ANNE-LOUISE-GERMAINE NECKER,

BARONNE DE STAËL-HOLSTEIN

“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY
April 22, Tuesday: John Bartram and Billie Bartram arrived home in Philadelphia.

Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker was born in Paris.
In Paris, Benjamin Constant took Madame de Charriere, an older Dutchwoman who had married into a Swiss family with which his own was connected, as his mistress. Initially, there was an escapade to England. Their affair—we do not know whether it was more an affair of the intellect or more one of the heart—would endure until in 1796 he would enter into his liaison with Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker, Madame de Staël. At this point he began his manuscript on religion, which eventually would appear in 5 volumes as *De la religion, considérée dans sa source, ses formes et ses développements*.

**Life is lived forward but understood backward?**

— No, that’s giving too much to the historian’s stories. Life isn’t to be understood either forward or backward.
The marriage of Benjamin Constant was dissolved, and he resigned his post in the court of Charles William, duke of Brunswick, as he became romantically involved with yet another married woman, Madame Germaine de Staël.

Do I have your attention? Good.
May 25, Monday: Benjamin Constant and Madame de Staël arrived in Paris from Switzerland.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

October 15, Thursday: Madame Germaine de Staël was exiled from revolutionary France. Benjamin Constant would follow her to Switzerland.
Benjamin Constant followed Madame de Staël into exile from Napoléon’s France.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT
Publication of Madame de Staël’s novel of the clash between Nordic and Southern-European mentalities, *Corinne, ou l’Italie* — a writing which notoriously featured a title character who was not only female but also intelligent:

Translated anonymously into English, this novel would be an immediate international success.

**WHAT I’M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND**

**YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**
September 2, Thursday: Samuel Taylor Coleridge met Madame de Staël.

October: Murray published Madame de Staël’s *De L’Allemagne* in French and English.

**THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT**
June 22, Saturday: Britain ended its 13-year occupation of St. Pierre and Miquelon as these islands reverted to being a colony of France.

That night, George Gordon, Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley having plans for a boat trip around Lake Geneva on the next day, they abandoned their efforts to compete in the story contest, but Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft, after her late start, was persisting. The friends discussed a subject from Madame de Staël’s De l’Allemagne: “whether the principle of life could be discovered and whether scientists could galvanize a corpse of manufactured humanoid.”

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

7th day Early this morning Several friends went to fort Walcot & procured liberty to meet with the Soldiers at 11 OClock, they went in the Custom House boat kindly accomodated by John
Stevens. The company from abroad were James Halleck, John Hull - - - -Robert Parry, Sally Parry, Dorothy Holding, Alice Abbot of our own towns folks was father Rodman, Jonathon Dennis, John Slocum, Benja Hadwen Hannah Dennis, Ruth & Eliza Rodman. They first went to Fort Walcot where they had good service & truth was maintained, then to fort Adams where Truth also bore the Palm, & the good cause preserved -This meeting was of great weight on my Spirits & since I find it succeeded well, I feel rejoiced with those who went having travailed with them as deeply as my capasity would admit. - I was fully persuaded it was best for me not to go, but to stay & promote the meeting appointed for people of colour at 5 OC this afternoon -While our aforementioned friends were on the fort Hugh Judge, Gerrard T Hopkins & company were called to go on Board the Packet for NYork 0- which rendered my presence necessary to pay their passages as one of the committee for that purpose Robert & Sally Parry & Sister Ruth dined with us. —
The black meeting this Afternoon was not largely attended, but succeeded pretty well John Hallock, Dorothy Golding twice, James Halleck twice were concerned in testimony – Robert & Sally lodged at Jonathon Dennis’s to night & expect to be at Portsmouth tomorrow from thence to Providence homeward bound. —


1. The term “scientist” in this translation is of course an anachronism, as this term would not begin to be used until 1830. In regard to the scientific currency of Mary Shelley’s galvanic mechanism for bringing life to Dr. Victor Frankenstein’s monster: In 1809 in ELEMENTS OF PHYSIOPHILOSOPHY, no less a credited figure than Lorenz Oken had declared that “Galvanism is the principle of life. There is no other vital force than the galvanic polarity.”
January/February: During this month or the following one the Reverend Waldo Emerson made an entry in his journal listing “Peculiarities of the present Age”:

2. It is said to be the age of the first person singular.
...
4. Transcendentalism: Metaphysics & ethics look inward — and France produces Madame de Staël; England, William Wordsworth; America, Sampson Reed; as well as Germany, Emanuel Swedenborg....
July: Early in this month Miss Elizabeth Palmer Peabody opened, in the front parlor of the building she had leased at 13 West Street in Boston, her Foreign Library, a bookstore and circulating library.2

At the suggestion of Washington Allston she would stock imported art supplies. One section was allocated to the homeopathic nostrums created by her father, Dr. Nathaniel Peabody. She displayed on the walls the paintings her sister Sophia was offering for sale. Margaret Fuller had staged her “conversations” here in late 1839 and this would continue in the early 1840s. The Reverend William Ellery Channing would stop by to read the newspaper. Sophia would marry Nathaniel Hawthorne at West Street in 1842. The editors of and contributors to THE DIAL would meet there, and for a time in 1842 and 1843 she would publish this journal as well as writing for it (her “A Glimpse of Christ’s Idea of Society,” a piece about Brook Farm, would appear in the October 1841 issue, and her “Fourierism” would appear in the April 1844 issue).

I had ... a foreign library of new French and German books, and then I came into contact with the world as never before. The Ripleys were starting Brook Farm, and they were friends of ours. Theodore Parker was beginning his career, and all these things were discussed in my book-store by Boston lawyers and Cambridge professors. Those were very living years for me.

2. Circulating libraries were privately owned collections of books and periodicals lent out for profit at fixed rates; this institution had its heyday in America in the first half of the 19th Century, just prior to the rise of the public library movement.
In this year Miss Peabody issued the first of two printed catalogs of her book collection. The collection included such titles as Wolfgang Menzel’s *German Literature. Tr. from the German of Wolfgang Menzel*. By C.C. Felton. (3 volumes, Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1840), Miss Peabody’s edition of Anna Cabot Lowell’s *Theory of Teaching*, Lamartine’s *History of the Girondists and Travels in the East*, Michelet’s *Mémoires de Luther*, Waldo Emerson’s *Nature*, the Reverend Ripley’s *Letters on the Latest Form of Infidelity* (a response to Andrews Norton’s attack on Transcendentalism), Robespierre’s *Mémoires*, and Rosini’s *Luisa Strozzi*, in addition to classic works by Aschylus, Ludovico Ariosto, Honoré de Balzac, George Bancroft, George Gordon, Lord Byron, Thomas Carlyle, Miguel de Cervantes, the Reverend Channing, Chateaubriand, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Cousin, Dante, Dumas, Euripides, Gerando, Goethe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hesiod, Homer, Victor Hugo, Mirabeau, Molière, Petrarch, Plato, Racine, Richter, Rousseau, George Sand, Schiller, Schlegel, William Shakespeare, Madame de Staël, Alexis de Tocqueville, Voltaire, William Wordsworth, and Xenophon. The collection also included various periodicals such as the *Annales des Sciences Naturelles*, Blackwood’s *Magazine*, the *Boston Quarterly Review*, the *Dial*, the Edinburgh Review, the *Journal des Literarische Unterhaltung*, the London and Edinburgh Philosophical Magazine, the Musical Journal, the *New-York Review*, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and the *Western Messenger*.

**“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY**

3. A facsimile of this catalog still exists, as part of Madeleine B. Stern’s “Elizabeth Peabody’s Foreign Library (1840),” *American Transcendental Quarterly*, No. 20 Supplement, Part 1, pages 5-12.
4. Henry Thoreau would consult this volume on December 5, 1840. His extracts would consist of quotations from Lorenz Oken and from Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert.
15 WEST STREET

Novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne once described 15 West Street as "Mrs. Peabody’s Caravansary," in reference to the diverse activities of the Peabody family who from 1840 to 1854 made their home in this building. In the front parlor, daughter Elizabeth opened a bookstore, the first in Boston to offer works by foreign authors. Here she and Ralph Waldo Emerson published The Dial, the quarterly periodical of the Transcendentalist poets. Here also, journalist-critic Margaret Fuller held her famous “Conversations” which today are considered landmark tracts in the history of American feminism. In the private rear parlor daughter Sophia in 1842 married Hawthorne, and daughter Mary in 1843 married Horace Mann, the father of public education in America. During the years the Peabody family lived on West Street they were hosts — and friend — to many who helped broaden American thought and literature.
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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: June 12, 2014
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 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.