THE FATHER OF BRITISH EGYPTOLOGY

"NARRATIVE HISTORY" AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY

Sir John Gardner Wilkinson

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project
October 5, Thursday: John Gardner Wilkinson was born in Little Missenden, Buckinghamshire, a son of a Westmoreland clergyman, the Reverend John Wilkinson, an amateur enthusiast for antiquities. Both parents would soon die, and the child would inherit a modest income.

Baptist businessman John Brown of Providence became on this day the 1st American to go on trial in a federal district court under the first section of the US Slave Trade Act of 1794, for sending out his old ship Hope in the African slave trade. Brown had fitted out his ship Hope as a negrero, and a year earlier it had brought a cargo of 229 new slaves to Havana, Cuba.

Accusers included Brown’s younger brother Friend Moses Brown, who had become a tireless opponent of both enslavement and the international slave trade since his conversion from the family’s Baptist faith to the
Religious Society of Friends. A founding member and officer of the Abolition Society chartered in 1789, Friend Moses had been fighting his state’s slave traders, including his own brother, during the decade that had elapsed since the passage in 1787 of a largely ineffective state statute that had prohibited the trade to residents of Rhode Island.

The penalty, if the case was lost, would be comparatively mild: no jail time, merely the confiscation of the Hope, since any more substantial penalty would necessitate a jury trial and there was no reasonable expectation that a local jury would convict their prominent fellow citizen. (In fact no American slave trader would meet with the death penalty for engaging in the international slave trade until the initial year of our civil war, and even then, only exactly one-count-em-one such American slave trader would ever actually be hanged by the neck until dead — isn’t history interesting?)

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Of the twenty years from 1787 to 1807 it can only be said that they were, on the whole, a period of disappointment so far as the suppression of the slave-trade was concerned. Fear, interest, and philanthropy united for a time in an effort which bade fair to suppress the trade; then the real weakness of the constitutional compromise appeared, and the interests of the few overcame the fears and the humanity of the many.
NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT

BLACK SWANS
John Gardner Wilkinson was sent by his guardian to Harrow School.

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.
John Gardner Wilkinson went up to Exeter College of Oxford University (in ill health, he would leave without a degree and travel to Italy).

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT
In Italy, John Gardner Wilkinson was inspired by Sir William Gell to study Egyptology.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT

BLACK SWANS
October: At the age of 24, John Gardner Wilkinson arrived for the initial time in Egypt. He would be there continuously for the following 12 years, visiting ancient sites, recording their inscriptions and paintings and compiling notes.

**Do I have your attention? Good.**
Jean-François Champollion conducted an archaeological expedition to Egypt.
John Gardner Wilkinson’s *Materia Hieroglyphica*.

**CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT**
John Gardner Wilkinson returned from Egypt to England for his health.

A (subsequently disregarded) project for a “Suez Canal” across the Suez isthmus by Prosper Enfantin.

A second aqueduct over New York’s Genesee River was begun.

English canal engineer William Weston died.

John Jervis became Engineer of the Chenango Canal.

The Carillon Canal was completed.

A Canadian commission was formed to investigate a Trent-Severn Waterway, to connect Lake Ontario with Georgian Bay.

William Gooding surveyed the Erie and Wabash Canal.

The Miami and Dayton Canal Company secured another land grant from the US Government.

The US Congress appropriated $25,000 to create a harbor near Chicago to serve as a terminus for the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

The Rochester Canal & Railway Company blocked a scheme to build a rival rail line between Rochester and Charlotte, along the west side of the Genesee River.

The Chemung Canal was completed.

New York’s Canal Commission passed enabling legislation for building the Chenango Canal and hired John B. Jervis to supervise construction.
John Gardner Wilkinson was elected to the Royal Society.

The head and torso of the statue known then as “younger Memnon” was relocated from the old Townley Galleries building to the Egyptian Sculpture Room of the new British Museum.
England’s viceroy over Egypt, Mohammed Ali, sent George Robins Gliddon to the United States to purchase machinery for the processing of cotton, rice, etc.
Acclaim for John Gardner Wilkinson’s MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ANCIENT Egyptians, including their private life, government, laws, arts, manufactures, religion, agriculture, and early history, derived from a comparison of the paintings, sculptures, and monuments still existing, with the accounts of ancient authors brought knighthood.

William Fullerton Cumming’s NOTES OF A WANDERER IN SEARCH OF HEALTH, THROUGH ITALY, EGYPT, GREECE, TURKEY; UP THE DANUBE AND DOWN THE RHINE (2 volumes).
From this year into 1843, Jean-François Champollion’s *Egyptian* dictionary would be being published.

Sir John Gardner Wilkinson’s *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, including their private life, government, laws, arts, manufactures, religion, agriculture, and early history, derived from a comparison of the paintings, sculptures, and monuments still existing, with the accounts of ancient authors* appeared in six volumes.
George Robins Gliddon’s Memoir on the Cotton of Egypt, Appeal to the Antiquaries of Europe on the Destruction of the Monuments of Egypt, and Discourses on Egyptian Archaeology.
From this point forward, Edward William Lane would devote himself to the preparation of an ARABIC-ENGLISH LEXICON (he would also find time to contribute several articles to the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft).

George Glidden, who had been an American vice-consul in Cairo, was offering a series of lectures in Boston on Egyptian antiquities, and was illustrating his talks with curiosities loaned to him by Colonel Mendes Cohen. These talks were being so well attended that Glidden would tour the US with his exhibit for two years, sometimes addressing audiences of 2,000 souls.

Edward William Lane’s Selections from the Kūr-ʾān, commonly called, in England, the Korān: with an interwoven commentary; translated from the Arabic, methodically arranged, and illustrated by notes, chiefly from Sale’s edition: to which is prefixed an introduction, taken from Sale’s preliminary discourse, with corrections and additions (London: Printed for James Madden and Co. 8, Leadenhall Street).

George Robins Gliddon was invited to Boston to deliver a course of Lowell Lectures on Egyptian archaeology. During this visit he took offense when James Ewing Cooley, in The American in Egypt with Rambles through Arabia, Petraea, and the Holy Land during the Years 1839-1840, characterized his father, John Gliddon, as a pompous, lazy and a wearer of Turkish slippers, in an Alexandria apartment infested with fleas, “anything but a gentleman.” Angered at being criticized by the son for his criticism of the father, Cooley followed the son into a store on lower Broadway on Manhattan Island and punched him out. When Gliddon took Cooley to court he was able to obtain a judgment for merely $5 (maybe less than a week’s wages). The affair left nobody happy — although as you may well imagine it left some people amused.

WHAT I’M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF
Sir John Gardner Wilkinson travelled in Dalmatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Edward William Lane had brought his sister Sophia Lane Poole (1804-1891) and her sons to Egypt when she became estranged from her husband the book collector Reverend Edward Poole, and for seven years, veiled in public, she had gained access to Cairo’s harems and bathhouses. The result was THE ENGLISHWOMAN IN EGYPT: LETTERS FROM CAIRO, WRITTEN DURING A RESIDENCE THERE IN 1842, 3 & 4, WITH E.W. LANE, ESQ., AUTHOR OF “THE MODERN EGYPTIANS.” BY HIS SISTER (these volumes do contain materials acquired through Poole’s visits to harems, but consists primarily of large sections of Lane’s unpublished manuscript with “I” replaced by “my brother”).
Sir John Gardner Wilkinson’s Dalmatia and Montenegro appeared in 2 volumes. In this year and the following one, the author would travel a 3d time in Egypt.
THE GENESIS OF THE EARTH AND OF MAN appeared, anonymously edited by Edward William Lane’s nephew Reginald Stuart Poole.

A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS, REVISED AND ABRIDGED FROM HIS LARGER WORK, BY SIR J. GARDNER WILKINSON, D.C.L., F.R.S., &c., IN TWO VOLUMES. ILLUSTRATED WITH FIVE HUNDRED WOODCUTS (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 329 & 331 Pearl Street, Franklin Square; illustrated by Joseph Bonomi). These two volumes would be purchased for the personal library of Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau would immediately copy from them into his Fact Book, and into his Indian Notebook #8.

Thoreau copied from George Douglas Brewerton’s article in the previous August’s Harper’s New Monthly Magazine “A Ride with Kit Carson through the Great American Desert and the Rocky Mountains,” into his
Indian Notebook #8 (about something that had happened in 1848).
Sir John Gardner Wilkinson made a final visit to Thebes in Egypt. Thereafter he would remain in England studying Cornish antiquities, and as well zoology.
Sir John Gardner Wilkinson bequeathed his collections to his old school, Harrow, with an elaborate catalogue.

After an arbitration by Napoleon III, the conflict between Egypt and Turkey over the Suez Canal was resolved. The Company abandoned its fresh-water canal and 60,000 hectares of irrigable land and accepted an obligation that the manual labor of fellahs would no longer be the basis for the construction (they were to be partially replaced by machinery).
October 29, Friday: Sir John Gardner Wilkinson died at Llandovery, England (his papers are at the Bodleian Library of Oxford University).

“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: December 17, 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.