, it was not named in the instrument, — and that they all looked forward to an early day when this evil and shame would be obliterated from the land. Surely, then, it is right to say that the combination which seeks to perpetuate and extend Slavery is unknown to the Constitution, — that it exists in defiance of that instrument, and also of the recorded opinions uttered constantly by its founders. Time would fail me to dwell on the perpetual influence, growing with time, which the Slave Power has exerted from the foundation of the government. In the earlier periods of our history it was



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

moderate and reserved. The spirit of the founders still prevailed. But with the advance of years, and as these early champions passed from the scene, it became more audacious, aggressive, and tyrannical, till at last it obtained the control of the government, and caused it to be administered, not in the spirit of Freedom, but in the spirit of Slavery. Yes! the government of the United States is now (let it be said with shame), not, as at the beginning, a government merely permitting, while it regretted Slavery, but a government openly favoring and vindicating it, visiting also with its displeasure all who oppose it.

During late years the Slave Power has introduced a new test for office, which would have excluded Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin. It applies an arrogant and unrelenting ostracism to all who express themselves against Slavery. And now, in the madness of tyranny, it proposes to extend this curse over new soil not yet darkened by its presence. It seeks to make the flag of our country the carrier of Slavery into distant lands, — to scale the mountain fastnesses of Oregon, and descend with its prey upon the shores of the Pacific, — to cross the Rio Grande, and there, in broad territories, recently wrested from Mexico by robber hands, to plant a shameful institution which that republic has expressly abolished.

In the prosecution of its purposes, the Slave Power has obtained the control of both the great political parties. Their recent nominations were made to serve its interests, to secure its supremacy, and especially to promote the extension of Slavery. Whigs and Democrats, — I use the old names still, — professing to represent conflicting sentiments, concur in being representatives of the Slave Power. General Cass, after openly registering his adhesion to it, was recognized as the candidate of the Democrats. General Taylor, who owns slaves on a large scale, though observing a studious silence on Slavery, as on all other things, is not only a representative of the Slave Power, but an important constituent part of the Power itself.

I will not dwell upon the manner in which General Taylor was forced upon the late Whig party. This has been amply done by others. But you will pardon me, if I allude to the aid his nomination derived from a quarter of the country where it should have encountered inexorable opposition, — I refer to New England, and especially to Massachusetts. I speak only what is now too notorious, when I say that it was the secret influence which went forth from among ourselves that contributed powerfully to this consummation. Yes! it was brought about by an unhallowed union — conspiracy let it be called — between two remote sections: between the politicians of the Southwest and the politicians of the Northeast, — between the cotton-planters and fleshmongers of Louisiana and Mississippi and the cottonspinners and traffickers of New England, — between the lords of the lash and the lords of the loom.

And now the question occurs. What is the true line of duty with regard to these two candidates? Mr. Van Buren — and I honor him





**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

for his trumpet call to the North – sounded the true note, when he said he could not vote for either. Though nominated by opposite parties, they represent substantially the same interest. The election of either would be a triumph of the Slave Power, entailing upon the country the sin of extending Slavery. How, then, shall they be encountered? To my mind the way is plain. The lovers of Freedom, from both parties, and irrespective of aU party associations, must unite, and by a new combination, congenial to the Constitution, oppose both candidates. This win be the FREEDOM POWER, whose single object will be to resist the SLAVE POWER. We will put them face to face, and let them grapple. Who can doubt the result?

I hear the old political saw, that "we must take the least of two evils." My friend from Ohio [Mr. Giddings] has already riddled this excuse, so that I might well leave it untouched; but I cannot forbear a brief observation. It is admitted, then, that Cass and Taylor both are evils. For myself, if two evils are presented to me, I will take neither. There are occasions of political difference, I admit, when it may become expedient to vote for a candidate who does not completely represent our sentiments. There are matters legitimately within the range of expediency and compromise. The Tariff and the Currency are of this character. If a candidate differs from me on these more or less, I may yet vote for him. But the question before the country is of another character. This will not admit of compromise. It is not within the domain of expediency. To be wrong on this is to be wholly wrong. It is not merely expedient for us to defend Freedom, when assailed, but our duty so to do, unreservedly, and careless of consequences. Who in this assembly would help to fasten a fetter upon Oregon or Mexico? Who that would not oppose every effort to do this thing? Nobody. Who is there, then, that can vote for either Taylor or Cass?

But it is said that we shall throw away our votes, and that our opposition will fail. Fail, Sir! No honest, earnest effort in a good cause can fail. It may not be crowned with the applause of men; it may not seem to touch the goal of immediate worldly success, which is the end and aim of so much in life. But it is not lost. It helps to strengthen the weak with new virtue, – to arm the irresolute with proper energy, – to animate all with devotion to duty, which in the end conquers all. Fail! Did the martyrs fail, when with precious blood they sowed the seed of the Church? Did the discomfited champions of Freedom fail, who have left those names in history that can never die? Did the three hundred Spartans fail, when, in the narrow pass, they did not fear to brave the innumerable Persian hosts, whose very arrows darkened the sun? Overborne by numbers, crushed to earth, they left an example greater far than any victory. And this is the least we can do. Our example will be the main-spring of triumph hereafter. It will not be the first time in history that the hosts of Slavery have outnumbered the champions of Freedom. But where is it written that Slavery finally prevailed?

Assurances here to-day show that we need not postpone success.



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

It seems already at hand. The heart of Ohio beats responsive to the heart of Massachusetts, and all the Free States are animated with the vigorous breath of Freedom. Let us not waste time in vain speculations between two candidates. Both are bad. Both represent a principle we cannot sanction.

Whatever may be said to the contrary by politicians. Freedom is the only question now before the American people. The Bank is not alone an "obsolete idea."

All the ideas put forward in the controversies of party are now practically obsolete. Peace has come to remove the question of the Mexican "War. We are no longer obliged to consider if an unnecessary and unconstitutional war shall be maintained by supplies. There is no question with regard to the Sub-Treasury. This is now firmly established. Then comes the cause of Internal Improvements. This is not unimportant, but happily it is removed from the domain of party. The Chicago Convention for the express consideration of this subject was composed of various political opinions, and I understand that its recommendations are now sustained by opposite parties.

Of the past issues, that of the Tariff excites the most interest. This, it will be remembered, did not find a place in the early history of the country. Only in recent times has it occupied the attention of politicians, and been the occasion of vehement popular appeals. Regret is often expressed that it is the subject of party strife. It will be in the recollection of most persons that Mr. "Webster made a vigorous effort to remove it from the list of party questions. "What he was unable to do directly has been accomplished indirectly by the Mexican "War. The debt of millions now entailed upon the country renders it necessary to impose a tariff which will satisfy the demands of all. Of course the debt must be paid; nor should we lose time in paying it, nor postpone it to the next generation. The people are not ready to meet it by direct taxation, — though, for one, I should be well pleased to see such a corrective applied to war. It can be paid only through the agency of a tariff, which, for this purpose, if for no other, must be supported by all parties. The Tariff, then, like the others, is no longer a political issue. If not obsolete, it is at least in abeyance.

These questions being out of the way, what remains for those who, in casting their votes, regard principles rather than men? It is clear that the only question of present practical interest arises from the usurpations of the Slave Power and the efforts to extend Slavery. This is the vital question at this time. It is the question of questions. It was lately said in the Convention of the New York Democracy at Utica (and I am glad to quote that most respectable body of men), that the movement in which we are now engaged is the most important since the American Revolution. Something more may be said. It is a continuance of the American devolution. It is an effort to carry into effect the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and to revive in the administration of our government the spirit of Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson, — to bring back the



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

Constitution to the principles and practice of its early founders, – to the end that it shall promote Freedom, and not Slavery, and shall be administered in harmony with the spirit of Freedom, and not with the spirit of Slavery.

In the last will and testament of "Washington are emphatic words, which may be adopted as the motto for the present contest. After providing for the emancipation of his slaves, to take place on the death of his wife, he says, "And I do hereby expressly forbid the sale or transportation out of the said Commonwealth of any slave I may die possessed of, under any pretence whatsoever." So, at least, should the people of the United States expressly forbid the sale or transportation of any slave beyond their ancient borders, under any pretence whatsoever.

Returning to our forefathers for their principles, let us borrow also something of their courage and union. Let us summon to our sides the majestic forms of those civil heroes whose firmness in council was equalled only by the firmness of Washington in war. Let us again awake to the eloquence of the elder Adams, animating his associates in Congress to independence; let us listen anew to the sententious wisdom of Franklin; let us be enkindled, as were the men of other days, by the fervid devotion to Freedom which flamed from the heart of Jefferson.

Instructed even by our enemies, let us be taught by the Slave Power itself. The few slaveholders are always united. Hence their strength. Like sticks in a fagot, they cannot be broken. Thus far the friends of Freedom have been divided. Union, then, must be our watchword, – union among men of all parties. By such union we consolidate an opposition which must prevail.

Let me call upon you, then, men of all parties, Whigs and Democrats, or howsoever named, to come forward and join in a common cause. Let us all leave the old organizations, and come together. In the crisis before us, it becomes us to forget past differences, and those names which have been the signal of strife. Only remembering our duties, when the fire-bell rings at midnight, we ask not if it be Whigs or Democrats who join us to extinguish the flames; nor do we make any such inquiry in selecting our leader then. To the strongest arm and the most generous soul we defer at once. To him we commit the direction of the engine. His hand grasps the pipe to pour the water upon the raging conflagration. So must we do now. Our leader must be the man who is the ablest and surest representative of the principles to which we are pledged.

Let Massachusetts, nurse of the men and principles that made our earliest revolution, vow herself anew to her early faith. Let her once more elevate the torch which she first held aloft, or, if need be, pluck fresh coals from the living altars of France, proclaiming, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," – Liberty to the captive. Equality between master and slave, Fraternity with all men, – the whole comprehended in that sublime revelation of Christianity, the Brotherhood of Man.

In the contemplation of these great interests, the intrigues of



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

party, the machinations of politicians, the combinations of office-seekers, all seem to pass from sight. Politics and morals, no longer divorced from each other, become one and inseparable in the holy wedlock of Christian sentiment. Such a union elevates politics, while it gives a new sphere to morals. Political discussions have a grandeur which they never before assumed. Released from topics which concern only the selfish squabble for gain, and are often independent of morals, they come home to the heart and conscience. A novel force passes into the contests of party, breathing into them the breath of a new life, — of Hope, Progress, Justice, Humanity.

From this demonstration to-day, and the acclaim wafted to us from the Free States, it is easy to see that the great cause of Liberty, to which we now dedicate ourselves, will sweep the heart-strings of the people. It will smite all the chords with a might to draw forth emotions such as no political struggle ever awakened before. It will move the young, the middle-aged, and the old. It will find a voice in the social circle, and mingle with the flame of the domestic hearth. It will touch the souls of mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, until the sympathies of aU swell in one irresistible chorus of indignation against the deep damnation of lending new sanction to the enslavement of our brother man.

Come forward, then, men of all parties! let us range together. Come forth, all who thus far have kept aloof from parties! here is occasion for action. Men of Peace, come forth! All who in any way feel the wrong of Slavery, take your stand! Join us, lovers of Truth, of Justice, of Humanity! And let me call especially upon the young. You are the natural guardians of Freedom. In your firm resolves and generous souls she will find her surest protection. The young man who is not willing to serve in her cause, to suffer, if need be, in her behalf, gives little promise of those qualities which secure an honorable age.

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



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

June 29, Thursday: A notice of **MURDER** appeared in the [Boston Daily Bee](#):

MURDER. At 11 o'clock last evening, in Richmond Street, a colored man was knocked down and stabbed in three places, in consequence of which he died immediately. The murderer, also a negro, was arrested in Southack Street at 3 o'clock this morning.

(Any trial would of course be a mere formality, since as we can see from the above press announcement, the white people already knew perfectly well that there had been a murder, and were perfectly well satisfied that they had already captured the person who had committed it.)

The [German National Assembly](#) created the post of Imperial Vice-Regent, and named Grand Duke Johann of Austria to the post.

[Hector Berlioz](#)'s 2d London concert established his reputation with the London press. His orientale La captive for soprano and orchestra to words of Hugo was performed for the initial time, at this concert.

## NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT



July 3, Monday: [Giuseppe Garibaldi](#) offers his sword to King Carlo Alberto of Sardinia. The King refuses his help, fearing his radical views.

In the Danish West Indies (now the Virgin Islands), Governor General Peter von Scholten read out an Emancipation Proclamation.

[Washington Goode](#), seaman, was indicted at 2 Richmond Street in [Boston](#) for the murder of Thomas Harding. There was excellent circumstantial evidence such as that one of the stab wounds on Harding's body was nine inches deep — and Goode, who had served under General Zachary Taylor through all the Florida War, had been captured with a knife in his possession the blade of which measured some ten or eleven inches!<sup>2</sup>

Washington Goode

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

2. What damning evidence this would have been, if it could have been demonstrated that Goode's knife was the only one in the world with a blade longer than nine inches! —However, in all likelihood Garibaldi's sword also had a blade longer than nine inches.



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

1849

Early January: Early in this month, the trial of seaman [Washington Goode](#) began. Since this was a capital case, it was held before the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. Since this was Massachusetts in the first half of the 19th Century, all twelve members of the jury were, of course, men and all twelve were, of course, white men. The murderer (we already knew he was the murderer, from reading the [Boston](#) newspapers) didn't have nearly as much money as O.J. Simpson — and so he came to be represented by an attorney, William Aspinwall, who had not previously defended any capital case. Aspinwall was assisted by Edward F. Hodges. After two days of testimony the [Courier](#) reported a general impression that the prisoner was going to be convicted because the evidence—though admittedly circumstantial—appeared to the white newsmen to be “very strong.” For instance, a witness had testified that from 50 feet away on that dark and stormy night, despite having been unable to obtain “any distinct view of his features,” by the technique “judging by his clothes” (dark pants, striped jacket), reported that they had a “strong belief” that it must in fact have been Goode whom they had seen running, after having heard a noise — that they supposed might well have been made by some sort of blow.<sup>3</sup> The prosecutor, Samuel D. Parker, had pointed out the interesting parallels between this case and the play “Othello.” One of the interesting parallels which the prosecutor had noted was the involvement of a handkerchief. Hey, just like Shakespeare! Another of the interesting parallels pointed out by the prosecutor was the fact that this “Othello” character had been, like this murderer, a black man. (What more evidence might anyone demand?) District Attorney Parker orated:

There may have been some slight jealousy about a woman, but only on the prisoner's part; and in this case a mere trifle, a little paltry thing called a handkerchief, as also in the case of a much more celebrated colored man, the far-famed Othello, of Shakespeare, was the cause of a foul murder.

DA Parker quoted, from [Shakespeare](#)'s play, a passage shortly prior to the murder of Desdemona:

By heaven I saw my handkerchief in his hand.  
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,  
And mak'st me call what I intend to do  
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice.  
I saw the handkerchief.

3. We know that the jacket the assailant was wearing was striped, but apparently they did not interrogate the witness as to what color the stripes were, or how wide they were, or whether they ran vertically, diagonally, or horizontally. We therefore do not know whether the “striped jacket” which the suspect was wearing when he was captured actually was a match with this previously observed “striped jacket,” in the color of its stripes, or in the direction in which its stripes ran, or in the breadth of its stripes. We may presume that dark pants were not unusual attire but we are forced to presume, to preserve the honor of the justice system, that striped jackets must have been at that time in that locale a great rarity, so great a rarity indeed that in a municipality the size of Boston on a given night no more than one person could have been wearing such attire. Such lack of judicial interest in relevant details now seems outrageous. Also, after the trial another Boston bystander would come forward, and informed the public that he had seen the fatal blow — but had that night been of the impression **that the assailant was a white man**.



## WASHINGTON GOODE

## WASHINGTON GOODE

January 4. Thursday: The [Boston Daily Evening Traveller](#) summarized the trial of the prisoner [Washington Goode](#) by saying that “though we believe no one now actually living” (an interesting phrase) “saw him strike the blow,” court testimony had made it very likely that they had found the right man — for instance, the blade of Goode’s knife had been demonstrated to be longer than the depth of the puncture wound. Also, from across the street on a dark and stormy night, a witness had observed the clothing worn by the attacker to resemble the clothing of the accused.<sup>4</sup> At the conclusion of this dramatic “trial,” Chief Justice [Lemuel Shaw](#) put a good face on things by delivering a 3-hour speech to the 12 white<sup>5</sup> men of the jury of the defendant’s peers, and then this jury of the defendant’s peers put a good face on things by staying out for a full 35 minutes before bringing back the necessary verdict, that the black defendant was guilty as charged.



COLDBLOODED MURDER

4. The case of Professor John White Webster a few years later would be said to be a precedent-setting case for the finding of guilt on the basis of evidence that was exclusively circumstantial, but I have difficulty with that conceit because I simply cannot locate in this Washington Goode case any evidence that was other than of a circumstantial nature. It seems to me that the difference between the Washington Goode case and the John White Webster case was not at all any significant difference in the nature of the evidence, but merely an enormous difference in the social standing of the accused individual!

5. We can know with certitude that they were white not only because contemporary records say that they were white but also because we have a record that once during this period a black man had appeared in a Boston courtroom in response to a jury summons issued in his name — and the court had simply told him to go away, that of course there must have been some mistake!





WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

January 15, Monday: In downtown [Boston](#)—where everything that happens of course happens for the greater glory of God— Chief Justice [Lemuel Shaw](#) lectured [Washington Goode](#) for an hour and a half on the habits of “intemperance” which he had had, the “ungodly” associates which he had had, the “dens of crime” which he had frequented, etc., informed him that having led such a life there was simply “no hope” that the governor of the state might reduce his sentence. The lecture probably was just what Seaman Goode needed. The judge then consigned him to be [hanged](#) by the neck, on May 25, Friday, 1849 (this seems to have been a traditional day upon which to conduct public hangings), until he was dead.<sup>6</sup> The opponents of the death penalty, to wit, the Standing Committee of the Massachusetts Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, would have a little more than four months to mobilize public opinion to bring pressure to bear on Governor George Nixon Briggs:

Why Sir, even the boys, and they are worth saving, for we have nothing else to make men, and even Governors of, are now saying in our streets, “it is only a nigger.”

During those four months 24,440 signatures would be collected, petitioning the Governor Briggs to commute Seaman Goode’s sentence, from death by hanging to life in prison without any possibility of parole.

For instance, [Friend Joseph Ricketson](#), [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)’s brother who, if I mistake not, was a birthright [Quaker](#) in good standing with his Monthly Meeting, reported that:

I have exerted myself very much for the last month in behalf of Washington Goode; there were several petitions here and we obtained 746 signatures.

In addition to the 24,440 signatures mentioned, there was one petition, from Woburn, Massachusetts, bearing a total of nine signatures, which demanded that Governor Briggs remain steadfast in the plan of “exicution.”

An article would appear in the [Boston Republican](#), pointing up the fact that in France the guillotine had been adopted, after consultation with medical men, as the least painful mode of execution, and that since the last hanging in Boston, “the [Ether](#) discovery has taken place.”

The question now arises, how shall the *hanging* be performed here in Boston.... Shall not the convict share also the advantage of this benign discovery? He is to be hanged by the neck. Shall not this be done *with the least possible pain*? If we follow the spirit of the law, there would seem to be no doubt that it must be done with the least possible pain. And it seems equally clear that it is within the *discretion* of the Sheriff, to permit any form of alleviating the pain, which is consistent with the one thing imposed upon him by the law; namely, the hanging of Goode, by the neck, until he is dead. We will not undertake to determine, whether Humanity does not require, that the convict, if he chooses, shall be allowed the benefit of ETHER. We content ourselves with saying that it is clearly within the *discretion* of the Sheriff to permit the pains of the convict to be thus alleviated.

6. In fact, [Boston](#) had not [hanged](#) anyone for simple homicide since 1826, almost a quarter of a century before, and there was another prisoner, Augustus Dutee, whose sentence to be hanged was being commuted during this period to life in prison — but then, we may presume that Augustus Dutee was a white man, not only because his sentence was commuted but also because the documents do not comment on his race as they would most assuredly have commented had he been anything other than white. In addition to Dutee, seven other murderers were then serving life in Massachusetts prison after having had their sentences to be hanged commuted by the state governor.





WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

The petition to commute the sentence of seaman Goode to life in prison without opportunity for parole that was being circulated and sponsored in Concord (either by [Anna Maria Whiting](#), one of the town's leading abolitionists, or by Caroline Hoar, the wife of Rockwood Hoar) is still in existence and bears, on the men's side of the sheet, the signature of [Henry Thoreau](#) as second in that column. It bears, on the women's side of the sheet, the signature of his younger sister, [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), as 5th in that column, followed in immediate succession by the signature of his mother, [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), the signature of his elder sister, [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#), the signature of his aunt [Louisa Dunbar](#), and the signature of his [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#). The signature of his father [John Thoreau, Sr.](#), however, appears nowhere on this petition. **Why not?** Thoreau's father was 62 years old at this point and still very actively engaged in his home business. Is one to suppose that he, quite alone in his home, **wanted** Seaman Goode to dance on air?

**DUNBAR  
FAMILY**

The full text of that petition, as it came to be circulated in the [Prisoner's Friend](#), had been as follows:



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, solemnly protest against the intended execution of Washington Goode, as a crime in which we would under no circumstances participate, which we would prevent, if possible, and in the guilt of which we will not, by the seeming assent of silence, suffer ourselves to be implicated.

We believe the execution of this man will involve all who are instrumental in it in the crime of murder – of the murder in cold blood of a helpless fellow being.

The arguments by which executions are generally defended are wholly wanted here. The prisoner is not one who in spite of good instruction and example, for purposes of avarice, revenge or lust, deliberately planned the murder of a fellow-being. The intended victim of law was a man of misfortune from birth, made by his social position, and still more by the color which God gave him, the victim of neglect, of oppression, of prejudice, of all the evils inflicted upon humanity by man. If in a paroxysm of drunken rage, he killed his opponent, (and this is the utmost alleged against him,) his case comes far short of premeditated murder.

But even this fact is extremely doubtful. It is supported only by the most suspicious testimony, and such as would not have weighed with any jury to touch the life of a white man. And since the trial, facts have come to light materially lessening the credibility of the evidence which led to conviction.

The glaring unfairness of his mode of trial is of itself sufficient ground for this protest. The maxim which gives to the accused a trial by his peers was essentially violated. In a community where sympathy with a colored man is a rare and unpopular sentiment, the prisoner should have been tried by a jury composed partly, at least, of his own race. This violation of the principles of equal justice demands our solemn protest.

We claim also that the petition of more than 20,000 of our fellow-citizens to have this man's life spared, demands respect. Such a number of voluntary petitioners, all upon one side, indicates the will of the sovereign people of the State, that the penalty should be commuted. Our respect for the right of the people to a voice and a just influence in the administration of public justice, also demands this solemn protest against the legal murder of Washington Goode.



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

NO-ONE'S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE



January 29, Monday: The governor of Massachusetts, George Nixon Briggs, commuted the sentence of execution by [hanging](#) of George Hunnewell, for having set fire to his home in Cambridge resulting in the death of his brother, to life in prison. Gosh, it makes you wonder — you don't suppose, maybe, that George Hunnewell was a white man?<sup>7</sup>

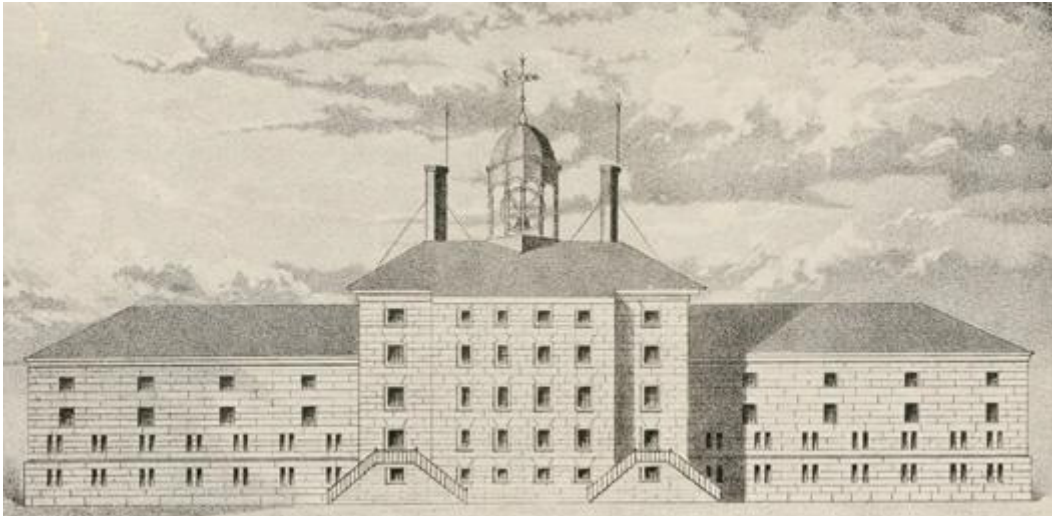
The [Boston Post](#), noting that the state governor had a quite unlimited power of pardon, would raise an obvious question after the execution of the black seaman [Washington Goode](#):

We have always had doubts of the guilt of the culprit. Facts will come out, and then will the community see who was right and who was wrong. But guilty or innocent, what necessity was there for this execution? ... Here was an individual on the last night determined to take his own life. The State stepping in and contending with him who should take it! But we have said sufficient for the present. Petitions have been sent in, meetings have been held, remonstrances have been made. Concord, by the influence of one female, sent in four hundred names. Norton sent in several. But all had no weight with the Governor

Washington Goode

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

7. Well gosh, yeah, he **must** have been a white man — for in this case life only meant 20 years, and on the occasion of Fast Day, April 7, 1869 he would be allowed to exit the Massachusetts State Prison as a free citizen.





WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

and his Council. The deed is done. The body now lies cold and quiet in its final resting place. Instead of "Died," we would have had "murdered" May 25th. It was a murder, a cool, deliberate murder. No other term will answer. ... He has the pardoning power. Why did he not exercise it? Why save Dutee and Wolf and York, and then hang Goode? These are serious questions. But we have done. We close by saying, from a repetition of such scenes, God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

February 16, Friday: Governor George Nixon Briggs of Massachusetts commuted the sentence of execution by [hanging](#) of Augustus Dutee –a French Canadian who had shot his paramour Ellen Oakes to death after she rejected his offer of marriage– to life in prison.

The [Boston Post](#), noting that the state governor had a quite unlimited power of pardon, would raise an obvious question after the execution of the black seaman [Washington Goode](#):

We have always had doubts of the guilt of the culprit. Facts will come out, and then will the community see who was right and who was wrong. But guilty or innocent, what necessity was there for this execution? ... Here was an individual on the last night determined to take his own life. The State stepping in and contending with him who should take it! But we have said sufficient for the present. Petitions have been sent in, meetings have been held, remonstrances have been made. Concord, by the influence of one female, sent in four hundred names. Norton sent in several. But all had no weight with the Governor and his Council. The deed is done. The body now lies cold and quiet in its final resting place. Instead of "Died," we would have had "murdered" May 25th. It was a murder, a cool, deliberate murder. No other term will answer. ... He has the pardoning power. Why did he not exercise it? Why save Dutee and Wolf and York, and then hang Goode? These are serious questions. But we have done. We close by saying, from a repetition of such scenes, God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

**THE TASK OF THE HISTORIAN IS TO CREATE HINDSIGHT WHILE  
INTERCEPTING ANY ILLUSION OF FORESIGHT. NOTHING A HUMAN CAN  
SEE CAN EVER BE SEEN AS IF THROUGH THE EYE OF GOD.**

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

## WASHINGTON GOODE

## WASHINGTON GOODE

May 24, Thursday: After hiding for 5 days in Magdala, [Richard Wagner](#) walked to Jena and the home of Professor Oskar Wolf.

That afternoon a reporter stopped by the [Boston](#) prison to ask black convict [Washington Goode](#) the usual journalistic questions, such as how does it feel to be waiting around to get hanged.

*Q.* How old are you?

*A.* Don't know.

*Q.* Is Washington Goode your real name?

*A.* They call me so.

*Q.* Have you a mother and sisters?

*A.* Yes. In Pennsylvania.

*Q.* Tell me truly now which you would prefer were it in your power, an execution or imprisonment for life?

*A.* Imprisonment for life, for I am innocent and when that is found out, I could be liberated.

*Q.* As the hour of execution is fixed, and you must suffer death, tell me now truly whether you are guilty or not?

*A.* I am innocent. I never killed Harding.

*Q.* What denomination do you belong to?

*A.* I never belonged to any.

*Q.* What made you say that you never told me that your cell was uncomfortable, and that you could not keep warm, except in bed?

*A.* The jail is a miserable place, and at that time I could not keep warm.

Here the jailer questioned him,

*Q.* Did you ever want for anything?

*A.* No. I have been well supplied, but then you know the jail is a miserable place. It will make, however, but little difference with me now. To-morrow I must die between eight and eleven.

During our conversation, he expressed himself very strongly in regard to the publication of his disgraceful end. "I cannot bear," he said, "to have my name in the papers! What will they say when I am dead? Then, oh my mother and sisters!" He evidently showed that there was still a green spot left in his heart, a chord that might have been made to vibrate!

We now took our final leave of the criminal, who grasped our hand firmly and bid us an everlasting farewell.

As the reporter was exiting he asked his escort for details about the construction of the gallows in the prison yard, but the official responded to his inquiry only with a question of his own, "What have you been writing



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

so much in the papers for?”



The turnkey incidentally remarked to the reporter, that he expected this prisoner that night to attempt to do away with himself.

**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.**

May 24, Thursday evening: Father Edward Thompson Taylor, chaplain at [Boston](#)’s Seamen’s Bethel, and a 2d Methodist pastor, the Reverend Mr. Dexter S. King, visited [Washington Goode](#), to discuss with the imprisoned 29-year-old seaman the condition of his immortal soul.

May 24/25, Thursday night and Friday morning: Desperate, in [Boston](#) prison, [Washington Goode](#) slashed an artery with a shard of broken glass, and swallowed tobacco and tarred rope, but this was not to be the worst day of this seaman’s life. Prompt medical attention saved him from bleeding to death.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

## Petitions in the Case of Washington Goode.

Amesbury,	43	Lawrence,	52
Acton,	22	Leicester,	146
Adams,	129	Lunenburg,	19
Ashburnham,	145	Lowell,	1208
Attleboro',	51	Leominster,	50
Abington,	356	Littleton,	110
Athol,	169	Lexington,	113
Ashby,	16	Mansfield,	214
Boston,	4936	Medway,	65
Boxboro',	90	Marshfield,	50
Bolton,	54	Marlboro',	235
Braintree,	36	Malden,	89
Boxford,	15	Marblehead,	114
Bradford,	25	Milford,	201
Blackstone,	93	Middleton,	45
Berlin,	76	Milton,	156
Bedford,	45	Northampton,	136
Barnstable,	264	Nantucket,	827
Bradford,	73	Newburyport,	109
Brookline,	304	Natick,	104
Cammington,	53	New Braintree,	41
Cambridgeport,	78	Needham,	148
Chelsea,	47	Newton,	155
Charlestown,	452	New Bedford,	176
Cariile,	33	N. Bridgewater,	120
Cochituate,	54	Pembroke,	282
Canton,	184	Pepperrell,	100
Cambridge,	180	Plymouth,	719
Concord,	51	Petersham,	91
Danvers,	105	Prescott,	78
Dedham,	82	Paxton,	70
Duxbury,	161	Roxbury,	42
Danvers,	227	Reading,	202
Dorchester,	132	Salem,	271
E. Bridgewater,	10	Sandwich,	46
Essex,	112	Salsbury,	44
Erving,	37	Springfield,	50
Easton,	230	Somerset,	34
Foxboro',	183	Sekonk,	57
Florida,	21	Sharon,	78
Falmouth,	66	Scituate,	318
Freetown,	50	Towusend,	17
Franklin,	124	Tyringham,	174
Fal' River,	381	Upton,	210
Fairhaven,	37	W. Bridgewater,	39
Framingham,	30	Waltham,	202
Great Barrington,	42	Weymouth,	427
Gloucester,	430	Wareham,	40
Gardner,	96	West Cambridge,	116
Georgetown,	120	Warren,	113
Hatfield,	107	Webster,	76
Holliston,	66	Wrentham,	41
Heath,	48	Williamston,	35
Harvard,	152	Westfield,	170
Holden,	82	Woburn,	203
Hingham,	252	Westminster,	130
Hanson,	139	Watertown,	36
Halifax,	31	Walpole,	81
Kingston,	156	Worcester,	1627
Lynn,	1455	Yarmouth,	58
Lancaster,	60	Total,	24 440.





**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

May 25, Friday: This was [Waldo Emerson](#)'s 46th birthday.



Thomas Greene Wiggins was born to the [slaves](#) Domingo “Mingo” Wiggins, a field slave, and Charity Greene of Columbus GA. Domingo and Charity’s slavemaster would suppose this blind sickly “pickaninny” to have no labor potential, and so, a couple of years later when he sold off the father and mother, it was possible for them to carry Tom along at no additional charge to the purchaser. Although Tom’s parents had married, the prevailing custom of the time was that married female slaves and their offspring were to be known the names of their owners — following slavery tradition, therefore, the infant was to grow up as Thomas Greene Bethune.

Austrian troops entered Florence and restored the power of Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany. He would return on July 28th.

After 3 weeks of withstanding furious bombardment, Venetians abandoned Fort Malghera and retreated to Venice, blowing up a large part of the railroad bridge that was their sole connection to the mainland.

Leaving his wife in Jena, [Richard Wagner](#) departed the shelter of Franz Liszt and under an assumed name, headed for Paris by way of Switzerland.

Rolands Knappen, oder Das ersehnte Glück, a komische-romantische Zauberoper by Albert Lortzing to words of the composer and Düringer after Masäus, was performed for the initial time, in Leipzig Stadttheater. This was a great success.

It had been 13 years since the last execution in [Boston](#) and many had hoped there wouldn’t be any more. Due to such petitionary unrest, it was not considered advisable to attempt to hang [Washington Goode](#) on Boston



Common so, in order to witness this man die, many were reduced to the indignity of perching upon the rooftops overlooking the city's jailyard.



The going price for a nice window view is reported to have been \$20 or higher. The condemned man was so weak from loss of blood from his suicide attempt of the previous night that he needed to be carried to his [gallows](#) strapped to a chair. Evidently the warden had elected to ignore the plea of a local newspaper, that as had been done in Brooklyn a few years earlier, he offer the victim the option of the new discovery [ether](#) before dropping the trap of the scaffold. This was during a rainstorm, for we have a report that one of the packed spectators in the courtyard is reported to have cried out “Down with your umbrellas, and let’s see the bloody nigger swing!” The condemned man strapped in the chair, offered a cup of water, commented “This is the last Cochituate water that I shall ever drink.”



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

## Famous Last Words:



"What school is more profitably instructive than the death-bed of the righteous, impressing the understanding with a convincing evidence, that they have not followed cunningly devised fables, but solid substantial truth."

— A COLLECTION OF MEMORIALS CONCERNING DIVERS DECEASED MINISTERS, Philadelphia, 1787



"The death bed scenes & observations even of the best & wisest afford but a sorry picture of our humanity. Some men endeavor to live a constrained life — to subject their whole lives to their will as he who said he might give a sign if he were conscious after his head was cut off — but he gave no sign Dwell as near as possible to the channel in which your life flows."

—Thoreau's JOURNAL, March 12, 1853

1836	<a href="#">James Madison</a>	unsolicited comment	<i>"I always talk better lying down."</i>
1846	Benjamin Robert Haydon	final entry in 38-year journal before offing himself	<i>"Stretch me no longer on this tough world. — Lear"</i>
1848	<a href="#">John Quincy Adams</a>	had just voted "no" on war on Mexico	<i>"This is the last of earth. I am composed."</i>
1849	<a href="#">Washington Goode</a>	offered a cup of water before being hanged in Boston	<i>"This is the last Cochituate water that I shall ever drink."</i>
1849	<a href="#">Edgar Allan Poe</a>	in bad shape in Baltimore	<i>"Lord help my poor soul."</i>
1850	John Caldwell Calhoun	unsolicited comment	<i>"The South! The poor South! God knows what will become of her."</i>

... other famous last words ...

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

The assembly sang a hymn, one that had been selected by Goode himself:

Soon shall I hear the solemn call,  
(Prepared or not) to yield my breath ;  
And this poor mortal frame must fall  
A helpless prey to cruel death.

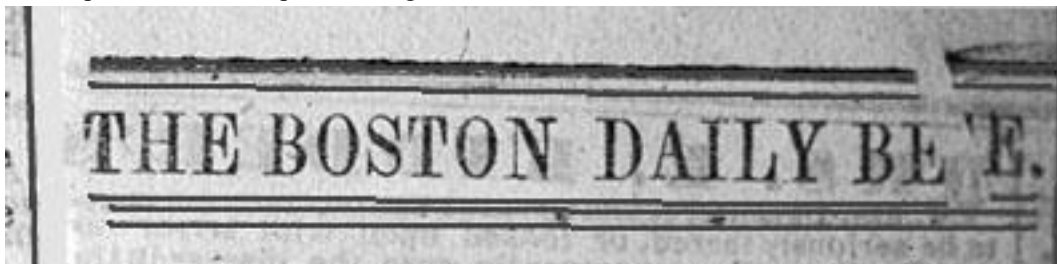
Then look, my soul, look forward now,  
And anchor safe beyond the flood ;  
Bow to the Savior's footstool, bow,  
And get a life secure in God.

Before these fleeting hours are gone,  
I'll bid this mortal world adieu ;  
And to the Lord I'll now resign  
My life, my breath, and spirit too.

Then welcome death, with all its force,  
No more I'll fear the gaping grave ;  
Jesus, my Lord, my last resource,  
Will reach his arm my soul to save.

He will not hide his smiling face,  
Nor leave me in that trying hour ;  
I'll trust my soul upon his grace,  
And cheerful leave this mortal shore.

At 9:50AM, local time, the trapdoor of the scaffold beneath the chair with the negro strapped into it was triggered and fell open with a thwack and –as the Boston Daily Bee reported– this black soul was “launched into the presence of the Supreme Being of us all.”



IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT IT IS MORTALS WHO CONSUME OUR  
HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS, FOR WHAT WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS  
EVADE THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE HUMAN LIFESPAN. (IMMORTALS,



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

WITH NOTHING TO LIVE FOR, TAKE NO HEED OF OUR STORIES.)

May 27, Sunday, 1849: [Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “To be misunderstood even by those whom one loves is the cross and bitterness of life. It is the secret of that sad and melancholy smile on the lips of great men which so few understand; it is the cruelest trial reserved for self-devotion; it is what must have oftenest wrung the heart of the Son of man; and if God could suffer, it would be the wound we should be forever inflicting upon Him. He also — He above all — is the great misunderstood, the least comprehended. Alas! alas! never to tire, never to grow cold; to be patient, sympathetic, tender; to look for the budding flower and the opening heart; to hope always, like God; to love always — this is duty.”

[Thomas Mayo Brewer](#) got married with [Sally R. Coffin](#), daughter of Mr. Stephen Coffin of Damariscotta, [Maine](#). The couple would produce two children.

After two Boston churches attended by persons of color had declined to allow the funeral services for the [hanged](#) black seaman to be conducted on their premises, on this afternoon the body of [Washington Goode](#) was interred in a city tomb at the South Burying Ground. The Reverend Mr. Grimes, pastor of the 12th Baptist Society, presided. On the handsome coffin of black walnut, a silver plate bore the simple inscription “Washington Goode, Died, May 25, 1849, Aged 29 years.”

[Margaret Fuller](#) reported to the New-York [Tribune](#) from Rome “between the heaves of storm”:

Rome, May 27, 1849.

I have suspended writing in the expectation of some decisive event; but none such comes yet. The French, entangled in a web of falsehood, abashed by a defeat that Oudinot has vainly tried to gloss over, the expedition disowned by all honorable men at home, disappointed at Gaëta, not daring to go the length Papal infatuation demands, know not what to do. The Neapolitans have been decidedly driven back into their own borders, the last time in a most shameful rout, their king flying in front. We have heard for several days that the Austrians were advancing, but they come not. They also, it is probable, meet with unexpected embarrassments. They find that the sincere movement of the Italian people is very unlike that of troops commanded by princes and generals who never wished to conquer and were always waiting to betray. Then their troubles at home are constantly increasing, and, should the Russian intervention quell these to-day, it is only to raise a storm far more terrible to-morrow. The struggle is now fairly, thoroughly commenced between the principle of democracy and the old powers, no longer legitimate. That struggle may last fifty years, and the earth be watered with the blood and tears of more than one generation, but the result is sure. All Europe, including Great Britain, where the most bitter resistance of all will be made, is to be under republican government in the next century.

Washington Goode

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

"God moves in a mysterious way."

Every struggle made by the old tyrannies, all their Jesuitical deceptions, their rapacity, their imprisonments and executions of the most generous men, only sow more dragon's teeth; the crop shoots up daily more and more plenteous.

When I first arrived in Italy, the vast majority of this people had no wish beyond limited monarchies, constitutional governments. They still respected the famous names of the nobility; they despised the priests, but were still fondly attached to the dogmas and ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. It required King Bomba, the triple treachery of Charles Albert, Pius IX., and the "illustrious Gioberti," the naturally kind-hearted, but, from the necessity of his position, cowardly and false Leopold of Tuscany, the vagabond "serene" meannesses of Parma and Modena, the "fatherly" Radetzsky, and, finally, the imbecile Louis Bonaparte, "would-be Emperor of France," to convince this people that no transition is possible between the old and the new. *The work is done*; the revolution in Italy is now radical, nor can it stop till Italy becomes independent and united as a republic. Protestant she already is, and though the memory of saints and martyrs may continue to be revered, the ideal of woman to be adored under the name of Mary, yet Christ will now begin to be a little thought of; *his* idea has always been kept carefully out of sight under the old *régime*; all the worship being for the Madonna and saints, who were to be well paid for interceding for sinners; — an example which might make men cease to be such, was no way coveted. Now the New Testament has been translated into Italian; copies are already dispersed far and wide; men calling themselves Christians will no longer be left entirely ignorant of the precepts and life of Jesus.

The people of Rome have burnt the Cardinals' carriages. They took the confessionals out of the churches, and made mock confessions in the piazzas, the scope of which was, "I have sinned, father, so and so." "Well, my son, how much will you *pay* to the Church for absolution?" Afterward the people thought of burning the confessionals, or using them for barricades; but at the request of the Triumvirate they desisted, and even put them back into the churches. But it was from no reaction of feeling that they stopped short, only from respect for the government. The "Tartuffe" of Molière has been translated into Italian, and was last night performed with great applause at the Valle. Can all this be forgotten? Never! Should guns and bayonets replace the Pope on the throne, he will find its foundations, once deep as modern civilization, now so undermined that it falls with the least awkward movement.

But I cannot believe he will be replaced there. France alone could consummate that crime, — that, for her, most cruel, most infamous treason. The elections in France will decide. In three or four days we shall know whether the French nation at large be guilty or no, — whether it be the will of the nation to aid or strive to ruin a government founded on precisely the same basis as their own.



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

I do not dare to trust that people. The peasant is yet very ignorant. The suffering workman is frightened as he thinks of the punishments that ensued on the insurrections of May and June. The man of property is full of horror at the brotherly scope of Socialism. The aristocrat dreams of the guillotine always when he hears men speak of the people. The influence of the Jesuits is still immense in France. Both in France and England the grossest falsehoods have been circulated with unwearied diligence about the state of things in Italy. An amusing specimen of what is still done in this line I find just now in a foreign journal, where it says there are red flags on all the houses of Rome; meaning to imply that the Romans are athirst for blood. Now, the fact is, that these flags are put up at the entrance of those streets where there is no barricade, as a signal to coachmen and horsemen that they can pass freely. There is one on the house where I am, in which is no person but myself, who thirst for peace, and the Padrone, who thirsts for money.

Meanwhile the French troops are encamped at a little distance from Rome. Some attempts at fair and equal treaty when their desire to occupy Rome was firmly resisted, Oudinot describes in his despatches as a readiness for *submission*. Having tried in vain to gain this point, he has sent to France for fresh orders. These will be decided by the turn the election takes. Meanwhile the French troops are much exposed to the Roman force where they are. Should the Austrians come up, what will they do? Will they shamelessly fraternize with the French, after pretending and proclaiming that they came here as a check upon their aggressions? Will they oppose them in defence of Rome, with which they are at war?

Ah! the way of falsehood, the way of treachery, – how dark, how full of pitfalls and traps! Heaven defend from it all who are not yet engaged therein!

War near at hand seems to me even more dreadful than I had fancied it. True, it tries men's souls, lays bare selfishness in undeniable deformity. Here it has produced much fruit of noble sentiment, noble act; but still it breeds vice too, drunkenness, mental dissipation, tears asunder the tenderest ties, lavishes the productions of Earth, for which her starving poor stretch out their hands in vain, in the most unprofitable manner. And the ruin that ensues, how terrible! Let those who have ever passed happy days in Rome grieve to hear that the beautiful plantations of Villa Borghese – that chief delight and refreshment of citizens, foreigners, and little children – are laid low, as far as the obelisk. The fountain, singing alone amid the fallen groves, cannot be seen and heard without tears; it seems like some innocent infant calling and crowing amid dead bodies on a field which battle has strewn with the bodies of those who once cherished it. The plantations of Villa Salvage on the Tiber, also, the beautiful trees on the way from St. John Lateran to La Maria Maggiore, the trees of the Forum, are fallen. Rome is shorn of the locks which lent grace to her venerable



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

brow. She looks desolate, profaned. I feel what I never expected to, — as if I might by and by be willing to leave Rome. Then I have, for the first time, seen what wounded men suffer. The night of the 30th of April I passed in the hospital, and saw the terrible agonies of those dying or who needed amputation, felt their mental pains and longing for the loved ones who were away; for many of these were Lombards, who had come from the field of Novarra to fight with a fairer chance, — many were students of the University, who had enlisted and thrown themselves into the front of the engagement. The impudent falsehoods of the French general's despatches are incredible. The French were never decoyed on in any way. They were received with every possible mark of hostility. They were defeated in open field, the Garibaldi legion rushing out to meet them; and though they suffered much from the walls, they sustained themselves nowhere. They never put up a white flag till they wished to surrender. The vanity that strives to cover over these facts is unworthy of men. The only excuse for the imprudent conduct of the expedition is that they were deceived, not by the Romans here, but by the priests of Gaëta, leading them to expect action in their favor within the walls. These priests themselves were deluded by their hopes and old habits of mind. The troops did not fight well, and General Oudinot abandoned his wounded without proper care. All this says nothing against French valor, proved by ages of glory, beyond the doubt of their worst foes. They were demoralized because they fought in so bad a cause, and there was no sincere ardor or clear hope in any breast.

But to return to the hospitals: these were put in order, and have been kept so, by the Princess Belgioioso. The princess was born of one of the noblest families of the Milanese, a descendant of the great Trivalzio, and inherited a large fortune. Very early she compromised it in liberal movements, and, on their failure, was obliged to fly to Paris, where for a time she maintained herself by writing, and I think by painting also. A princess so placed naturally excited great interest, and she drew around her a little court of celebrated men. After recovering her fortune, she still lived in Paris, distinguished for her talents and munificence, both toward literary men and her exiled countrymen. Later, on her estate, called Locate, between Pavia and Milan, she had made experiments in the Socialist direction with fine judgment and success. Association for education, for labor, for transaction of household affairs, had been carried on for several years; she had spared no devotion of time and money to this object, loved, and was much beloved by, those objects of her care, and said she hoped to die there. All is now despoiled and broken up, though it may be hoped that some seeds of peaceful reform have been sown which will spring to light when least expected. The princess returned to Italy in 1847-8, full of hope in Pius IX and Charles Albert. She showed her usual energy and truly princely heart, sustaining, at her own expense, a company of soldiers and a journal up to the last sad betrayal of Milan, August 6th. These days undeceived all the





WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

people, but few of the noblesse; she was one of the few with mind strong enough to understand the lesson, and is now warmly interested in the republican movement. From Milan she went to France, but, finding it impossible to effect anything serious there in behalf of Italy, returned, and has been in Rome about two months. Since leaving Milan she receives no income, her possessions being in the grasp of Radetzky, and cannot know when, if ever, she will again. But as she worked so largely and well with money, so can she without. She published an invitation to the Roman women to make lint and bandages, and offer their services to the wounded; she put the hospitals in order; in the central one, Trinita de Pellegrini, once the abode where the pilgrims were received during holy week, and where foreigners were entertained by seeing their feet washed by the noble dames and dignitaries of Rome, she has remained day and night since the 30th of April, when the wounded were first there. Some money she procured at first by going through Rome, accompanied by two other ladies veiled, to beg it. Afterward the voluntary contributions were generous; among the rest, I am proud to say, the Americans in Rome gave \$250, of which a handsome portion came from Mr. Brown, the Consul.

I value this mark of sympathy more because of the irritation and surprise occasioned here by the position of Mr. Cass, the Envoy. It is most unfortunate that we should have an envoy here for the first time, just to offend and disappoint the Romans. When all the other ambassadors are at Gaëta, ours is in Rome, as if by his presence to discountenance the republican government, which he does not recognize. Mr. Cass, it seems, is required by his instructions not to recognize the government till sure it can be sustained. Now it seems to me that the only dignified ground for our government, the only legitimate ground for any republican government, is to recognize for any nation the government chosen by itself. The suffrage had been correct here, and the proportion of votes to the whole population was much larger, it was said by Americans here, than it is in our own country at the time of contested elections. It had elected an Assembly; that Assembly had appointed, to meet the exigencies of this time, the Triumvirate. If any misrepresentations have induced America to believe, as France affects to have believed, that so large a vote could have been obtained by moral intimidation, the present unanimity of the population in resisting such immense odds, and the enthusiasm of their every expression in favor of the present government, puts the matter beyond a doubt. The Roman people claims once more to have a national existence. It declines further serfdom to an ecclesiastical court. It claims liberty of conscience, of action, and of thought. Should it fall from its present position, it will not be from, internal dissent, but from foreign oppression.

Since this is the case, surely our country, if no other, is bound to recognize the present government *so long as it can sustain itself*. This position is that to which we have a right: being such, it is no





WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

matter how it is viewed by others. But I dare assert it is the only respectable one for our country, in the eyes of the Emperor of Russia himself.

The first, best occasion is past, when Mr. Cass might, had he been empowered to act as Mr. Rush did in France, have morally strengthened the staggering republic, which would have found sympathy where alone it is of permanent value, on the basis of principle. Had it been in vain, what then? America would have acted honorably; as to our being compromised thereby with the Papal government, that fear is idle. Pope and Cardinals have great hopes from America; the giant influence there is kept up with the greatest care; the number of Catholic writers in the United States, too, carefully counted. Had our republican government acknowledged this republican government, the Papal Camarilla would have respected us more, but not loved us less; for have we not the loaves and fishes to give, as well as the precious souls to be saved? Ah! here, indeed, America might go straightforward with all needful impunity. Bishop Hughes himself need not be anxious. That first, best occasion has passed, and the unrecognized, unrecognized Envoy has given offence, and not comfort, by a presence that seemed constantly to say, I do not think you can sustain yourselves. It has wounded both the heart and the pride of Rome. Some of the lowest people have asked me, "Is it not true that your country had a war to become free?" "Yes." "Then why do they not feel for us?"

Yet even now it is not too late. If America would only hail triumphant, though she could not sustain injured Rome, that would be something. "Can you suppose Rome will triumph," you say, "without money, and against so potent a league of foes?" I am not sure, but I hope, for I believe something in the heart of a people when fairly awakened. I have also a lurking confidence in what our fathers spoke of so constantly, a providential order of things, by which brute force and selfish enterprise are sometimes set at naught by aid which seems to descend from a higher sphere. Even old pagans believed in that, you know; and I was born in America, Christianized by the Puritans, — America, freed by eight years' patient suffering, poverty, and struggle, — America, so cheered in dark days by one spark of sympathy from a foreign shore, — America, first "recognized" by Lafayette. I saw him when traversing our country, then great, rich, and free. Millions of men who owed in part their happiness to what, no doubt, was once sneered at as romantic sympathy, threw garlands in his path. It is natural that I should have some faith.

Send, dear America! to thy ambassadors a talisman precious beyond all that boasted gold of California. Let it loose his tongue to cry, "Long live the Republic, and may God bless the cause of the people, the brotherhood of nations and of men, — equality of rights for all." *Viva America!*

Hail to my country! May she live a free, a glorious, a loving life, and not perish, like the old dominions, from, the leprosy of selfishness.



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

Evening.

I am alone in the ghostly silence of a great house, not long since full of gay faces and echoing with gay voices, now deserted by every one but me, — for almost all foreigners are gone now, driven by force either of the summer heats or the foe. I hear all the Spaniards are going now, — that twenty-one have taken passports to-day; why that is, I do not know.

I shall not go till the last moment; my only fear is of France. I cannot think in any case there would be found men willing to damn themselves to latest posterity by bombarding Rome. Other cities they may treat thus, careless of destroying the innocent and helpless, the babe and old grandsire who cannot war against them. But Rome, precious inheritance of mankind, — will they run the risk of marring her shrined treasures? Would they dare do it? Two of the balls that struck St. Peter's have been sent to Pius IX. by his children, who find themselves so much less "beloved" than were the Austrians.

These two days, days of solemn festivity in the calends of the Church, have been duly kept, and the population looks cheerful as it swarms through the streets. The order of Rome, thronged as it is with troops, is amazing. I go from one end to the other, and amid the poorest and most barbarous of the population, (barbarously ignorant, I mean,) alone and on foot. My friends send out their little children alone with their nurses. The amount of crime is almost nothing to what it was. The Roman, no longer pent in ignorance and crouching beneath espionage, no longer stabs in the dark. His energies have true vent; his better feelings are roused; he has thrown aside the stiletto. The power here is indeed miraculous, since no doubt still lurk within the walls many who are eager to incite brawls, if only to give an excuse for slander.

To-day I suppose twelve thousand Austrians marched into Florence. The Florentines have humbled and disgraced themselves in vain. They recalled the Grand Duke to ward off the entrance of the Austrians, but in vain went the deputation to Gaëta — in an American steamer! Leopold was afraid to come till his dear cousins of Austria had put everything in perfect order; then the Austrians entered to take Leghorn, but the Florentines still kept on imploring them not to come there; Florence was as subdued, as good as possible, already: — they have had the answer they deserved. Now they crown their work by giving over Guerazzi and Petracchi to be tried by an Austrian court-martial. Truly the cup of shame brims over.

I have been out on the balcony to look over the city. All sleeps with that peculiar air of serene majesty known to this city only; — this city that has grown, not out of the necessities of commerce nor the luxuries of wealth, but first out of heroism, then out of faith. Swelling domes, roofs softly tinted with yellow moss! what deep meaning, what deep repose, in your faintly seen outline!

The young moon climbs among clouds, — the clouds of a departing thunderstorm. Tender, smiling moon! can it be that thy full orb



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

may look down on a smoking, smouldering Rome, and see her best blood run along the stones, without one nation in the world to defend, one to aid, – scarce one to cry out a tardy “Shame”? We will wait, whisper the nations, and see if they can bear it. Rack them well to see if they are brave. *If they can do without us*, we will help them. Is it thus ye would be served in your turn? Beware!

## ARTHUR FULLER’S BOOK

### THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



October 2, Sunday: In his journal [Thoreau](#) began to construct the Tom-Hyde-the-tinker-standing-on-the-gallows parable that appears on page 327-8 of the “Conclusion” chapter of [WALDEN](#), which he would add to his *ms* in Draft F.

[WALDEN](#): Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe. Tom Hyde, the tinker, standing on the gallows, was asked if he had any thing to say. “Tell the tailors,” said he, “to remember to make a knot in their thread before they take the first stitch.” His companion’s prayer is forgotten.

PEOPLE O  
WALDEN

TOM HYDE



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

This initial rendition of the parable is slightly more elaborate, in that after Tom's ghastly stab at [gallows](#) humor he goes on to add some blubbery and tendentious pseudo-poetry, suggesting that the people who are killing him are making a mistake which is going to inconvenience them, which they are going to have to recognize in the future, but are only going to recognize after it has become too late for them to do anything about it — because in actuality, if they would only realize it, Tom Hyde, the tinker who should have “gone tinkering about his life to improve it” but failed to do so, would be worth more to them alive than he would be worth to them dead:

Tom Hyde's dying speech When Tom standing on the gallows was asked if he had anything to say—  
He said—Tell the tailors to remember & make a knot in their thread before they take the first stitch. also  
You Boston folks & Roxbury people  
Will want Tom Hyde to mend your kettle

We note the ghastly little word “also” here. Tom inserts “also” because he is well aware that the moment he pauses is the moment the employee who is holding the cord will yank on it, opening the latch that snaps the trap, that allows him to drop straight down, and his neck to snap — and he doesn't want this employee to make a mistake and yank on the cord at some mere *hemm* in this little departing sermon of his.

**YOUR GARDEN-VARIETY ACADEMIC HISTORIAN INVITES YOU TO CLIMB  
ABOARD A HOVERING TIME MACHINE TO SKIM IN METATIME BACK  
ACROSS THE GEOLOGY OF OUR PAST TIMESLICES, WHILE OFFERING UP  
A GARDEN VARIETY OF COGENT ASSESSMENTS OF OUR PROGRESSION.  
WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP! YOU SHOULD REFUSE THIS HELICOPTERISH  
OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL PAST, FOR IN THE REAL WORLD THINGS  
HAPPEN ONLY AS THEY HAPPEN. WHAT THIS SORT WRITES AMOUNTS,  
LIKE MERE “SCIENCE FICTION,” MERELY TO “HISTORY FICTION”:  
IT'S NOT WORTH YOUR ATTENTION.**



WASHINGTON GOODE

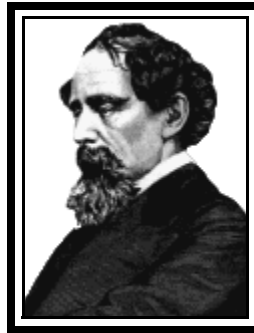
WASHINGTON GOODE

November 3, Saturday: Ebenezer and Abijah Learned, brothers with prior grand larceny convictions living in a mansion overlooking the sea, were arrested and charged with the theft from the safe in Provincetown. Only \$200.<sup>00</sup> of the \$20,000.<sup>00</sup> was recovered from their possession (more research would be necessary, to verify that these brothers were convicted as charged and to discover what sort of prison terms they served).

In England, [Herman Melville](#) paid half a crown for permission to stand on an adjacent roof, in order to witness the [hanging](#) of a married couple, Maria and George Manning, who had conspired to murder a friend. How titillating this must have been for these spectators! Then he had breakfast and went to the zoo.



(Charles Dickens also attended this interesting hanging — though not in the company of Melville.)



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



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

1850

June 12, Wednesday: [Professor John White Webster](#)'s lawyers had submitted a petition for a writ of error against Judge Lemuel Shaw because of his faulty instructions to the jury. On this day the hearing was held before a panel of five judges one of whom was Shaw, and the writ denied. Webster would appeal to Governor George N. Briggs for a pardon, asserting his entire innocence. He had been convicted on evidence which was wholly circumstantial. Unfortunately for him, the black man [Washington Goode](#) had just been hanged in [Boston](#) for murder entirely on the basis of such circumstantial evidence. Thus, the Governor could not pardon Webster without seeming to allow different standards of evidence to accused white men. The Fall River [Weekly News](#) would express this matter most succinctly: "If any delays, misgivings or symptoms of mercy are manifested, the gibbeted body of Washington Goode will be paraded before the mind's eye of his Excellency. If he relents in this case, though the entire population of the State petition for a remission of sentence, Governor Briggs will forfeit all claim to public respect as a high minded, honorable and impartial chief magistrate. He can do one of two things and retain his character as a man and a public servant: resign his office, or let the law take its course." The governor signed the death warrant. Webster, therefore, in a last-ditch effort to avoid the gallows, would make a retreating confession. He had indeed struck the victim. However, he had only struck him once. Also, he was only defending himself as he had been provoked into doing this! His act had not been premeditated or malicious. He had been pushed into this by [Doctor Parkman](#), who had become so inordinately aggressive to collect the money he was owed. The creditor had been "gesticulating in the most violent and menacing manner." He had even been threatening to seize the professor's mineral cabinet, despite the fact that the professor had put this asset up as security to cover not only this loan, but another separate loan to another man. What could Professor Webster do under such extenuating circumstances but seize "whatever thing was handiest—it was a stick of wood— and [deal] him an instantaneous blow with all the force that passion could give it. It was on the side of his head, and there was nothing to break the force of the blow. He fell instantly upon the pavement. There was no second blow. He did not move." (Of course, such an exculpatory confession would get the man exactly nowhere, for it did nothing to restore the torn social fabric. For a suitable restoration of the torn social fabric, we will need to wait until after this [hanging](#), when the victim's widow would be listed as the 1st contributor to a fund created for the murderer's impoverished widow and daughters.)

**BETWEEN ANY TWO MOMENTS ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF MOMENTS, AND BETWEEN THESE OTHER MOMENTS LIKEWISE AN INFINITE NUMBER, THERE BEING NO ATOMIC MOMENT JUST AS THERE IS NO ATOMIC POINT ALONG A LINE. MOMENTS ARE THEREFORE FIGMENTS. THE PRESENT MOMENT IS A MOMENT AND AS SUCH IS A FIGMENT, A FLIGHT OF THE IMAGINATION TO WHICH NOTHING REAL CORRESPONDS. SINCE PAST MOMENTS HAVE PASSED OUT OF EXISTENCE AND FUTURE MOMENTS HAVE YET TO ARRIVE, WE NOTE THAT THE PRESENT MOMENT IS ALL THAT EVER EXISTS — AND YET THE PRESENT MOMENT BEING A**



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**MOMENT IS A FIGMENT TO WHICH NOTHING IN REALITY CORRESPONDS.**



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

1851

## WOMEN HANGED IN ENGLAND DURING 1851

Date	Name	Age	Place of execution	Crime
25/03	Sarah Chesham	42	Chelmsford	Murder
10/05	Catherine Connelly	70 <sup>a</sup>	Cork	Murder
19/08	Mary Cage	40	Ipswich	Murder of husband

a. This set an age record, of sorts.

It seems to be during this timeframe that the Reverend [Adin Ballou](#) authored the following material in opposition to capital punishment, referring regretfully to the recent [hangings](#) of [Washington Goode](#), Daniel H. Pierson,<sup>8</sup> and [John White Webster](#):

### Capital Punishment: Reasons For Immediate Abolition

#### What is Capital Punishment?

It is the infliction of Death on a human being who has been convicted of murder or some other crime, and who is a helpless prisoner in the hands of the public authorities. It is commonly executed by hanging, beheading, shooting, &c.; in our country almost always by hanging.

#### Who Inflict the Death Penalty?

All the people in the State or Nation who do not unequivocally protest against it. This is emphatically true in our Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Reader, whether voter or non-voter, male or female, adult or youth, thou art either for Capital Punishment or against it. Thou art not a neutral in the case. When one of thy fellow creatures is put to death on the gallows by public authority, with thy approbation or with thy consent, consider the deed as thine own. Nay, if thou lettest it be done without thy solemn protest against it, the deed is virtually thine own. Wince not at this. Know thy responsibility before God in this matter. Unless thou hast cleared the skirts of thy garments by some public, unequivocal and uncompromising testimony against Capital Punishment, thou art the man or the woman who inflicts it. Thou and thy fellows took the life of [Washington Goode](#), Daniel H. Pierson, and [John W. Webster](#). Say not "the Sheriff did it - the Governor ordered it - the Court decreed it - the law requires it." All true: but in whose name

8. In 1848 they had hanged Pierson, a white imbecile of Boston, after he killed his wife and children.





WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

and by whose authority does the Sheriff, the Governor, the Court, the law hang a man? Who made the law, the Court, the Governor and the Sheriff? Answer: the people - the sovereign people. They do all these things. Who are the people? Answer: the voters, together with all who help to form that public opinion which governs voters, legislators and rulers. Whatever public opinion unequivocally demands should be done, is done. Voters, legislators and rulers see that it is done. They see that hanging is done. Why? Because public opinion demands it. And who form public opinion? All men, women and children who think and speak. Public opinion is nothing but the confluence of private opinions; like a mighty river made up of many small streams, rivulets or springs. Reader, remember that thou art one of these streams, rivulets or springs. Thy opinion is for or against Capital Punishment. So if not against it, thou art for it. If for it, thy private opinion is a part of that great river of public opinion which says to voters, legislators and rulers, "Keep on hanging murderers." Therefore thou art one of the executioners of Capital Punishment, acting through thy agents. The deed is really thine. If it be glorious, then glory on. But if it be abhorrent and abominable, hold back thy hand from thy guilty brother's life. Protest against the custom, the law, the public opinion. Let thy testimony be unequivocal, uncompromising and incessant against it, till the death penalty be utterly abolished.

### **Capital Punishment is Anti-Christian**

Noah, Moses, and the ancients generally sanctioned it; but Christ prohibits it. The Old Testament, he knew, contained many sayings which authorized the taking of blood for blood, "life for life, eye for eye," &c. But he took care that the New Testament should record all imperative testimony against thus resisting evil with evil. Referring directly to that whole class of Old Testament sayings which sanction the taking of "life for life," our Lord says: "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil" - that is, by inflicting evil on the evil-doer, as you have heretofore done under the authority of these Noachic and Mosaic sayings. Away with all hatred and vindictiveness. Oppose evil only with good - only by doing what is best both for the injurious and the injured parties. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," &c. that ye may be the children of your father in heaven, who always acts on this divine principle toward the unthankful and evil. On the same ground he enjoined the duty of always cherishing the spirit of forgiveness. "When ye pray, say ... Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Is it forgiving an offender to take blood for blood, life for life, eye for eye? Is this forgiving as we would have God forgive us? Wilt thou hang thy son's murderer by the neck till he be "dead, dead, dead," and then pray God to forgive thine offences as thou hast his! And after this wilt thou still presume to call



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

Jesus Christ thy Lord, and thyself a Christian! Of all such Christ demandeth, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" As Jesus taught, so taught his apostles. Hear Paul: "Recompense to no man evil for evil"; "avenge not yourselves"; "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." "See that none render evil for evil unto any man." So Peter, John and all the apostles. Hanging the evil doer is recompensing "evil for evil." It is man avenging himself by "rendering evil for evil." It is a vain attempt to overcome evil with evil. Therefore it is utterly anti-Christian. Christ never gave countenance to Capital Punishment, or to the taking of human life for any cause. He exemplified what he taught. He was once called on to adjudge a woman to death for adultery, according to the law of Moses. Did he sanction Capital Punishment? No; but he required those who would have stoned the criminal to death, to be sure first that they themselves were without sin. They felt the rebuke and fled. The woman still remained to receive death, if at all, from his sinless hands. But forbearing to harm her, guilty though she was, he said, "Go and sin no more." Jesus was no patron either of crime or of Capital Punishment. When James and John would have called fire down from heaven upon the unaccommodating Samaritans, "even as Elias did," he turned and rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." So then Christians, following out their Lord's mission in his divine spirit, are not to destroy men's lives, but to save them - even though Noah, Moses and Elias be officiously quoted to the contrary. When will this genuine Christianity come to be understood and exemplified throughout nominal Christendom? In that day will Capital Punishment, as well as War, be denounced and renounced as utterly anti-Christian. Reader, do not attempt to parry the force of the foregoing demonstration by any special pleading. Do not say, as some have, "Christ had no reference to public judicial proceedings; capital punishment, &c., when he gave forth those strong prohibitory precepts against resisting evil with evil; he only referred to petty revenge between individuals in common life," &c. This is groundless assumption, and contrary to the obvious meaning of Christ's language. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye," &c. Where? By whom? See Gen. 9:6, Ex. 21:22-25, Lev. 24:17-20, Deut. 19:16-21. Examine those passages, and thou wilt see that "life for life, eye for eye," &c. were to be taken by public judicial authority. Can we, then, suppose Christ did not forbid legal and judicial resistance of evil with evil, but merely ordinary individual retaliations? No; he forbade all those sayings had authorized; that is, both individual and governmental takings of "life for life, eye for eye," &c. This is too plain to be caviled upon. Neither let the reader say, as some have, Christ did not refer to those sayings of Noah, Moses, &c. but only to certain glosses on them made by some of the Jewish Rabbis. Show us any rabbinical glosses stronger than the original Scripture sayings in the



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

Pentateuch. There are none. It is sheer assumption to plead all such abatement of Christ's obvious meaning. Nor let anyone rise up and say, as some have said, "You make Christ to condemn Moses, and the New Testament to destroy the Old. Thus you pervert the Word of God." Strange notion! Is not Christ superior to Moses, and the New Testament to the Old? Who doubts this? The Jew may, but not the Christian. He who places Jesus Christ below Moses, or no higher than Moses, or the New Testament below the Old, or no higher than the Old, is anti-Christian, whatever else he may be. This is a settled point. But it does not follow that Christ condemns Moses, or that the New Testament destroys the Old. The less and the greater may mutually corroborate each other. Moses wrote of the Christ, and commanded that when he came, the people should hear him "in all things." Therefore said Jesus to the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." Moses was a faithful servant, but Christ is the Son of God. He who respects Moses as a servant, will surely respect Christ as the Son of God. And he who, under pretence of reverencing Moses, takes "life for life," regardless of Christ's solemn injunction to "resist not evil with evil," insults both of them. He tramples under foot his acknowledged Lord, and impudently says to Moses, "I will not obey thy command, to hear Christ in all things. I will hear him in nothing that differs from thy old law of "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth." That law suits my own instincts exactly, and I will not allow it to be superseded, even by Jesus Christ!" Would Moses feel honored by such an adherent? No; he would rebuke the self-willed zealot, and say, "No man honors me who does not honor the Son of God more." If the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, who all predicted a more glorious dispensation of divine truth and righteousness to come, could be summoned to give judgment, they would unanimously concur with Paul in his testimony: "If that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." Instead of subordinating the New Testament to the Old, or lowering down its sublime law, of resisting evil only with good, to the ancient maxims, they would exalt Jesus Christ and his precepts above all, as the true light and life of men. Alas! that anyone should so poorly appreciate either the Old or the New Testament, as to imagine that he can truly honor the former without implicitly obeying the latter as God's revised statutes. The former had a glory which was designed to be superseded by the superior glory of the latter, even as the moon and the stars of night fade away in the radiance of the sun. Does the sun destroy the moon and stars, because he outshines them? No more does the New Testament destroy the Old by superseding its imperfect institutions with diviner ones. The position is impregnable. Capital Punishment, however sanctioned by Noah, Moses and the ancients, is anti-Christian. It ought therefore to be immediately abolished in all professedly Christian States. He who upholds it fights against Jesus Christ.

### **Capital Punishment is Unnecessary**



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

There is no excuse for hanging a murderer, on the ground that he is outraging the public peace, and endangering the lives of his fellow-creatures. He is a helpless prisoner; completely in the power of the government, and there he can be kept in safe custody - in a custody which will prevent his injuring others, or being injured by others. What more does the public good require? What more does his own good require? What more does any reasonable, humane, upright man desire? Who is it that clamors for his life - that cries out to have this powerless, pinioned man thrust into eternity from a gallows? O spirit of vindictive cruelty, we know thee all through the dark ages! Thou art thyself a murderer from the beginning. Be thou exorcised from all well-meaning souls. Thou hast often transformed thyself into an angel of light, and seated thyself in the high places of Christianity; but thou shalt be cast down into the pit, whence thou camest. Thou deprecatest and revengest murder, but art forever predisposing mankind to commit it. We know thee; "Get thee behind us, Satan." Capital Punishment is not necessary in order to prevent the criminal's escaping his due recompense. God has not left rewards and punishments to the uncertainty and imperfection of human government. He himself will render to every man according to his deeds. No sinner can escape the divine judgment. No murderer can by any possibility evade a just retribution. He may all mere human punishments, but none of the divine. Who but an atheist doubts this great truth? Then let no man say, "The murderer must be hung, or he will go unpunished." Not so. His going unpunished is an impossibility. Keep him, then, unharmed, where he can harm no one, and let him be made better if possible. Leave him to be punished by the only authority that is competent to do it without error. Why not? Avenger of blood, thou art dismissed. Thy mission is fulfilled. To whom will the putting to death of the criminal do any good? It will preserve no one's life, that could not just as surely be preserved by the judicious confinement of the convict. It will not help God's administration of justice. It will not restore the murdered person to life. It will give no comfort to the murdered one's surviving friends, unless they are depraved enough to find comfort in retaliation. It will do the murderer himself no good. If he be unprepared to die, it will precipitate him into the spirit world against all the dictates of religion; and if he have become a penitent - a regenerate man, forgiven of God - man ought to be both ashamed and afraid to be less merciful. It will do the righteous, the well-disposed and tender-hearted, no good. They are grieved and disgusted by such State tragedies. It will do the wicked, the depraved, the hard-hearted, no good. They love such spectacles, crowd eagerly around them, display all the hateful traits of devils incarnate, and go away ripe for violence and bloodshed. Hence our State authorities will not allow them free access to the place of execution, giving tickets of admission only to a few select witnesses, or respectable amateurs of this kind of tragedy. This is proof positive, if proof were wanting, that the hanging of



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

murderers works no good to the wicked. If it did, the more they should see of it the better. Away with a punishment which is as unnecessary as it is anti-Christian.

### **This Punishment is Irreparable**

Man can take away life; but he cannot restore it. Many have been put to death for crimes which seemed to have been conclusively proved against them, who were afterwards ascertained beyond doubt, to be innocent. Then their judges and executioners would have given worlds for the power to reverse the fatal sentence - to repair the dreadful error. But there was no remedy - no reparation. What presumption is it in ignorant, fallible mortals, themselves daily beggars for Divine mercy, to crush the life out of their guilty fellows; to thrust them from the land of the living into the unknown world of spirits! It is the prerogative of the Most High to kill; for He knoweth when and how to take life, and is able, moreover, to restore it at pleasure. Not so man. In his pride and rashness he kills, and there his power ends. He may stare at the ruin he has wrought; he may deplore it; but he cannot repair it. Alas! for the accusers, the jurors, the judges, the executioners, and their abettors, who presume to quench the flame of human life. The guilt of their victims is no justification of their presumption. Vengeance belongeth unto God alone, who ever judgeth righteously, and can do no wrong. Let man content himself with imposing uninjurious restraint on the outrageous and dangerous. Then if he err in judgment, or in methods of treatment, he can correct his errors, repair his incidental wrongs, and prove himself to be, what he ever ought to be the overcomer of evil with good. Read the following extracts, and see how liable human tribunals are to put to death the innocent.

A few years ago, a poor German came to New York and took lodgings, where he was allowed to do his cooking in the same room with the family. The husband and wife lived in a perpetual quarrel. One day, the German came into the kitchen, with a clasp-knife and a pan of potatoes, and began to pare them for his dinner. The quarrelsome couple were in a more violent altercation than usual, but he sat with his back towards them, and, being ignorant of their language, felt in no danger of being involved in their disputes. But the woman, with a sudden and unexpected movement, snatched the knife from his hand, and plunged it into her husband's heart. She had sufficient presence of mind to rush into the street, and scream murder. The poor foreigner, in the meanwhile, seeing the wounded man reel, sprang forward to catch him in his arms, and drew out the knife. People from the street crowded in, and found him with the dying man in his arms, the knife in his hand, and blood upon his clothes. The wicked woman swore, in the most positive terms, that he had been fighting with her husband, and had stabbed him with a knife he always carried. The



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

unfortunate German knew too little English to understand her accusation, or to tell his own story. He was dragged off to prison, and the true state of the case was made known through an interpreter; but it was not believed. Circumstantial evidence was exceedingly strong against the accused, and the real criminal swore that she saw him commit the murder. He was executed, notwithstanding the most persevering efforts of his lawyer, John Anthon, Esq., whose convictions of the man's innocence were so painfully strong, that, from that day to this, he has refused to have, any connection with a capital case. Some years after this tragic event, the woman died, and on her deathbed confessed her agency in the diabolical transaction; but her poor victim could receive no benefit from this tardy repentance. Society had wantonly thrown away its power to atone for the grievous wrong.

- Mrs. Child

A young lady, belonging to a genteel and very proud family in Missouri, was beloved by a young man named Burton; but, unfortunately, her affections were fixed on another, less worthy. He left her with a tarnished reputation. She was by nature energetic and high-spirited; her family were proud, and she lived in the midst of a society which considered revenge a virtue, and named it honor. Misled by this false popular sentiment, and her own excited feelings, she resolved to repay her lover's treachery with death. But she kept her secret so well that no one suspected her purpose, though she purchased pistols, and practiced with them daily. Mr. Burton gave evidence of his strong attachment by renewing his attentions when the world looked most coldly on her. His generous kindness won her bleeding heart, but the softening influence of love did not lead her to forego the dreadful purpose she had formed. She watched for a favorable opportunity, and shot her betrayer when no one was near to witness the horrible deed. Some little incident excited the suspicion of Burton, and he induced her to confess to him the whole transaction. It was obvious enough that suspicion would naturally fasten upon him, the well-known lover of her who had been so deeply injured. He was arrested; but succeeded in persuading her that he was in no danger. Circumstantial evidence was fearfully against him, and he soon saw that his chance was doubtful; but with affectionate magnanimity he concealed this from her. He was convicted and condemned. A short time before the execution, he endeavored to cut his throat; but his life was saved for the cruel purpose of taking it away according to the cold-blooded barbarism of the law. Pale and wounded, he was hoisted to the gallows, before the



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

gaze of a Christian community. The guilty cause of all this was almost frantic when she found that he had thus sacrificed himself to save her. She immediately published the whole history of her wrongs and her revenge. Her keen sense of wounded honor was in accordance with public sentiment; her wrongs excited indignation and compassion, and the knowledge that an innocent and magnanimous man had been so brutally treated, excited a general revulsion of popular feeling. No one wished for another victim, and she was left unpunished, save by the dreadful records of her memory.

- Mrs. Child

Hold! all ye vindictives that would take "life for life." It is impious, cold-hearted presumption in man to do this awful deed! It is anti-Christian, unnecessary, irreparable, abhorrent! We challenge a refutation of these reasons for abolishing the death penalty. They are unanswerable. Let the abomination cease.

**THE FALLACY OF MOMENTISM: THIS STARRY UNIVERSE DOES NOT CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF MOMENTS. THAT IS A FIGMENT, ONE WE HAVE RECOURSE TO IN ORDER TO PRIVILEGE TIME OVER CHANGE, A PRIVILEGING THAT MAKES CHANGE SEEM UNREAL, DERIVATIVE, A MERE APPEARANCE. IN FACT IT IS CHANGE AND ONLY CHANGE WHICH WE EXPERIENCE AS REALITY, TIME BEING BY WAY OF RADICAL CONTRAST UNEXPERIENCED — A MERE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT. THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO INSTANT HAS EVER FOR AN INSTANT EXISTED.**



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

1858

June 25, Friday: James McGee was [hanged](#) on the same gallows on which [Washington Goode](#) and [John White Webster](#) had been hung, for having stabbed to death Deputy Warden Galen C. Walker in the Massachusetts State Prison on December 15, 1856.

For what would be known as the four Treaties of Tientsin, the [Chinese](#) negotiators were not allowed to dispute a single word of the prepared English text, involving 56 articles. Privileges for the Russians and for the Americans were included along with the privileges for the British and the French. From this point Westerners would import and sell their [opium](#) at will.

DOPERS

**FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A “HISTORICAL CONTEXT” IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.**





WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE

1862

August 8, Thursday: At Weymouth on May 3, 1860 the pregnant Betsy Frances Tirrell had ingested ten grains of strychnine in preserved fruit, supplied to her by her fiancé George Canning Hersey under the pretense that this deadly poison would merely produce miscarriage. Tirrell had been convicted of murder.

### TRANSCRIPT OF THE TRIAL

The accused was [hanged](#) in the rotunda of Dedham jail at about the center of the north side, between the wings, on this morning, on the same gallows on which [Washington Goode](#), James McGee, and [John White Webster](#) had been hung. The rope used was a small cord of Italian flax that had been tested with a weight of 3,400 pounds. Hersey declined to make a statement prior to execution but left a written confession protesting only that he had not also, as suspected, poisoned his wife Emeline Hersey, or poisoned Mary Tirrell. Hersey was 29 years of age at the point of his death.

**“HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE” BEING A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN TIME (JUST AS THE PERSPECTIVE IN A PAINTING IS A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN SPACE), TO “LOOK AT THE COURSE OF HISTORY MORE GENERALLY” WOULD BE TO SACRIFICE PERSPECTIVE ALTOGETHER. THIS IS FANTASY-LAND, YOU’RE FOOLING YOURSELF. THERE CANNOT BE ANY SUCH THINGIE, AS SUCH A PERSPECTIVE.**



WASHINGTON GOODE

WASHINGTON GOODE



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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: February 8, 2016



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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.



**WASHINGTON GOODE**

**WASHINGTON GOODE**

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.