

GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM



## FRIEND WILLIAM C. TABER



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



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**1639**

Philip Taber (1605-1672) became a freeman of [Plymouth](#).

*Ousamequin* Yellow Feather (the *Massasoit*) and his son Sachem Moanam (*Wamsutta*) reaffirmed their treaty relations with [Plymouth](#), agreeing not to cause any “unjust” wars and also not to sell any more land without the prior consent of that colony’s government.

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1661

~~Massasoit~~  
*Massasoit* died and was succeeded by his 1st son, *Wamsutta*, the one who had been nicknamed “Alexander” (*sic*) by the whites.<sup>1</sup>



Att the earnest request of *Wamsutta*, desiring that in regard his father is lately deceased, and hee being desirouse, according to the custome of the natives, to change his name, that the Court would confer an English name upon him, which accordingly they did, and therefore ordered, that for the future hee shalbee called by the name of *Allexander Pokanokett*; and desiring the same in the behalfe of his brother, they have named him *Phillip*.



*Allexander Wamsutta* was married to [Squaw Sachem Weetamoo](#) of Pocasset. He sold Attleboro lands to the [Plymouth](#) colony. This sachem would be signing the land sale documents presented to him by the English sometimes with

an **A** sometimes with a **W** and sometimes with a **M**

(these things are complex, for in fact he had in addition another name beginning with the letter M) as his younger brother *Metacom*, when he would in his turn become the sachem of the [Wampanoag](#), would be signing these ubiquitous documents with

a big inky **P**

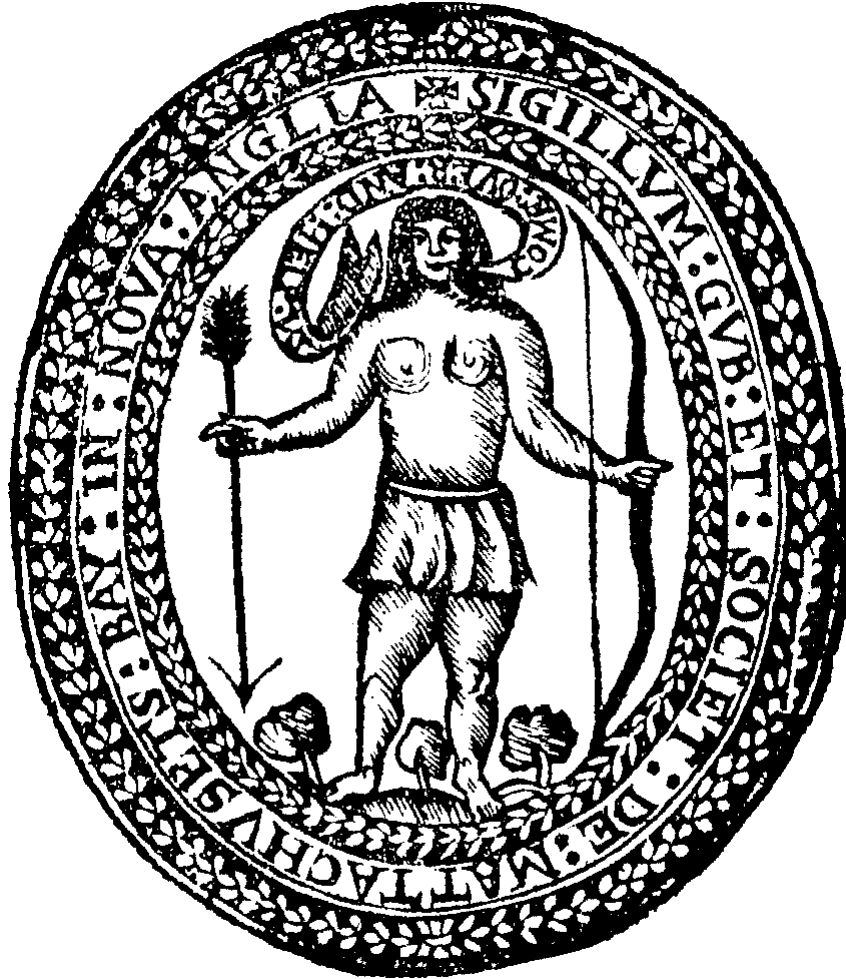
*Phillip alias Metacom  
 his P marko*

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(it all was made to seem so legitimate and respectful and congenial).

This was the year of the property transaction known as the “Northern Purchase.” The English of [Rehoboth](#)

1. When the seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony depicted an American native with a cartoon bubble coming out of his mouth, going “Come over and help us,” the reference of course was to the Book of the Acts of the Apostles in the Christian Bible, which has the Apostle Paul dreaming of a Macedonian who is pleading that he “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.”



On that basis, for the whites to have assigned to two Native American sachems the names “Phillip” (*sic*) and “Alexander” (*sic*) two well-known kings of ancient Macedonia, would seem rather innocent. However, bear in mind that it was the naming convention of the period, to refer to persons of color by the deployment of offensively grandiloquent and therefore implicitly derogatory nicknames. The dusky brothers *Wamsutta* and *Metacom* were therefore nicknamed Alexander and Phillip more or less in the mode in which masterly whites were in the habit of condescending magisterially to their black slaves: such ostentatious names (in the case of black slaves, master-assigned names such as those which Dr. LeBaron of [Plymouth](#) tried to enforce upon his house slaves, such as Pompey and Julius Caesar — starving one of his slaves, Quasho Quando, as punishment when the man absolutely refused to respond to such a name) implicitly gestured toward their low standing in the eyes of the righteous, marking them as pretenders, as con artists, implicitly warning fellow whites not to take them seriously as human beings or as leaders.

**In what significant manner does this differ from the period in Central Europe during which Jews were being required to register and to receive family names and were being assigned names, by a sympathetic constabulary, which translate into the ordinary English as “gold-grubber” and as “money-bags”?**



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(chartered in 1643 by the [Plymouth](#) Colony, and the birthplace of public education in North America) hired



Thomas Willett to negotiate for them with [Wampanoag](#) sachems for what is now Attleboro and North Attleboro. This 1661 deed still exists and very clearly is signed by Willett and by [Wamsutta](#).<sup>2</sup> The land in question has clearly belonged to the white man since way back. One of the terms and conditions of this deed document, however, is that part of the property in question had been set aside for perpetual use by the natives. Since there aren't any natives there any longer, and since continuous occupancy is normally taken by our courts to be the signal of native title, this clause would seem to be ancient history — but as of the Year of Our Lord 2003 there is a case pending in the [Rhode Island](#) courts which alleges that legal title to the land district that had been set aside, that seems to amount to [Cumberland](#) and east [Woonsocket](#), is open to challenge.



The bite in this antique document comes from the fact that since the early 1660s, colonial law, and the federal law that followed after this colonial law upon our national independence, has consistently held that no native tribal land could be validly conveyed to another unless that conveyance had the blessing of a federal court, or [2. Metacom](#) had such a high regard for Captain Thomas Willett that during the race war he ordered that the Willett family not be harmed. When someone who had not heard of this brought the head of Hezekiah Willett to Metacom, thinking that he would be pleased, Metacom did what he could: he adorned the head of Willett's son with wampum, and combed its hair.



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of the US Congress. Since there exists no federal legislative or judicial record whatever, that these lands which had been formally set aside for native use in this Wamsutta/Willett title document have subsequently legitimately been conveyed to anyone else, and since the tribe in question, the Seaconke *Wampanoag*, happens to be still in existence, it is abundantly clear that the land in question –whatever that land amounts to and whoever now resides upon it– still belongs to them and to them alone. (After the natives lost in this race war known as “*King Phillip’s War*”, we understand that very naturally the victorious white colonists simply moved in and took over by eminent domain, selling the red survivors of the war into slavery or packing them off to other lands. However, that makes the situation of these native inheritors similar to, say, the situation of an Israeli Jew who is holding a WWII-era title document to a family home in the Polish town of Oswicum, the German form of the name being “Auschwitz” — a family home now inhabited and defended by non-Jewish Poles who definitely have some sort of piece of paper asserting their invalid title. It seems clear that the legal implications of World War II for its survivors, and the implications of King Phillip’s War for its survivors, have yet to be fully worked out.)

But you can’t please everybody all the time. Soon *Wamsutta* fell under suspicion of not favoring one English colony over another, but instead, of the evil practice of selling merely to the highest bidder, favoring his own interest and the interest of his band over the interest of others. He was therefore taken captive by an indignant Major Josiah Winslow and marched rapidly to Duxbury at gunpoint, as part of a strategy to put the arm on him and to induce him to favor the *Plymouth* colony over the *Rhode Island* colony. They needed for him to pledge to sell no more native American territory to settlers out of the *Rhode Island* group, even if those white people were to offer his people a better deal.

Did he not understand who his real friends were? However, while being held under guard in Duxbury, Alexander *Wamsutta* became seriously ill, so ill that the guards feared to be blamed for his death and released him to hike home — and in his fever he didn’t make it all the way back.

*Metacom*, the second son of the *Massasoit*, the one who had been nicknamed “Phillip” by the whites, was at that time 24 years of age, and suspected or professed to suspect that the whites had poisoned his brother, or had caused his illness because of the overexertion of being force-marched at gunpoint, or at the very least had sadly neglected his brother during his fever. That suspicion, well or poorly grounded, was going to cause one hell of a lot of trouble.

*Weetamoo*, a Pocasset, had been the consort of *Metacom*’s older brother *Wamsutta*. With his death, as his younger brother became Sachem, she became not merely a widow but the Squaw Sachem.

The Reverend *Roger Williams*, William Field, the Reverend Thomas Olney, Jr., Joseph Torrey, Philip Taber (1605-1672), and John Anthony were associated together in *Providence*, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.



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Inauthentic representation of Metacom by Paul Revere, for whom an Indian was an Indian, at the Library of Congress. Done in 1772.



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1778

September 5, Saturday: The British landed at Clark's Cove and put [New Bedford](#) to the torch. Nearly all the shipping, 20 shops, and 22 houses were destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

In [The Pennsylvania Packet](#):

TO BE SOLD, A LIKELY healthy *Negro* Wench, with two male children. For particulars enquire of the *Printer*.

SLAVERY

FRANKLIN

3. Since the William C. Taber House at 363 Main Street in [New Bedford](#) is said to date to this year, it might appear that its construction had not as yet been completed.





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**1796**

A toll bridge connected [New Bedford](#) and Fairhaven.

Rhonda or Rhoda Howland was born.



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**1797**

February 24, Friday: [William Congdon Taber](#) was born to Barnabas Taber and Mary Congdon Taber. He would get married with Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman, mother of all his children, and then with Rhonda or Rhoda Howland. His children would be Elizabeth G. Taber (July 18, 1820), Charles Taber (April 20, 1822), Ruth S. Taber (May 19, 1824), Augustus Taber (February 13, 1826), Ruth S. Taber again (December 23, 1827), Abraham Taber (July 29, 1830), Abraham Taber again (August 3, 1832), Susan Taber (May 29, 1835), William Congdon Taber, Jr. (October 3, 1837), Mary Anna Taber and David Taber (July 30, 1840), John R. Taber (February 9, 1844), and Robert B. Taber (May 4, 1846). He would have a bookstore in [New Bedford](#), Massachusetts, in partnership with Abraham Sherman, Jr. He would be in trade alone from 1835 to 1843, but then he would be joined by his son Charles Taber and the shop would begin to be known as William C. Taber & Son (then as William C. Tabor & Sons, then with the retirement of the father Charles Taber would join with his brother Augustus Taber as C. & A. Taber, and then with the withdrawal of Augustus Taber, as Charles Taber & Co.). Charles would accept as partners Abraham Taber and Asa C. Pierce, and later, William C. Taber, Jr. In 1862 the brothers, Abraham and William C. Taber, Jr., took the two book and stationery stores then

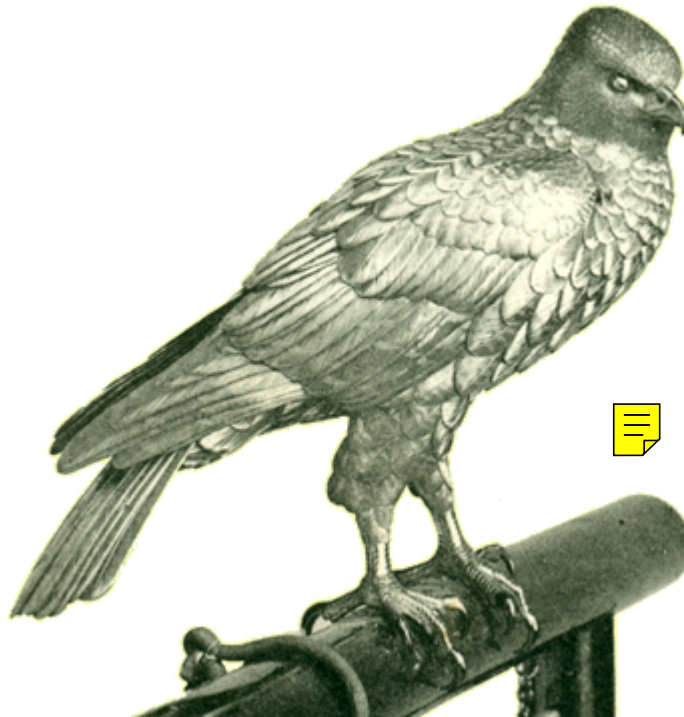


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conducted by the firm, and Charles Taber, with Asa C. Pierce, would begin as manufacturing photographers at No. 6 North Water street. In 1871 Charles Taber would assume the sole management, until 1881 when he would admit as partners his brother William C. Taber, Jr. and his sons Charles M. Taber and Frederic Taber. In 1893 the Taber Art Company would incorporate having William C. Taber as president, W.C. Freeman as vice-president, H.G. Stratton as treasurer, Charles M. Taber as clerk, and as company directors William C. Taber, E.L. Freeman, H.G. Stratton, W.C. Freeman, C.D. Burrage, and Frederic Taber. This would grow into an art company employing some 300 workers before being merged in 1897 into the Taber-Prang Art Company. The art business of the firm would consist in the creation of ambrotype reproductions (the initial one being of English philanthropist Elizabeth Fry). The company would import and then manufacture mats, frames, photographs, and finally artotype engravings and etchings.





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**1801**



Hannah Tucker Shearman was born.



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**1820**



July 18, Tuesday: Elizabeth G. Taber was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).




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**1822**

 April 20, Saturday: Death of [Allegra](#), 5-year-old illegitimate daughter of [George Gordon, Lord Byron](#) with [Claire Clairmont](#), due to typhus or malaria, at the Roman Catholic convent to which she had been consigned.



Inconvenient and Dead (but not Forgotten)

[Charles Taber](#) was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858). He would be educated at the [Friends' School](#) in [Providence, Rhode Island](#), and then at Haverford College in Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

4. This is the Quaker who during 1838-1842, as a teenage [New Bedford](#) bookstore clerk recently graduated from Haverford College, would be teaching Frederick Douglass to read.



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**1824**



May 19, Wednesday: Ruth S. Taber was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858). This infant would not survive.

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka began his duties as an under-secretary in the office of the Council of Communications, St. Petersburg. "I had to be in the office only five to six hours per day, I was not assigned work at home, and I had no real duties or responsibilities. Consequently, all the rest of my time I could devote to my favorite activities, especially music."





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**1826**



February 13, Monday: Augustus Taber was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).

The American Temperance Society, later to become the [American Temperance Union](#), was organized. It would so quickly beget auxiliaries that, by 1835, some 8,000 locals would be in existence.



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**1827**



December 23, Sunday: Ruth S. Taber was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).

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

*1st day 23 of 12 M / In the Morning Meeting D Buffum & H. Dennis were engaged in testimony - & in the Afternoon the Meeting was silent - Both were seasons of some trial to me - Divine help has since been afforded, & the arisings of life sweetly spring up in my heart - I believe I am thankful*

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**



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**1830**



June 29, Tuesday: Abraham Taber was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858). This infant would not survive.



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1832

➡ August 3, Friday: There was an enormous storm in the China Seas.

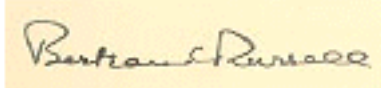
The bulk of the 1,300-man command of Atkinson and Dodge arrived at the Bad Axe River, and between them and the steamboat on the river, many more of the British Band of Sac and Fox were killed. Of the approximately 200 who did manage to reach the west bank of the Mississippi, most were immediately dispatched by Woodland Dakota warriors allied with the whites.



"...The conflicts of Europeans with American-Indians, Maoris and other aborigines in temperate regions ... if we judge by the results we cannot regret that such wars have taken place ... the process by which the American continent has been acquired for European civilization [was entirely justified because] there is a very great and undeniable difference between the civilization of the colonizers and that of the dispossessed natives...."



- Bertrand Russell, THE ETHICS OF WAR, January 1915



Abraham Taber was born to William Congdon Taber and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

6th day 3 of 8 M / Our School committee was very Small & but little buisness done - it was however agreed to adjourn to the 4th of 9 M - then to Meet to consider the State of things & act according to Circumstances. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



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**1835**



May 29, Friday: Susan Taber was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).



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**1837**

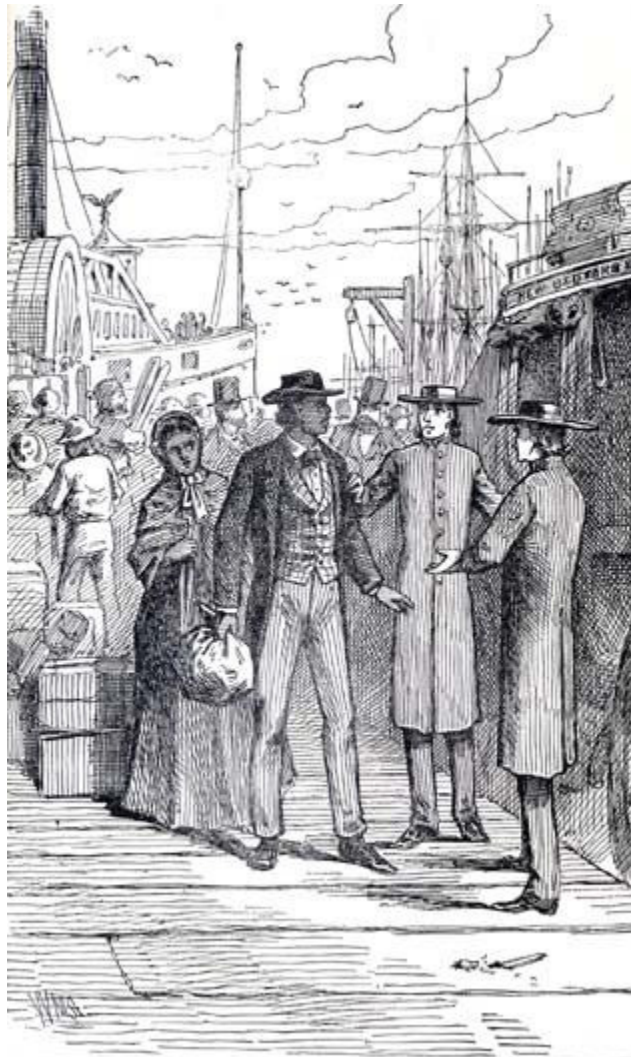


October 3, Tuesday: [William Congdon Taber \(Jr.\)](#) was born in [New Bedford](#), Massachusetts to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).<sup>5</sup>

5. After primary schooling in New Bedford he would complete his education at the New England Yearly Meeting boarding school in Providence, Rhode Island. He would get married with Sarah A. Wood (1839-1912), and die in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1907.

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September 16, Sunday: Frederick Douglass and Anna Murray Douglass, as Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Johnson, were put by David Ruggles aboard the steamer *John W. Richmond* from New-York to [Aquidneck Island](#)<sup>6</sup> in [Rhode Island](#) and there boarded a stagecoach headed toward the whaling port of [New Bedford](#) in the company of Friends [Joseph Ricketson, Junior](#) and [William Congdon Taber](#).<sup>7</sup>



In [New Bedford](#), known as a liberal town, the outlaw bridegroom would be seeking (but not finding, due to

6. There is possible irony here, that might be looked into. What is the probability that Anna's and Frederick's black ancestors had been brought to this continent in ships owned by the international slavetraders of [Newport](#)?

7. Although Frederick Douglass's various narratives all make the encounter in Newport seem quite accidental, it is rather more likely that David Ruggles had passed the word to the local anti-slavery society, and that Friends [William Congdon Taber](#) and [Joseph Ricketson, Junior](#) had been expectantly waiting for them to disembark from the steamer.





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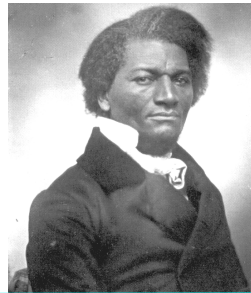
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race prejudice) employment as a caulker — and would be put to work on the docks as a stevedore.



**ANNA MURRAY DOUGLASS**



**FREDERICK DOUGLASS**



We arrived at [Newport](#) the next morning, and soon after an old fashioned stage-coach, with "New Bedford" in large yellow letters on its sides, came down to the wharf. I had not money enough to pay our fare, and stood hesitating what to do. Fortunately for us, there were two [Quaker](#) gentlemen who were about to take passage on the stage,— Friends William C. Taber and Joseph Ricketson, —who at once discerned our true situation, and, in a peculiarly quiet way, addressing me, Mr. Taber said: "Thee get in." I never obeyed an order with more alacrity, and we were soon on our way to our new home. When we reached "Stone Bridge" the passengers alighted for breakfast, and paid their fares to the driver. We took no breakfast, and, when asked for our fares, I told the driver I would make it right with him when we reached New Bedford.



**WILLIAM C. TABER**  
**JOSEPH RICKETSON**

"The capacity to get free is nothing; the capacity to be free, that is the task."

— André Gide, THE IMMORALIST  
translation Richard Howard  
NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, page 7

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

*1st day 16th of 9 M 1838 / I was so unwell for several days past that I could go out but little & have not attended Meetings today, but felt Able to be at the funeral of my Venerable Father in law Clarke Rodman, which was after the Afternoon Meeting - It was very numerously attended by people of all persuasions, & the sitting at the house was a very solemn Season leaving an evidence that words are not necessary to produce an evidence to the Truth but that it may be experienced in solemn Silence The*



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*only expressions were from Hannah Dennis simply the expression of the Scripture passage "Mark the perfect Man & behold the upright, for the end of that Man is peace."- this simply expressed, without enlargement, left a precious savor & I never felt more unity with Hannah on any occasion. -- At the grave we had a Silent Solemn pause & the countenances of the people exhibited a reverence & respect not usually discoverable to the same extent on such occasions -*



**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

**NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT**





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September 18, Tuesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) to his journal in regard to the annular (partial) solar [eclipse](#) (#7260) that passed from Hudson Bay down across northern New England:

SUN

*This P.M. the Eclipse. Peter Howe did not like it for his rowan would not make hay: and he said "the sun looked as if a nigger was putting his head into it."*

A thin, dark horizontal line that ends on the right with a decorative, wavy flourish.

Well, in some sense Peter Howe of Concord was right, black people were indeed raising their head into the sunshine. For on this day of eclipse Frederick Douglass and Anna Murray Douglass, as free Mr. and Mrs.



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Frederick Johnson, were arriving in their new hometown, [New Bedford](#):

We arrived at [Newport](#) the next morning, and soon after an old fashioned stage-coach, with "New Bedford" in large yellow letters on its sides, came down to the wharf. I had not money enough to pay our fare, and stood hesitating what to do. Fortunately for us, there were two [Quaker](#) gentlemen who were about to take passage on the stage, -Friends William C. Taber and Joseph Ricketson,- who at once discerned our true situation, and, in a peculiarly quiet way, addressing me, Mr. Taber said: "Thee get in." I never obeyed an order with more alacrity, and we were soon on our way to our new home. When we reached "Stone Bridge" the passengers alighted for breakfast, and paid their fares to the driver. We took no breakfast, and, when asked for our fares, I told the driver I would make it right with him when we reached New Bedford. I expected some objection to this on his part, but he made none. When, however, we reached New Bedford, he took our baggage, including three music-books, -two of them collections by Dyer, and one by Shaw,- and held them until I was able to redeem them by paying to him the amount due for our rides. This was soon done, for Mr. Nathan Johnson not only received me kindly and hospitably, but, on being informed about our baggage, at once loaned me the two dollars with which to square accounts with the stage-driver. Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Johnson reached a good old age, and now rest from their labors. I am under many grateful obligations to them. They not only "took me in when a stranger" and "fed me when hungry," but taught me how to make an honest living. Thus, in a fortnight after my flight from [Maryland](#), I was safe in New Bedford, a citizen of the grand old commonwealth of Massachusetts....

**WILLIAM C. TABER**

**JOSEPH RICKETSON**

**NATHAN JOHNSON**

Mary J. Tabor would allege in 1907 something that does not jibe with the popular appreciation of Frederick Douglass that is gathered from reading of his NARRATIVE, to wit, that at this point, with him arriving at freedom in New Bedford, he was not yet able to read, let alone to write. She would allege that in New Bedford after his escape from slavery, it had been her relative [William C. Taber](#) who had found for Douglass the stevedoring work he mentions on the wharves (help not acknowledged in Douglass's written account), and she would allege that at this point Douglass had been taught to read by her relative, the New Bedford bookseller [Charles Taber](#):

Owing to the anti-slavery principles of Friends, New Bedford early became a station on the "underground railroad," and if a fugitive slave could once reach this haven of rest, he felt almost safe from pursuit, public opinion being so strong that



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in the days of the Fugitive Slave Law it would have been impossible to capture a runaway slave in this town.

Frederick Douglass, one of the most remarkable of colored men, passed some time here in safety, and always retained a most grateful recollection of his sojourn among the Quakers. It happened on this wise: Having made his escape from slavery and reached Newport after many perils, he was very anxious to come to New Bedford, that place being known among the slaves as a heaven upon earth.

Hearing the name called out, he peeped shyly around the corner of a building and gazed longingly at the state coach which was filled with "women Friends" on their way home from New England Yearly Meeting. William C. Taber, sitting on the top of the coach, observed the pleading eyes, and said, "Yes, friend, it is all right, climb up here beside me."

No sooner said than done, William C. Taber paid his fare, brought him to his own house, and found work for him on the wharves, as he had been a stevedore at the South. While in New Bedford, he was taught to read by Charles Taber.

Thus the distinguished orator was launched on the road to fame.



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What we have, above, is essentially an assertion that when Douglass arrived in [New Bedford](#) aboard that stage from [Newport, Rhode Island](#), he could not yet read, let alone write. —That that is importantly discordant with the fulsome manner in which the NARRATIVE is now conventionally read, is something that goes without saying.

For their wedding document, the newlyweds had adopted the family name Johnson, but soon this came to seem an unwise selection. At the time the Douglasses were there, New Bedford had the highest per capita income in America. When the fugitive slave Freddy Bailey, then calling himself Frederick Johnson, arrived at the home of Nathan Johnson and Mary “Polly” Johnson in New Bedford (the Douglasses are not the only guests

This is the recent dedication of a plaque at the site, attended by descendants of the original participants:



documented to have found refuge for a time at 21 Seventh Street, next door to the Friends meetinghouse),





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Nathan was reading [Robert Burns](#), and within a day or two Johnson would rename him after the hero Douglas



in *LADY OF THE LAKE*, as Frederick Douglass. (Frederick decided to spell it “Douglass” because there were some black families in New Bedford who were spelling their name that way.)<sup>8</sup>

8. But why did Freddy Bailey *alias* Fred Johnson **accept** the proffered name “Douglass”? Merely because it had been suggested to him? I think not! The Following is from a collection of Douglass’s speeches entitled *LECTURES ON AMERICAN-SLAVERY*, which would be published in 1851:

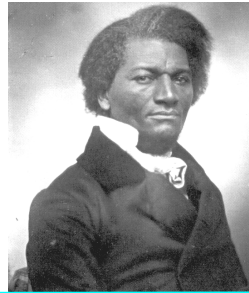
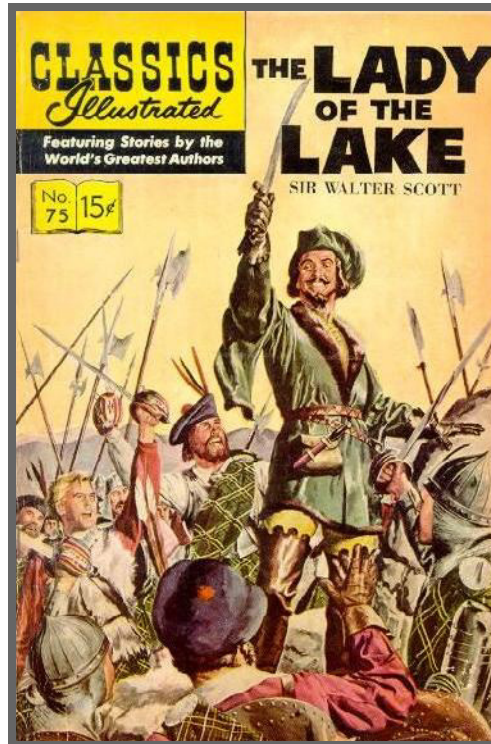
It is often said, by the opponents of the Anti-slavery cause that, the condition of the people of Ireland is more deplorable than that of the American slaves. Far be it from me to underrate the sufferings of the Irish people. They have been long oppressed; and the same heart that prompts me to plead the cause of the American bondman, makes it impossible for me not to sympathize with all the oppressed of all lands. Yet I must say that there is no analogy between the two cases. The Irishman is poor, but he is not a slave. He may be in rags, but he is not a slave. He is still the master of his own body and can say with the poet,

“The hand of Douglass is his own.”



Thus in all probability the name was chosen because although it was intentionally opaque it nevertheless suggested, at least to its bearer, in the idea that “The hand of Douglass is his own,” the same sort of thing that was suggested in that time by the more usual name “Freeman” meaning “the free man.”



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**WILLIAM C. TABER****WILLIAM C. TABER****GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM****ANNA MURRAY DOUGLASS****FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

The first thing these Douglasses with a wedding certificate in the name of Johnson, but with no [manumission](#) papers to produce for the husband whether he was named “Mr. Douglas” or “Mr. Johnson,” discovered in “free” [New Bedford](#) was that racial prejudice would prevent the husband from using his skills as a ship calker. It was explained that all the white calkers would quit. Work was found for him, by Friend [William C. Taber](#), as a stevedore, carrying oil aboard a vessel, and he then had to saw wood, shovel coal, sweep chimneys, and roll casks in an oil refinery. However, accounts of such Jim Crow experiences would not fit into the narrative he later needed to tell to righteous Northern abolition audiences, for whom South=Them=Evil meant North=Us=Good, and so Douglass ordinarily suppressed this experience of racial prejudice in New Bedford.<sup>9</sup>




Finding my trade of no immediate benefit, I threw off my calking habiliments, and prepared myself to do any kind of work I could get to do.



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Although a skilled craftsman could not get work in his craft in that city at that time, due entirely to the color of his skin, Frederick Douglass did not speak of this until 1881 , when in a reference to “the test of the real civilization of the community,” he suggested that the [New Bedford](#) of the 1840s had failed that test:

I am told that colored persons can now get employment at calking in New Bedford.

9. If “French” innocence consists in the refusal to be shamed by the nature of one’s pleasures, and if the “German” variety consists in an awareness that so long as one is sacrificing oneself, no-one has a right to object to one’s sacrificing them as well, and if the “English” consists in a principled refusal to take responsibility for one’s obedience to improper instructions from one’s betters, and the “Italian” in not happening to notice where you have your hand, then the innocence of the USer must consist in a refusal or a failure to recognize evil of which we ourselves are the beneficiaries.



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In fuller detail:

... The name given me by my dear mother was no less pretentious and long than Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey. I had, however, while living in [Maryland](#), dispensed with the Augustus Washington, and retained only Frederick Bailey. Between Baltimore and New Bedford, the better to conceal myself from the slave-hunters, I had parted with Bailey and called myself Johnson; but in New Bedford I found that the Johnson family was already so numerous as to cause some confusion in distinguishing them, hence a change in this name seemed desirable. Nathan Johnson, mine host, placed great emphasis upon this necessity, and wished me to allow him to select a name for me. I consented, and he called me by my present name—the one by which I have been known for three and forty years—Frederick Douglass. Mr. Johnson had just been reading the "Lady of the Lake," and so pleased was he with its great character that he wished me to bear his name. Since reading that charming poem myself, I have often thought that, considering the noble hospitality and manly character of Nathan Johnson—black man though he was—he, far more than I, illustrated the virtues of the Douglas of Scotland. Sure am I that, if any slave-catcher had entered his domicile with a view to my recapture, Johnson would have shown himself like him of the "stalwart hand." ...My "Columbian Orator," almost my only book, had done nothing to enlighten me concerning Northern society. I had been taught that slavery was the bottom fact of all wealth. With this foundation idea, I came naturally to the conclusion that poverty must be the general condition of the people of the free States. In the country from which I came, a white man holding no slaves was usually an ignorant and poverty-stricken man, and men of this class were contemptuously called "poor white trash." Hence I supposed that, since the non-slave-holders at the South were ignorant, poor, and degraded as a class, the non-slave-holders at the North must be in a similar condition. I could have landed in no part of the United States where I should have found a more striking and gratifying contrast, not only to life generally in the South, but in the condition of the colored people there, than in New Bedford. I was amazed when Mr. Johnson told me that there was nothing in the laws or constitution of Massachusetts that would prevent a colored man from being governor of the State, if the people should see fit to elect him. There, too, the black man's children attended the public schools with the white man's children, and apparently without objection from any quarter. To impress me with my security from recapture and return to slavery, Mr. Johnson assured me that no slave-holder could take a slave out of New Bedford; that there were men there who would lay down their lives to save me from such a fate.



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



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**1839**

Sarah A Wood was born.



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**1840**

July 30, Thursday: Mary Anna Taber and David Taber were born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).



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**1844**

February 9, Friday: John R. Taber was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).





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**1846**

May 4, Monday: Michigan ended its death penalty.

Robert B. Taber was born to [William Congdon Taber](#) and Hannah Tucker Shearman or Sherman Taber (1801-1858).



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**1853**

September 6, Tuesday: Hannah Tucker Shearman Taber died in [New Bedford](#), Massachusetts at the age of 52 (the widower [William Congdon Taber](#) would remarry, with Rhonda or Rhoda Howland).

On this day and the following one a gang from an athletic club in the pay of the Democratic organization in New-York (Tammany Hall<sup>10</sup>), dressed in uniform white panama hats, pantaloons, polished boots, and heavy gold chains, twice totally disrupted a woman's rights convention at the Tabernacle building that was being presided over by Friend [Lucretia Mott](#). Sojourner Truth spoke:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles or gives me the best place, and ain't I a woman? ... I know it feels kind of hissin' and ticklin' like to see a colored woman get up and tell you about things, and woman's rights. We have all been thrown down so low that nobody thought we'd ever get up again, but we have been down long enough now; we will come up again, and here I am.

Legend has it that Friend Lucretia simply took the arm of the ringleader of the gang and asked him to escort them safely from the building and that—unable to cope with this unexpected reaction to the situation—he did so.

[Now here is something I believe that you and I should pay careful attention to, since you probably first learned of this period of our nation's history in about the same manner in which I first learned about it, and in all probability the scars this has left on your consciousness of race and gender issues are similar to the scars this has left on my own. What I am suggesting that you and I should pay careful attention to, is succinctly

10. It had two names at the same time. It was named Columbia Hall in honor of that mass-murdering founding father Christopher Columbus, but also, wouldn't you know, named after the late 17th Century Delaware chief Tamanend, the idea being that American tribalists are stereotypically generous in their care for needy members of their same tribe, and that such kindness translates, in civilized public life, into benevolent public associations of graft and mutual backscratching. This was well before "Boss Tweed" became the Grand Sachem of the Tammany Society in 1868, but the benevolent fraternity had already clearly degenerated into something of a *cosa nostra*. Nevertheless, the Tammany Society had lost all patience with real American tribalists when most of us sided with Great Britain during the [War of 1812](#). The society finally sold all the collections of Native American artifacts it had been keeping in its central "Wigwam" building, to P.T. Barnum for use in his "Greatest Show on Earth."—In the latest episode of such racial and ethnic stereotyping, just the other day when Mafia *don* John Gotti was convicted on 13 counts of murder and racketeering, his daughter commented proudly "My father is the last of the Mohicans."



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She was evidently a full-blooded African, and though now aged and worn with many hardships, still gave the impression of a physical development which in early youth must have been as fine a specimen of the torrid zone as Cumberworth's celebrated statuette of the Negro Woman at the Fountain.

-Harriet Beecher Stowe



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encapsulated in the fact that the historian Alan Nevins, writing for us in 1947, described the above incident only briefly. The sum total of what Nevins had to offer us was:

At the Tabernacle a colored woman stirred up a tempest by making a speech.

“At the Tabernacle a colored woman stirred up a tempest by making a speech.” We may usefully contrast this history-writing by Nevins, on which you and I cut our teeth, with other forms of description such as “In a red brick building, Sojourner Truth stirred up a tempest by making a speech” in which **the place** is allowed to remain categorical rather than **the person**, and such as “At the Tabernacle, a vivid oration stirred the delegates” in which the event is described as Nevins might easily have described that stirring speech, had it issued from the mouth of **some white male running for political office** rather than originating with some generic citizen who, because **not white and not male**, is obviously nothing but a troublemaker who has “stirred up a tempest” in a teapot.]



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**1869**

December 29, Wednesday: Rhonda or Rhoda Howland Taber died in [New Bedford](#), Massachusetts at the age of 73.



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**1886**

3<sup>RD</sup> MO 23<sup>RD</sup> (3 day): [William Congdon Taber \(Sr.\)](#) died at the age of 89 in [New Bedford](#), Massachusetts. The body would be placed in the Friends Burying Ground.



**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**



**WILLIAM C. TABER**

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**1887**

November 17, Thursday: [Charles Taber](#) died at the age of 66 in [New Bedford](#), Massachusetts.

*DEATH OF CHARLES TABER.*

Charles Taber, the well-known art photographer, of New-Bedford, Mass., died yesterday morning at his home in that city, where he was born in 1822. Mr. Taber came of Quaker stock and was himself a member of the Society of Friends. He was educated at Haverford College, in Pennsylvania, and for many years was engaged in the book trade in his native place. He then turned his attention to photographic work, and about 1865 introduced the ambrotype, which was at that time the highest form of the art. He applied it with peculiar success to the copying of works of art, and his reproductions of fine paintings, engravings, and statuary attained a deserved popularity. His business at once became very extensive, and at the present day his house is the leading one of those devoted to art photography.

Mr. Taber was a man of restless energy, and was engaged from time to time, with almost invariable success, in a variety of commercial enterprises in addition to his main business, and at the time of his death was interested in whaling operations on a large scale. He possessed a kindly disposition, which made friends for him everywhere. As a merchant he was upright and honorable, while his large fund of information and a literary ability of high order made him a delightful companion. He leaves a widow and five children in very easy circumstances, his accumulated wealth being considerable, while the business will be carried on by two of his sons.



**CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT**





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**1907**

Mary J. Tabor alleged in this year something that does not jibe with the popular appreciation of Frederick Douglass that is gathered from reading of his NARRATIVE, to wit: regardless of the earlier learning experiences with language that are so carefully detailed in his later relations of his life, at the point at which he arrived in New Bedford — he was not yet able to read, let alone to write. She alleged in this year that, in New Bedford after his escape from slavery, and after her relative [William C. Taber](#) had found work for him on the wharves (acknowledged in Douglass's account), Douglass had been taught to read, that he had been taught then by her relative [Charles Taber](#) (assistance that goes entirely un-acknowledged in Douglass's account):

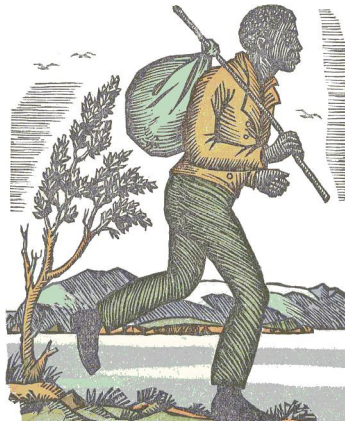
Owing to the anti-slavery principles of Friends, New Bedford early became a station on the "underground railroad," and if a fugitive slave could once reach this haven of rest, he felt almost safe from pursuit, public opinion being so strong that in the days of the Fugitive Slave Law it would have been impossible to capture a runaway slave in this town.

Frederick Douglass, one of the most remarkable of colored men, passed some time here in safety, and always retained a most grateful recollection of his sojourn among the Quakers. It happened on this wise: Having made his escape from slavery and reached Newport after many perils, he was very anxious to come to New Bedford, that place being known among the slaves as a heaven upon earth.

Hearing the name called out, he peeped shyly around the corner of a building and gazed longingly at the state coach which was filled with "women Friends" on their way home from New England Yearly Meeting. William C. Taber, sitting on the top of the coach, observed the pleading eyes, and said, "Yes, friend, it is all right, climb up here beside me."

No sooner said than done, William C. Taber paid his fare, brought him to his own house, and found work for him on the wharves, as he had been a stevedore at the South. While in New Bedford, he was taught to read by Charles Taber.

Thus the distinguished orator was launched on the road to fame.







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Isn't it nice that once in awhile we can afford to honor a white man for helping a colored man? –Usually we only honor people of color who make their lives important by saving the life of a white man, as in the postcard on the following screen (which happens to have been issued during this very year):

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

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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: March 7, 2014**

WILLIAM C. TABER

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GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM



POCAHONTAS SAVING THE LIFE OF JOHN SMITH.



1607-JAMESTOWN EXPOSITION-1907

OFFICIAL SOUVENIR

POST CARD

PLACE STAMP HERE  
 UNITED STATES, CUBA, CANADA AND MEXICO ONE CENT.  
 FOREIGN TWO CENTS.

OFFICIAL SEAL PUBLISHED BY THE CONCESSIONAIRE, THE JAMESTOWN AMUSEMENT & VENDING CO., INC., NORFOLK, VA.

FOR COMMUNICATION THIS SPACE MAY BE USED

FOR ADDRESS ONLY

No. 3. POCAHONTAS SAVING THE LIFE OF JOHN SMITH. While exploring in December, 1607, Captain Smith was attacked by Indians; his companions were killed, and he having sunk in the marsh, was dragged out and tied to a tree to be used as a target for arrows and tomahawks. A trifle saved him. He exhibited a compass he always carried, the marking needle in which the Indians could see, but could not touch on account of the glass over it. This so amazed them he was released, plentifully fed, and taken by triumphant procession before their King, Powhatan, who promptly ordered him to be killed. As he lay bound upon the ground with the

M \_\_\_\_\_  
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attention, his father to spare him, which he did, saying: "We will keep him to make here hats and bows and such."



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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.



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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.