

## LIEUTENANT EZRA RIPLEY





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LT. EZRA RIPLEY

1822




April 10, Wednesday: [Ebenezer Weaver Pierce](#) was born to Ebenezer Peirce and Joanna (Weaver) Peirce in Assonet, Massachusetts, in an old New England family. He would attend several local academies such as Assonet and Andover Academy, but not college. Instead he would rely on his family's wealth and engage in sheep farming, while rising in the Massachusetts State Militia until by the beginning of the Civil War he had achieved the rank of militia brigadier general.



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1826

 August 10, Thursday: [Ezra Ripley](#) was born in Waltham to [Mrs. Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley](#) and the [Reverend Samuel Ripley](#) and named in honor of the Reverend's reverend father (he would become a Lieutenant of the 29th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers and succumb to illness and the heat at the age of 36 in Helena, Arkansas on the Mississippi River near Vicksburg on July 28, 1863).

Doting father Allan Melvill wrote to Peter Gansevoort about the wellbeing of his 8-year-old son [Herman Melvill](#), "I depend much on your kind attention to my dear Boy who will be truly grateful for the least favour — let him avoid green Fruit & unseasonable exposure to the Sun & heat."

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

*5th day 10th of 8 M / Father Rodman said a few words as did Francis Carr, the first time in Public, he is a friend who needs care, & I hope wisdom & prudence will go hand & hand with those who may find it their places to lend a helping hand. —*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



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**1846**

[William Thaddeus Harris](#) graduated from [Harvard College](#). He would study for the law, but would never practice.

In Waltham the 1st bridge was erected on Moody Street across the Charles River (this bridge would be redone in 1871, in 1921, and in 1946).

The [Reverend Samuel Ripley](#) and [Mrs. Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley](#) had been operating an academy in Waltham that prepared young men to enter [Harvard College](#). Sarah was the instructor in Greek, Latin, and German. In this year, empty nesters having raised their brood of children, totaling 7, Samuel and Sarah retired to the Old Manse in [Concord](#) to escape the “dreary passage of constant labours and homesick boys,” while son [Ezra Ripley](#), last one out of the house, matriculated at Harvard. The Reverend would die during the following year but his widow Sarah would survive him for another 20 years.

The [Harvard Class of 1846](#) funded a monument in the cemetery of Plymouth, Massachusetts, in memory of their tutor and proctor [Robert Bartlett](#):

To [Robert Bartlett](#), an alumnus of [Harvard College](#), who obtained the highest place among his companions, by genius, by study and learning, always distinguished by every form of virtue, most devoted to religion, to truth and liberty, who sacredly discharged all the offices of life, the most excellent and dutiful son, the most deserving brother, the most faithful friend, for almost four years the learned, kind and careful instructor, hurried away by a hasty death; in consequence of distinguished kindness to themselves, the members of the class of 1846, the last who listened to his instruction, have erected this monument.

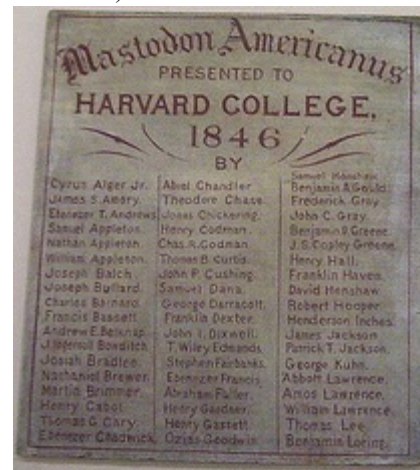
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The rules of “rugby” [football](#), which dated to William Webb Ellis’s famous act of 1823, were formalized.

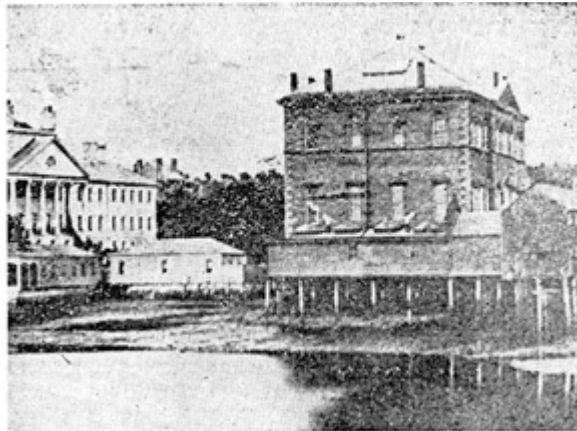
SPORTS

Professor [John White Webster](#) had gotten enthused about a mastodon skeleton *Mammot americanum* that had been found in a New Jersey bog in 1844 and was available on the market for only \$3,000, and jumped at the chance to acquire it for the [Harvard](#) Museum supposing that the officials of the college would be as enthusiastic as he was about these magnificently preserved bones and supposing that he could easily raise the funds to reimburse him for his grand procurement (but in this year he discovered that he had been quite mistaken, because some of the local folks whose names had been inscribed on the presentation plaques had failed to make good on their promises and had left him holding the bag for the balance of the debt).



[Professor Webster](#) would be undaunted by this residual obligation. He knew he would be able to turn to his richie-rich Boston acquaintance Doctor [George Parkman](#), who although he was personally rather unpleasant was the sole owner of a whole potfull of downtown real estate, for a personal loan to cover the balance.

A new building for the [Harvard Medical College](#) was erected upon land belonging to [Doctor Parkman](#) down on the flats of the Charles River at the foot of North Grove Street near the Massachusetts Hospital on Allen Street (now Massachusetts General) and near the New Gaol at Foundry Wharf, all of this in the neighborhood of the tollhouse at the [Boston](#) approaches to the Cambridge Bridge:



(Don't go looking for this two-story brick building set on piers at the waterfront near Massachusetts General Hospital. It was long ago torn down.)



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1853

May: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

**CONSULT THIS ISSUE**

This month's issue of [Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science, and Art](#).

**CONSULT THIS ISSUE**

[Waldo Emerson](#) began to compose the genre of material he would use to denigrate [Henry Thoreau](#) in his obituary: pounding beans when he should have been pounding empires, lacking ambition, always being in opposition, leading huckleberry parties when he should have been leading parties of engineers, and being forgotten. So he didn't impress Thoreau all that much, well, he had disciples, there were people whom he did impress, quite reputable people in fact, people who were doing something with their lives — and he impressed them a whole lot.

[Ezra Ripley](#) of Concord got married with [Harriet M. Hayden](#) of East Cambridge, about whose family little is known. Might she have been a daughter of [Lewis Hayden](#) and [Harriet Bell Hayden](#) of Beacon Hill in Boston, near the African meetinghouse, whose home functioned as a stop on the Underground Railroad?





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1861

June 10, Monday: [Ebenezer Weaver Pierce](#) served with General Benjamin Butler and led Union forces at the battle of [Big Bethel / Bethel Church on the Virginia peninsula near Newport News](#). The result was a disaster.



June 10: A. m. to prairie.



June 10: “Dear Mother ... nothing has happened that I can tell you of that I think of now ... It is such hard work to write that you must not expect every little particular ...

Dont you show this to any body now nor let either of the boys. Representation of your loving son shooting a bird with that gun that kicks so.”<sup>1</sup>

[COMMENT: ONE IS REMINDED OF THOREAU’S WISDOM IN WALDEN. HERE WE CAN SEE HIM IN THE BACKGROUND OF THIS ACCOUNT, APPLYING THAT WISDOM, WISDOM WHICH PERHAPS WAS DIFFERENT FROM BRONSON ALCOTT’S DISDAIN OF “MONSTROUS BOYS” AND CONTEMPT FOR “THE GUNNER’S CRACK AIMING DEATH TO THOSE JOYOUS SONGSTERS OF THE AIR AND GROVES,” APPLYING IT IN REAL LIFE WITH A REAL MANCHILD, WAITING AND WATCHING AND PREPARED AT THE RIGHT OCCASION TO HELP THIS YOUNG MAN PUT ASIDE CHILDISH THINGS:]

1.PUT ALCOTT QUOTE ABOUT KILLING BIRDS HERE.



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... As for fowling, during the last years that I carried a gun my excuse was that I was studying ornithology, and sought only new or rare birds. But I confess that I am now inclined to think that there is a finer way of studying ornithology than this. It requires so much closer attention to the habits of the birds, that, if for that reason only, I have been willing to omit the gun. Yet notwithstanding the objection on the score of humanity, I am compelled to doubt if equally valuable sports are ever substituted for these; and when some of my friends have asked me anxiously about their boys, whether they should let them hunt, I have answered, yes, - remembering that it was one of the best parts of my education, - **make** them hunters, though sportsmen only at first, if possible, mighty hunters at last, so that they shall not find game large enough for them in this or any vegetable wilderness, - hunters as well as fishers of men. Thus far I am of the opinion of Chaucer's nun, who

"yave not of the text a pulled hen

That saith that hunters ben not holy men."

There is a period in the history of the individual, as of the race, when the hunters are the "best men," as the Algonquins called them. We cannot but pity the boy who has never fired a gun; he is no more humane, while his education has been sadly neglected. This was my answer with respect to those youths who were bent on this pursuit, trusting that they would soon outgrow it. No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child. I warn you mothers, that my sympathies do not always make the usual **anthropic** distinctions.

December: The [Houston](#) family moved back to Huntsville, Alabama and rented the Steamboat House.

Despite the debacle at Big Bethel, [Ebenezer Weaver Pierce](#) was named colonel of the 29th Massachusetts Infantry.

**US CIVIL WAR**

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1862

Spring: At the POW camp for Confederate soldiers and Southern sympathizers, Fort Warren on Georges Island in



Boston Harbor, prisoner exchanges were from time to time occurring. This spring, as one group of lucky Southrons was being processed, they were allowed to spend their last night in incarceration drinking whiskey and dancing with the fort's laundry girls.



[Lieutenant Ezra Ripley](#) of Company B of the 29th Massachusetts Infantry and several other officers brought charges against their commanding officer Colonel [Ebenezer Weaver Pierce](#) for several reported indecent activities, including forcing several privates to give a concert composed of “certain improper, vulgar and indecent songs,” during which the commanding officer “did laugh and encourage them while singing.” Specifically, the commander enjoyed a “very vulgar” ditty known as “The Farmer’s Daughter.” In addition, there was an accusation that there was, in their colonel’s possession, in a locked drawer, “obscene and immoral literature” containing “low and bawdy” pictures and engravings. In addition, they alleged that he had left his post to consort with local plantation slave women. The trial consumed 8 days, during which the officers of the court considered the contents of a “vulgar” book entitled FRANCES HILL. The colonel was found guilty on 3 counts and recommended for separation from the US Army. However, a 78-year-old veteran of the War of 1812 and Mexican War in charge of the Norfolk and Fortress Monroe area (the oldest general on either side), General John Wool, obviously well aware that wars were all about fighting with fucking being more or less of a side issue, then vacated that ruling. A memoir of [Lieutenant Ezra Ripley](#) of Company B that would be prepared at Harvard College would need to confine itself to the observation that “some reasons interfered with his promotion, which were in a high degree honorable to him, but they cannot properly be mentioned here.”

US CIVIL WAR



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Our national birthday, Friday the 4th of July: It was the 4th of July in the Year of Our Lord 1862, [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s 58th birthday and our national birthday. The author had a piece currently appearing in [The Atlantic Monthly](#). Also in this issue was a pyrotechnic depiction of the battle between the USS *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* (re-christened the *Virginia*) that was currently going down in [New-York](#) harbor. Initially posted at Fortress Monroe, the 29th Massachusetts Infantry under [Colonel Pierce](#) witnessed the historic naval battle between USS *Monitor* and the *Virginia*.

### US CIVIL WAR

The wounded Colonel Daniel Butterfield lay on his cot and was composing bugle calls on the backs of envelopes. One of the calls he was developing was a new one to replace the old final call of the day, which had variously been known as "Taps," as "tattoo," and as "lights out." He was trying to make "Taps" become something that would bring comfort to soldiers who were physically exhausted, and peacefulness to soldiers who were of troubled mind:

The music was beautiful on that still summer night and was heard beyond the limits of the Butterfield Brigade as it echoed through the valleys. The next morning, buglers from other Brigades came to visit and to inquire about the new Taps and how to sound it.

### CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY

Nelson J. Waterbury, the head at this point of the Tammany Hall political organization and thus an enormously powerful American politician, declared at this point that the President of the United States of America would need to "set his foot firmly on abolitionism and crush it to pieces." This would be essential to maintaining the fighting spirit of the Union armies. If there was one thing this civil war could not be about, it could not be about the freeing of America's [slaves](#). Don't even think of going there.

### IRISH

In England, a famous river excursion was taking place. The Reverend Charles Ludwidge Dodgson, a dean of Christ Church college in [Oxford University](#), had taken the 2 Liddell sisters, prepubescents, for a row on the Thames River and was inventing a charming story which soon he would write down, about a girl named Alice and her adventures down a rabbit hole. Dodgson subscribed to the Victorian notion that prepubescent humans were purity incarnate and found their purity to be utterly compelling. He liked to take photographs of little girls with their clothes off, as such naked innocence was emblematic of this compelling purity. The Reverend would later publish ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll. For unspecified reasons this dean soon would become a former dean, and be more or less banned from the company of little girls.



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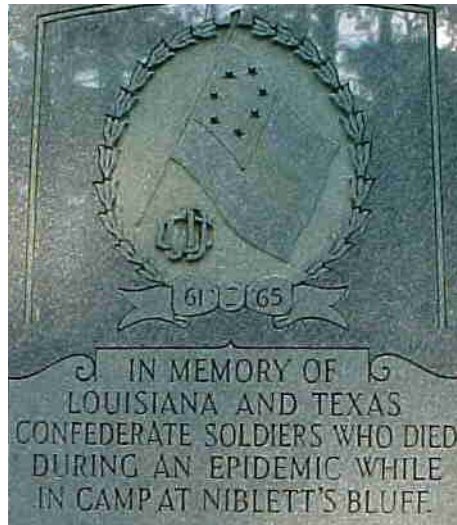
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1863

Lieutenant-Colonel of Engineers [Caleb G. Forshey](#) supervised the construction of a “tête de pont” redoubt (an entrenched bridgehead with both flanks anchored on a river, designed to hold a river crossing by defending against an attack coming from any direction) at Niblett’s Bluff to protect that strategic river crossing between [Texas](#) and Louisiana. His redoubt appears now to have been a rectangular one, with a “salient angle” at the entrance of the fort, of earthen walls apparently about 8 feet high and 6 feet thick, with a “banquette” firing-step so the soldiers could fire over the top and then step back down to reload. His trench line may have also had a “cremailliere,” a saw-toothed line of fortifications that could enable a cross-fire across the front of a line of approaching soldiers. Included in the plan for the Niblett’s Bluff fortification was a “bombproof” bunker covered with earth, to shelter troops during artillery fire, and a secure, water-tight “magazine” for explosives. Typically, this would have been a log or plank room covered with a thick layer of earth, with its entrance to the rear of incoming fire. In order to create visibility and a clear field of fire, all trees around the works were chopped down, and their branches were sharpened and interlaced as an abattis pointing in the direction of an approaching enemy.

### FORSHEY’S SKETCH

As it would turn out, the only actual enemy they would face at this location during the [Civil War](#) would be the measles.



The 29th Massachusetts Infantry under [Colonel Pierce](#) saw a great deal of action, including service in Mississippi. However, before it would be able to go into battle against the Confederates, it would be necessary to resolve an issue among its officers. [Lieutenant Ezra Ripley](#) of Company B was determined that Colonel [Ebenezer Weaver Pierce](#) be removed from command, as it was beneath his dignity as a grandson (and namesake) of the straight-laced Reverend Ezra Ripley of the “Old Manse” in Concord to serve under such a person.

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May: As a part of Barlow's Brigade, Von Steinwehr's Division, Howard's (11th) Corps, the 33rd Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment took part in the battle of Chancellorsville with only minor losses.

[DANIEL FOSTER](#)

The Vicksburg Campaign: Union General Grant would in this month prepare several victories around Vicksburg, Mississippi, the fortified city considered essential to the Union's plans to regain control of the Mississippi River. On May 22d, Grant would begin a siege of the city. After 6 weeks, Confederate General John Pemberton would surrender, giving up the city and 30,000 men. The capture of Port Hudson, Louisiana shortly thereafter would place the entire Mississippi River in Union hands. The Confederacy would be effectively split, no longer able to function as a single entity, and in warfare what that means is impending doom. Doom, da-doom doom.

[US CIVIL WAR](#)



After having served throughout the Peninsula Campaign and the battles of Antietam and Fredericksburg, the 29th Massachusetts Infantry moved with the IX Corps to Kentucky and then Mississippi, arriving during the Vicksburg Campaign. By this point the problematic [Colonel Pierce](#), he of the sex urges and bawdy behavior, had no longer been with them, as he had lost a body part to a Confederate cannonball in White Oak Swamp, Virginia. When he recovered, however, he took his stump back into active service and obtained command of a brigade command in the IX Corps, but remained in Kentucky. When the 29th Massachusetts would march with the IX Corps to participate in the siege of Jackson during July, [Lieutenant Ezra Ripley](#), still it goes without saying nothing but a Lieutenant, would need to be carried in the back of an open wagon. Fat lot of good his presence was doing for the troops of his Company B! As his health further declined he would be transferred into an ambulance.

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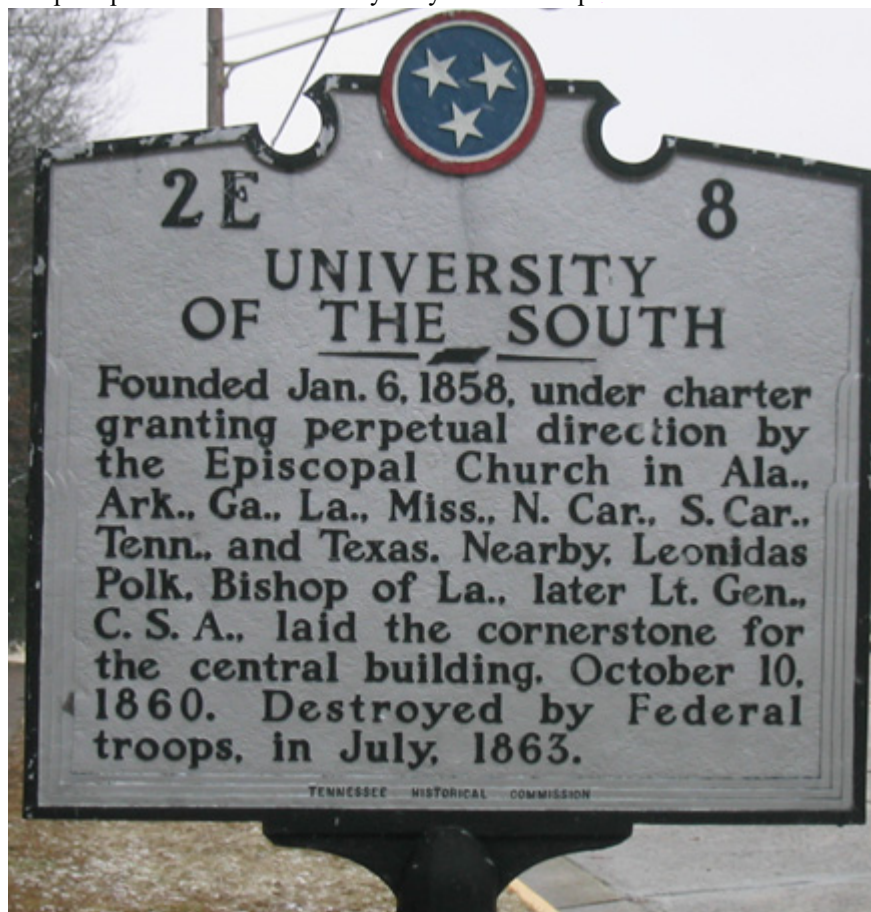
July: [Waldo Emerson](#) decided that war was one of his Good-Things-Leading-To-Human-Elevation:

*I shall always respect War hereafter. The cost of life, the dreary havoc of comfort and time, are overpaid by the Vistas it opens of ... reconstructing and uplifting Society.*

The [52d Regiment of Massachusetts Infantry \(Militia\)](#) was detached to return north because their 9 months of enlisted service was going to expire on August 14th.

During this month the 29th Massachusetts marched with the IX Corps to participate in the siege of Jackson, while Concord's [Lieutenant Ezra Ripley](#) of Company B, still it goes without saying nothing but a Lieutenant, would need to be carried in the back of an open wagon. As his health further declined he would be transferred into an ambulance. Finally he would agree that he needed to go back home to Concord, for his health.

The central building that had been created for the new University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee –the institute for Episcopal students– was destroyed by Federal troops.



[US CIVIL WAR](#)

[Dr. Samuel Kneeland, Jr.](#) entered the corps of surgeons of volunteers and was placed in charge, successively, of the university hospital in New Orleans, and of the marine hospital in Mobile. (Hopefully, he would not



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murder any of the soldiers there in the course of medical experiments.)

When he would learn that his son Toussaint L'Ouverture Delany had been among the survivors of the frontal assault of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers upon Fort Wagner, [Dr. Martin Robison Delany](#) would commit himself wholeheartedly to the cause of the war against the Southern states.



[Frederick Douglass](#) was assured personally by Secretary of War Stanton in [Washington DC](#) that in exchange for recruiting black Southerners as Union soldiers he would be receiving an officer's commission. ( ~~Q~~: Would Stanton keep his promise? ~~A~~: Stanton would be a white man.)



US CIVIL WAR

John Andrew, a Massachusetts lawyer and politician, offered the following words of encouragement to Robert

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Gould Shaw, the white leader of the black recruits:

I know not, Mr. Commander, where in all human history to any given thousand men in arms there has been committed a work at once so proud, so precious, so full of hope and glory, as the work committed to you.

### Carleton Mabee's BLACK FREEDOM

The Tappanite-related American Peace Society itself acquiesced in the war. In doing so, it indulged in the sophistry of considering the war not to be a war in the usual international sense, but merely the attempt of a government to punish its own subjects for breaking the law. Indirectly the peace society ... supported the federal conscription law as necessary without indicating concern to secure exemption for conscientious objectors.... Among the Concord transcendentalists, Thoreau, who had once advocated going to prison to shame the state into giving up both war and slavery, in a sharp reversal now believed that suffering in this war was regenerating the nation. Similarly, the once anti-institutional, individualistic [Waldo Emerson](#) now argued that government must have dictatorial powers during wartime and that participation in war taught self-reliance — surely not the same kind of nonconformist self-reliance that he had once valued. To the disillusionment of [Moncure Daniel Conway](#), one of Emerson's individualistic, antiwar, antislavery disciples, Emerson even accepted an appointment as an official visitor at West Point.



**Pencil sketch of Fort Ridgely in the summer of 1863 after the race war**



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July 28, Tuesday: There was fighting at Stony Lake.

US CIVIL WAR

[Walt Whitman](#) wrote a letter from [Washington DC](#):

### “Specimen Days”

Dear M., –

*I am writing this in the hospital, sitting by the side of a soldier, I do not expect to last many hours. His fate has been a hard one – he seems to be only about 19 or 20 – Erastus Haskell, company K, 141st N. Y. – has been out about a year, and sick or half-sick more than half that time – has been down on the peninsula – was detail'd to go in the band as fifer-boy. While sick, the surgeon told him to keep up with the rest – (probably work'd and march'd too long.) He is a shy, and seems to me a very sensible boy – has fine manners – never complains – was sick down on the peninsula in an old storehouse – typhoid fever. The first week this July was brought up here – journey very bad, no accommodations, no nourishment, nothing but hard jolting, and exposure enough [Page 811] to make a well man sick; (these fearful journeys do the job for many) – arrived here July 11th – a silent dark-skin'd Spanish-looking youth, with large very dark blue eyes, peculiar looking. Doctor F. here made light of his sickness – said he would recover soon, &c.; but I thought very different, and told F. so repeatedly; (I came near quarreling with him about it from the first) – but he laugh'd, and would not listen to me. About four days ago, I told Doctor he would in my opinion lose the boy without doubt – but F. again laugh'd at me. The next day he changed his opinion – I brought the head surgeon of the post – he said the boy would probably die, but they would make a hard fight for him.*

*The last two days he has been lying panting for breath – a pitiful sight. I have been with him some every day or night since he arrived. He suffers a great deal with the heat – says little or nothing – is flighty the last three days, at times – knows me always, however – calls me “Walter” – (sometimes calls the name over and over and over again, musingly, abstractedly, to himself.) His father lives at Breesport, Chemung county, N. Y., is a mechanic with large family – is a steady, religious man; his mother too is living. I have written to them, and shall write again to-day – Erastus has not receiv'd a word from home for months.*

*As I sit here writing to you, M., I wish you could see the whole scene. This young man lies within reach of me, flat on his back, his hands clasp'd across his breast, his thick black hair cut close; he is dozing, breathing hard, every breath a spasm – it looks so cruel. He is a noble youngster, – I consider him past all hope. Often there is no one with him for a long while. I am here as much as possible.*

US CIVIL WAR

Ready finally to go home to Concord, [Lieutenant Ezra Ripley](#) boarded a steamer bound for New England. As this boat passed by the city of Vicksburg, too ill to sit up without assistance, he spoke of the many comrades who had fallen there and sadly ask to be “lifted up to look once more upon that fatal spot.” He would perish at 11:00PM as “a cool night breeze...was blowing through the open doors of his room.” Before dying he had dictated a letter to a comrade to bear to his wife. The corpse would be left at Helena, Arkansas to be interred in its military cemetery (later the remains would be exhumed and conveyed to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, where they be positioned near those of his father and grandfather under an inscription that struggled to put the very best possible face on the matter:



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**In memory of Ezra Ripley, Lieutenant of the Twenty-ninth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers — born at Waltham, August 10, 1826 — died on the Mississippi River near Vicksburg, July 28, 1863.**

**Of the best Pilgrim stock, descended from officers in the Revolutionary army, and from a long line of the ministers of Concord, he was worthy of his lineage.**

**An able and successful lawyer, he gave himself with persistent zeal to the cause of the friendless and the oppressed.**

**Of slender physical strength, and of a nature refined, sensitive, and delicate, he was led by patriotism and the love of freedom to leave home and friends for the toilsome labors of war, and shrank from no fatigue or danger, until, worn out in her service, he gave up his life for his country.**

**“Animæque magnæ Prodigum.”**



(Lieutenant Ripley's widow [Harriet M. Hayden Ripley](#) would not remarry and would survive until 1917.)

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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: April 15, 2018



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# ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

## GENERATION HOTLINE



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

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in



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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.