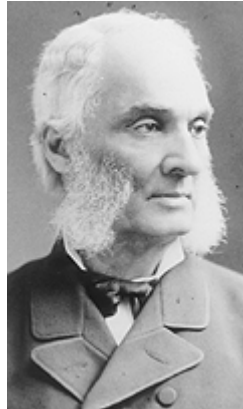


ROBERT PURVIS,

NOT QUITE A WHITE MAN IN AMERICA



1784

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, [James Forten](#) (1766-1842) was apprenticed to Robert Bridges to learn the making of sails.





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1790

[William Purvis](#) came from England to America.

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A 12-year-old girl named Dido Badaraka was kidnapped in Morocco and sold into bondage.

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At the age of 19, Dido Badaraka was manumitted. She would marry a German Jewish merchant of Charleston, South Carolina, Baron Judah, and they would have a daughter, Harriet Judah. This daughter would have three sons with a lover, [William Purvis](#), a cotton broker of Charleston, South Carolina — one of them [Robert Purvis](#).

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1798

[James Forten](#), who had apprenticed at Robert Bridges's sail loft in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at Bridges's death became the proprietor of that loft.



1810



August 4, Saturday: [Robert Purvis](#) was born in Charleston, South Carolina to [William Purvis](#), a cotton broker, and his mistress Harriet Judah, a free mulatto daughter of the manumitted Moroccan slave Dido Badaraka. The baby was of a wonderfully light complexion.

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

7 day 4 of 8 Mo// It has been a day of exercise, but the cause



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is hidden & must not be written as there can not possibly be any use arise from it either to myself or any one else – The usual rounds of life as to the outward.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1818

➡ February 13, Friday: In Philadelphia, [James Forten](#) received an urgent summons to a meeting of the vestry. Absalom Jones, the 1st black ordained priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, rector of the 1st African Church of St. Thomas which he had established in 1794, had died of [typhoid fever](#) (the funeral service and procession would take place on the following Monday, with the sermon being presented by the priest who had ordained Jones, Bishop William White; eventually Mr. Prince Saunders would be chosen to step into the Reverend Jones's position as Reader or Minister at St. Thomas's).

A sermon was delivered at Woodstock, Vermont by the Reverend Leland Howard, pastor of the 1st Baptist Society in Windsor, Vermont, prior to the [hanging](#) of Samuel E. Godfrey (1782-1818) of Chatham on Cape Cod for the grudge murder in 1814 of Thomas Hewlet (as keeper of the Vermont State Prison where Godfrey was serving a prison sentence, Hewlet had punished him for a rule infraction; there had been in this case three successive trials and three successive orders of execution over a period of four years). It was freezing that day and a snowstorm was swirling about the site — and yet more than 10,000 turned out to witness this event.

1819

➡ During this year and the following one, Major Long would be leading an expedition of exploration to the region of the Rocky Mountains, with the naturalist [Thomas Say](#) as zoologist. Say would find the ten-line burweed beetle *Leptinotarsa* in the Great Plains and write it up as a feeder upon Mexican burweed.¹

At the age of nine [Robert Purvis](#) was brought by his father [William Purvis](#) to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where despite his mixed race he would be able to attend the Pennsylvania Abolition Society's Clarkson School.

[Nicholas Marcellus Hentz](#) became a member of the [Academy of Natural Sciences](#) in Philadelphia.

1. In a related piece of news, no indigenous word has been found, in any of the 8,000 Native American languages of California, for the common appliance known as the shoe, evidently due in part to the fact that prior to the period of contact with Mexico there had been no burs in the grasslands of California for any bare foot to step upon. (NOTE: this problem of the burweed beetle that eventually would attack potato crops has nothing whatever to do with the Irish Potato Famine of 1845-1852. It is a completely different infestation problem dating to a completely separate era.)



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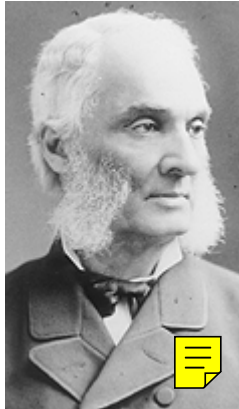
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1826

 [William Purvis](#) died and his 15-year-old or 16-year-old almost-white son [Robert Purvis](#) inherited a fortune of \$120,000 (in today's money, the equivalent would be ample to make the lad "a multimillionaire").





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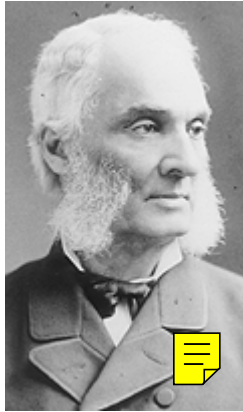
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1830



[Robert Purvis](#) met the abolitionists [Friend Benjamin Lundy](#) and William Lloyd Garrison.



Annual black conventions began in Philadelphia. In the convention of this year, [Robert Purvis](#) joined in an appeal to establish a manual labor school for blacks.

The free mulatto Shadd family moved from Delaware to West Chester outside of Philadelphia. [Mary Ann Shadd](#) would attend a [Quaker](#) school there, run by Miss Phoebe Darlington. Her father Abraham Shadd would be active in abolitionist groups and other political organizations that discussed black immigration to Canada, Africa, and the West Indies. He would function as an agent of subscriptions for Garrison's newspaper, [The Liberator](#). He and his family would begin to socialize with the more affluent blacks of the area. The Shadd home in West Chester would function as a stop on the [Underground Railroad](#).

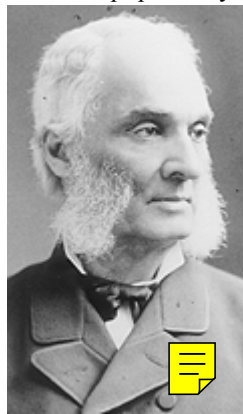
In this year the shipbuilders of Chatham in Canada West (where Mary Ann Shadd eventually would teach)

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**ROBERT PURVIS****ROBERT PURVIS**[GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM](#)

were launching their first commercial vessel, the *Sans Pareil*.

**1831**

[Robert Purvis](#), having been expelled from Amherst College for a prank, at this point got married with [Harriet Forten](#), a daughter of the abolitionist James Forten, Sr. (A sailmaker with 30 employees, Forten was the wealthiest black resident of Philadelphia — except probably for Purvis himself.)





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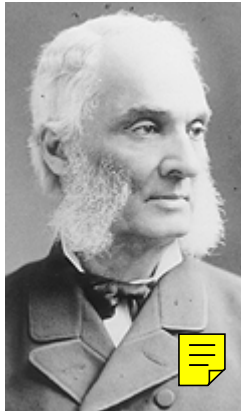
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1832



First week of June: While in Philadelphia, William Lloyd Garrison stopped for a few days at the residence of [Robert Purvis](#) and [Harriet Purvis](#). In a thank-you letter written later that month, Garrison would refer to his host as “one to whom I am so deeply indebted, and whose friendship I prize at a high rate.”



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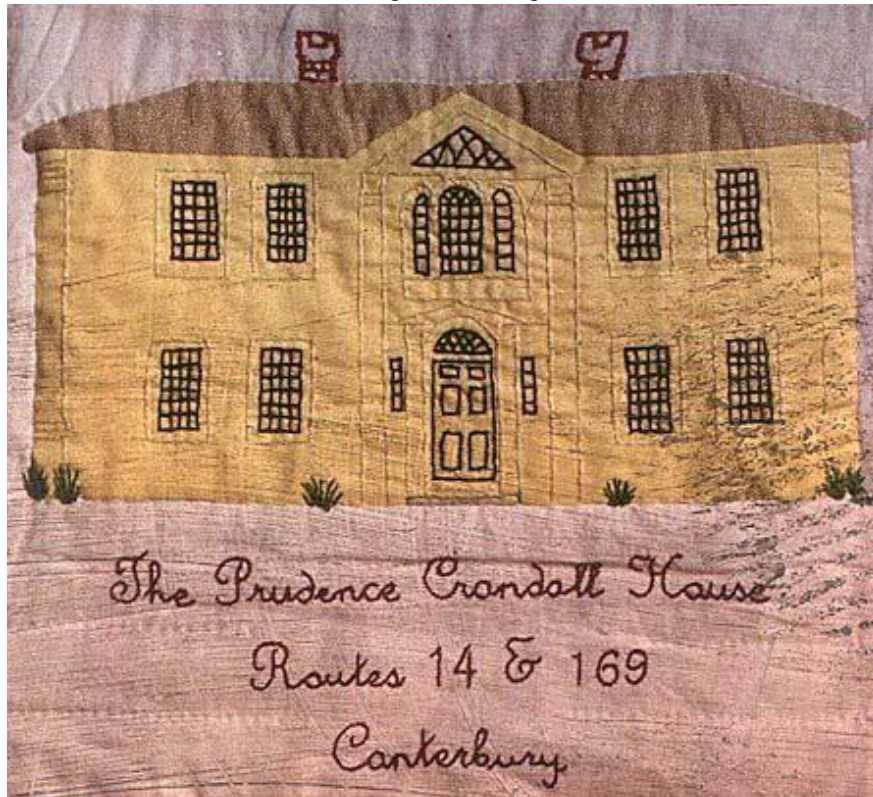
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1833



June: A few months after the March outbreak of madness in Canterbury, Connecticut over the teaching of “young ladies and misses of color,” some of whom were from out of state, at [Prudence Crandall](#)’s school, the Connecticut legislature enacted a sneaky new law requiring that any school teaching out-of-state pupils had to have the approval of the town in which it was located. On the basis of this law, Headmistress Crandall was taken under arrest. Tactically, she and the abolitionists refused to post bail so that the authorities would be forced to book her. After she was held overnight, bail was posted and her school continued.



In the 4th National Negro Convention in Philadelphia, [Robert Purvis](#) served as the vice president and corresponding secretary from Pennsylvania. Purvis supported such racially neutral reforms as the temperance crusade, women’s rights, and the improvement of prison conditions. He believed that reform groups should be racially integrated. He opposed a legislative proposal that would have prevented out-of-state free blacks from settling in Pennsylvania. He became one of the founders of the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored

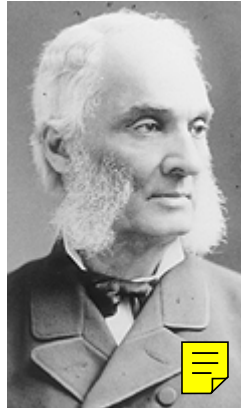


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
Persons.



This Convention for the Improvement of the Free People of Colour would find itself able to “cheerfully recommend” [Crandall](#)’s school, when David Ruggles would propose that they specifically endorse the school,



his motion would fail of approval (MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE FREE PEOPLE OF COLOUR IN THESE UNITED STATES, HELD BY ADJOURNMENTS IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, FROM THE 3RD TO THE 13TH OF JUNE INCLUSIVE, 1833. New York: by order of the Convention).

 December: Abba Alcott, wife of [Bronson Alcott](#) and again-pregnant mommy of an infant author-to-be, helped Friend [Lucretia Mott](#) and [Harriet Purvis](#), the wife of [Robert Purvis](#), form the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Philadelphia.



Eventually Abba would be a member of three such antislavery societies, not only this one in Philadelphia but also the ones that would be formed in Boston and in Concord!



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December 4, Wednesday: The Calculational Engine project had soaked up to date some £17,000 in tax revenues, a truly enormous sum of money, and there was nothing whatever to show for it. Charles Babbage ordered his contractor Joseph Clement, as preparations for removal of the engine were completed: To move all parts of the engine except the large platform for the calculating end and the large columns; all the drawings, (the 27 still attached to drawing boards were not to be taken off them, the contractor was to include cost of the boards if necessary); all the rough sketches, small notebook on contrivances determined upon and the several loose sheets of mechanical notations of the Calculational Engine; and all the patterns from which castings had been made and thus were no longer required. He was to oil and pack all steel parts to avoid rust, and list the parts remaining at his workshop that were the property of the Government (these materials would be removed in 1843 to King's College, London).

In Philadelphia, a group of black and white male abolitionists organized the American Anti-Slavery Society and Arthur Tappan became its 1st president. The Reverend Samuel Joseph May attended, and William Lloyd Garrison, and also [Friend John Greenleaf Whittier](#), Lewis Tappan and Arthur Tappan, Friends [James](#) and [Lucretia Mott](#), etc. Of the about 60 people in attendance only 21 were members of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), because conservative Quakers would have been keeping their distance from all involvement in outside organizations, even those such as this one whose aims they generally greatly respected. The Reverend [Daniel Starr Southmayd](#), not of Concord but "of Lowell, Massachusetts," was a delegate. On the last day of the meeting, the new society urged that white females should also set up their own auxiliary anti-slavery societies. In that period the claim was being made, that True Womanhood would restrict itself to the home, and this claim was being hotly contested by women who would insist that the True Woman was merely following her natural True Womanly inclination, in seeking to succor the defenseless in such institutions as the Samaritan Asylum for Indigent Colored Children in Boston.

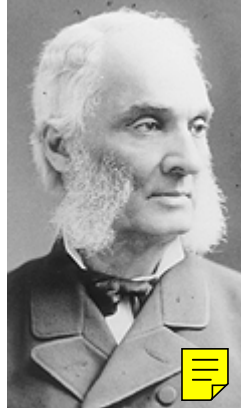
As wives and mothers, as sisters and daughters, we are bound to urge men to cease to do evil.

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There were three blacks present, including a Philadelphia barber and dentist named James McCrummill and the well-to-do [Robert Purvis](#) of Philadelphia — who although he appeared white:



was known locally to be actually not a white man at all.² Purvis signed the Declaration of Sentiments.



2. This would be by way of contrast with Senator Daniel Webster, who was so dark-complected that once he was actually turned away by a commercial establishment that imagined it was dealing with a black American, but who was generally known to be, actually, a white man through and through.



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(Notice that although white men of this period generally feared social contamination by inferior blacks, even an intimate touching, as by a barber, could be permissible, as depicted here in a Virginia barbershop — so long as the relationship was one clearly marked as an intransitive one, between a superior or customer and an inferior or servant.)

There were two or three Unitarians. At one point during the convention a young man at the door was speaking of his desire to dip his hand in Garrison's blood but the Philadelphia police, rather than take such a person into detention, warned the convention organizers that the path of discretion would be for them to meet only during hours of daylight.



Garrison authored the broadside “Declaration of Sentiments” of the meeting (Declaration of the Anti-Slavery Convention), which under an image of Samson strangling the lion included a renunciation of “the use of carnal weapons” and a declaration that “doing evil that good may come” represented the antithesis of Christian ethics. At one point [Friend Lucretia Mott](#) rose to suggest from the back of the room that in the draft of this resolution, the mention of God be placed before rather than after the mention of the [Declaration of Independence](#). As a woman and a non-delegate she spoke with such diffidence that the chairman had to encourage her. This could very well have been the 1st time that many in the room had heard a woman speak in a public meeting.³

After silence in the [Quaker](#) manner, it was time for the actual delegates, that is, the menfolk, to file forward and affix their signatures to the declaration — this would be the signature that Whittier would later say he was more proud of, than of his signature on the title page of any of his books.

The broadside manifesto “Declaration of the Anti-Slavery Convention Assembled in Philadelphia, December 4, 1833,” as so nicely illustrated by Rueben S. Gilbert of Merrihew & Gunn (his work excerpted above), announced the reasons for formation of the society and enumerated its goals:

3. As a woman she would not of course have been officially a delegate to this convention, but a mere spectator accompanying her spouse. Of course no-one thought of the idea of having women as delegates, let alone to solicit the signatures of women, nor is it likely that any of the women even contemplated the possibility of a woman's adding her own signature. Such things were not just unheard-of, in this period, but also, very clearly, they went unthought as well. For a woman to have sported a signature would have been like for a woman to have sported a beard. During this month Abba Alcott, pregnant wife of [Bronson Alcott](#) and mother of an infant author-to-be [Louisa May Alcott](#), was helping [Lucretia Mott](#) form the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.

THE ALCOTT FAMILY



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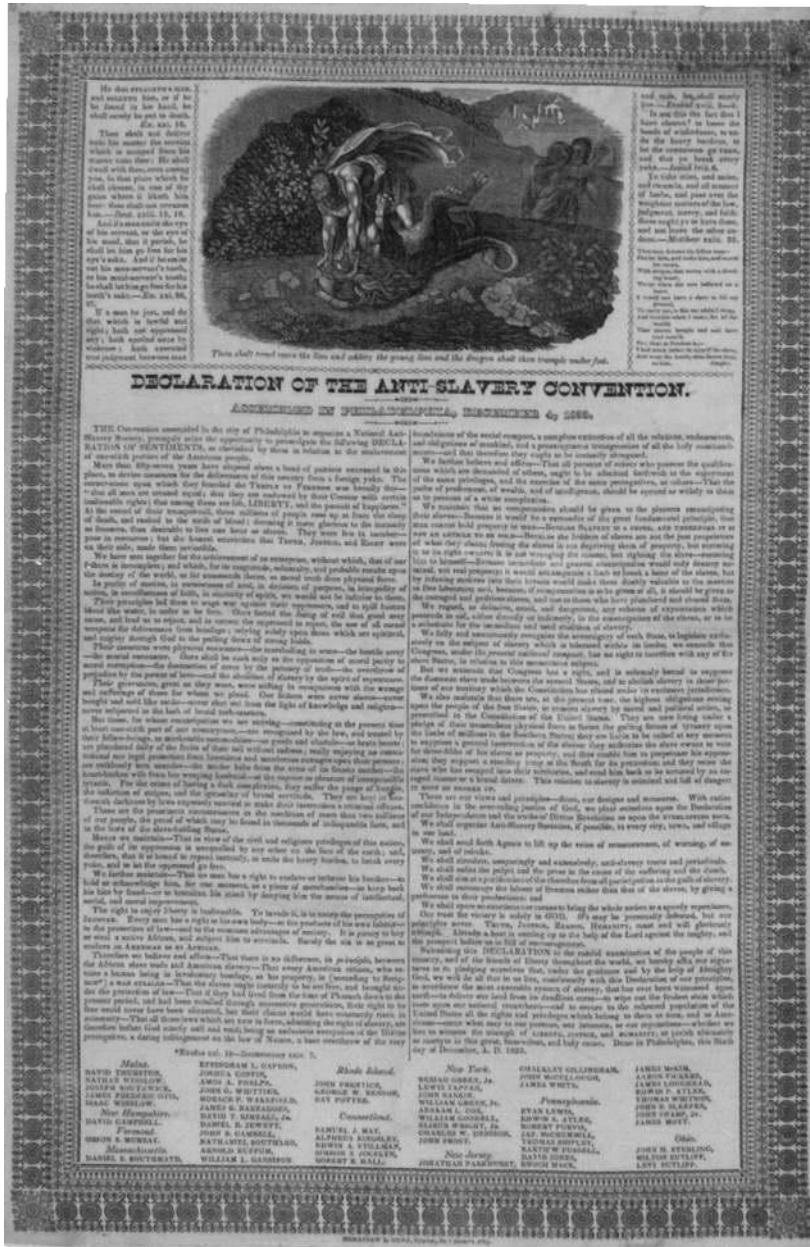
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Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society

Whereas the Most High God "hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," and hath commanded them to love their neighbors as themselves; and whereas, our National Existence is based upon this principle, as recognized in the [Declaration of Independence](#), "that all mankind are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"; and whereas, after the lapse of nearly sixty years, since the faith and honor of the American people were pledged to this avowal, before Almighty God and the World, nearly one-sixth part of the nation are held in bondage by their fellow-citizens; and whereas, Slavery is contrary to the principles of natural justice, of our republican form of government, and of the Christian religion, and is destructive of the prosperity of the country, while it is endangering the peace, union, and liberties of the States; and whereas, we believe it the duty and interest of the masters immediately to emancipate their slaves, and that no scheme of expatriation, either voluntary or by compulsion, can remove this great and increasing evil; and whereas, we believe that it is practicable, by appeals to the consciences, hearts, and interests of the people, to awaken a public sentiment throughout the nation that will be opposed to the continuance of Slavery in any part of the Republic, and by effecting the speedy abolition of Slavery, prevent a general convulsion; and whereas, we believe we owe it to the oppressed, to our fellow-citizens who hold slaves, to our whole country, to posterity, and to God, to do all that is lawfully in our power to bring about the extinction of Slavery, we do hereby agree, with a prayerful reliance on the Divine aid, to form ourselves into a society, to be governed by the following Constitution: —

ARTICLE I. — This Society shall be called the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

ARTICLE II. — The objects of this Society are the entire abolition of Slavery in the United States. While it admits that each State, in which Slavery exists, has, by the Constitution of the United States, the exclusive right to legislate in regard to its abolition in said State, it shall aim to convince all our fellow-citizens, by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that Slaveholding is a heinous crime in the sight of God, and that the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned, require its immediate abandonment, without expatriation. The Society will also endeavor, in a constitutional way, to influence Congress to put an end to the domestic Slave trade, and to abolish Slavery in all those portions of our common country which come under its control, especially in the District of Columbia, -- and likewise to prevent the extension of it to any State that may be hereafter admitted to the Union.

ARTICLE III. — This Society shall aim to elevate the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, and by removing public prejudice, that thus they may, according to their intellectual and moral worth, share an equality with the whites, of civil and religious privileges;



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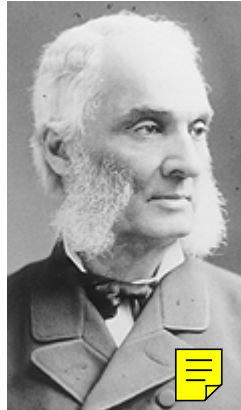
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but this Society will never, in any way, countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force.

ARTICLE IV. — Any person who consents to the principles of this Constitution, who contributes to the funds of this Society, and is not a Slaveholder, may be a member of this Society, and shall be entitled to vote at the meetings....

1834

➡ Summer: Traveling to England, [Robert Purvis](#) was equipped with letters of introduction from William Lloyd Garrison to a number of British reformers including Daniel O’Connell and Sir Thomas Foxwell Buxton. A passport had been first denied, and had then been granted only through the intervention of the President, Andrew Jackson. Purvis was probably the first black American to receive a US passport. When the passport controversy hit the gazettes, a Virginia slaveholder who was ticketed to travel on same ship to England pressured the shipping line to deny Purvis passage, and he was forced to take passage on another vessel. (On the return trip Purvis would deliberately obtain a ticket on the same vessel as that Virginian in order to eat and drink with this racist and his cronies and, tall and handsome, dance with the Southern white ladies — on the last day of the voyage he would with glee and aplomb disclose his racial identity to his new white “friends.”)⁴



4. For a comparison situation, during our own timeframe: The Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. of the Abyssinian Baptist Church of Harlem was “white to all appearances, having blue eyes, an aquiline nose, and light, almost blond, hair.” During his freshman year at Colgate University, his roommate only learned of his racial identity by meeting his father, Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., after which he was no longer able to be friends or roommates. During his college years, Powell worked as a bellhop at a summer resort in Manchester, Vermont. During the summer of 1926 Abraham Lincoln’s dying son Robert Todd Lincoln visited this resort. Lincoln was a man of such “Negrophobia” that he could not bear to be waited on by a black person or to have one of them touch his luggage, his automobile, or any of his possessions, and was known to have whacked the knuckles of a helpful black servant with his cane. However, at this resort the dying man did not decline Powell’s services — as he took him to be a white boy!



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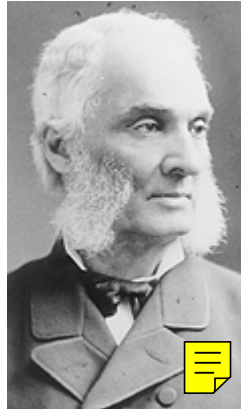
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1835



This was the year of the 6th National Negro Convention. [Robert Purvis](#) would persuade its attenders to “peaceably” resist the fugitive slave law. This convention, taking note that [sugar beets](#) were being grown in



France, urged that America’s free blacks should grow sugar beets and offer the sugar through the American Free Produce Association as an alternative to slavery-produced [cane sugar](#). (This idea, of course, would be a nonstarter, as many of the white people who consumed sugar were being made uneasy in their souls not so much by the ingestion of a snow-white substance which had been invisibly tainted by slavery but by the ingestion of a snow-white substance which had been invisibly tainted by being touched by black hands. Such whites were uneasy about purchasing cane sugar produced in the tropics by black slaves, but would of course be almost equivalently uneasy about purchasing beet sugar produced locally by free black farmers, and would therefore be unlikely to pay a premium price to consume local beet sugar rather than the imported cheaper cane sugar.)

SWEETS
WITHOUT
SLAVERY



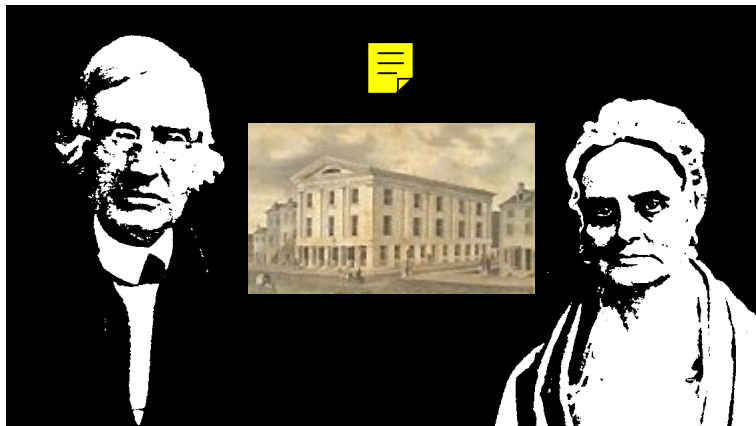
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1836

➡ December: In Philadelphia, due to the general refusal to rent halls for politically unpopular meetings, Friends [James](#) and [Lucretia Mott](#) undertook to raise \$40,000.⁰⁰ for the construction of a large new “Pennsylvania Hall.”



“I know of no country in which there is so little true independence of mind and freedom of discussion as in America.”

— Alexis de Tocqueville





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Here the high-powered “executive committee” for Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society which was behind this important hall project center themselves around [Robert Purvis](#), in an 1851 image from the Sophia Smith Collection of Smith College:



In about this timeframe, [Robert Purvis](#) was being chosen by blacks in Philadelphia to deliver the formal eulogy at a memorial observance for Thomas Shipley, whose appearance before the courts had saved hundreds of blacks in Pennsylvania from slavery.

1838

[Robert Purvis](#) was chair of a committee of seven persons that drew up a lengthy protest, entitled an APPEAL OF FORTY THOUSAND CITIZENS THREATENED WITH DISFRANCHISEMENT, TO THE PEOPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA. Despite this effort, Pennsylvania would adopt a new constitution that barred black citizens from voting.



ROBERT PURVIS

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May 16, Wednesday: The tendency to see the very light-skinned [Robert Purvis](#) as white was a factor leading to one of the most shameful episodes in Philadelphia history: the burning by a mob of a new abolitionist meeting hall and a black orphanage. When a lawsuit would be brought against the city for not protecting the hall, something utterly surprising would come to light — part of the city’s defense would turn out to be that these abolitionists had brought on the riot themselves “by promoting promiscuous intermingling indoors and out of blacks and whites.” The evidence the city would present of this provocativeness would include the fact that a “white man” had been seen to offer his hand to a black woman as she was getting out of a carriage. Then the pair had strolled, outrageously, arm in arm, into the hall. The sight of such an outrage to public decency had inflamed the mob! Well, it would be belatedly understood, what the mob had seen had been the very light-skinned Purvis courteously assisting his wife, [Harriet Purvis](#), who was so many shades darker in complexion than he.⁵

Two black women (referred to as “two coloreds” in some depositions of the time) having been seated as delegates to an Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in Pennsylvania Hall, the convention was



obviously not so much “promiscuous” (19th-Century term for the mixing of genders) as it was something far, far more dangerous to law order and public decency, “amalgamated” (19th-Century term for the mixed of races). William Lloyd Garrison, among others, addressed this amalgamated assembly. Notices were posted in Philadelphia asking all citizens with “due regard for property” to “interfere, forcefully if they must” in “preservation of the Constitution.”⁶

May 18, Friday: The anti-slavery women delegates, including [Robert Purvis](#)’s black 1st wife [Harriet Purvis](#), tried to continue their 2d antislavery convention of American women by meeting at the Temperance Hall in Philadelphia — but they were banned.

5. Imagine a comparable situation, that did not happen. Senator Daniel Webster was so dark-complected that on one occasion a commercial establishment turned him away, presuming that they were dealing with a black American. It was only because he was so very well known as an Alpha Male that this sort of incident did not happen more often. Imagine, what if some situation had arisen in which he had been sighted from a distance or under poor lighting conditions in downtown Boston with a daughter, and the result had been a riot and some theater had gotten burned to the ground! –Well, I guess Boston lucked out on that one, it never happened.

6. In the last session [Friend Abby Kelley](#) would urge that white abolitionists ought to be visiting black Americans “in their homes and encouraging them to visit us, receiving them as we do our white fellow citizens.” The reaction of some of the other white abolitionist delegates was that this sort of behavior might amount to the dreaded “amalgamationism” and therefore was certainly not going to be officially sponsored.



ROBERT PURVIS

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1839

The mulatto [Robert Purvis](#) became the president of the Vigilance Committee of Philadelphia. He would serve in that capacity during the organization's six-year existence, until 1844 (the activities of this group would later be carried forward by the General Vigilance Committee from 1852 to 1857, a group of which he would also be the only chairman). The group would often meet at his house at 9th and Lombard Streets to plan ways to assist runaway slaves. This home had a secret room behind a trap door, and who knows what that was for?

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD



The mulatto [Mary Ann Shadd](#) completed her education and began teaching nearby, outside Philadelphia. She would later also hold teaching positions in Delaware, and in Trenton, New Jersey, until 1848.



ROBERT PURVIS

ROBERT PURVIS

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1840

[Robert Purvis](#) of Philadelphia commissioned Nathaniel Jocelyn of New Haven to prepare a portrait of [Joseph Cinqué](#).⁷ Since this depicted a strong, proud black man in African garb, when it was submitted for display at the annual exhibit on behalf of the Philadelphia Artists' Fund the reaction it produced was that "displaying works of that character, under the excitement of the times ... might prove to be injurious to the proprietors and the institution." The painting would therefore hang in a place of honor in the Purvis home until, the last surviving member of the American Anti-Slavery Society, he died in 1898. It is now at the New Haven Colonial Historical Society, accession number 1971.205:



7. Jocelyn also would depict Cornelius Vanderbilt, in 1846.



ROBERT PURVIS

ROBERT PURVIS

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1842

During two nights of anti-black rioting in Philadelphia, the worst in that city's history, angry mobs surrounded [Robert Purvis](#)'s home at 9th and Lombard Streets for 40 hours while he sat inside with a rifle. Although not one member of this racist assembly could summon the courage to invade the house, afterward the wealthy Purvis would relocate his family to a large farm he owned in Byberry, across the road from the Byberry [Friends](#) Meetinghouse.



March 4, Friday: [James Forten](#), [Robert Purvis](#)'s father-in-law, died.



ROBERT PURVIS

ROBERT PURVIS

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1845

[Robert Purvis](#) became president of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society (in 1850 he would decline a 6th term).





ROBERT PURVIS

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

1851

Wendell Phillips, who was noticeably reluctant and uncomfortable when it came to sharing quarters with black abolitionists while on lecture tours, knew very well that the abolitionist struggle, for white abolitionists, had nothing whatever to do with a desire to improve the conditions of life available to black Americans. At this point he gave his game away by declaring to his white friends:



“My friends, if we never freed a slave,
we have at least freed ourselves
in the effort to emancipate our brother man.”⁸

Obviously, the name of Wendell’s game would be Set-The-White-Man-Free-From-Being-His-Brother’s-Keeper. (Let the names of our favorite games be accurately descriptive! :-)

It is to be noted that this was the game that was being played in Virginia as well during this year, for there was a new law being put in effect which would oblige free blacks to leave that State of grace within a year — or be reduced again to slavery. The local version of Set-The-White-Man-Free-From-Being-His-Brother’s-Keeper, being played down south, was Go-Be-Free-Somewhere-Else, and the local version being played up north was At-Least-We-Tried-And-Are-Now-Therefore-Among-The-Righteous — but these slightly differing versions amount to very much the same sort of stupid racist bag of tricks of What-Is-Of-The-Last-Importance-Is-The-White-Man’s-Righteousness.



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8. Has it become clear to you, in view of the above, why, when in 1842 the surviving 35 of the black [privateers](#) of the *Amistad* mutiny had been sent back to Africa aboard the bark *Gentleman*, they had been sent home as mere charity wards with nobody ever thinking to return to them their prize schooner *La Amistad* admittedly worth \$70,000 — which they had won fair and square with their blood, sweat, and tears? For sure, had it been 35 surviving free white [privateers](#), they would not have been denied this booty which belonged to them, but because they were instead free blacks, it never even **occurred** to any of the white players in this legal drama to give them their prize schooner back! One of the open issues of this drama, therefore, is: what happened to the [La Amistad](#)? **Where did this valuable piece of property go? Which white men were allowed to profit from it?** Our history books are, of course, silent. This is a question which, due to the ingrained nature of our race prejudice, it has never occurred to us to pose:



"In those parts of the Union in which the negroes are no longer slaves, they have in no wise drawn nearer to the whites. On the contrary, the prejudice of the race appears to be stronger in the States which have abolished slavery ... and nowhere is it so intolerant as in those States where servitude has never been known."



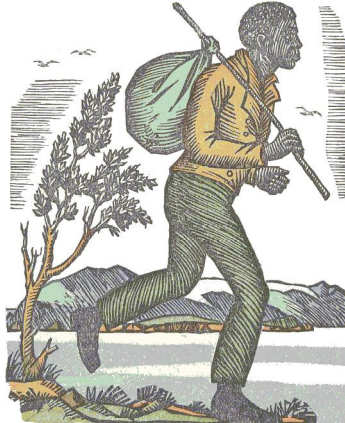
— Alexis de Tocqueville

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Surprise surprise! It was a white man's game in which the person of color was but a pawn.⁹



Here the executive committee of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society position themselves around [Robert Purvis](#) during this year. I **don't** mean to suggest that **all** of these folks would have **totally** agreed with Phillips or with his white-man's-game of Set-The-White-Man-Free-From-Being-His-Brother's-Keeper. I only mean to insist that that was in fact the **predominant**, most **influential** white attitude:



During this year was published in Philadelphia PA by the firm of Campbell & Powers John Campbell's NEGRO-MANIA: BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THE FALSELY ASSUMED EQUALITY OF THE VARIOUS RACES OF MEN; DEMONSTRATED BY THE INVESTIGATIONS OF CHAMPOLLION, WILKINSON AND OTHERS, TOGETHER

9. Maybe you don't agree.



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WITH A CONCLUDING CHAPTER, PRESENTING A COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF THE CONDITION OF THE NEGROES IN THE WEST INDIES BEFORE AND SINCE EMANCIPATION.

EMANCIPATION
JAMES WILKINSON

Surprise surprise! Black people are inferior to white people.²

In this year also appeared [Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright](#)'s REPORT ON THE DISEASES AND PECULIARITIES OF THE NEGRO RACE ([DeBow's Review](#) XI), in which he declared the seeking of freedom by people of color to be a medical condition, an illness, an ailment to which he assigned the New Greek designation "[drapetomania](#)." (To prevent such an ailment from manifesting itself the slavemaster must avoid making himself too familiar with his or her slaves, never in any manner allowing them to consider themselves as equals with their white masters. Upon the detection symptoms of this medical condition, such as the slave's becoming sulky and dissatisfied without cause, the curative treatment should include "whipping the devil out of them."¹⁰

10. [To be perfectly frank here: I have yet to establish that any sensible person at the time took Dr. Cartwright seriously, so the possibility remains open, at least in my own mind) that he was merely some sort of running dog whom only a modern historian reconstructing this in retrospect would ever tendentiously take seriously. What do you think?]



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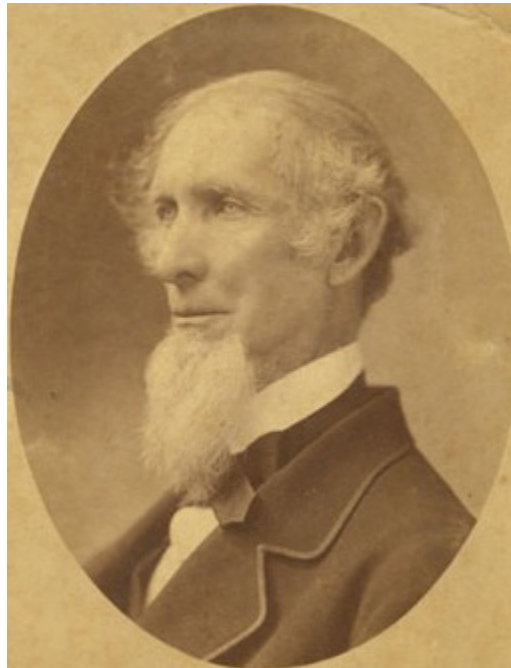
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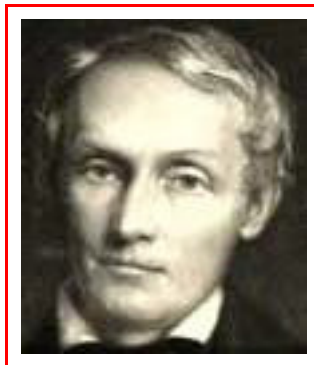
(Other Southern physicians would suggest that the removal of both big toes might be adequate to render running impossible.)

The first complete gorilla skeleton reached England. Previously, all that had been seen by Europeans had been a few skulls. Clearly, gorilla people were also inferior to white people.

Publication of [Dr. Josiah Clark Nott](#)'s AN ESSAY ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF MANKIND, VIEWED IN CONNECTION WITH NEGRO [SLAVERY](#) DELIVERED BEFORE THE SOUTHERN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION, 14 DECEMBER, 1850.¹¹



[Professor Samuel George Morton](#)'s ADDITIONAL OBSERVATION ON HYBRIDITY.



11. The attitude of the Southern Rights Association seems to have been that black slaves had no Southern rights. The attitude of Dr. Nott seems to have been that one sufficient reason for the appropriateness of such a political fact had been revealed by the science of biology — according to the advice of the most prominent of the learned white practitioners in that field.



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December 6, Saturday: The group of about 100 armed white men under the leadership of Lieutenant Thomas Sweeny, who had been besieged in their Camp Independence since November 12th, at this point made their move out of the native American controlled territory and back to the white settlements.

In Concord, [Henry Thoreau](#) was surveying a six-acre woodlot near Annursnack Hill for Samuel Barrett and did not make an entry in his journal. This woodlot had belonged to the Lorings and was being sold to George Brooks. The bill for the survey was \$3.⁰⁰. Neighbors mentioned on the survey papers are Prescott, Barrett, Billings,¹² and Easterbrook.

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

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

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

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

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/5.htm

Meanwhile, in New-York, Walt Whitman was witnessing the landing of [Lajos Kossuth](#), with cannon salutes, a grand parade down Broadway, a banquet for 400 at the Irving House, and a torchlit procession. This great white advocate of liberty was here in our great whitman land of liberty at last! Whitman wished courage "To a Foil'd European Revolutionaire."

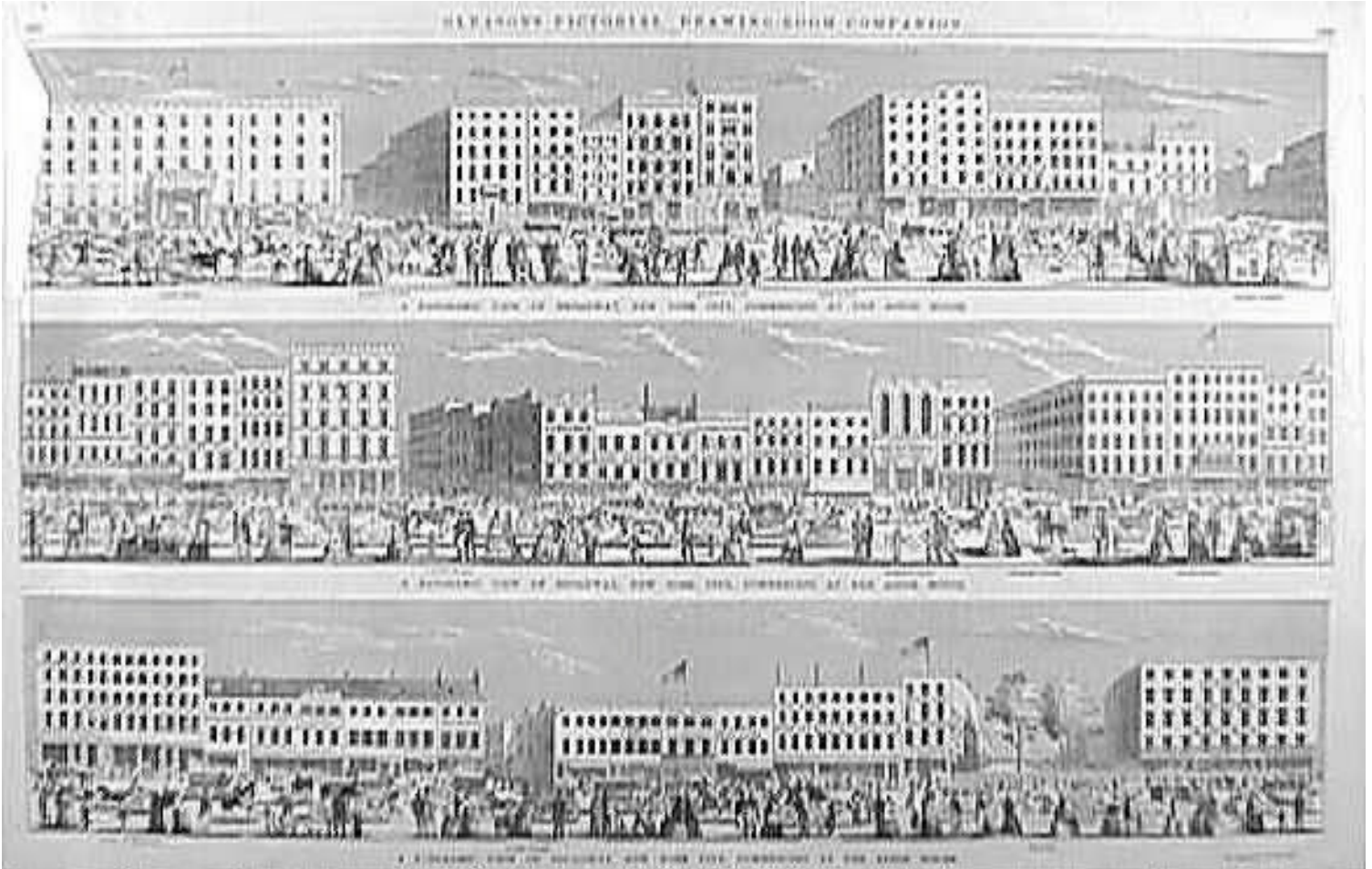


Incidentally, note the "Kossuth hat." Although it doesn't show in this particular illustration, such a hat sported an ostrich plume.

12. I imagine this is not Boston's illustrator and architect Hammatt Billings, but perhaps the home of Nathaniel and John Billings on Old Concord Road?

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This is what Broadway Avenue would look like, nine years later:



Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, a ceremony of an entirely different order was being transacted. William Parker's three white neighbors, as well as all black men that armed posses could hunt "like partridges upon the mountain" (as one person described the event), that is, culprits who had been singled out merely by their availability and the color of their pelt regardless of whether they were anywhere near that home on that night in September, were being arraigned for treason against the United States of America, on the allegation that refusal to assist Gorsuch and his marshall, equally with resisting the marshall, amounted to making war. It seems that the no-nos the nation derived from this incident were not "what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world" but "something has gone seriously awry when white men refuse to side with their own race," and not "resist not evil" but "we can't let niggers know how to use guns." [Friend Lucretia Mott](#) and her associates were in the courtroom "knitting furiously." Each man wore a red, white, and blue knitted scarf around his neck.

This charge of conspiring to make war could of course not be sustained, but Judge John Kane made a remark about "itinerant female agitators" that indicated he would have found the defendants guilty if there had been



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any way to do so. This case became central in the ongoing debate within the antislavery movement over resort to violence in the face of injustice. [Friend Lucretia Mott](#) summed up her position with the thought that we all know, of course, that good is of God, and therefore we must be mistaken if we ever suppose it can come from our doing evil. I am bringing this incident to your attention because it bears on the issue of whether Thoreau was a nonviolenter. Mott holds unimpeached credentials as a nonviolenter, and Thoreau's credentials as a nonviolenter have been attacked by his biographer Richardson on the basis of his reaction to the Harper's Ferry raid of 1859, and yet it is clear that had the black activist William Parker been captured and put on trial for the murder of this white master, Mott would have reacted in exactly the same way Thoreau reacted to John Brown's conduct. In fact Mott's deportment and words in the case of this charge of treason in the "Christiana riot" in 1851 exactly parallel Thoreau's deportment and words in the case of John Brown.

We note especially the words that Thoreau would have read about John Brown as a moral hero in the presence of the widow Brown, over the grave at North Elba on July 4, 1860:

John Brown's career for the last six weeks of his life was meteor-like, flashing through the darkness in which we live. I know of nothing so miraculous in our history.

If any person, in a lecture or conversation at that time, cited any ancient example of heroism, such as Cato or Tell or Winkelried, passing over the recent deeds and words of Brown, it was felt by any intelligent audience of Northern men to be tame and inexcusably far-fetched.

For my own part, I commonly attend more to nature than to man, but any affecting human event may blind our eyes to natural objects. I was so absorbed in him as to be surprised whenever I detected the routine of the natural world surviving still, or met persons going about their affairs indifferent. It appeared strange to me that the "little dipper" should be still diving quietly in the river, as of yore; and it suggested that this bird might continue to dive here when Concord should be no more.

I felt that he, a prisoner in the midst of his enemies and under sentence of death, if consulted as to his next step or resource, could answer more wisely than all his countrymen beside. He best understood his position; he contemplated it most calmly. Comparatively, all other men, North and South, were beside themselves. Our thoughts could not revert to any greater or wiser or better man with whom to contrast him, for he, then and there, was above them all. The man this country was about to hang appeared the greatest and best in it.

Years were not required for a revolution of public opinion; days, nay hours, produced marked changes in this case. Fifty who were ready to say, on going into our meeting in honor of him in Concord, that he ought to be hung, would not say it when they came out. They heard his words read; they saw the earnest faces of the congregation; and perhaps they joined at last in singing the hymn in his praise.

The order of instructors was reversed. I heard that one preacher, who at first was shocked and stood aloof, felt obliged at last, after he was hung, to make him the subject of a sermon, in which, to some extent, he eulogized the man, but said that



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his act was a failure. An influential class-teacher thought it necessary, after the services, to tell his grown-up pupils that at first he thought as the preacher did then, but now he thought that John Brown was right. But it was understood that his pupils were as much ahead of the teacher as he was ahead of the priest; and I know for a certainty that very little boys at home had already asked their parents, in a tone of surprise, why God did not interfere to save him. In each case, the constituted teachers were only half conscious that they were not leading, but being dragged, with some loss of time and power.

The more conscientious preachers, the Bible men, they who talk about principle, and doing to others as you would that they should do unto you – how could they fail to recognize him, by far the greatest preacher of them all, with the Bible in his life and in his acts, the embodiment of principle, who actually carried out the golden rule? All whose moral sense had been aroused, who had a calling from on high to preach, sided with him. What confessions he extracted from the cold and conservative! It is remarkable, but on the whole it is well, that it did not prove the occasion for a new sect of Brownites being formed in our midst.

They, whether within the Church or out of it, who adhere to the spirit and let go the letter, and are accordingly called infidel, were as usual foremost to recognize him. Men have been hung in the South before for attempting to rescue slaves, and the North was not much stirred by it. Whence, then, this wonderful difference? We were not so sure of their devotion to principle. We made a subtle distinction, forgot human laws, and did homage to an idea. The North, I mean the living North, was suddenly all transcendental. It went behind the human law, it went behind the apparent failure, and recognized eternal justice and glory. Commonly, men live according to a formula, and are satisfied if the order of law is observed, but in this instance they, to some extent, returned to original perceptions, and there was a slight revival of old religion. They saw that what was called order was confusion, what was called justice, injustice, and that the best was deemed the worst. This attitude suggested a more intelligent and generous spirit than that which actuated our forefathers, and the possibility, in the course of ages, of a revolution in behalf of another and an oppressed people.

Most Northern men, and a few Southern ones, were wonderfully stirred by Brown's behavior and words. They saw and felt that they were heroic and noble, and that there had been nothing quite equal to them in their kind in this country, or in the recent history of the world. But the minority were unmoved by them. They were only surprised and provoked by the attitude of their neighbors. They saw that Brown was brave, and that he believed that he had done right, but they did not detect any further peculiarity in him. Not being accustomed to make fine distinctions, or to appreciate magnanimity, they read his



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letters and speeches as if they read them not. They were not aware when they approached a heroic statement, – they did not know when they burned. They did not feel that he spoke with authority, and hence they only remembered that the law must be executed. They remembered the old formula, but did not hear the new revelation. The man who does not recognize in Brown's words a wisdom and nobleness, and therefore an authority, superior to our laws, is a modern Democrat. This is the test by which to discover him. He is not willfully but constitutionally blind on this side, and he is consistent with himself. Such has been his past life; no doubt of it. In like manner he has read history and his Bible, and he accepts, or seems to accept, the last only as an established formula, and not because he has been convicted by it. You will not find kindred sentiments in his commonplace book, if he has one.

When a noble deed is done, who is likely to appreciate it? They who are noble themselves. I was not surprised that certain of my neighbors spoke of John Brown as an ordinary felon, for who are they? They have either much flesh, or much office, or much coarseness of some kind. They are not ethereal natures in any sense. The dark qualities predominate in them. Several of them are decidedly pachydermatous. I say it in sorrow, not in anger. How can a man behold the light who has no answering inward light? They are true to their right, but when they look this way they see nothing, they are blind. For the children of the light to contend with them is as if there should be a contest between eagles and owls. Show me a man who feels bitterly toward John Brown, and let me hear what noble verse he can repeat. He'll be as dumb as if his lips were stone.

It is not every man who can be a Christian, even in a very moderate sense, whatever education you give him. It is a matter of constitution and temperament, after all. He may have to be born again many times. I have known many a man who pretended to be a Christian, in whom it was ridiculous, for he had no genius for it. It is not every man who can be a freeman, even.

Editors persevered for a good while in saying that Brown was crazy; but at last they said only that it was "a crazy scheme," and the only evidence brought to prove it was that it cost him his life. I have no doubt that if he had gone with five thousand men, liberated a thousand slaves, killed a hundred or two slaveholders, and had as many more killed on his own side, but not lost his own life, these same editors would have called it by a more respectable name. Yet he has been far more successful than that. He has liberated many thousands of slaves, both North and-South. They seem to have known nothing about living or dying for a principle. They all called him crazy then; who calls him crazy now?

All through the excitement occasioned by his remarkable attempt and subsequent behavior the Massachusetts Legislature, not taking any steps for the defense of her citizens who were likely



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to be carried to Virginia as witnesses and exposed to the violence of a slaveholding mob, was wholly absorbed in a liquor-agency question, and indulging in poor jokes on the word "extension." Bad spirits occupied their thoughts. I am sure that no statesman up to the occasion could have attended to that question at all at that time – a very vulgar question to attend to at any time!

When I looked into a liturgy of the Church of England, printed near the end of the last century, in order to find a service applicable to the case of Brown, I found that the only martyr recognized and provided for by it was King Charles the First, an eminent scamp. Of all the inhabitants of England and of the world, he was the only one, according to this authority, whom that church had made a martyr and saint of; and for more than a century it had celebrated his martyrdom, so called, by an annual service. What a satire on the Church is that!

Look not to legislatures and churches for your guidance, nor to any soulless incorporated bodies, but to inspirited or inspired ones.

What avail all your scholarly accomplishments and learning, compared with wisdom and manhood? To omit his other behavior, see what a work this comparatively unread and unlettered man wrote within six weeks. Where is our professor of belles-lettres, or of logic and rhetoric, who can write so well? He wrote in prison, not a History of the World, like Raleigh, but an American book which I think will live longer than that. I do not know of such words, uttered under such circumstances, and so copiously withal, in Roman or English or any history. What a variety of themes he touched on in that short space! There are words in that letter to his wife, respecting the education of his daughters, which deserve to be framed and hung over every mantelpiece in the land. Compare this earnest wisdom with that of Poor Richard.

The death of [Washington] Irving, which at any other time would have attracted universal attention, having occurred while these things were transpiring, went almost unobserved. I shall have to read of it in the biography of authors.

Literary gentlemen, editors, and critics think that they know how to write, because they have studied grammar and rhetoric; but they are egregiously mistaken. The art of composition is as simple as the discharge of a bullet from a rifle, and its masterpieces imply an infinitely greater force behind them. This unlettered man's speaking and writing are standard English. Some words and phrases deemed vulgarisms and Americanisms before, he has made standard American; such as "It will pay." It suggests that the one great rule of composition – and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this – is, to speak the truth. This first, this second, this third; pebbles in your mouth or not. This demands earnestness and manhood chiefly.

We seem to have forgotten that the expression, a liberal



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education, originally meant among the Romans one worthy of free men; while the learning of trades and professions by which to get your livelihood merely was considered worthy of slaves only. But taking a hint from the word, I would go a step further, and say that it is not the man of wealth and leisure simply, though devoted to art, or science, or literature, who, in a true sense, is liberally educated, but only the earnest and free man. In a slaveholding country like this, there can be no such thing as a liberal education tolerated by the State; and those scholars of Austria and France who, however learned they may be, are contented under their tyrannies have received only a servile education.

Nothing could his enemies do but it redounded to his infinite advantage – that is, to the advantage of his cause. They did not hang him at once, but reserved him to preach to them. And then there was another great blunder. They did not hang his four followers with him; that scene was still postponed; and so his victory was prolonged and completed. No theatrical manager could have arranged things so wisely to give effect to his behavior and words. And who, think you, was the manager? Who placed the slave-woman and her child, whom he stooped to kiss for a symbol, between his prison and the gallows?

We soon saw, as he saw, that he was not to be pardoned or rescued by men. That would have been to disarm him, to restore to him a material weapon, a Sharps' rifle, when he had taken up the sword of the spirit – the sword with which he has really won his greatest and most memorable victories. Now he has not laid aside the sword of the spirit, for he is pure spirit himself, and his sword is pure spirit also.

“He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene,
Nor called the gods with vulgar spite,
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bowed his comely head
Down as upon a bed.”

What a transit was that of his horizontal body alone, but just cut down from the gallows-tree! We read, that at such a time it passed through Philadelphia, and by Saturday night had reached New York. Thus like a meteor it shot through the Union from the Southern regions toward the North! No such freight had the cars borne since they carried him Southward alive.

On the day of his translation, I heard, to be sure, that he was hung, but I did not know what that meant; I felt no sorrow on that account; but not for a day or two did I even hear that he was dead, and not after any number of days shall I believe it. Of all the men who were said to be my contemporaries, it seemed to me that John Brown was the only one who had not died. I never hear of a man named Brown now –and I hear of them pretty often– I never hear of any particularly brave and earnest man, but my first thought is of John Brown, and what relation he may be to him. I meet him at every turn. He is more alive than ever he

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was. He has earned immortality. He is not confined to North Elba nor to Kansas. He is no longer working in secret. He works in public, and in the clearest light that shines on this land.



And it is also worthy of note that on October 25-26, 1860 (published November 3) [Friend Lucretia Mott](#), the foremost spokesperson for nonviolence in the abolitionist movement in America, brought forward the position she had originally taken in regard to the “Christiana riot” near Philadelphia in 1851 by declaring

It is not John Brown the soldier we praise, it is John Brown the moral hero.



We might be tempted to declare that [Thoreau](#) was the most belligerent nonresistor of evil the world had yet seen, but in fact that description had already been awarded to someone. It was awarded by [Robert Purvis](#) to [Friend Lucretia](#), and (despite what was said in the heat of the Civil War by Horace Greeley’s newspaper in New-York, in mockery of her) there is no shadow of a doubt that [Friend Lucretia](#) was for the totality of her life a convinced disbeliever in all violence.



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1852

[Robert Purvis](#) became chairman of the General Vigilance Committee of the Underground Railroad. He would serve in this capacity until 1857.



1853

Since children of color had been being seated apart from the white children in the public schools of Byberry, the township in which [Robert Purvis](#) lived, and then they had created a racially segregated black school which was in Purvis's estimate no more than "a shanty," he began to refuse to pay his considerable taxes, asserting that such a refusal was "a vindication of his rights and personal dignity, against an encroachment upon them as contemptibly mean as it was infamously despotic." The directors of the public schools responded by rescinding their exclusionary edict. (This meant that the local rich farmer of color would be able to continue to enter his children in the public schools, but it did not mean that the local rich farmer of color would be able to, for instance, enter his farm's livestock in the local farm fair!)



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1859

[Robert Purvis](#) was the only member of color, of the old-line Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.





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1860

October 25, Thursday-26, Friday: [Friend Lucretia Mott](#) attempted some spin-doctoring at the 24th annual meeting of



the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia, spin-doctoring which would be reported on November 3, 1860 in the [National Anti-Slavery Standard](#). According to that source, she had been glad that the resolution



accepted by the meeting did not sanction the measures resorted to by John Brown rather than those which had always been approved by the Pennsylvania branch of this society, and by the national organization of which it was a part. She had read, from the society's Declaration of Sentiments, what she had said were not only her own views, but also the views always sponsored by this society:

"Our principles lead us to reject and to intreat the oppressed to reject all carnal weapons, relying solely on those which are might through God to the pulling down of strongholds." We did not countenance force, and it did not become those -Friends and others- who go to the polls to elect a commander-in-chief of the army and navy, whose business it would be to use that army and navy, if needed, to keep the slaves of the South in their chains, and secure to the masters the undisturbed enjoyment of their system - it did not become such to find fault with us because we praise John Brown for his heroism. For it is not John Brown the soldier that we praise; it is John Brown the moral hero; John Brown the noble confessor and martyr whom we honor, and whom we think it proper to honor in this day when men are carried away by the corrupt and pro-slavery clamor against him.



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Our weapons were drawn only from the armory of Truth; they were those of faith and hope and love. They were those of moral indignation strongly expressed against wrong. [Robert Purvis](#) has said that I was "the most belligerent non-resistant he ever saw." I accept the character he gives me; and I glory in it. I have no idea, because I am a non-resistant, of submitting tamely to injustice inflicted either on me or on the slave. I will oppose it with all the moral powers with which I am endowed. I am no advocate of passivity. Quakerism, as I understand it, does not mean quietism. The early Friends were agitators; disturbers of the peace; and were more obnoxious in their day to charges, which are now so freely made, than we are.

Friend Lucretia concluded by expressing her pleasure that the new resolution committed the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society to nothing inconsistent with the high moral grounds it had ever occupied. She reported a comment by O'Connell, that no revolution was worth the cost of a single drop of human blood. She indicated that John Brown had well illustrated in his own case the superiority of moral power to physical power — of the sword of the spirit to the sword of the flesh.

[Robert Purvis](#) also addressed this assembly:

What is the attitude of your boasting, braggart republic toward the 600,000 free people of colour who swell its population and add to its wealth? I have already alluded to the dictum of Judge Taney in the notorious Dred Scott decision. The dictum reveals the animus of the whole government; it is a fair example of the cowardly and malignant spirit that pervades the entire policy of the country. The end of the policy is, undoubtedly, to destroy the coloured man, as a man. With this view, it says a coloured man shall not sue and recover his lawful property; he shall not bear arms and train in the militia; he shall not be a commander of a vessel, not even of the meanest craft that creeps along the creeks and bays of your Southern coast; he shall not carry a mailbag, or serve as a porter in a post-office.

November 3, Sunday: Professor [William Henry Harvey](#) wrote to [Harvard professor Asa Gray](#) about the completion of his reading of [Charles Darwin](#)'s ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES:

I have no objection *per se* to a doctrine of derivative descent.... I have had a short friendly correspondence with Darwin on the subject, but without much result one way or the other.... His latter chapters are those which have most impressed me.... Certainly there are many *broad facts* which can be read by a supposition of descent with variation. *How broad* those facts are, and how broad the limits of descent with variation may be, are questions which I do not think his theory affords answer to. It opens vistas vast, and so it evidently points whence, through time, light may come by which to see the objects in those vistas, but to my mind it does no more.... A good deal of Darwin reads to me like an ingenious dream.

ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES



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Friend [Lucretia Mott](#), the foremost spokesperson for nonviolence in the abolitionist movement in America, brought forward the position she had taken in regard to the “Christiana riot” near Philadelphia by declaring in regard to the raid by John Brown that¹³

It is not John Brown the soldier we praise, it is John Brown the moral hero; John Brown the noble confessor and patient martyr we honor, and whom we think it proper to honor in this day when men are carried away by the corrupt and proslavery clamour against him. Our weapons were drawn only from the armory of Truth; they were those of faith and love.



Nevertheless, in this supercharged atmosphere in which men were just then being asked to abandon the arms of faith and love in order to pick up the “New Minnie,” Lucretia’s use of the vocabulary of violence, her use of terms like “weapons” and “armory,” were bound to be problematic, bound to be misused by those, such as [Horace Greeley](#), who were determined to misunderstand and mock.

[NO ENTRY IN THOREAU’S JOURNAL, FOR 3 NOVEMBER]

13. We might say that HDT was the most belligerent nonresistor of evil the world had yet seen, but in fact that description had already been awarded to someone. It was awarded by [Robert Purvis](#) to [Lucretia Mott](#), and there is no shadow of a doubt that Friend Lucretia was a convinced disbeliever in violence. These words of hers are from the [National Anti-Slavery Standard](#) of November 3, 1860.





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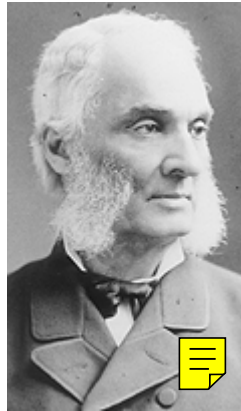
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1865

After the civil war, [Robert Purvis](#) would for a time take an interest in municipal reform in Philadelphia, but would spend most of his time tending his tree-lined lawn, his fine orchard, and his prize-winning livestock. His son Charles B. Purvis would become surgeon-in-chief at the Freedmen's Hospital, and would for more than 30 years (1868-1907) be a professor at the Howard University College of Medicine.



1875

[Harriet Purvis](#) died, and was buried at the Fair Hills [Friends'](#) burial ground near her home in Byberry, Pennsylvania. (Later, the widower [Robert Purvis](#) would remarry with another resident of Byberry, [Friend](#) Tacy Townsend.)



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1883

December 4, Tuesday: [Robert Purvis](#) presided at the 50th anniversary meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, held in Philadelphia. He was one of the society's three surviving founders, the other two being former society secretary Elizur Wright, Jr. and Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#). Appearing in this year was R.C. Smedley's HISTORY OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN CHESTER AND THE NEIGHBORING COUNTIES OF PENNSYLVANIA, for which Purvis had supplied a 3-page sketch of his parentage and early abolitionist activities.



1898

April 15, Friday: Having reached the age of 87, [Robert Purvis](#) had a stroke and died. He was survived by his 2d wife, [Friend](#) Tacy Townsend Purvis, and his son Dr. Charles B. Purvis. The funeral would be held in Philadelphia and his body would be interred at the Fair Hill Friends' burial ground.¹⁴

A historical marker would be positioned at 1601 Mount Vernon Street, the last house in which he had lived.

14. [Friends](#) burial ground? –Had this man been a [Quaker](#)? Refer to Henry Joel Cadbury's NEGRO MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, which lists as recorded ministers, and as otherwise active members, the following persons: William Allen, Osborn T. Taylor, Joseph Coleman, [Paul Cuffe](#), Daniel Drew, Noah McLean, Miles Lassiter, David Bustill, William Bowen, Sarah Mapps Douglas, Jeremiah Bowser, Cyrus Bustill, David Mapps, Grace Mapps, Hannah Conn, Emily Rodman Williams, Caesar Sanky, Sarah Antone, and [Robert Purvis](#).



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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: October 21, 2013



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ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



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



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

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