

THE AMERICAN ALMANACS¹



"What we call the past is built on bits."



– [John Archibald Wheeler's THE SEARCH FOR LINKS](#)
(Proc. 3d Int. Symp. Foundations of Quantum
Mechanics, Tokyo, 1989)

WALDEN: His [Alek Therien the woodchopper's] only books were an almanac and an arithmetic, in which last he was considerably expert. The former was a sort of cyclopaedia to him, which he supposed to contain an abstract of human knowledge, as indeed it does to a considerable extent.

1. Refer to PRELIMINARY CHECK LIST OF AMERICAN ALMANACS, 1639-1800 by Hugh Alexander Morrison (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1907).

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CHECK LIST OF RHODE ISLAND ALMANACS 1643-1850

With Introduction and Notes.

By HOWARD K. CHAPIN²

While Massachusetts boasts of an almanac in 1639, the year in which Glover established the first printing press in that colony, Rhode Island, according to Isaiah Thomas, closely followed her with one in 1643, eighty-nine years before a printing press was established within her borders. Gregory Dexter, who produced this first almanac for Rhode Island on his press at London, settled in Providence and later, "about the year 1646," according to Morgan Edwards, in his *HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS*, Dexter "was sent for to Boston to set in order the printing press there, for which he desired no other reward than that one of their almanacks should be sent to him every year." Ezra Stiles corroborates Edwards with the statement that "It is said that after Samuel Green began printing at Cambridge, Dexter went there annually, for several years, to assist him in printing an Almanac."³ A considerable improvement occurs about 1646 in the work which Daye produced. This was noticed by Littlefield and may well be accounted for by the employment of Dexter at that time.

It would seem then that Dexter continued for several years to assist Matthew Daye, who was only an apprentice, and Samuel Green who had even less knowledge of printing, in the rather difficult task of making up the form for the almanacs. This work would naturally require the oversight of a master printer, such as Dexter is known to have been. Roger Williams, in a letter to Governor Winthrop in 1669, wrote, "Sir, I have encouraged Mr. Dexter to send you a limestone, and to salute you with this enclosed. He is an intelligent man, a master printer of London and conscionable (though a Baptist)." Additional light is thrown upon Dexter's life in London by Arber in *A TRANSCRIPT OF THE REGISTERS OF THE COMPANY OF STATIONERS OF LONDON*,⁴ where Gregory Dexter's name appears under the date of December 18, 1639, in a list of men who took up their freedom as stationers, or in other words, were admitted as Master-Printers at Stationers Hall.

An agreement dated at Providence, 27th of 5th month 1640, was signed by Gregory Dexter, but Mr. Henry R. Chace believes that this, like some of the other early agreements, was not signed when it was dated, but received its signatures from time to time as opportunity offered, during a period of perhaps several years. In 1643, as the title page states, Gregory Dexter printed at London *A KEY INTO THE LANGUAGE OF AMERICA*, which

2. From the *PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY*, New Series, Volume 25 (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1915).

3. Thomas's *HISTORY OF PRINTING IN AMERICA*, Worcester, 1874, volume 1, page 194.

4. Thomas's *HISTORY OF PRINTING IN AMERICA*, Worcester, 1874, volume 3, page 688.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

Roger Williams had written during his sea voyage to England that summer. Thomas says that Dexter printed the almanac in the same year. Morgan Edwards in his HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS writes that Gregory Dexter "is said to have been born in London and to have followed the stationery business there in company with one Coleman; and to have been obliged to fly for printing a piece that was offensive to the then reigning power."

Edwards adds that this was the Coleman "who became the subject of a farce called THE CUTTER OF COLEMAN STREET." Dexter continued to reside at Providence, where he became pastor of the (first) Baptist Church, Town Clerk, Deputy, and in 1655 Governor of the Colony.

The Cambridge almanacs, as in fact many of the later Massachusetts almanacs, had a large circulation in Rhode Island and Nichols tells us that in 1724 Whittemore's almanacs were used as far west as New York. Likewise New York almanacs were circulated in New England, for we find a copy of Daniel Leed's Almanac for 1713 imprinted with the name of a Newport bookseller, Elkana Pembroke. Usually the almanacs printed in Rhode Island give the Court Calendar for the neighboring colonies.

It was not until 1728 that a real Rhode Island almanac was produced. This was Poor Robin's Almanac, which was printed at Newport by James Franklin, the brother of Benjamin. This 1728 almanac was the first of that series, sometimes by Poor Robin and sometimes by itinerant astrologers, as Maxwell and Stafford, which was continued annually by James Franklin, and after his death by his widow, until 1741.

In his Poor Robin's Almanac for 1730 Franklin says, referring to the author of the almanac for 1729, "My advice to him, is, That he take a Trip to Jerico, and tarry there till his Beard be grown, before he attempt any further Adventure of this kind." In 1731 Franklin published an almanac by Samuel Maxwell, a young man from remote parts, then but twenty-two years of age as is shown by the entry "The Author's Birthday 1708," which appears against the thirtieth of May. In speaking of himself in his preface Maxwell says, "Although I be young in Years, yet I give not my Pen a Latitude beyond my Beard; for I always keep one parallel with the other: And my Almanack is in such an easy plain Form, and regular Method, that I hope there will be no Fault found by any of my Antagonists." The fault was evidently found, for Poor Robin reappears as the author in 1732 and continues to 1735. James Franklin died Feb. 4, 1735 and no almanac was issued for 1736. In the following year his widow, Ann Franklin, obtained the services of Joseph Stafford who edited her almanacs for 1737 and 1738. He went to Boston and published an almanac there in 1739, thus making it necessary for Widow Franklin to revive Poor Robin for her 1739 almanac, as she explained in her preface.

A noticeable peculiarity of the early Franklin almanacs is that the astronomical calculations are contained in a ruled box of about the size of a pocket almanac, and on the outer and lower margins have texts in poetry and prose which thus increase the size of the page to that of the contemporary



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

almanacs such as Leeds. James Franklin was the first American printer to use this make-up in his almanacs.

The eighteenth century almanacs may roughly be divided into four groups according to size. The smallest were called pocket almanacs and their pages were about 4 inches by 2 3/4 inches. None of these seemed to have been published in Rhode Island during this period although the boxes of the early Franklin almanacs, were the size of the contemporary pocket almanacs. This peculiarity of the Franklin almanacs increased the dimensions of their pages so that they would fall into the second class, with pages 5 1/2 inches by 3 inches. The Whitefield almanac, the last published by Franklin as well as almost all of the later Providence and Newport almanacs, were of larger size being 6 inches by 3 1/2 inches. The sheet almanacs were, of course, large folio broadside.

There was a gap in the issuance of Rhode Island almanacs from 1741 to 1750 when Franklin's son, James, who had rejoined his mother after serving an apprenticeship in Philadelphia with his uncle Benjamin, began to publish Poor Job's almanac. under the pseudonym of Job Shepherd. In the preface to his 1751 almanac Job Shepherd says "And now, Reader, after having made this Publick Appearance, it must, on mature Consideration, appear very odd, what some think, and others affirm, that there is not, nor ever was, such a Person as I am living." In 1760 Franklin published an almanac by Nathaniel Whitefield. This is the last of the Franklin almanacs. In his preface Whitefield says, "It is expected, and the Public is never satisfied, 'till they receive an Account of the Life and Writings of an Author, when and where he was born, and who was his Patron, with many other Particulars. I shall only say in general, that I was born in the Reign of George King of England, and am a near relative of George Whitefield." The vagueness of these autobiographies, together with the fact that no such persons are recorded at Newport, seems to point strongly to the probability that both Shepherd and Whitefield were fictitious persons.

Two years later the first of Benjamin West's Rhode Island almanacs made its appearance, being published at Providence by William Goddard, for the year 1763. Providence now takes the lead over Newport in almanacs. The New-England Almanack or Lady's and Gentleman's Diary, at first by West and later by the fictitious Bickerstaff continued until 1881, having an existence of 118 years.

The title, the author, and the name of the publishers of this almanac varied from time to time. Its first issue was entitled AN ALMANACK FOR 1763, but this was increased to THE NEW ENGLAND ALMANACK in 1764 and so remained, with the exception of 1769, when it was entitled THE NEW-ENGLAND TOWN AND COUNTRY ALMANACK, until 1781, when it became BICKERSTAFF'S NEW-ENGLAND ALMANACK, CONTINUING SO UNTIL 1814. IN 1815 IT BECAME THE RHODE ISLAND ALMANACK, the "k" being dropped from Almanac in 1833. In 1871 the title was changed to THE OLD RHODE ISLAND FARMER'S ALMANAC.

From 1763 to 1781 Benjamin West was the author, with the exception of the year 1769 when "Abraham Weatherwise" took his place. From 1781 to 1881 "Isaac Bickerstaff" was given as the



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

author, except in 1833, when the name of R.T. Paine appeared on the title page.

The first almanac of this series was printed by William Goddard. He continued to do the printing until he turned the business over to his mother, the 1766 almanac being issued by Sarah and William Goddard. In 1767 the almanac was printed by Sarah Goddard and Company, in 1768 and 1769 by Sarah Goddard and John Carter, and from 1770 to 1793 by John Carter. The firm was Carter and Wilkinson from 1794 to 1799. John Carter again appears as the printer in 1800 and so continues until 1814. The 1815 almanac was published by Brown and Wilson, but Wilson's name is dropped after 1816, the work being done from 1817 to 1820, and from 1828 to 1861 by H.H. Brown. From 1821 to 1825 the firm was Brown and Danforth, and in 1826 and 1827 Carlisle and Brown. In 1861 A. Crawford Greene took over the work, becoming A. Crawford Greene and Son with the almanac for 1878.

In 1769 the firm, then Sarah Goddard and John Carter, published THE NEW-ENGLAND TOWN AND COUNTRY ALMANACK by "Abraham Weatherwise." This pseudonym was copied by Carter from Dunlap's Weatherwise's Almanac, which was printed in Philadelphia ten years earlier, at a time when Carter was living in that city. The preface states that this almanac was printed upon paper made within the colony of Rhode Island. This almanac evidently did not meet with much success, although they advertised a third edition of it, for it was not continued the next year as promised in the text. Weatherwise almanacs were issued throughout New England by various printers during the latter half of the 18th century.

In 1772 an edition of West's New-England Almanack was issued by Ebenezer Campbell in Newport. This may have been a pirated edition, or it may have been one of those cases in which West sold his calculations to two printers, of which proceeding Carter so strongly complained.

In 1781 John Carter issued two almanacs from the same type, the only difference being two changes on the title page. One was entitled THE NEW-ENGLAND ALMANACK, "By Benjamin West," while the other was entitled BICKERSTAFF'S NEW-ENGLAND ALMANACK, "By Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq." After Carter had issued the West almanac for 1781, the old disagreement broke out again between him and West, which resulted in Carter's reissuing the same almanac under the pseudonym of "Isaac Bickerstaff," adopting the name of a successful Boston series started in 1768 by West himself. This dispute of 1781 was the culmination of a long series of business misunderstandings between Carter and West. Carter in the Providence Gazette for October 18, 1766, states that he had purchased the sole right to publish West's almanac for 1767, notwithstanding the fact that some Boston publishers were using the same almanac. As Carter quaintly words it: "Charity bids us hope, that those Gentlemen of Boston have more Virtue and Honor, than to persue under-handed measures to obtain the Property of others, and that Mr. West could not be deluded by any Consideration, to deviate from the Paths of Rectitude, and risque the Loss of his Credit, by selling a second Time what he had already disposed of."



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

A reconciliation evidently occurred, for the West almanac for 1768 was published by Goddard and Carter. Another disagreement broke out the following year. Goddard and Carter published the Weatherwise almanac for 1769 while the West almanac was printed by Mein and Fleeming in Boston, the imprint stating that the almanac was "Sold by Benjamin West (the author) in Providence." From 1770 to 1780 Carter published West's almanacs, and had many quarrels with the author over the sale of his astronomical calculations to other printers. This series started in 1763 was continued after 1781 under the name of Bickerstaff.

West then became the author of the series of North American Calendars published by Bennett Wheeler. Nichols tells us that in Isaiah Thomas's almanac for 1784 it says "that West was the original Bickerstaff and had ceased to publish his annuals in 1779 because of those persons who had brought the name into disrepute." West was professor of mathematics at Brown University, and wrote a well known account of the transit of Venus which he observed from Transit Street in Providence which thus derived its name. His astronomical calculations were in use throughout New England.

Let us now return to Newport where beginning with 1764, we find Ames' almanacs reprinted by Samuel Hall, the successor of the Franklins. In 1766 both the regular Ames' and the pirated edition bear Hall's name. In 1772 John Anderson's first almanac was issued by Solomon Southwick at Newport. The Anderson almanacs continued until 1777 when the war with England brought them to an end. From the fact that no John Anderson was living at Newport and that in the preface of his 1773 almanac appear the following words: "As I find there is much Inquiry about the real Author, or, 'Who is this John Anderson?,'" it seems probable that the name, like Poor Robin and Job Shepherd was a pseudonym. The name originating with Solomon Southwick, was revived by Bennett Wheeler in 1780, and by Southwick's son in 1795.

Southwick and Wheeler appear to have been on very friendly terms in 1780 which may account for Wheeler's reviving "Anderson" for his almanac for that year. Wheeler states in the AMERICAN JOURNAL that he used West's calculations in this almanac.

The following year West's name appears on Wheeler's almanac as a result of the dispute between Carter and West. This North American Calendar became a prosperous rival of Carter's Bickerstaff and continued to be published until 1803. West's name was dropped in 1788, and the same year the title was changed to WHEELER'S NORTH AMERICAN CALENDAR. Amos Perry in his article on New England Almanacs states that this series continued until 1805, but no copies for 1804 or 1805 have been located. In 1785 and 1786 Wheeler, evidently quarrelling with West, issued his North American Calendar under the pseudonym of Copernicus Partridge as well as under West's name. The Partridge almanac for 1786 ran through three editions.

In 1781 a French almanac, entitled *CALENDRIER FRANÇAIS*, was published at Newport. This almanac was printed from the French type which was brought over from France by de Ternay's fleet



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

which was sent to help the Colonies. The fleet lay at Newport during the winter of 1780-81 and their press was set up on shore as is stated in the *CALENDRIER*, "pres le Parc de la Marine." The first 26 pages contain the astronomical calculations, the saint's names appearing after each day, for this almanac was the first Roman Catholic as well as the first French almanac printed in New England. Pages 26 and 31 contain a list of the French vessels, the number of their cannon, and the roll of their officers. Pages 31 and 32 contain a list of the officers under Rochambeau. After the names of many of the officers are manuscript notes in ink, in the Rhode Island Historical Society copy, evidently contemporary, such as: "mort", "Tué à Chesapeak," "blessé au jambe," etc.

The year 1788 saw two almanacs published at Newport by Peter Edes. The one by Daniel Freebetter, a pseudonym previously popular in Connecticut, was not again issued; the other, by Thornton, was continued for a decade. The following year, 1789, Edes published an almanac purporting to be by the fabulous Poor Richard. This also did not meet with success and was not repeated the next year. Elisha Thornton, born in Smithfield, Rhode Island, in 1748, was the first native Rhode Island almanac maker. He ceased to publish his almanac with the issue of 1792 and thereafter sold his calculations to various printers.

In 1793 Nathaniel Phillips, who had recently established a press at Warren, started his United States Diary which lasted until 1798.

In 1800 Oliver Farnsworth issued his first Newport almanac, the title being changed later to Rhode Island almanac. It lasted until 1806, Benjamin West being the author during the last three years of its existence.

Remington Southwick, styling himself "of Mendon" in 1800, was the author of The Columbian Calendar for 1801 which was published at Dedham in Massachusetts. Later he became Teacher of Mathematics in Washington Academy at Wickford, R.I., and is so described on the title page of the Columbian Calendar of Newport for 1806. He probably did the astronomical work for Oliver Farnsworth's almanacs for 1800 and 1801 and appears as author of those published by Farnsworth for 1802 and 1803.

Sheet almanacs were issued by both Carter and Wheeler. They were usually issued during the first part of January as is shown by the advertisements in the newspapers, while the regular almanacs were issued in October or November. These sheet almanacs, according to the advertisements, were "Convenient for Compting-Houses, Stores, public Houses &c." The earliest Rhode Island sheet almanac that has been recorded was for 1771. Such almanacs were, by nature, rather ephemeral and only two existing examples of them have survived.

The Poor Job almanac for 1751 is the earliest known Rhode Island almanac to contain an illustration. Thereafter the man of signs and cuts explaining eclipses became quite common. A portrait of Wilkes appears as the cover design of the Weatherwise almanac, and a fanciful cover design is used on the early Andersons. Armorial cuts of the state and national arms are used on the title pages of the Phillips and the



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

contemporary Wheeler almanacs.

After 1800 fewer issues of Rhode Island almanacs appeared. BICKERSTAFF'S NEW-ENGLAND ALMANAC, called after 1815 THE RHODE ISLAND ALMANAC, continued the standard, practically without a rival. In 1806 Moses Lopez at Newport issued a Hebrew almanac known as A LUNAR CALENDAR FOR A.M. 5566. From 1825 to 1832 H.H. Brown issued THE RHODE ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR as well as THE RHODE ISLAND ALMANAC and in 1843 Moore instituted his PROVIDENCE ALMANAC. This, as time went on, became less and less of an almanac and more and more of a business directory until in 1896 the title PROVIDENCE ALMANAC was dropped.

During the last quarter of the century various comic and advertising almanacs were issued in Providence, Pawtucket, and Westerly, a series of French Catholic almanacs was published in Woonsocket from 1882 to 1893, and a Swedish almanac in Providence in 1894.

The success of the New York World's almanac set the example for our local papers so that today our two most successful almanacs are the PROVIDENCE JOURNAL ALMANAC in Providence and the NEWPORT MERCURY ALMANAC in Newport.

Beside the bona-fide Rhode Island almanacs, there have been a number of Massachusetts almanacs which, regularly as Thomas's, or irregularly as Weatherwise's, Bickerstaff's and Pope's, used Rhode Island as part of their title although not published within the state. These doubtless circulated considerably in Rhode Island. Robert B. Thomas's OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC has for over half a century been sold extensively in Rhode Island by local dealers, who have, as a general rule, had their names stamped or printed on the cover.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

300 BCE

circa 300 BCE: At about this period, in Mesopotamian [astronomy](#), the development of a mathematical theory of planetary motions.

ANCIENT CALCULATION

The development of accurate predictions of lunar movement and lunar [eclipses](#).

The beginnings of true mathematical science, grounded in astronomical observations. The multiplicity of phenomenon were reduced to mathematical expressions to predict what would happen in the future. In Seleucid times two different systems (we now term them “A” and “B”) were in use to compute the course of the [sun](#) and [moon](#).

[Almanacs](#): “Observational” texts comprising monthly reports of certain astronomical phenomena (using Zodiacal signs as reference), and covering one Babylonian year.

Normal-Star [Almanacs](#): “Observational” texts similar in structure to the almanacs but using “normal stars” as reference.

Goal-Year Texts: “Observational” texts containing information for enabling the prediction of planetary and lunar phenomena for a given year.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

All classes of Seleucid astronomical texts contained at least some predictions. Non-mathematical astronomic texts of the Seleucid Period consisted of:

- [Almanacs](#)
- Normal-Star [Almanacs](#)
- Goal-Year Texts
- Diaries⁵
- Horoscopes
- Lists of lunar and solar [eclipses](#)



5. The “Astronomical” Diaries date back to the Late Assyrian Period (*circa* 740 BCE) and were the source of the other “observational” texts.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1504

February 29: Christopher Columbus, stranded by shipworms on the island of Jamaica, enabled his people in their abuse of the natives — consulting his Regiomontanus [almanac](#) to obtain the date of the next partial lunar eclipse, he demonstrated for the amazement of these locals that white men possessed a power to produce, and then dispel, a supernatural darkness of the moon.⁶

ASTRONOMY

1567

An [almanac](#) was published by Jo. Schwertelius Witeberg[ae], Schonbornius (Barth.) Computus, vel Calendarium Astronomicum, F.F. 8vo.

1628

An [almanac](#) was published that eventually would find its way into the library of Governor John Winthrop of Connecticut. That almanac was Jacobo Rosco's *EPHEMERIS PERPETUA HOC EST GENERALE CALDENDARIUM ASTRONOMICUM ET ASTROLOGICUM* (Basiliae).

1639

December 18: Gregory Dexter, later to be a master printer in [Providence, Rhode Island](#), and then pastor of the Baptist Church there, and then the Town Clerk, and then a Deputy Governor, and in 1655 the colonial Governor, on this day took up his freedom as a stationer in London, which is to say, having completed his apprenticeship he was admitted as a Master-Printer at Stationers Hall. He would follow the stationery business in London in company with one Coleman until obliged to fly for printing a piece that was offensive to the then reigning power. This Coleman with whom he associated himself in London has been said to have been the man “who became the subject of a farce called THE CUTTER OF COLEMAN STREET.”

6. I find it difficult to believe that this actually happened, or if it did happen, that it was anywhere near as simple a matter as here recounted. For one thing, this Regiomontanus almanac was of course one that had been prepared for Europe, by someone who had no information about the longitudes and latitudes of the American continents.

**1640**

From Governor John Winthrop's journal we learn that the first American [almanac](#) was prepared in this year by the mariner William Peirce and printed at Cambridge by a man named Daye.

Mo. 1 (March) A printing house was begun at Cambridge by one Daye, at the charge of Mr. Glover, who died on sea hitherward. The first thing which was printed was the freemen's oath; the next was an almanac made for New England by Mr. William Peirce, mariner; the next was the Psalms newly turned into metre.

JOHN WINTHROP JOURNAL**1643**

[ALMANACK FOR [RHODE ISLAND](#) AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS IN NEW ENGLAND FOR 1644. London: Gregory Dexter.] In his "History of Printing in America," Isaiah Thomas stated that this was the first [almanac](#) for Rhode Island (however, no copy of this has been located).

(Gregory Dexter also printed at London A KEY INTO THE LANGUAGE OF AMERICA, which [Roger Williams](#) had written that summer during his sea voyage to England.)


According to Joseph A. Leo Lemay's "NEW ENGLAND'S ANNOYANCES": AMERICA'S FIRST FOLK SONG (Newark NJ: U of Delaware P, 1985), this first folk song sung in America most likely was authored in 1643 by the [Edward Johnson](#) of Woburn MA who in 1648 would prepare the pro-emigration tract GOOD NEWS FROM NEW ENGLAND and who by 1653 in London would have prepared a HISTORY OF NEW ENGLAND. Most likely the lyrics were first printed up at the colonial press in Cambridge MA on a broadside in this year, and most likely this broadside had been necessitated by a tract which was then appearing, NEW ENGLANDS FIRST FRUITS. (That tract was something of a report card of the progress of Harvard College and/or the progress of the Reverend John Eliot's Christian Indians, and had been prepared by the Reverend Henry Dunster, Thomas Weld, and Hugh Peter.) The song, in quatrains made up of anapestic tetrameter lines, was to be sung to the tune known as "Derry down" and thus, between stanzas, there would have been some sort of refrain like "Hey down, down, hey down derry down." Abundant internal textual evidence demonstrates that its intended audience was not as it represents, prospective immigrants from England, but instead, with irony, New Englanders who might be being tempted to try their luck elsewhere. Since the persona projected by the singer is interestingly similar to the what we now term the "hillbilly," what we have here is evidence that this hardscrabble imago constitutes the original American self-characterization.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

[Henry Thoreau](#) may have had this merely as verbal material, for he was not using the version that [Benjamin Franklin](#)'s nephew Benjamin Mecom had used as filler material in a 1758 chapbook, FATHER ABRAHAM'S SPEECH,⁷ heading it "An Old Song, wrote by *one of our first New England Planters, on their Management in Those good Old Times. To The Tune of a Cobler there was, etc.*" which lacked the stanza from which he

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7. That's the early title for [Benjamin Franklin](#)'s THE WAY TO WEALTH, which he was preparing as a preface for his POOR RICHARD IMPROVED: BEING AN [ALMANAC](#) ... FOR ... 1758,  and which [Thoreau](#) would satirize in "Economy."

WALDEN: I am not sure that I ever heard the sound of cock-crowing from my clearing, and I thought that it might be worth the while to keep a cockerel for his music merely, as a singing bird. The note of this once wild Indian pheasant is certainly the most remarkable of any bird's, and if they could be naturalized without being domesticated, it would soon become the most famous sound in our woods, surpassing the clangor of the goose and the hooting of the owl; and then imagine the cackling of the hens to fill the pauses when their lords' clarions rested! No wonder that man added this bird to his tame stock, -to say nothing of the eggs and drumsticks. To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth, drowning the feebler notes of other birds, -think of it! It would put nations on the alert. Who would not be early to rise, and rise earlier and earlier every successive day of his life, till he became unspeakably healthy, wealthy, and wise? This foreign bird's note is celebrated by the poets of all countries along with the notes of their native songsters. All climates agree with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

quoted in [WALDEN](#):

- He may have seen a copy that appeared in the Massachusetts Spy newspaper on February 3, 1774.
- He may have seen a copy that appeared on pages 52 and 53 of the Massachusetts Magazine in January 1791.
- He may have seen a copy that was reprinted in a Plymouth newspaper, The Old Colony Memorial, on May 18, 1822, as it had been presented in a private letter that had been discovered, that had been written in Cambridge MA on December 15, 1817.
- He may have seen this on pages 230 and 231 of John Farmer and Jacob Bailey Moore's COLLECTIONS, HISTORICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS: AND MONTHLY LITERARY JOURNAL 3 of 1824.
- He may have seen this on page 35 of Alonzo Lewis's HISTORY OF LYNN published in Boston in 1829.
- He may have seen this on pages 29 and 30 of the Massachusetts Historical Society's COLLECTIONS, 3D SERIES, 7, for the year 1838.
- He may have seen this on pages 71 and 72 of the 2d edition of Alonzo Lewis's HISTORY OF LYNN, INCLUDING NAHANT published in Boston in 1844.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

I have marked the materials which [Thoreau](#) utilized:

New England's annoyances you that would know them,
Pray ponder these verses which briefly doth show them.
The place where we live is a wilderness wood,
Where grass is much wanting that's fruitful and good.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

From the end of November till three months are gone,
The ground is all frozen as hard as a stone,
Our mountains and hills and vallies below,
Being commonly covered with ice and with snow.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

And when the north-wester with violence blows,
Then every man pulls his cap over his nose;
But if any's so hardy and will it withstand,
He forfeits a finger, a foot, or a hand.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

When the ground opens we then take the hoe,
And make the ground ready to plant and to sow;
Our corn being planted and seed being sown,
The worms destroy much before it is grown.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

While it is growing much spoil there is made,
By birds and by squirrels that pluck up the blade;
Even when it is grown to full corn in the ear,
It's apt to be spoil'd by hog, racoon, and deer.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

Our money's soon counted, for we have just none,
All that we brought with us is wasted and gone.
We buy and sell nothing but upon exchange,
Which makes all our dealings uncertain and strange.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

And now our garments begin to grow thin,
And wool is much wanting to card and to spin;
If we can get a garment to cover without,
Our innermost garment is clout upon clout.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

Our clothes we brought with us are apt to be torn,
They need to be clouted before they are worn,
For clouting our garments does injure us nothing:
Clouts double are warmer than single whole clothing.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

If flesh meat be wanting to fill up our dish,
We have carrots and pumpkins and turnips and fish;
And when we have a mind for a delicate dish,
We repair to the clam banks, and there we catch fish.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

Instead of pottage and puddings and custards and pies,
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies;
We have pumpkin at morning and pumpkin at noon;
If it was not for pumpkins we should be undone.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

**If barley be wanting to make into malt,
We must be contented, and think it no fault;
For we can make liquor to sweeten our lips,
Of pumpkins and parsnips and walnut tree chips.**

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

**And of our green corn-stalks we make our best beer,
We put it in barrels to drink all the year:
Yet I am as healthy, I verily think,
Who make the spring-water my commonest drink.**

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

And we have a Cov'nant one with another,
Which makes a division 'twixt brother and brother:
For some are rejected, and others made Saints,
Of those that are equal in virtues and wants.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

For such like annoyance we've many mad fellows
Find fault with our apples before they are mellow;
And they are for England, they will not stay here,
But meet with a lion in shunning a bear.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

Now while some are going let others be coming,
For while liquor is boiling it must have a scumming;
But we will not blame them, for birds of a feather,
By seeking their fellows are flocking together.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....

But you who the Lord intends hither to bring,
Forsake not the honey for fear of the sting;
But bring both a quiet and contented mind,
And all needful blessings you surely shall find.

... Hey down, down, hey down derry down....



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

And here is how the song would appear in Thoreau's literary production (we may note well that neither in the original folk song, nor in Thoreau's version of it, is there to be discovered any evidence of a psychic disturbance at the thought of the production of sweetness from [sugar cane](#), in that it needed typically to be planted, tended, harvested, and processed by the black slave laborers in the plantations of the subtropics):

WALDEN: Every New Englander might easily raise all his own breadstuffs in this land of rye and Indian corn, and not depend on distant and fluctuating markets for them. Yet so far are we from simplicity and independence that, in Concord, fresh and sweet meal is rarely sold in the shops, and hominy and corn in a still coarser form are hardly used by any. For the most part the farmer gives to his cattle and hogs the grain of his own producing, and buys flour, which is at least no more wholesome, at a greater cost, at the store. I saw that I could easily raise my bushel or two of rye and Indian corn, for the former will grow on the poorest land, and the latter does not require the best, and grind them in a hand-mill, and so do without rice and pork; and if I must have some concentrated sweet, I found by experiment that I could make a very good molasses either of pumpkins or beets, and I knew that I needed only to set out a few maples to obtain it more easily still, and while these were growing I could use various substitutes beside those which I have named, "For," as the Forefathers sang,-

"we can make liquor to sweeten our lips
Of pumpkins and parsnips and walnut-tree chips."

Finally, as for salt, that grossest of groceries, to obtain this might be a fit occasion for a visit to the seashore, or, if I did without it altogether, I should probably drink the less water. I do not learn that the Indians ever troubled themselves to go after it.

Thus I could avoid all trade and barter, so far as my food was concerned, and having a shelter already, it would only remain to get clothing and fuel. The pantaloons which I now wear were woven in farmer's family, -thank Heaven there is so much virtue still in man; for I think the fall from the farmer to the operative as great and memorable as that from the man to the farmer;- and in a new country fuel is an encumbrance. As for a habitat, if I were not permitted still to squat, I might purchase one acre at the same price for which the land I cultivated was sold -namely, eight dollars and eight cents. But as it was, I considered that I enhanced the value of the land by squatting on it.

**SWEETS
WITHOUT
SLAVERY**



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1646

Master printer Gregory Dexter of [Providence, Rhode Island](#) was sent for to assist Samuel Green and his apprentice Matthew Daye in [Boston](#) in setting up a printing press. Dexter asked for no reward other than that each year he be sent a freebie copy of their [almanac](#).

1669

[Roger Williams](#) wrote to Governor John Winthrop, Jr. about the master printer of [Providence, Rhode Island](#), Gregory Dexter,

Sir, I have encouraged Mr. Dexter to send you a limestone, and to salute you with this enclosed. He is an intelligent man, a master printer of London and conscionable (though a Baptist).

(Note well: present-day Providence Baptists allege, with the utmost of heat and conviction, that this Roger Williams was a Baptist minister, founder of their flock.)

We have the following information about [Providence, Rhode Island](#) from Nathaniel Morton's NEW ENGLAND'S MEMORIAL:

This year three men were executed for robbing and murdering an Indian near Providence, which, besides the evidence that came against them, they did in substance confess against themselves, and were condemned by legal trial. Some have thought it great severity, to hang three English for one Indian; but the more considerate will easily satisfy themselves for the legality of it;...

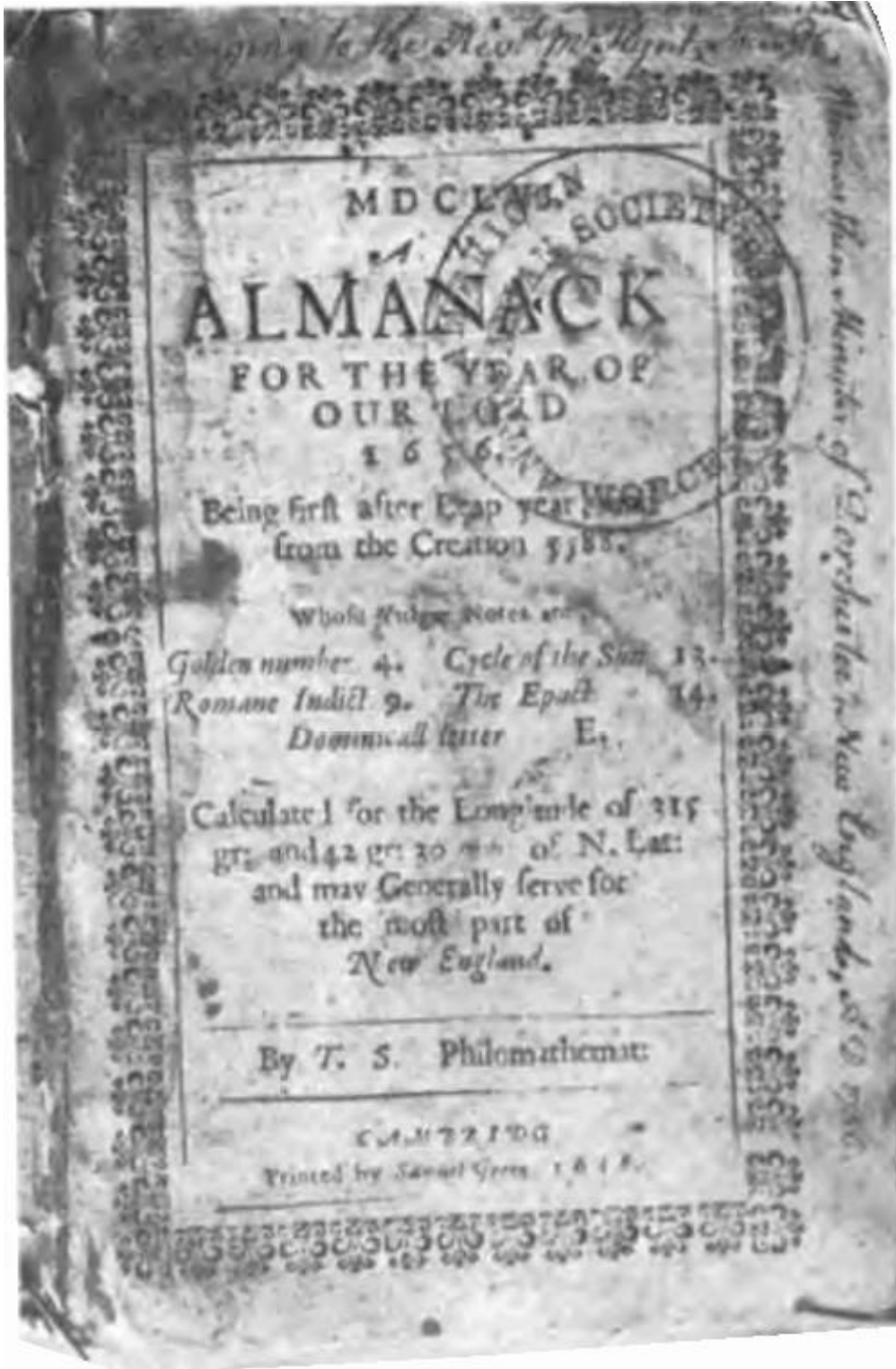
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



1664

[Saffron-Walden](#), according to POOR ROBIN'S [ALMANACK](#) AND KALENDER OF THE YEAR 1664, is at the meridian at which "the pole is elevated 62 degrees and 6 digits above the horizon, where the May-pole is elevated (with a plumm [*sic*] cake on the top of it) 5 yards 3/4 above the marker-cross."



1666

July 3: [John Evelyn](#)'s diary entry for this day was in part as follows:

John Evelyn's Diary

I went to sit with the Commissioners at the Tower of Lond, where our Commiss: being read, we made some progresse in buisnesse: Sir G: Wharton being our Secretary, that famous Mathematician, & who writ the yearely [Almanac](#), during his Majesties troubles:

Thence to Painter hall to our other Commiss: & dined at my L[ord] Majors:

THIS DAY IN PEPYS'S DIARY



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1676

The 6th edition, “with many useful additions,” of [John Evelyn](#)’s *KALENDARIVM HORTENSE: OR, THE GARD’NERS ALMANAC*, DIRECTING WHAT HE IS TO DO MONTHLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. AND WHAT FRUITS AND FLOWERS ARE IN PRIME. TO WHICH IS ADDED, A DISCOURSE OF EARTH, RELATING TO THE CULTURE....



August 12, Saturday:⁸ The word was out early that morning that King [Phillip](#), with his wife Wootonekanuske and child having been taken captive, and with all his efforts to obtain help from other native tribes having proven to be totally fruitless, had given up and gone home to [Pokanoket](#) to await his fate:

The next news we hear of Phillip was that he had gotten back to Mount Hope, now like to become Mount Misery to him and his vagabond crew.



"As the star of the Indian descended,
that of the Puritans rose ever higher."
— Tourtellot, Arthur Bernon, THE CHARLES,



8. On this date William Harris wrote again to Sir Joseph Williamson, a letter which is a useful source of information.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

NY: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941, page 63

After a year's absence Philip, reduced to a miserable condition, returned to his native place, near which he was killed, Aug. 12, 1676. One of his own men, whom he had offended, and who had deserted to the English, shot him through the heart. His death put an end to this most horrid and distressing war.

About 3000 warriors were combined for the destruction of New England, and the war terminated with their entire defeat, and almost total extinction. About 600 of the English inhabitants, the greatest part of whom were the flower and strength of the country, either fell in battle or were murdered by the enemy. Twelve or thirteen towns were destroyed [according to Trumbell, vol. i, page 350, and Holmes's Annals of America, i., page 384] and about 600 houses burned.⁹

"KING PHILLIP'S WAR"

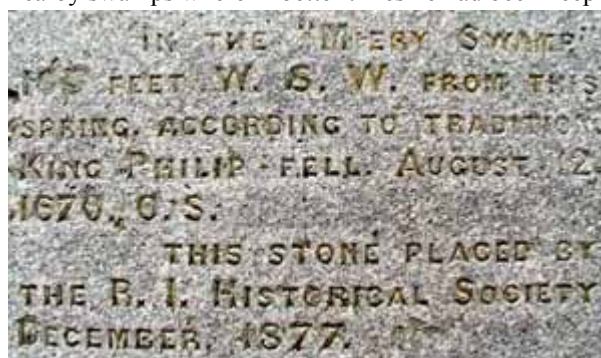
-
9. [Lemuel Shattuck](#)'s 1835 [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#) Boston MA: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: John Stacy, 1835
-

(On or about November 11, 1837 [Thoreau](#) would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study.)

The warriors under Captain Benjamin Church,¹⁰ white and red, crept up during the previous night and in the dawn they assaulted *Metacom*'s hilltop ceremonial center at *Mount Hope* on *Rhode Island*'s Narragansett Bay.



Surprise was achieved. An English-allied native informant named Alderman hunted down and shot the fleeing leader in the nearby swamps where in better times he had been keeping his royal herds of pigs.



The first shot through the upper chest put Metacom on his face in the mud and water on top of his gun. Alderman apparently then poured more powder down the barrel of his gun, rammed down another ball, charged his pan—a process requiring a certain amount of time—and then shot Metacom again, this time delivering the *coup de grace* directly through the heart. Some five or six persons who were with Metacom also were killed while attempting to escape. The white army gave “three loud huzzas.” As the Reverend

10. Benjamin Church would later be paid the going rate for *Metacom*'s head, 30 shillings, “scant reward, and poor encouragement,” when it was mounted atop a pole in Plymouth common.

Increase Mather would later characterize the accomplishment,¹¹ the grand result had been brought about by a combination of the white people's righteous prayers to their God, and the red people's wicked remarks in disregard of God's wrath: the white warriors, he claimed, had prayed the bullet into Metacom's heart, whereas there was an unnamed "chief" present who had been a sneerer at the Christian religion, who "withal, added a most hideous blasphemy, immediately upon which a bullet took him in the head, and dashed out his brains, sending his cursed soul in a moment among the devils, and blasphemers, in hell forever."¹²



There are no authentic period depictions of this person.

11. Reverend Increase Mather. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WARR WITH THE INDIANS IN NEW-ENGLAND (1676).

12. Since the Reverend Increase Mather's PREVALENCY OF PRAYER was well known, and since this is from page 7 in the front of the book, we may suppose that the initial audience for WALDEN well understood that Thoreau was taking an actual slap at the memory of the Reverend on page 182, where he made his preposterous remark that "this vice is one of which the Indians were never guilty."

WALDEN: Some have been puzzled to tell how the shore became so regularly paved. My townsmen have all heard the tradition, the oldest people tell me that they heard it in their youth, that anciently the Indians were holding a pow-wow upon a hill here, which rose as high into the heavens as the pond now sinks deep into the earth, and they used much profanity, as the story goes, though this vice is one of which the Indians were never guilty, and while they were thus engaged the hill shook and suddenly sank, and only one old squaw, named Walden, escaped, and from her the pond was named.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



The corpse of Metacom was “pulled out of the mire to the upland,” some tugging it by the stockings and others by the breechclout, the body being otherwise unclothed “and a doleful, great, naked, dirty beast he looked like,” was quartered and **hanged** in four separate trees and the head and his trademark crippled hand were carried away.¹³No mention was made at the time, or later, about any pipe, any war club, or any

THE MARKET FOR HUMAN BODY PARTS

wampum belt associated with Metacom that had been sequestered either by Alderman or by Church as souvenirs of the event.

13. Note: The head would be mounted atop a pole in Plymouth and would remain there for a quarter of a century. The hand, recognizable as King Phillip’s because crippled (evidently a pistol had split while being fired), would be preserved by Alderman in a bucket of rum and displayed for pennies in taverns for many years. The horrible death and mutilation of the person who supposedly had caused these hostilities, however, would do little to bring these hostilities to an end. In western New England, and in Maine, this race war, which in actuality had always been an unplanned leaderless struggle between mutually antagonistic and intolerant groups, would continue unabated. The Abenaki of Maine (Penobscot) would be attacking the settlements of the English along the coastline well into 1677. The *Iroquois* and the Algonquian would be attacking in the inland regions for the next three generations, right up into the period of the French and Indian Wars.





Samuel Sewall lettered neatly alongside this date in his [almanac](#): *Philippus exit*.

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

Here is how the scene would be depicted, from 1829 to 1887, on the American stage:



META. Embrace me, Nahmeokee – ‘twas like the first you gave me in the days of our strength and joy – they are gone. [*Places his ear to the ground*] Hark! In the distant wood I faintly hear the cautious tread of men! They are upon us, Nahmeokee – the home of the happy is made ready for thee. [*Stabs her, she dies*] She felt no white man’s bondage – free as the air she lived – pure as the snow she died! In smiles she died! Let me taste it, ere her lips are cold as the ice. [*Loud shouts. Roll of drums. Kaweshine leads Church and Soldiers on bridge, R.*]

CHURCH. He is found! Philip is our prisoner.

META. No! He lives – last of his race – but still your enemy – lives to defy you still. Though numbers overpower me and treachery surround me, though friends desert me, I defy you still! Come to me – come singly to me! And this true knife that has tasted the foul blood of your nation and now is red with the purest of mine, will feel a grasp as strong as when it flashed in the blaze of your burning dwellings, or was lifted terribly over the fallen in battle.

CHURCH. Fire upon him!

META. Do so, I am weary of the world for ye are dwellers in it; I would not turn upon my heel to save my life.

CHURCH. Your duty, soldiers. [*They fire. [Metamora](#) falls. Enter Walter, Oceana, Wolfe, Sir Arthur, Errington, Goodenough, Tramp and Peasants. Roll of drums and trumpet till all on.*]

META. My curses on you, white men! May the Great Spirit curse you when he speaks in his war voice from the clouds! Murderers! The last of the Wampanoags’ curse be on you! May your graves and the graves of your children be in the path the red man shall trace! And may the wolf and panther howl o’er your fleshless bones, fit banquet for the destroyers! Spirits of the grave, I come! But the curse of *Metamora* stays with the white man! I die! My wife! My queen! My Nahmeokee! [*Falls and dies; a tableau is formed. Drums and trumpet sound a retreat till curtain. Slow curtain*]

November 27: There occurred a fire in [Boston](#) that would be described, in an [almanac](#) shortly afterward, as “Bostons greatest fire.” Well, this wasn’t actually as great as the later fires, to be lovingly portrayed in Currier & Ives lithographs, but all buildings along a stretch of the waterfront were indeed destroyed. It being said that this was evidence of God’s displeasure at the violation of the Sabbath day — a roundup of [Quakers](#) was promptly initiated.

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

1678

The first illustration of the “man of signs” to be prepared in New England appeared in John Foster’s [almanac](#).

The Dominion of the Moon in Man’s Body
(according to Astronomers)



The *Head* and *Face* the *Ram* doth crave,
The *Neck* and *Throat*, the *Bull* will have,
The loving *Twins* do rule the *Hands*,
The *Breast* and *Sides* in *Cancer* bands,
The *Heart* and *Back* the *Lion* claims,
Bowels and *Belly* *Virgo* gains,
The *Reins* and *Loyns* are *Libra*’s part,
The *Secrets* *Scorpio*’s are by Art;
Thinks to the *Arch* *Scorpio*’s part.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1683

[Halley's Comet](#) was a publication opportunity. In this year appeared both Christopher Ness's *A STRANGE AND WONDERFUL TRINITY; OR, A TRIPPLICITY OF STUPENDOUS PRODIGIES, CONSISTING OF A WONDERFUL ECLIPSE, AS WELL AS OF A WONDERFUL COMET, AND OF A WONDERFUL CONJUNCTION [of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars], NOW IN ITS SECOND RETURN*, and the Reverend Increase Mather's *KOMETOGRAPHIA; OR, DISCOURSE CONCERNING COMETS....* Attempting to provide a catalog of appearances of all known historical comets, the Reverend cited a number of appearances that we now know to have been Halley's Comet: he knew of the appearances during 66, 684, 837, 912, 1066, 1145, 1301, 1456, 1531, 1607, and 1682, missing the appearances it had made during 141, 218, 295, 347, 451, 530, 607, 760, 989, and 1378.



Of course, he supposed all these to be separate comets, rather than one comet returning multiple times. In this book the Reverend bound two of his sermons “occasioned by the late blasing [blasting] stars.” The Reverend's son Cotton Mather authored an [almanac](#) article about this appearance of Halley's Comet.

[SKY EVENT](#)

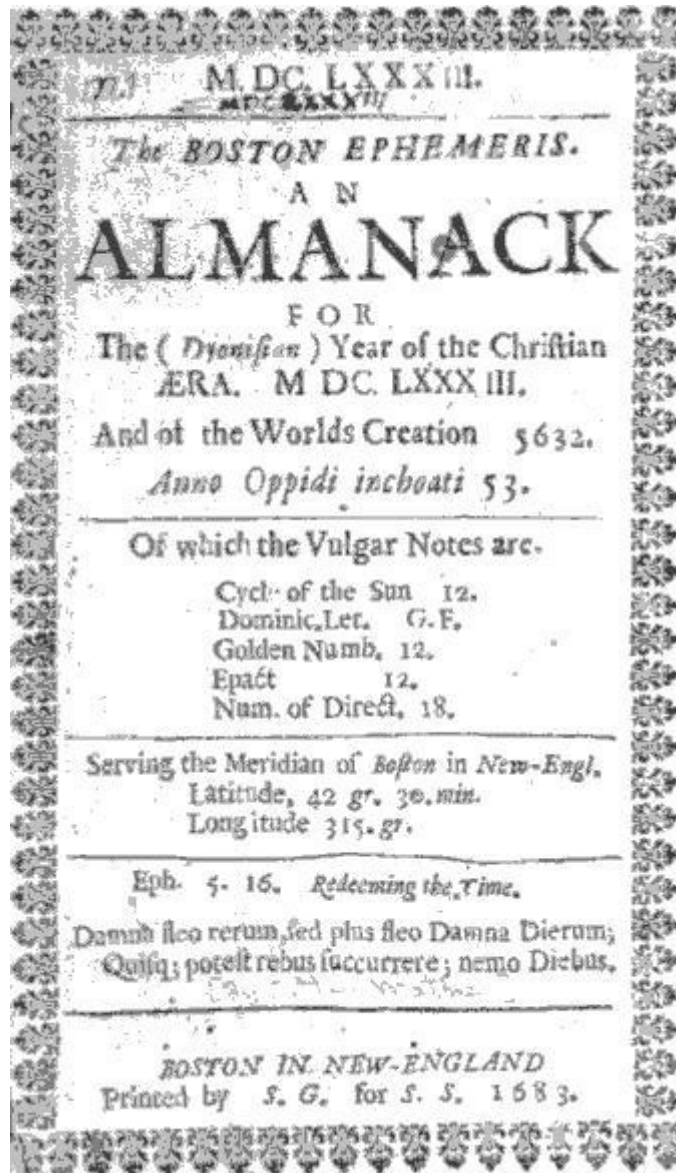
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1684

RUSSELL'S CAMBRIDGE ALMANACK FOR 1684 contained the first full-page woodcut to appear in any American [almanac](#), purporting to depict King David with his harp.



1693

THE COMPLEAT GARD'NER appeared, translated from the French. [John Evelyn](#) acknowledged in a letter to his brother that most of the work had been done by someone else, with Evelyn's name appearing on the front for commercial reasons.¹⁴



1700

From this year into 1745, in the vicinity of [Concord](#), the “Jacob Whittemore” house was being constructed as a two-story side gable Georgian 5-bay edifice around a central chimney. Its front door had heavy entablature. Associated with this house would be a barn, a cornhouse, a cider mill, and a blacksmith shop. Jacob Whittemore was a son of Dr. Nathaniel Whittemore, publisher of a widely circulated [almanac](#) as well as physician. This house would later pertain to the family of Lexington minute man John Muzzy. This structure also is still in existence.

14. Bonnefons, Nicolas de. *LE JARDINIER FRANCOIS*. English. 1672. THE FRENCH GARDINER: INSTRUCTING HOW TO CULTIVATE ALL SORTS OF FRUIT-TREES AND HERBS FOR THE GARDEN: TOGETHER WITH DIRECTIONS TO DRY AND CONSERVE THEM IN THEIR NATURAL / AN ACCOMPLISHED PIECE WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN FRENCH AND NOW TRANSPLANTED INTO ENGLISH BY [JOHN EVELYN](#), ESQ.; WHEREUNTO IS ANNEXED, THE ENGLISH VINEYARD VINDICATED BY JOHN ROSE, NOW GARDINER TO HIS MAJESTY; WITH A TRACT OF THE MAKING AND ORDERING OF WINES IN FRANCE. Printed by S.S. for Benj. Tooke, 1672.
Evelyn, John. *KALENDARIVM HORTENSE, OR, THE GARD'NERS ALMANAC*: DIRECTING WHAT HE IS TO DO MONTHLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, AND WHAT FRUITS AND FLOWERS ARE IN PRIME / by John Evelyn. The 5th edition, with many useful additions. London: Printed by John Martyn, 1673.

**1704**

A manuscript [almanac](#) *CALENDARIUM ASTRONOMICUM*; A COMPLEAT EPHEMERIS OF THE CELESTIAL MOTIONS, FOR THE YEAR OF CHRIST, 1704, WITH DRAWINGS OF THE ECLIPSES, 1703 TO 1763, EXACTLY CALCULATED FROM “*ASTRONOMINA CAROLINA*,” BY JOHN CHATTOCK, SCHOOLMASTER OF CASTLE BROMWICK, IN WARWICKSHIRE has been described in a rare-books catalog as “very cleverly written, in exact imitation of printing type, a work of untiring labor, the whole interspersed throughout with verses on the months, chronology, &v. 8vo, neat, 1 Pound 1 Shilling.”

1708

Jonathan Swift, using the name Isaac Bickerstaff, decided to take John Partridge up on the offer he had made, and see if he might not beat the [almanac](#) publisher at his game of making prophesies. Using the name “Isaac Bickerstaff,” he therefore prophesied that Partridge would “infallibly die upon the 29th of March next, about eleven at Night, of a raging fever.” Then, at the proper time, using another name, he fulfilled his own prophesy by announcing Partridge’s demise, leaving the publisher to protest with indignation in the next edition of his almanac.¹⁵ When the people in the audience for this looked the name of John Partridge up in the [Stationer’s Register](#), they found that it had indeed been stricken from the list. Jonathan even wrote Partridge an epitaph:

Here Five Foot deep lyes on his back
A Cobler, Starmonger, and Quack,
Who to the Stars in pure Good-will,
Does to his best look upward still.

1713

David Leed’s [almanac](#) for the year 1713: THE AMERICAN ALMANACK FOR THE YEAR OF CHRISTIAN ACCOUNT, 1713. Despite being produced in the New-York colony, by William Bradford, this almanac was also being retailed by the bookseller Elkana Pembroke of [Newport, Rhode Island](#).

Daniel Leed’s almanacs had been printed annually by William Bradford at Philadelphia or New York from 1689 to 1713. On some of the 1713 edition the imprint was omitted and the name of the bookseller was put in its place. Pembroke was perhaps one of the common class of itinerant booksellers who moved about from town to town at that time. At any rate I have not found his name in any contemporary list of Newport inhabitants. This 1713 almanac was the last one by Daniel Leeds. His son, Titan Leeds, continued the series annually

15. Swift’s jokish trick would be repeated by [Benjamin Franklin](#) two decades later in Philadelphia at the expense of his prime competitor in almanac-making, Titan Leeds.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

from 1714 to 1744.

1724

Dr. Nathaniel Whittemore's [almanacs](#), produced in Boston, were being relied upon not only in Massachusetts but also in [Rhode Island](#) and Connecticut, and as far west as New York.

Benjamin Whittemore, a son of Dr. Whittemore, was [Concord](#)'s deputy and representative to the General Court.

In [Concord](#), John Fassett, Benjamin Whittemore, John Flint, George Farrar, and Samuel Chandler were Selectmen. Ordinarily the town's five selectmen acted as Overseers of the Poor and as Assessors, but in this period there was in addition a board of five Overseers of the Poor.

In [Concord](#), John Flint continued as Town Clerk.

In [Concord](#), Samuel Chandler continued as Town Treasurer.

Between this year and 1740 the house and barn and old farmstead in [Concord](#) that we know as the "Bensen-Tarbell-Ball place" would be being constructed. Henry Thoreau would describe this: "Tarbell's hip-roofed house looked the picture of retirement –of cottage size under its noble elm with its heap of apples before the door and the wood coming up within a few rods –it being far off the road. The smoke from his chimney so white and vaporlike, like a winter scene." The structures would be demolished in 2001 to make way for a modern large house, and a driveway to other lots.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1728

The initial series of [James Franklin](#)'s [almanacs](#) in [Newport, Rhode Island](#) –up to James Senior's death in 1735 and the assumption of control of the shop by the Widow Franklin and Joseph Stafford's relocation from Newport to Boston– would be being written by Stafford.

These early [almanacs](#) competed with each other on the basis of the accuracy of their calendrical calculations, but Franklin, and then a number of years later Nathaniel Ames, in [Newport](#), would change the name of the game when they began to include short paragraphs on current events and on morality, and when Franklin coined a character "Poor Robin" who might offer to his readership various humorous comments (nowadays we find this sort of added material used as brief column-filler paragraphs by the [Reader's Digest](#) and [The New Yorker](#) magazines). [Benjamin Franklin](#) would then go one better on his elder half-brother, when he would alter "Poor Robin" into "Poor Richard" and in addition predicted the death of his prime competitor, Philadelphia almanac maker Titan Leeds.¹⁶

MDCCXXVIII. THE RHODE-ISLAND ALMANACK, FOR THE YEAR, 1728. By "Poor Robin."

In 1911 a facsimile reprint of this almanac would be issued at Providence by George Parker Winship on the basis of the only copy known still to be extant. There would be 2 editions of this fac-simile with notes and additions, the one "without the Sensible Alteration," being limited to sixty copies. The only items of local interest that are given are the Baptist and Quaker meetings.

1729

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1729. By "Poor Robin." [Newport, Rhode Island: James Franklin.](#)

A copy recently sold by Dodd, Mead & Co. has not been located. A statement in the almanac of 1730 seems to show that this one was not by Poor Robin.

1730

MDCCXXX. THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1730. By "Poor Robin." [Newport, Rhode Island: James Franklin.](#)

16. [Franklin](#), in doing this, was repeating a jokish trick that Jonathan Swift had played at the expense of his chief competitor in almanac-making in London, John Partridge, in 1708.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1731

AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 1731. By Samuel Maxwell, [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#).

This is the first Rhode Island almanac to add the court sessions to its local items.

This Samuel Maxwell was 22 years of age, something we know by virtue of an entry he made in the almanack under the date of May 30, 1731: “The Author’s Birthday 1708.” In the preface he wrote “Although I be young in Years, yet I give not my Pen a Latitude beyond my Beard; for I always keep one parallel with the other: And my Almanack is in such an easy plain Form, and regular Method, that I hope there will be no Fault found by any of my Antagonists.”

1732

MDCCXXXII. THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1732. By Poor Robin. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#).



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

December 19: [Benjamin Franklin](#), AKA “Richard Saunders,” AKA “Poor Richard,” began publication of POOR RICHARD’S [ALMANACK](#). This continued the [Rural Wit](#) tradition of New England, with annual publication to the year 1757. Continuing for twenty-five years to contain these supposedly anonymous witty, worldly-wise sayings, the almanac would play a considerable part in bringing together and molding a white American character out of what had been at that time merely a collection of diverse immigrant European types. At about this time, presuming all of morality to consist of mere selfish prudence (a move most typical of this man, characterizable by his marginal jotting of 1741 “*Nothing so likely to make a man's fortune as virtue*”), Franklin undertook a characteristically simplistic plan for “self-improvement”:

Ben Franklin’s “Autobiography”

In this piece it was my design to explain and enforce this doctrine, that vicious actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden, but forbidden because they are hurtful, the nature of man alone considered; that it was, therefore, every one's interest to be virtuous who wish'd to be happy even in this world; and I should, from this circumstance (there being always in the world a number of rich merchants, nobility, states, and princes, who have need of honest instruments for the management of their affairs, and such being so rare), have endeavored to convince young persons that no qualities were so likely to make a poor man's fortune as those of probity and integrity.

Indeed Franklin determined in this to imitate the humility not only of Jesus but also of [Socrates](#):

Ben Franklin’s “Autobiography”

My list of virtues contain'd at first but twelve; but a Quaker friend having kindly informed me that I was generally thought proud; that my pride show'd itself frequently in conversation; that I was not content with being in the right when discussing any point, but was overbearing, and rather insolent, of which he convinc'd me by mentioning several instances; I determined endeavouring to cure myself, if I could, of this vice or folly among the rest, and I added Humility to my list) giving an extensive meaning to the word.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

Of course, in Franklin's book there was no great difference to be noted between humility and the appearance of humility, since either could produce the desired rewards, true humility being only slightly more bothersome to produce than its ersatz. How utterly different this mere prudence is from any real morality!

PROTOTRACTATUS (1921) 6.422

Die Ethik ist transzendental.

Ethics is transcendental.

TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS, 6.421

*Es ist klar, daß sich die Ethik
nicht aussprechen läßt.*

It is clear that ethics
cannot be put into words.

*Die Ethik ist transzendental.
(Ethik und Ästhetik sind Eins.)*

Ethics is transcendental.
(Ethics and aesthetics are
one and the same.)

— Ludwig Wittgenstein

The most pertinent of the recycled worldly-wise proverbs Franklin had put in the mouth of Saunders would be re-collected in 1758 as "The Way to Wealth," in which the literary persona would be a "Father Abraham"

— an elderly person who was induced, in order to kill some time for some people who were waiting for the commencement of a public auction, to make a speech.

WALDEN: I am not sure that I ever heard the sound of cock-crowing from my clearing, and I thought that it might be worth the while to keep a cockerel for his music merely, as a singing bird. The note of this once wild Indian pheasant is certainly the most remarkable of any bird's, and if they could be naturalized without being domesticated, it would soon become the most famous sound in our woods, surpassing the clangor of the goose and the hooting of the owl; and then imagine the cackling of the hens to fill the pauses when their lords' clarions rested! No wonder that man added this bird to his tame stock, -to say nothing of the eggs and drumsticks. To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth, drowning the feebler notes of other birds, -think of it! It would put nations on the alert. Who would not be early to rise, and rise earlier and earlier every successive day of his life, till he became unspeakably healthy, wealthy, and wise? This foreign bird's note is celebrated by the poets of all countries along with the notes of their native songsters. All climates agree with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



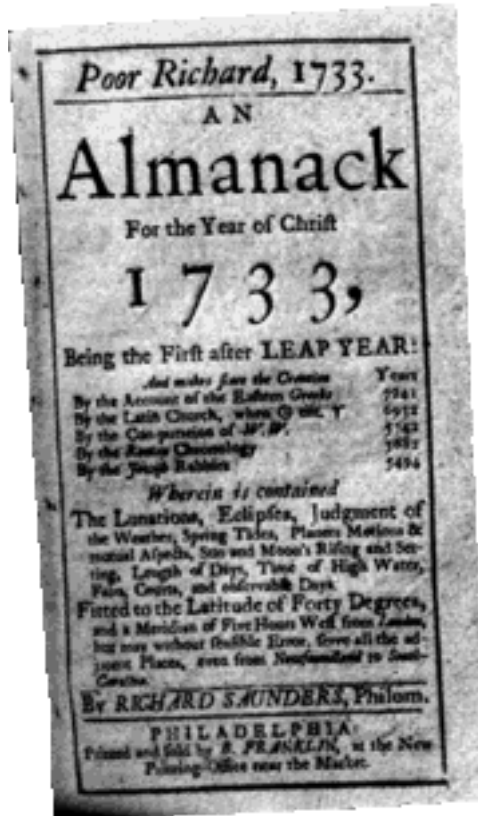
ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1733

MDCCXXXIII. THE RHODE ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1733. By "Poor Robin." [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#). Sold also by T. Fleet, Boston.

[Benjamin Franklin](#) put out his [almanac](#):



1734

MDCCXXXIV. THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1734. By Poor Robin. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#).



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1735

February 4: James [Franklin](#), elder half-brother of [Benjamin Franklin](#), died. No almanac would be issued for the year 1736. The printing business in [Newport, Rhode Island](#) would be carried on by Ann Smith Franklin as “Widow Franklin,” aided by two daughters and her son [James Franklin](#). For 1737 and 1738 she would rely on Joseph Stafford to prepare the [almanacs](#), but then he would move to Boston to put out his own almanac and she would herself prepare the materials from 1737 to 1741.

MDCCXXXV. THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1735. By Poor Robin. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#). Sold also by T. Fleet, Boston.

The copy in the Library of Congress is interleaved with manuscript notes. It belonged to Daniel Rogers, a tutor at Harvard in 1732.

1737

MDCCXXXVII. THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1737, BY POOR ROBIN. By Joseph Stafford, [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [Widow Franklin](#).

1738

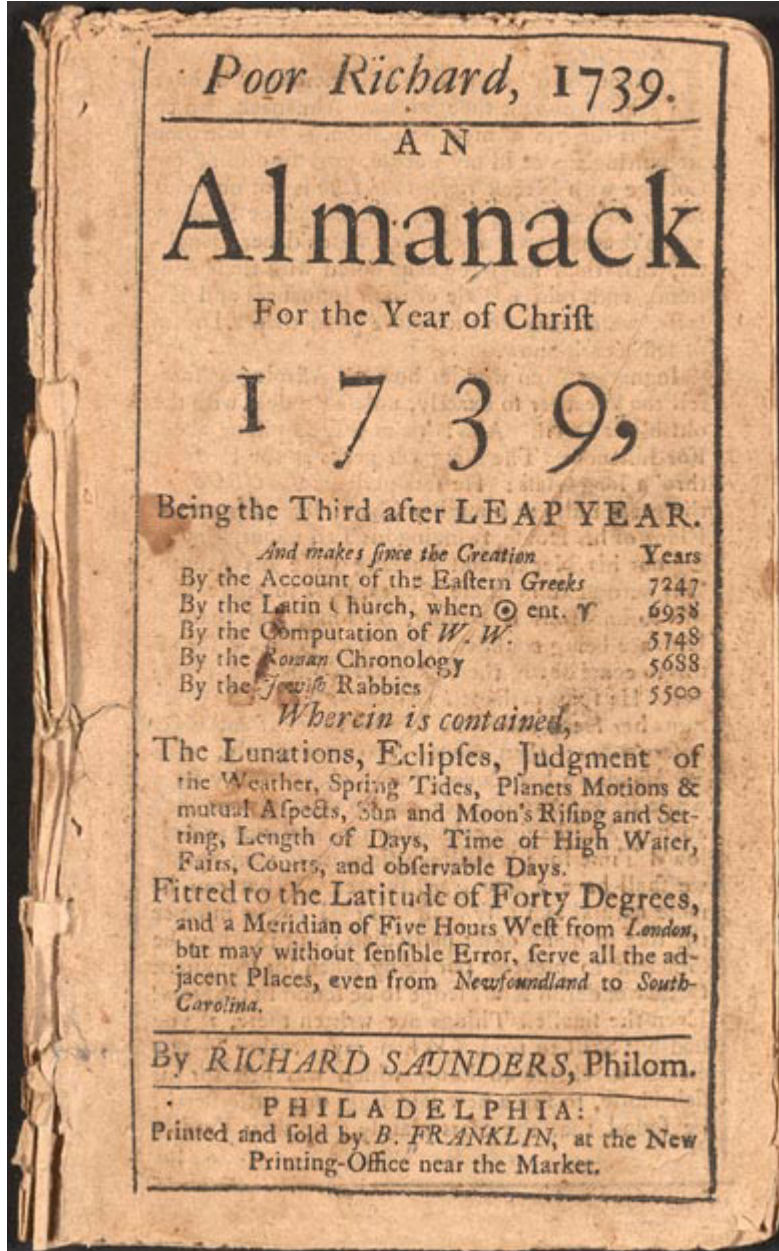
MDCCXXXVIII. THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1738, BY POOR ROBIN. By Joseph Stafford. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [Widow Franklin](#).

1739

MDCCXXXIX. THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1739. By “Poor Robin.” [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [Widow Franklin](#)

James Franklin having died in 1735, and Stafford having moved to Boston, Widow Franklin issued the almanac this year and subsequently, under the pseudonym formerly used by her husband.

In Philadelphia, [Benjamin Franklin](#) put out a “Poor Richard” ALMANACK:



1740

MDCCXL. 1740. THE RHODE-ISLAND ALMANACK FOR THE YEAR, BY POOR ROBIN. [Newport](#), [Rhode Island](#): [Widow Franklin](#).



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1741

MDCCXLI. THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR, 1741. By “Poor Robin.” [Newport: Widow Franklin.](#)

There would be a gap in the issuance of [Rhode Island](#) almanacs until 1750 when [James Franklin](#)'s son [James Franklin](#), rejoining his mother after serving an apprenticeship in Philadelphia with his uncle [Benjamin Franklin](#), would begin to publish “Poor Job’s almanac.”

1750

[POOR JOB, 1750. AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1750. By “Job Shepherd.” [Newport, Rhode Island: James Franklin.](#)]

This is the first of the second series of Franklin’s almanacs. They were issued by James Franklin’s son James under the pen name of Job Shepherd. The only known copy lacks six leaves.

In the preface to his 1751 almanac this pseudonymous “Job Shepherd” would write “And now, Reader, after having made this Publick Appearance, it must, on mature Consideration, appear very odd, what some think, and others affirm, that there is not, nor ever was, such a Person as I am living.”

1751

POOR JOB, 1751. AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1751. By “Job Shepherd.” [Newport, Rhode Island: James Franklin.](#)

This almanac contains a cut of the man of signs, a geographical description of the world, a list of the Kings of England, and an ephemeris. This is the first almanac printed in Rhode Island that contains these things as far as we actually know, but it is probable that they were on the missing pages of the 1750 almanac which has only come down to

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

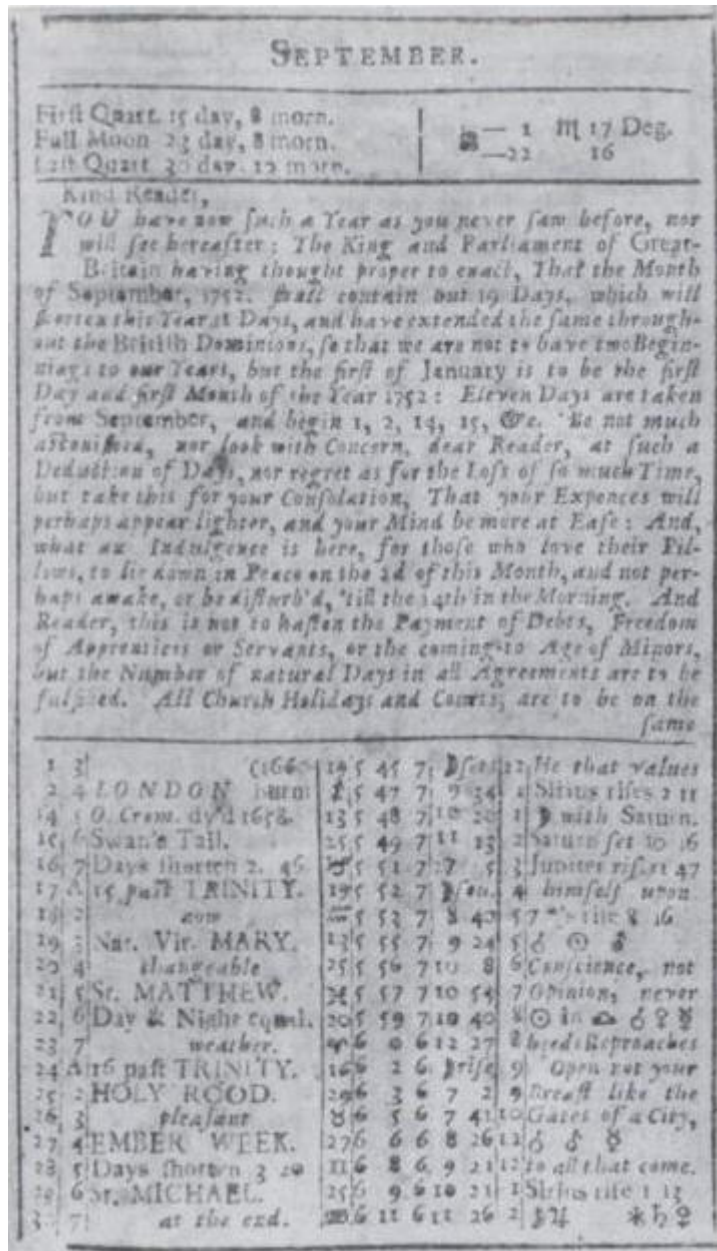
us in a mutilated condition.



In the preface this pseudonymous "Job Shepherd" wrote "And now, Reader, after having made this Publick Appearance, it must, on mature Consideration, appear very odd, what some think, and others affirm, that there is not, nor ever was, such a Person as I am living."

1752

POOR JOB, 1752. AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1752. By Job Shepherd, Philom. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#). This was the almanac that had the unenviable task of explaining to the people at large, that in this year the month of September was going to have only 19 days — but no, nobody was going to get cheated:



Nathaniel Ames's AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY; OR [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST,



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1753 was in this year prepared for printing in Boston by J. Draper for the Booksellers. At the foot of the second page was a diagram and explanation of the transit of Mercury across the sun: "On Sunday, May 6, the Sun will rise with Mercury making a black Spot in his Body..." The ending was an explanation of the correction of the calendar that had just occurred: "striking off the Eleven Days between the 2d and 14th of September, A.D. 1752 ... to produce an Uniformity in the Computation of Time throughout the christian Part of the World..."

1753

POOR JOB, 1753. AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1753 by Job Shepherd, Philom. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#).

[Benjamin West](#) moved to [Providence](#) and opened a school. Unable to make enough money this way, he would open a dry-goods store and bookstore.

1754

POOR JOB, 1754. AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1754. By Job Shepherd, Philom. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#).

Many local items appear as for instance against May 2.
"G. Elect. Newport."

1755

POOR JOB, 1755. AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1755. By Job Shepherd, Philom. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#).

This almanac contains a curious tide table calculated for Rhode Island, but with variations given for other places, sailing directions for entering the harbor of Newport and the bearing of the Rhode Island Lighthouse on Beaver-Tail.

**1757**

[Benjamin Franklin](#) introduced a bill in the Assembly for paving the streets of Philadelphia. He published his famous “Way to Wealth.” He went to London for a 17-year mission as a lobbyist pleading the cause of the Assembly against the Proprietaries, and in particular representing the government of Pennsylvania in its attempt to seize lands the crown had granted to the [William Penn](#) family in 1681. (With the beginning of this lobbying activity, sensibly, his AUTOBIOGRAPHY breaks off.)

[Benjamin Franklin](#)’s POOR RICHARD’S [ALMANACK](#):

WALDEN: I am not sure that I ever heard the sound of cock-crowing from my clearing, and I thought that it might be worth the while to keep a cockerel for his music merely, as a singing bird. The note of this once wild Indian pheasant is certainly the most remarkable of any bird’s, and if they could be naturalized without being domesticated, it would soon become the most famous sound in our woods, surpassing the clangor of the goose and the hooting of the owl; and then imagine the cackling of the hens to fill the pauses when their lords’ clarions rested! No wonder that man added this bird to his tame stock, -to say nothing of the eggs and drumsticks. To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth, drowning the feebler notes of other birds, -think of it! It would put nations on the alert. Who would not be early to rise, and rise earlier and earlier every successive day of his life, till he became unspeakably healthy, wealthy, and wise? This foreign bird’s note is celebrated by the poets of all countries along with the notes of their native songsters. All climates agree with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**1758**

POOR JOB’S COUNTRY AND TOWNSMAN’S [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1758. By Job Shepherd. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): [James Franklin](#).

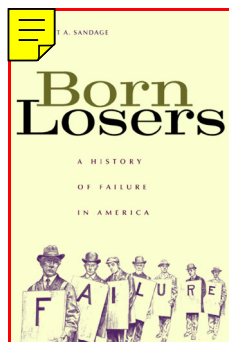
[Benjamin Franklin](#) ceased printing the POOR RICHARD’S [ALMANACK](#) after inserting in its last issue what has become the most famous literary production of Colonial America, “Father Abraham’s Sermon.”¹⁷



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

POOR RICHARD'S ALMANACK FOR 1758 quoth, "The Borrower is a Slave to the Lender, and the Debtor to the Creditor" – not to mention the thief, since Ben Franklin cribbed from PROVERBS 22:7, "The borrower is servant to the lender."



17. To create this he simply recycled the better of the proverbs he had put in his Almanack over the years, by making the literary persona not "Poor Richard" Saunders but a "Father Abraham," an elderly person who has been induced, in order to kill some time for some people who were waiting for a public auction to begin, to make a speech. [Henry Thoreau](#) would mock its crass, opportunistic, prudential attitude in the "Economy" chapter of [WALDEN](#).

[WALDEN](#): I am not sure that I ever heard the sound of cock-crowing from my clearing, and I thought that it might be worth the while to keep a cockerel for his music merely, as a singing bird. The note of this once wild Indian pheasant is certainly the most remarkable of any bird's, and if they could be naturalized without being domesticated, it would soon become the most famous sound in our woods, surpassing the clangor of the goose and the hooting of the owl; and then imagine the cackling of the hens to fill the pauses when their lords' clarions rested! No wonder that man added this bird to his tame stock, -to say nothing of the eggs and drumsticks. To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth, drowning the feebler notes of other birds, -think of it! It would put nations on the alert. Who would not be early to rise, and rise earlier and earlier every successive day of his life, till he became unspeakably healthy, wealthy, and wise? This foreign bird's note is celebrated by the poets of all countries along with the notes of their native songsters. All climates agree with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1759

Nathaniel Ames's AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY, OR, AN ALMANACK FOR...1759. Boston: Printed and Sold by Draper, Green & Russell, & Fleet. The title page featured a woodcut of the solar system, all six planets of it. A three-page explanation of this six-planet solar system was also provided. The path of a comet was shown with the notation: "N.B. At the writing this, it was not determined whether Comet would appear or not, as expected."

Here is an actual woodblock, cracked with age, that was used to print an astronomical cut in this year's edition of [Benjamin Franklin](#)'s POOR RICHARD'S ALMANACK:



[Franklin](#) reissued "The Way to Wealth," his collection of recycled proverbs, as "Father Abraham's Speech."

Franklin had, in 1738 in his POOR RICHARD'S [ALMANACK](#), offered the following proverb: "Sell not virtue to purchase wealth, nor Liberty to purchase power." The aphorism in its more developed form, "Those who would give up Essential Liberty to purchase a little Temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety," had 1st appeared in a letter dated November 11, 1755 from the Pennsylvania Assembly to the Governor of



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

Pennsylvania. Then, in this year, this aphorism was recycled as a motto on the title page of AN HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA, an anonymous treatise published by Franklin's print shop. In a new edition in 1812, this treatise would be attributed in its entirety to Franklin; however, it is now clear because of a letter he sent to David Hume on September 27, 1760, that he was not himself the author of this treatise in its entirety, but merely its printer and a contributor of some of its materials. He had served in the Pennsylvania Assembly, and remarks he made while serving are portrayed passim in this treatise, but the entirety of the treatise is not his (the most likely actual author seems to be Richard Jackson). Regardless of this, however, the motto that appears on the book's title page is still presumed by scholars to have been contributed by Franklin.

The primary force of the proverb obviously is in regard to those free white people for whom freedom does not come first — those who sought to continue the affiliation with England, the mother country, and with the Crown. The proverb can be seen as a “flipped” version of sayings such as “I'd rather be a live dog than a dead lion,” or “Water wears away rock, but grass bends in the wind.”

My own contribution to the analysis of this proverb is to insist upon taking it out of this phony a-world-in-which-there-are-white-people-only context, the blinkered context in which it has customarily been analyzed, and insert it instead into its actual context, the context in which it had appeared. This world in which the saying appeared was not a world in which there were white people only, but instead was the actual world of Philadelphia, a location where there were people of color — people who typically did not have liberty, they being white people's slaves. In such a context such as remark was decidedly not innocent. My own contribution is to point up the fact that Benjamin Franklin was one of these Philadelphia white slavemasters, that is, he was an owner of non-white slaves, and that he was a Philadelphia slavetrader, that is, he was making a market in the buying and storage (at night in a locked slave pen in the back yard), and advertising and commercial vending of non-white human beings. My own contribution is that this proverb works quite well as a legitimization of his sort of activity: “Thofe black people who in order to stay alive have been willing to be alive as slaves, these people whom I am buying and owning and selling, deferve no better treatment than I as a slavemaster and slavetrader am providing. They deferve neither Liberty nor Safety — and I, I am without fin.”

What I am offering is that if we fully analyze his proverb, not only in its primary blinkered just-us-white-folks meaning but also in its secondary real-world-of-race-issues meaning, we can see why it was that Franklin, when he went off to the Constitutional Convention, was able to bow to the wishes of the southern slaveholding colonies and never even bring up for consideration the issue of freedom for Americans of color. They reason why he didn't make an issue of this was, he did not consider that these Americans of color, who were willing to be alive although enslaved, were entitled to any such consideration. To be entitled to consideration, they would have needed to have rejected slavery — and have been killed, and be dead. Since they were not dead, they were, at this Constitutional Convention of white people, entitled to jack squat.

Notice that Franklin's attitude is similar to the attitude that Japanese soldiers would exhibit toward American prisoners of war in WWII. The Americans in the POW camps in the Pacific Theatre were very badly abused, and basically the reason why their Japanese guards treated them so badly was, they had surrendered rather than dying honorably on the battlefield defiantly facing the enemy. Since they were still alive, they had given up their honor as warriors and were not entitled to any sort of decent treatment. Similarly, since these black people of Philadelphia were being held as slaves —since they had chosen to remain among the living— they were deserving neither of liberty nor of safety. To hell with them, let's us white people form a federal union!

—This is why I offer, as a first approximation, that the cause of the US Civil War was Benjamin Franklin.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1760

WHITEFIELD'S [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1760. By Nathaniel Whitefield. [Newport, Rhode Island: James Franklin.](#)

This almanac is of larger size than the earlier Franklin almanacs, being over 6" x 3 1/2". It contains a table for calculating interest upon the Lawful Money of the Colonies of Rhode-Island and Connecticut, and many medical remedies. This is the last almanac published by the Franklins.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

In the preface this Whitefield writes, “It is expected, and the Public is never satisfied, ’till they receive an Account of the Life and Writings of an Author, when and where he was born, and who was his Patron, with many other Particulars. I shall only say in general, that I was born in the Reign of George King of England, and am a near relative of George Whitefield.” The vagueness of this, combined with the fact that we have no other record of the existence of such a person, would appear to indicate that “Nathaniel Whitefield,” like “Job Shepherd” before him, had been a fiction.

A pirated edition of Nathaniel Ames’s AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY, OR, AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR...1760...IID EDITION... was being retailed in Boston. A bold note on the title page of this pirated edition created verisimilitude by warning its purchaser that unauthorized almanacs were being sold bearing Dr. Ames’s name “that differ in a scandalous manner, and can by no means be depended on....” The title-page woodcut was of the four seasons surrounding the signs of the Zodiac. The last three pages provided the reader with a heroic poem “On the Reduction of QUEBEC, Sept. 18. 1759. by General Wolfe and brave Troops under his Command, &c.”





ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1763

AN [ALMANACK](#), FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST, 1763, and THE NEW ENGLAND ALMANACK FOR 1763. By [Benjamin West](#). Done on the press of William Goddard, the only one in [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#). He would republish this almanac annually until 1793.

This is the first of the Providence series of West almanacs, which continued until 1781. The title was enlarged in 1764. The Almanac contains an ephemeris and gives the time of high tide. The court holdings and church meetings are given under the respective months. A table of the value and weight of coins and a table of Post Roads are included. This makeup becomes the rule for subsequent West almanacs.

1764

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST, 1764, and THE NEW ENGLAND ALMANACK FOR 1764. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): William Goddard.

Nathaniel Ames, Senior's final almanac: AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY; OR [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST, 1764. Boston: Printed and Sold by R. & S. Draper ... Edes & Gill ... Green & Russell ... T. & J. Fleet.... The introductory essay defended astrology as having a "philosophical foundation." Mention was made of the glassicord "Musical Instrument of Glass invented by Mr. Franklin." This publication offered health advice, "some hints concerning the Sanatorian Doctrine [Santorio Santorio, 1561-1636, an Italian physician] of Perspiration, a Discharge from our Bodies, tho' insensibly made, that is greater than all the sensible Evacuations put together, since Health in all Persons every Moment depends upon a right Discharge of this Matter...."

AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY: OR, [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1764. By Nathaniel Ames. [Newport](#): Re-printed and sold by Samuel Hall.

A reprint of Ames's Boston Almanac.
This Newport series of Ames's continued several years.

1765

THE NEW ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1765. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): William Goddard.

It contains an advertisement about paper manufacturing in Rhode Island, as do some of the subsequent almanacks.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY: OR, [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST, 1765. By Nathaniel Ames (the younger). [Boston](#): Printed and Sold by R. & S. Draper, Edes & Gill, Green & Russell, T. & J. Fleet, etc. Two pages were devoted to “Some Practical Rules for Husbandry.” This was the first almanac produced by the son after the death of his father, and in a Note to the Reader, the young man writes of his being “forced as it were, to make my unexpected, premature Appearance in Public....” The publication included “An Elegy on the Death of the late Dr. Ames.” Sold also by B. Hall at [Newport](#).

Hammett gives the imprint “Newport: Samuel Ball” but doubtless intended to describe this almanac.

1766

The 1st BRITISH NAUTICAL [ALMANACK](#) was published (for the year 1767). It contained sun and star tables and tables for lunar distance calculations.

[CARTOGRAPHY](#)

“Luckily for Cook, the Nautical Almanac had just been started, and contained tables of the moon which had not previously been available, and which much lightened the calculations.”

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY’S AND GENTLEMAN’S DIARY, FOR 1766. By [Benjamin West](#), Philomath. [Providence](#): Sarah and William Goddard.

Contains chronology of French and Indian War, and “a short view of the present State of the American Colonies.”

(These “Lady’s and Gentleman’s Diaries” would have an enviable publication run of a total of 118 consecutive years.)

AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY: OR, [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1766. By Nathaniel Ames. [Newport](#): Reprinted and sold by Samuel Hall.

AMES’S [ALMANACK](#) REVIVED AND IMPROVED: OR, AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY FOR 1766. BY A LATE STUDENT AT HARVARD COLLEGE. [Boston](#): R. & S. Draper; Edes & Gill; Green & Russell; T. & J. Fleet; S. Hall in [Rhode Island](#).

A pirated edition because of failure of Ames to agree with printers. (Nichols) Printed in Boston, not in Newport.

1767

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1767. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Sarah Goddard and Company.

The first Rhode Island Almanac to have a cut on the title page

and the first of West's Providence Almanacs to contain a cut.

1768

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY, FOR 1768. By [Benjamin West](#), Philomath. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Sarah Goddard and John Carter.

It contains a cut explaining the eclipse.



In addition to his annual almanac for Rhode Island, [Benjamin West](#) anonymously published one at the print shop of Mein And Fleming in Boston labeled BICKERSTAFF'S BOSTON [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1768. Its title page woodcut was of "the giants lately discovered in South America." A full-page woodcut illustrated "A Sachem of the Abenakee Nation, rescuing an English Officer from the Indians." It included a 4-page gazetteer of the world and a 5-page "Chronological Table of the Discoveries of the Arts and Sciences, interspersed with remarkable Events, since the Deluge." This was the first of his "Bickerstaff's" publications.



AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY: OR, [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1768. By Nathaniel Ames. [Newport](#): Reprinted and sold by Samuel Hall.

**1769**

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1769. By [Benjamin West](#). [Boston](#): Mein and Fleeming. Sold by Benjamin West, (the author) in [Providence, Rhode Island](#).

Owing to a disagreement, West had his almanac published in Boston, and Goddard and Carter published one under the pseudonym of Abraham Weatherwise.

THE NEW-ENGLAND TOWN AND COUNTRY [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1769. By "Abraham Weatherwise." [Providence](#): Sarah Goddard and John Carter.

See note to previous entry. A portrait of John Wilkes appears on the front page, and the title page is the fifth page. Second and Third Editions were issued, according to advertisements in the [Providence Gazette](#). This almanac contains an account of the Stage coach and Passage Boat owners and time tables, and also the bearings from Rhode Island Lighthouse. Compare 1755 Almanac.

Samuel Stearns's EDDES & GILL'S NORTH-AMERICAN [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1769.... Printed and Sold by Edes & Gill. Boston. The author's note was addressed to "Americans" and indicated that due to "a prudent diffidence," he would remain anonymous in this first attempt at an almanac (a note in the diary of Nathaniel Ames for February 1768 had indicated that Samuel Stearns wanted to learn "how to make almanacks"). This publication included a two-and-a-half-page allegory which it alleged had been discovered by accident in an old pamphlet, offering a description of the "barbarous oppression" to which the English colonists felt they were being subjected by the mother country. The publication printed the Charter of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay in its entirety, consuming 21 of its pages.

1770

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY, FOR 1770. By [Benjamin West](#), Philomath. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

"This Year two Things are added: one is a new table, by which the Interest of any Sum of Money; for any time, and at any Rate per Cent may readily be computed. This Table will be esteemed a great Curiosity: - The second is the Rising, Setting and Southing of the Pleiades...."



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1771

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY, FOR ... 1771. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#): Printed and Sold, Wholesale and Retail, by John Carter. Three pages of this are devoted to distinguishing between “the folly and absurdity of astrology” and the “advantages and satisfaction derived from astronomy.”

WEST'S SHEET [ALMANACK](#), FOR THE YEAR 1771.

Broadside. No copy located. Advertised in [Providence Gazette](#).
The earliest sheet almanac for [Rhode Island](#).

Nathanael Low's AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY; OR, [ALMANACK](#) FOR ... 1771. PRINTED AND SOLD BY KNEELAND AND ADAMS ... BOSTON. CREATED ABOUT SEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE BOSTON MASSACRE, THIS LEADS OFF WITH A FIERY 2-1/2 PAGE PATRIOTIC ESSAY ABOUT HOW WE “ESTEEM FREEDOM AS OUR NATIVE RIGHT; LIKE FREE-BORN SONS OF LIBERTY THEREFORE LET US ACT” AND THEN FOOTNOTES THE DATE MARCH 5, 1771 WITH “AN HORRID MASSACRE MOST INHUMANLY AND BARBAROUSLY COMMITTED BY BRITISH TROOPS ON THE INHABITANTS OF BOSTON, 5TH DAY, 1770.” CITING THE NON-IMPORTATION AGREEMENTS, THE PUBLICATION SUGGESTS “IN A PARTICULAR MANNER LET US ABSTAIN FROM THE USE OF FOREIGN TEA. THERE IS NO ONE ARTICLE IMPORTED SO FATAL TO THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY AS THIS....” THERE ARE ALSO “SOME NECESSARY RULES TO BE OBSERVED WITH REGARD TO HEALTH, CHIEFLY FROM DR. CHYNE.”

AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY: OR, [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST, 1771. By Nathaniel Ames. [Newport](#). Printed and Sold by the Printers and Booksellers.... Boston. This almanac contained the first appearance in print of [Benjamin Franklin](#)'s famous self-composed epitaph.

1772

[Benjamin West](#) was awarded an honorary degree by [Dartmouth College](#).

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1772. By [Benjamin West](#), Philomath. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

It contains account of the compass variation for Providence and a table to calculate the number of days from any day of one month to the same day of any other month.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1772. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. [Newport](#), [Rhode Island](#): Ebenezer Campbell.

WEST'S SHEET ALMANACK, FOR THE YEAR 1772.

Broadside. No copy located. Advertised in [Providence Gazette](#).



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR ASTRONOMICAL DIARY, 1772. By John Anderson,¹⁸ Philomath. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): Solomon Southwick.

This is the first of the series of Anderson Almanacs.

1773

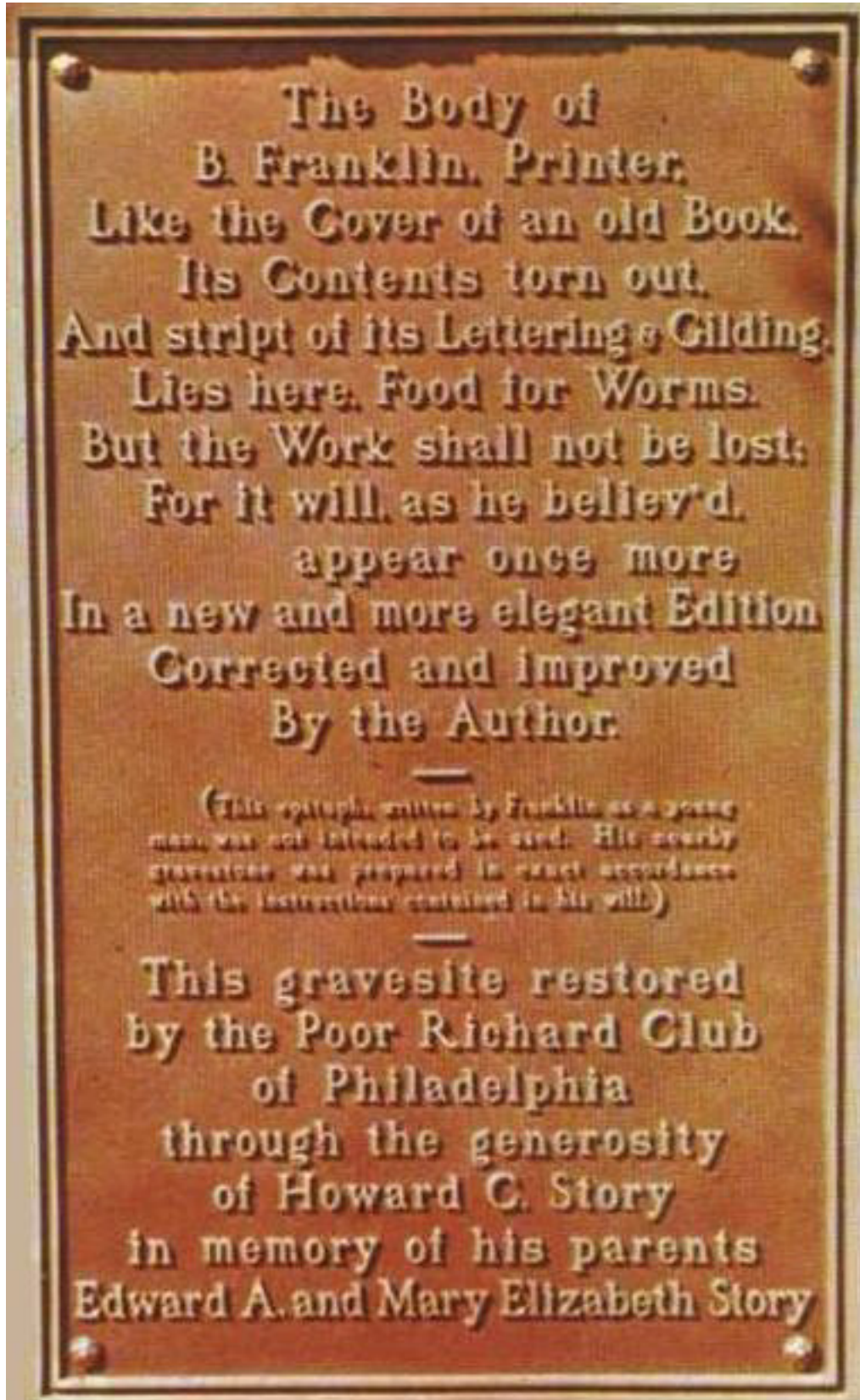
THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY, FOR 1773. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

ANDERSON IMPROVED: BEING AN [ALMANACK](#) AND EPHEMERIS FOR 1773. By John Anderson. [Newport](#): Solomon Southwick.

There is a large ornamental cut on the front page and the title page is page three. The Anderson series are arranged in this style. The man of signs also appears.



18. Since in fact there is no record of any "John Anderson" living at [Newport](#), and since in the preface of the 1773 almanac we notice the question being raised "Who is this John Anderson?," we are probably safe in putting this identity down as yet another pseudonym.





ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1774

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1774. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

It contains "A brief Historical Account of the Rise and Settlement of Rhode Island Government." See also the almanac for 1778.

ANDERSON IMPROVED: BEING AN [ALMANACK](#) AND EPHEMERIS FOR 1774. By John Anderson, Philom. [Newport](#): Solomon Southwick.

A new and more elaborate man of signs out appears, and "the Stage from Newport to Hoosuck are inserted this Year, which were never in any other Almanack."



(The same.) The second edition.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1775

In approximately this timeframe, [Benjamin West](#) closed his store in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) and began to make revolutionary war uniforms.

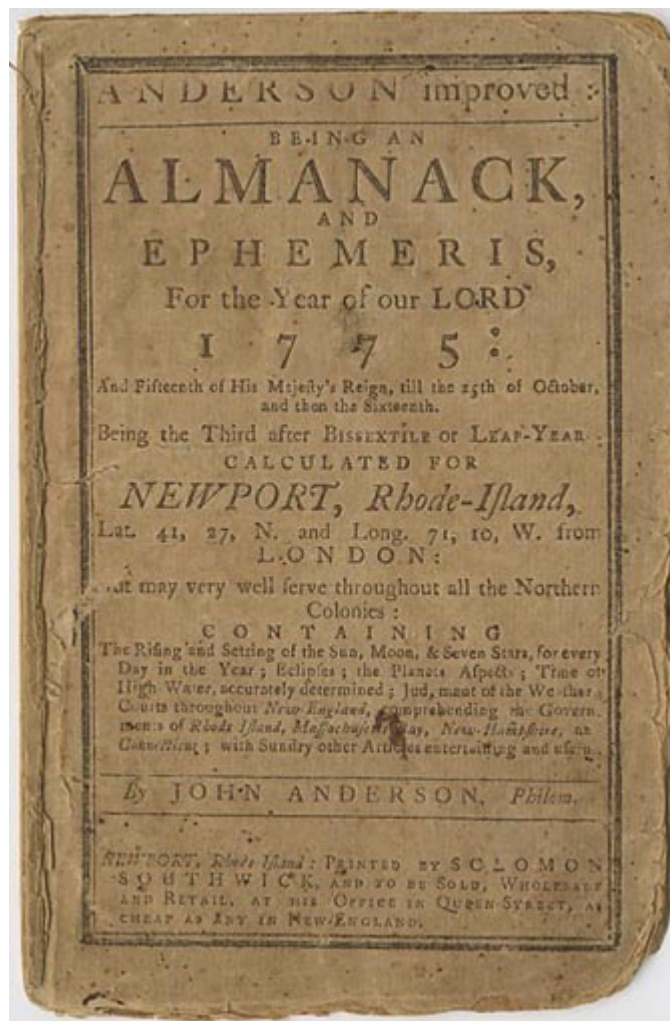
THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1775. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#): John Carter.

It contains "A brief view of the present controversy between Great Britain and America, with some observations thereon."

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

ANDERSON IMPROVED: BEING AN [ALMANACK](#), AND EPHEMERIS FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1775. By John Anderson, Philom. [Newport](#): Printed by Solomon Southwick. The publication included verses on the history of astronomy. The (pseudonymous) author addressed his American public in these “troublesome times,” disclaiming any “gift of prophecy” but daring to offer his two cents worth so that we may “remain the freest and happiest people under Heaven.” Americans needed to “stop all trade with Great Britain till the Parliament shall recognize your right to carry on trade upon an equal footing with the people of England, till they withdraw all their useless creatures and tools from this country, and till they leave the sole government of yourselves to yourselves.” A tabulation of Britain’s exports makes a case that “America takes off more of the British manufactures, &c. than all the other parts of the world.”



Nathanael Low’s AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY; OR, ALMANACK FOR...1775. Boston: Printed and Sold by John Kneeland, in Milk Street. Low also was determinedly fanning the flames of rebellion. His title-page woodcut depicted a “virtuous patriot at the hour of death.” His “Address to the Inhabitants of Boston” took up four pages and decried the Port Bill as well as the “British armament parading in your streets and harbour”: “My dear brethren, the destiny of America seems to be suspended on the present controversy; and it is on your fidelity, firmness and good conduct ... that a happy issue of it in a great measure depends....”



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1776

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY FOR 1776. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

It contains a list of the Public offices of Rhode Island and an account of the Post service.

WEST'S [ALMANACK](#), FOR THE YEAR 1776. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#): John Carter.

This was issued as a sheet almanac. The only known copy, now in the New York Public Library, has been cut up into twelve leaves and bound as a book. These leaves are printed on one side only. The title at the top and the notes about eclipses at the bottom of the original broadside, now continue across eight pages (four successive leaves). There is a photostat copy at the American Antiquarian Society.

AN [ALMANACK](#) AND EPHEMERIS FOR 1776. By John Anderson, Philom. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): Solomon Southwick.

(Same) Second edition.

HDT

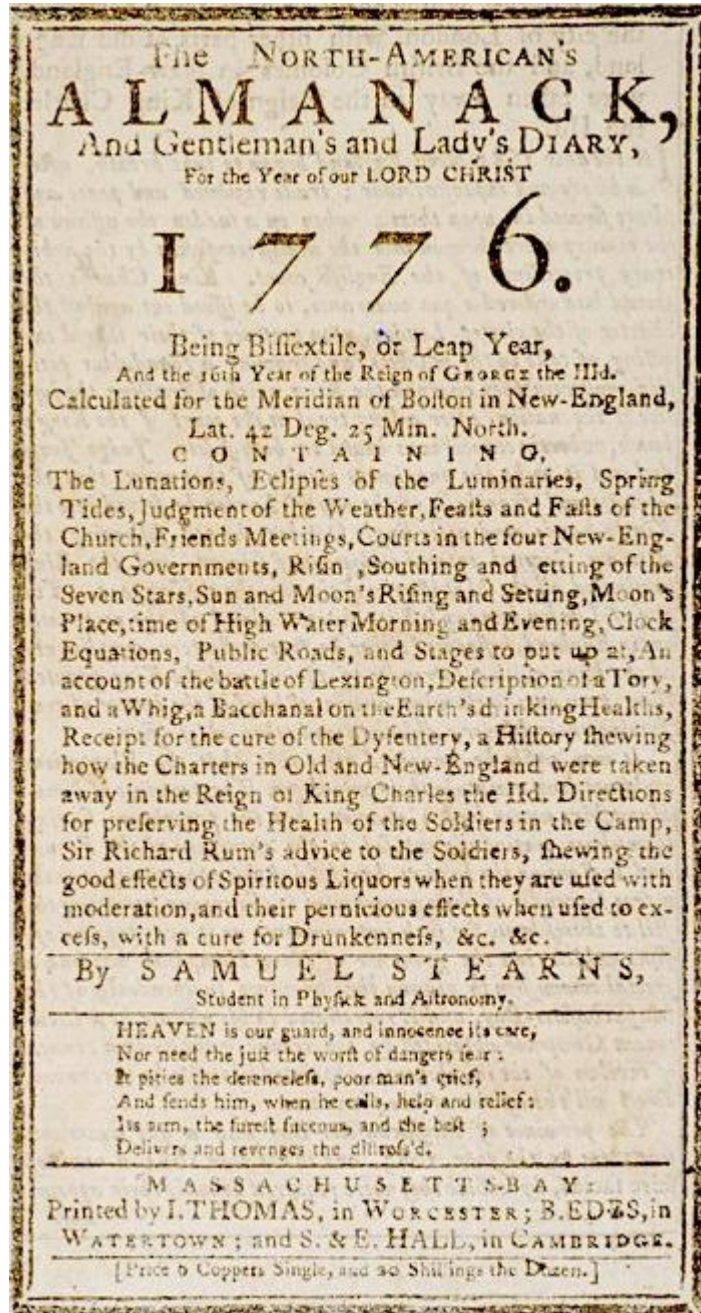
WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

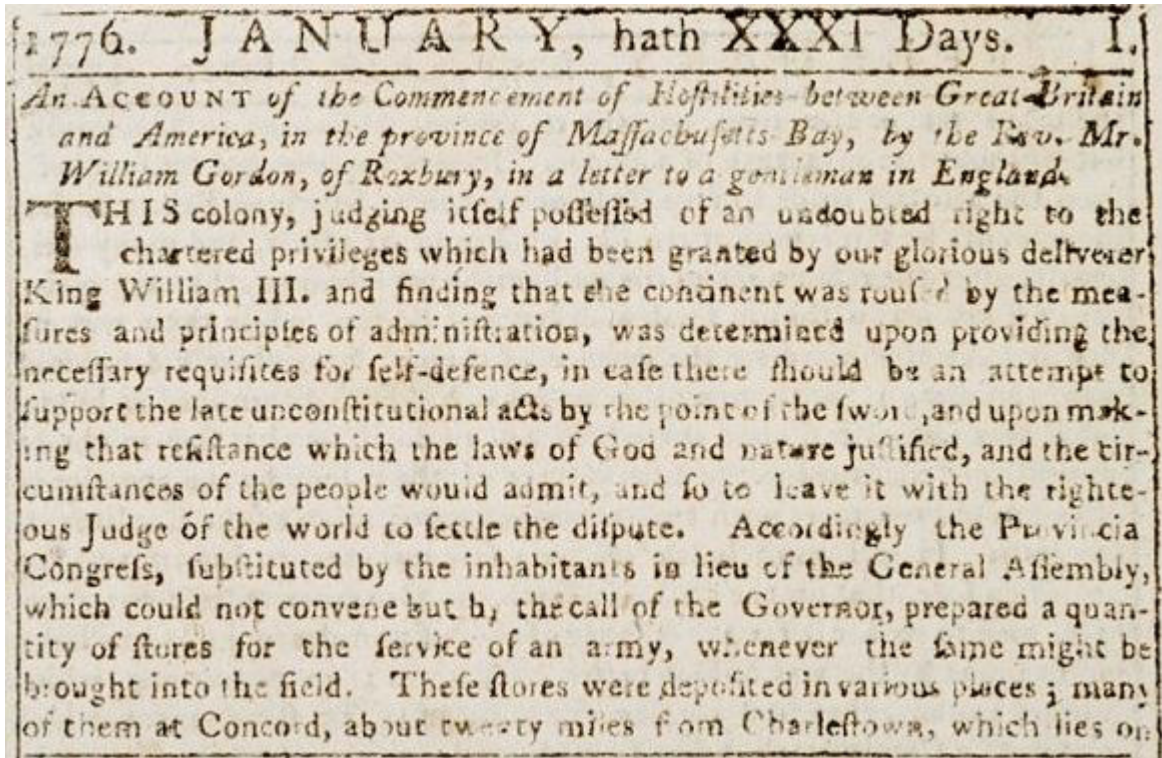
In a rare-books catalog we find Samuel Stearns's THE NORTH AMERICAN'S ALMANACK, AND GENTLEMAN'S AND LADY'S DIARY, FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST 1776, With 12 Page Account of the Beginning of the Revolutionary War in Massachusetts:



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

This was printed by I. Thomas in Worcester, B. Edes in Watertown, and S.&E. Hall in Cambridge, and bears an asking price of “6 Coppers.” Besides the usual monthly calendars, this publication offered a 2-page history of the charters of the British colonies of Massachusetts and Connecticut, a list of the Governors of Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, and Connecticut, from the first settlements up to the time they surrendered their charters, and the Reverend William Gordon of Roxbury’s “An Account of the Commencement of Hostilities between Great Britain and America, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay.”





ALMANACS

ALMANACS

NOTE: [William Bartram](#) ascribed the lunar eclipse of this year to the year 1773, a fact which, even if we had no other such warnings in regard to his accounts of his travels, would have forced us to beware of a too-literal acceptance of them as reported.¹⁹

Date	Time UT (hr:mn)	Type	Node	Saros	Gamma	Magnitude		Duration (min)		Moon Position		Contacts UT (hr:mn)			
	Greatest					Pen.	Umb.	Par	Tot	RA	Decl.	U1	U2	U3	U4
1772 Oct 11	17:14	Total	D	123	0.093	2.76	1.647	236	104	1.16	7.5	15:16	16:22	18:06	19:12
1773 Apr 07	8:43	Partial	A	128	0.648	1.673	0.697	164		13.11	-6.4	7:21			10:05
1773 Sep 30	17:53	Partial	D	133	-0.623	1.773	0.688	182		0.49	2.6	16:22			19:24
1774 Feb 26	10:59	Penumbral	A	100	-1.357	0.412	-0.645			10.62	7.3				
1774 Sep 20	0:57	Penumbral	D	143	-1.312	0.479	-0.547			23.85	-2.4				
1774 Mar 27	23:19	Penumbral	A	138	1.396	0.321	-0.697			12.48	-1.6				
1774 Aug 21	15:06	Penumbral	D	105	1.327	0.434	-0.558			22.02	-10.7				
1775 Feb 15	15:11	Partial	A	110	-0.699	1.646	0.535	166		9.93	12	13:48			16:34
1775 Aug 11	7:15	Partial	D	115	0.576	1.798	0.835	176		21.38	-14.8	5:47			8:43
1776 Jul 31	0:02	Total	D	125	-0.156	2.575	1.597	212	96	20.71	-18.4	22:16	23:14	0:50	1:48
1776 Feb 04	14:29	Total	A	120	-0.013	2.911	1.789	236	106	9.19	16.2	12:31	13:36	15:22	16:27
1777 Jan 23	16:24	Partial	A	130	0.672	1.681	0.6	168		8.44	19.9	15:00			17:48

19. [William Bartram](#) tells us he is alone when he is not alone, and tells us he is unarmed when in fact he is packing a rifle. He isn't even to be trusted in regard to names, alleging for instance that his father [John Bartram](#) and his martyred-by-the-Indians grandfather had the same name, [John Bartram](#), when in fact **he himself had been named after this grandfather, [William Bartram](#)**! — Was he stoned when he wrote this? — Go figure.

1777

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY FOR 1777. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

AN [ALMANACK](#), AND EPHEMERIS FOR 1777. By John Anderson, [Newport](#): Solomon Southwick.

AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY; OR [ALMANACK](#) ... 1777. Nathaniel Low. Boston. Printed by J. Gill and T. & J. Fleet. The frontispiece of this almanac is a woodcut map of the New York Campaign during the latter half of 1776 titled "A View of the Present Seat of War, at and near New-York." Nine landmarks or fortifications are keyed on this map in Manhattan and its surroundings, plus "General Washington's Lines on New York Island." (Presumably this military intelligence didn't amount to anything of which the enemy wasn't already fully aware.)



In Augsburg, M.A. Lotter created this map:



CARTOGRAPHY

1778

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY’S AND GENTLEMAN’S DIARY FOR 1778. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Printed and Sold by John Carter, at the Post-Office near the State-House. Including “A List of the Presidents of the Colony of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, under the First Charter; and the Governors, under the Second Charter....”

At the end of the Revolution, [Benjamin West](#) would open another school.

1779

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY’S AND GENTLEMAN’S DIARY FOR 1779. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter. Also, BICKERSTAFF’S BOSTON [ALMANACK](#), FOR THE YEAR OF OUR REDEMPTION 1779. Danvers, Massachusetts: Printed by E. Russell, next the Bell-Tavern (this was the 2d almanac to be printed in Danvers). In a title cut, three people observed moon and stars. “Rules proper to be observed in Trade” included such advice as “Endeavor to keep a proper assortment in your way, but not overstock yourself” and “Be not too talkative, but speak as much as is necessary to recommend your goods....” It excerpted from a heroic poem, “America Invincible.”



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1780

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY FOR 1780. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

A cut showing the eclipse appears in this almanac.



ANDERSON REVIVED: THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR; OR, AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1780. [By John Anderson, A.M.] [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

This is the first almanac published by Bennett Wheeler, and the first of his series, which continued to 1803. He revived the old fictitious Anderson for 1780, but used West's calculation. The next year he employed West openly. West appears as the author from 1781 to 1785 and for 1787.

(Same) Second Edition.

No copy located. Mentioned in Evans.

1781

CALENDRIER FRANÇAIS POUR L'ANNÉE COMMUNE 1781. [Newport](#), [Rhode Island](#): De l'Imprimerie de l'Escadre.

An account of this almanac together with the other works printed on the French Fleet, entitled "The Printing Press of the French Fleet," by Howard M. Chapin, was published by Preston & Rounds, Providence, 1914.²⁰

"Following the calendar is a list of names of the officers of Count Rochambeau, Destouches and others." —Hammett.

[[ALMANACK](#) FOR 1781.] By John Anderson, [Newport](#).

Imperfect copy. Title page missing.

20. The type had been brought over by the French fleet, but actually the press was set up ashore.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR; OR, AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1781. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler. [Newport](#): Henry Barber.

The second almanac of the Wheeler series. Henceforth West calculated for Wheeler instead of for Carter. It contains cut of the eclipse.



BICKERSTAFF'S NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1781. [By Isaac Bickerstaff, esq., Philom.] [Providence](#): John Carter.

According to the [Providence Gazette](#) four impressions were issued. In the second edition there is a change in the tide tables. After the final disagreement between West and Carter, the latter re-issued the almanac under this pseudonym. It contains the man of signs cut and one eclipse cut.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1781. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#): John Carter.

It has a cut showing the eclipse and an elaborate cut of the man of signs. It is the last West Almanac published by Carter,

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

and with it the West-Carter controversy ended.



1782

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, AND RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER FOR 1782. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M. and Fellow of the Academy of Arts and Sciences. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Bennett Wheeler.

It contains three cute explaining eclipses; and a reprint of the Articles of Confederation.



THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR FOR 1782, [Newport](#).

No copy located. Mentioned by Hammett.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1782. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): John Carter.

The type used is smaller than that previously used in this Bickerstaff series of almanacs.

NOTE:

THOMAS'S MASSACHUSETTS, CONNECTICUT, [RHODE ISLAND](#), NEW HAMPSHIRE AND VERMONT [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1782, published by Isaiah Thomas at Worcester, is the first of a series of Massachusetts almanacs that bear the name of [Rhode Island](#) in their title. These continued until 1810.

There were also similar series by Weatherwise (1791-1799), Bickerstaff (1791-1799), and Pope (1797).

1783

STAFFORD'S ALMANACK, FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 1783. "Hosea Stafford," a pseudonym of Nehemiah Strong. New Haven, Connecticut: Printed and Sold by T. & S. Green. The verses at the top of the calendar pages for July through December told of an "Amiable Virgin," who presumably wouldn't have remained virginal for all that long, and the publication went on to recommend a medicine that might be applied both externally and internally, "The Poor Man's Medicine," concocted by the boiling of quicksilver (which is to say, the poisonous metal mercury) in water. Included was a census tabulation of the inhabitants, and also of local Indians and Negroes: "A Return of the Number of Inhabitants in the State of Connecticut, February 1, 1782; and also of Indians and Negroes."

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR: OR THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1783. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Bennett Wheeler.

Besides three cuts explaining eclipses, it has a reprint of the treaty with France.

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR: OR THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#), FOR 1783. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M., A.A.S. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler for Henry Barber, [Newport](#).

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY FOR 1783. By Isaac Bickerstaff, esq., Philom. [Providence](#): John Carter.

Two eclipse cuts are shown.





ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1784

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR; OR, THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1784. By [Benjamin West](#). [Newport, Rhode Island](#): Bennett Wheeler.

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR; OR, THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1784. By [Benjamin West](#). [Newport](#): Solomon Southwick.

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR: OR, THE RHODE ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1784. By [Benjamin West](#), A.M., A.A.S. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

Second edition. Advertised in the [U.S. Chronicle](#).

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR; OR THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1784. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler. Sold by Terrence Reilly.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1784. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): John Carter.

It contains eclipse cut.



1785

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY'S AND GENTLEMAN'S DIARY FOR 1785. By Isaac Bickerstaff, esq., Philom. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter. Also, BICKERSTAFF'S BOSTON [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1785. Boston: Printed and Sold (Wholesale and Retail) by John W. Folsom. A title-page woodcut depicted a "male chimpanzee or the man of the wood," and this "most remarkable animal ... lately discovered in Africa" displayed some more or less human characteristics of this. This may have created by [Benjamin West](#), or may have been a plagiarization of almanacs issued in Connecticut by Daboll, Judd, and Strong.

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR; OR, THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1785. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

The official scale of depreciation of currency is included.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR; OR, THE RHODE ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1785. By “Copernicus Partridge.” [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

Copernicus Partridge is probably a pseudonym of Bennett Wheeler.

1786

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1786. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

[Benjamin West](#) was hired to lecture in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at the [College of Rhode Island](#) (he would not actually begin to teach there until he got back to [Providence](#) from a teaching appointment in Philadelphia, in 1788).

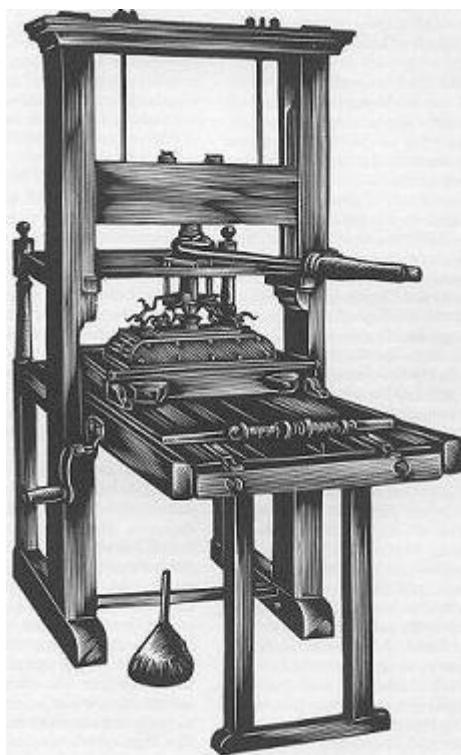
THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR; OR, THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST 1786. By “Copernicus Partridge,” A.M. ([Benjamin West](#)) [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler. Two editions. An “Author to Reader” letter originated from “Academic Grove.”

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR FOR 1786. By [Benjamin West](#). [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

No copy located. Mentioned by Sabin.

1787

Here is a current woodcut of a press manufactured in this year in Philadelphia by John Goodman, which is still intact and in good condition at the Cumberland County Historical Society in Carlisle, Pennsylvania after use for many years by the printing shop of Joseph Baumann in Ephrata and then by a press in Cumberland County:



THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1787. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

THE RHODE ISLAND SHEET [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1787. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.
Broadside.

THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR: OR, THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST 1787.... By [Benjamin West](#), A.M., A.A.S., professor of mathematics and astronomy in the [College of Rhode Island](#) (during this year, however, he was teaching mathematics instead at the Protestant Episcopal Academy in Philadelphia). [Providence](#): Printed by Bennett Wheeler. There was an elaborate account of the discovery of a new planet henceforth to be known as “Herschel,” the planet which we now term “Uranus.”

ASTRONOMY



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

Contains cut of [lunar] eclipse.



(Same, a second edition.) On the title-page “Eleventh of American Independence” is in Old English type.

(Same, a third edition.) There are three scrolls outside of the border on the title-page.

1788

AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1788. By Elisha Thornton of [Smithfield \[Rhode Island\]](#).²¹ [Newport](#): Peter Edes. October 11, 1787.

AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY, OR [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1788. By Daniel Freebetter, Philomath. [Newport](#): Peter Edes.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#), OR, LADY’S AND GENTLEMAN’S DIARY FOR 1788. By Isaac Bickerstaff, esq., Philom. [Providence](#): John Carter.

WHEELER’S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, AND RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1788. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

WHEELER’S SHEET [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1788. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

Broadside. Advertised in the [U.S. Chronicle](#). No copy located.

21. Elisha Thornton had been born in Smithfield, Rhode Island in 1748, and was the first native Rhode Island almanac maker. He would discontinue publishing his own material with the issue of 1792 and thereafter would vend his calculations to other printers.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

[Benjamin West](#) began to lecture in mathematics and natural philosophy at the [College of Rhode Island](#). THE NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR: OR, THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD CHRIST 1788.... [[Benjamin West](#)] [Providence](#): Printed by Bennett Wheeler. One-page account of the College of Rhode-Island. A number of useful “receipts” such as how to make Japan ink, how to prevent the “smoaking” of lamps, and how to produce “the King of France’s Teeth Powder, famous for making the Teeth White and preserving them from the Scurvy.”

(Same, second impression) Advertised in the [U.S. Chronicle](#).

[Isaac Bailey](#), who would as a young adult be heavily engaged in the [Providence](#) printing business, was born in [Rhode Island](#).

1789

WEATHERWISE’S [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR 1789.... Boston: Printed and Sold by Edmund Freeman. More than five pages of this were devoted to the fate of an American who had torched a British naval facility during December 1776. The account, “An authentic Account of James Hill, otherwise John Hind, otherwise James Hind, otherwise James Acksan, commonly called John the Painter, who was executed for setting fire to the Rope-house belonging to His Majesty’s Dock Yard at Portsmouth,” instanced that this person had been being paid for military intelligence by an American commissioner in Paris, Silas Dean.



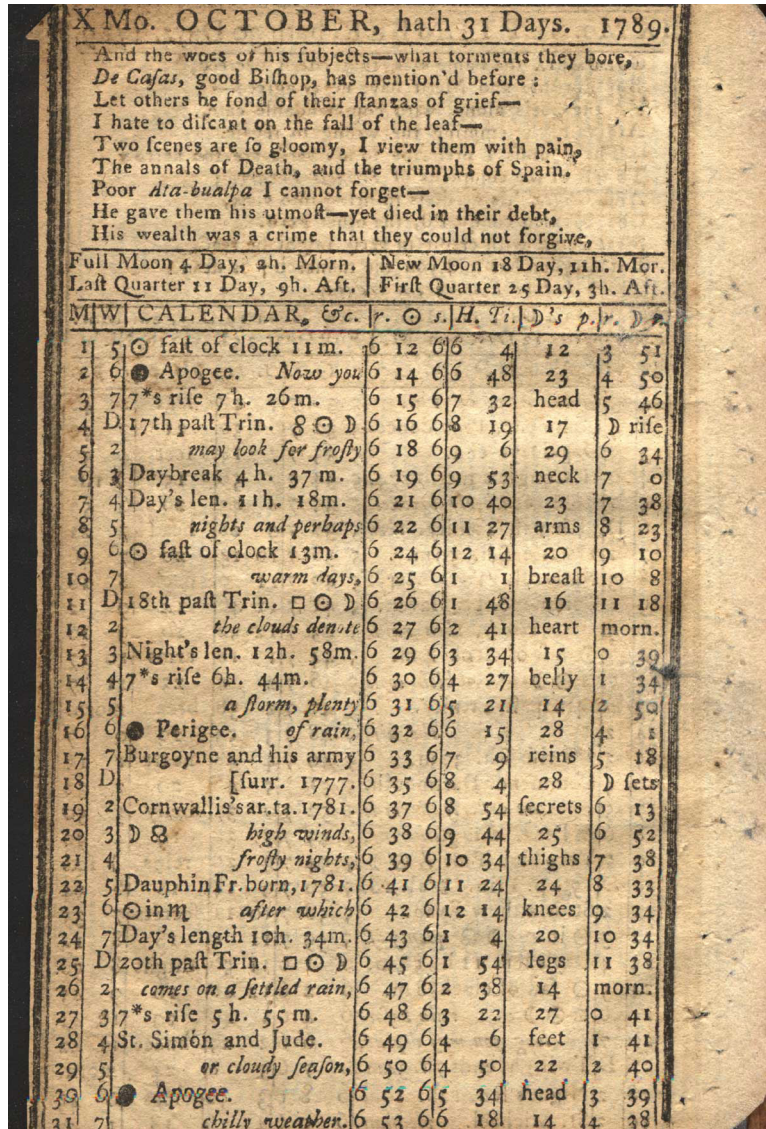
ALMANACS

ALMANACS

POOR RICHARD'S RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1789. BY POOR RICHARD. [Newport, Rhode Island](#): Peter Edes.

AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1789. By Elisha Thornton of [Smithfield, Newport](#): Peter Edes.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1789. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): John Carter.



WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR & RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1789 ([Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler) had an exceedingly crude woodcut of the "Arms of the United States."

The title page bears cut of Arms of United States and the almanac contains a report of the committee to make the channel, with directions for entering the harbor of Providence.





ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1790

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1790. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Bennett Wheeler.

Cut of eclipse on title page.



(Same, second edition.)

The second edition contains an apology for the non-appearance of the comet of 1661.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1790. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): John Carter.

Contains two eclipse cuts. This almanac contains "Directions for sailing up the Providence River."



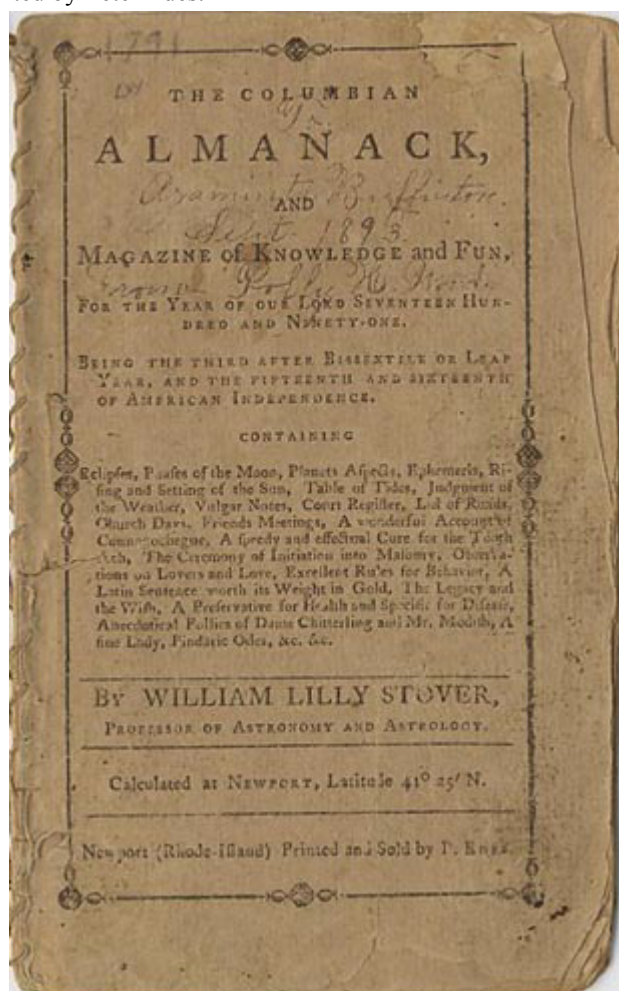
ALMANACS

ALMANACS

AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1790. By Elisha Thornton of [Smithfield, Newport](#): Peter Edes.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1790. [Newport](#): Peter Edes.

THE COLUMBIAN [ALMANACK](#) AND MAGAZINE OF KNOWLEDGE AND FUN FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD SEVENTEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-ONE. BEING THE THIRD AFTER BISEXTILE OR LEAP YEAR, AND THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. "William Lilly Stover, Professor of Astronomy and Astrology." Calculated at [Newport](#), Latitude $41^{\circ} 25' N.$: Printed and Sold by Peter Edes. This offered calculations identical to those of Elisha Thornton of [Smithfield](#)'s RHODE ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1791, which was also printed by Peter Edes.



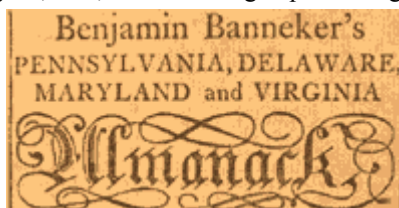


ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1791

Andrew Ellicott hired Benjamin Banneker as his assistant in surveying for the city of Washington in the District of Columbia. In this year, also, Banneker began publishing an [almanac](#).²²



THE COLUMBIAN [ALMANACK](#) AND MAGAZINE OF KNOWLEDGE AND FUN FOR 1791. By William Lilly Stover, professor of astronomy and astrology, [Newport \(Rhode Island\)](#): P. Edes.

The type pages of this almanac are wider than those of its contemporary Rhode Island almanacs. The Court Register is placed above the astronomical calculation for the month in the space formerly filled by poetry. It contains an account of the masonic initiation.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1791. By Elisha Thornton of [Smithfield](#). [Newport](#): P. Edes.

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1791. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

It has a cut of the eclipse on the title page.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1791. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), John Carter.

A cut of the eclipse is included.



22. BENJAMIN BANNEKER'S PENNSYLVANIA, DELAWARE, [MARYLAND](#) AND VIRGINIA ALMANACK AND EPHEMERIS, FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1792. Baltimore: William Goddard and James Angell, 1791.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1792

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1792. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1792. By Elisha Thornton of [Smithfield](#).²³ [Newport](#): P. Edes.

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1792. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

A cut of the eclipse appears on the title page.



1793

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1793. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): B. Wheeler.

23. Elisha Thornton had been born in Smithfield, Rhode Island in 1748, and was the first native Rhode Island almanac maker. He would discontinue publishing his own material with this issue and thereafter would vend his calculations to other printers.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

A cut of arms of the United States appears on the title page.



THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1793. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): John Carter.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1793, by Elisha Thornton, and PHILLIPS'S UNITED STATES DIARY, OR AN ALMANACK FOR 1793. [Warren](#): Nathaniel Phillips.

The first Warren almanac. A cut of the Arms of the United States appears on the title page.

CARLETON'S [ALMANACK](#) (ENLARGED AND IMPROVED) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1793.... Osgood Carleton. Boston: Printed and sold by Samuel Hall, No. 53, Cornhill. Carleton was "a Teacher of Mathematicks in Boston," and produced almanacs for the years 1790-1798. In this year's "enlarged and improved" edition he devoted two calendar pages to each month, rather than one. At the top of each calendar page was an important event of American history. This included an excerpt from THE MEMOIRS OF CAPT. JOHN SMITH. A lunar eclipse was illustrated by a cut.





ALMANACS

ALMANACS

(Same.) 2d edition.

Initial issue of the MASSACHUSETTS FARMER'S ALMANAC, prepared by Robert Bailey Thomas. This publication would become something of a recognized New England institution, in much the same fashion as in this century the National Geographic Magazine has become a recognized national institution:

THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE: "Your literature," continued Zenobia, apparently delighted with her description, "will be the Farmer's Almanac; for, I observe, our friend Foster never gets so far as the newspaper. When you happen to sit down, at odd moments, you will fall asleep, and make nasal proclamation of the fact, as he does; and invariably you must be jogged out of a nap, after supper, by the future Mrs. Coverdale, and persuaded to go regularly to bed. And on Sundays; when you put on a blue coat with brass buttons, you will think of nothing else to do, but to go and lounge over the stone-walls and rail-fences, and stare at the corn growing. And you will look with a knowing eye at oxen, and will have a tendency to clamber over into pig-sties, and feel of the hogs, and give a guess how much they will weigh, after you shall have stuck and dressed them. Already, I have noticed, you begin to speak through your nose, and with a drawl. Pray, if you really did make any poetry to-day, let us hear it in that kind of utterance!"

THE NEW ENGLAND CALLENDAR: OR ALMANACK FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 1793. BEING FIRFT AFTER BIFFECTILE, OR LEAP YEAR, AND THE 17TH OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA. CALCULATED FOR THE LATITUDE OF BOFTON, BUT WILL FERVE FOR EITHER OF THE ADJACENT STATES. "Richard Aftrologer." Boston: Printed and sold by Nathaniel Coverly.... This was one of several issued in this year by Coverly. The title cut was of a cherub consulting a globe. There were three pages of epigrams and epitaphs.

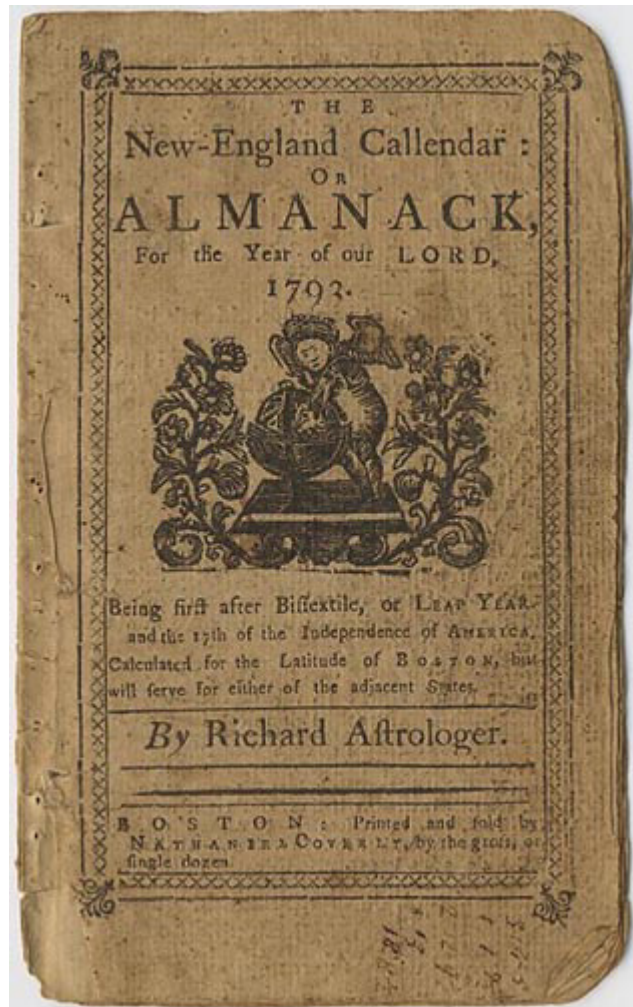
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS





ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1794

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1794. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#), WITH AN EPHEMERIS FOR 1794. By Elisha Thornton. [Warren](#): Nathaniel Phillips for Jacob Richardson, [Newport](#).

(Thornton's?) SHEET [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1794. ([Providence](#)?) Broadside. Advertised in [Providence Gazette](#).

PHILLIPS'S UNITED STATES DIARY, OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1794. [Warren](#): Nathaniel Phillips.

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR AN [ALMANACK](#), FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1794.... [[Benjamin West](#)]. [Providence](#): Printed ... by Bennett Wheeler. Title cut of lunar eclipse.



Two-plus pages were devoted to "Thirteen Allegories." Described the "famous thieves vinegar" that had been such an effective remedy during the 1666 plague in London.

The arms of the United States and of Rhode Island appear on title page of this and subsequent Phillips almanacs.

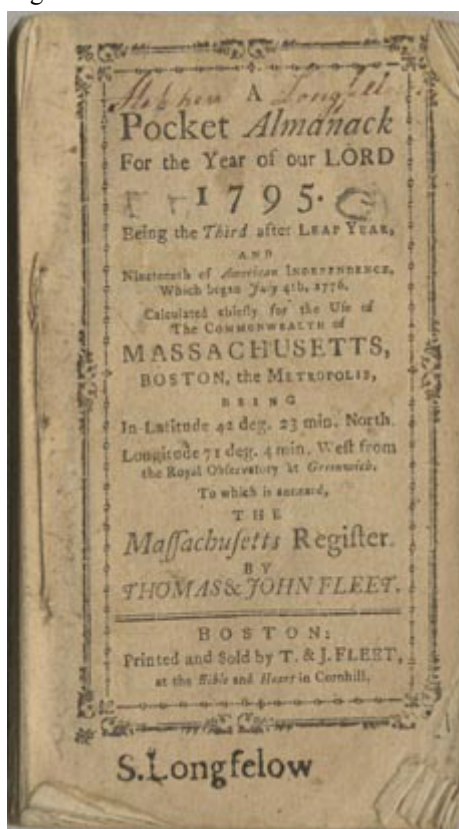


ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1795

A POCKET [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1795...TO WHICH IS ANNEXED, THE MASSACHUSETTS REGISTER.... Boston: Printed and sold by Thomas & John Fleet. The first 20 pages was an almanac, most likely that of Nathanael Low. The remainder of the pages were devoted to tables and listings such as the Massachusetts county census of 1791, Light Houses on the Head Lands and Islands of the United States, Practitioners of Law in Massachusetts, Cutters employed in Aid of the Customs, Post Office Matters, and Ministers, Churches and Religious Assemblies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



AN ASTRONOMICAL DIARY: OR [ALMANACK](#), FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1796.... "Isaac Bickerstaff." Boston: Printed for B. Larkin, E. Larkin.... The calculations correspond closely to those of Osgood Carleton's almanac for 1796.

PHILLIPS'S UNITED STATES DIARY; OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1795. [Warren, Rhode Island](#): Nathaniel Phillips.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

ANDERSON REVIVED: BEING AN [ALMANACK](#), AND EPHEMERIS FOR 1795. By John Anderson. [Newport](#): Henry C. Southwick and Co.

WHEELERS'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1795. [Providence](#): Bennett Wheeler.

(Same, with variation on last ten pages.)

NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1795. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER FOR 1795.

Bartlett ascribes this to Elijah Fenton. It was bound both with the Bickerstaff and with the Thornton almanacs for 1796.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1795. By Elisha Thornton. [Providence](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

THORNTON'S SHEET [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1795. [Providence](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

Broadside. Advertised in Providence Gazette.

1796

A POCKET [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1796...TO WHICH IS ANNEXED THE MASSACHUSETTS REGISTER.... Boston: Printed and sold by T. & J. Fleet. The first 20 pages of this formed an almanac with calculations by Nathanael Low. The remainder was devoted to tables and listings such as of Federal, State and local officials, Practitioners of Law in Massachusetts, Physicians and Surgeons Practicing in Boston, Post Office Matters, and Ministers, Churches and Religious Assemblies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Paul Revere is to be found, as President of the Mechanic Association in Boston.

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1796. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): B. Wheeler.

There is a cut of arms of Rhode Island on the title page.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1796. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

It contains the man of signs cut.



THE NEW-ENGLAND ALMANACK FOR 1796. By Elisha Thornton. Providence: Carter and Wilkinson.

THORNTON'S SHEET ALMANACK FOR 1796. Providence: Carter and Wilkinson.

Broadside. Advertised in Providence Gazette.

PHILLIPS'S UNITED STATES DIARY; OR AN ALMANACK FOR 1796. Warren: Nathaniel Phillips.

The Rhode Island Historical Society has a copy sewed with March as the first month.

December 29: In a diary we find the earliest instance, as yet known to our historians, of a commercially procured Christmas-season present: "Daniel Livermore made a present of an Almanack to my son Cyrus."²⁴

24. Until the 1830s, gifts would be typically given at the new year rather than on Christmas Day. After that decade gifts would begin to be given during the entire holiday period, and then gift-giving would refocus itself upon our newly reconfigured family-oriented and food-oriented, no longer downtown riot-oriented and drink-oriented, Christmas holiday to the exclusion of the New Year's holiday. Refer to Stephen Nissenbaum's THE BATTLE FOR CHRISTMAS.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1797

THOMAS'S MASSACHUSETTS, CONNECTICUT, RHODE-ISLAND, NEWHAMPSHIRE & VERMONT [ALMANACK](#) ... FOR ... 1797. Printed at Worcester, Massachusetts, for Isaiah Thomas. Ten pages of this almanac were devoted to President George Washington's Farewell Address, dated September 17, 1796, a communication in the form of an oration which actually was only printed, never delivered. The author pointed out that "this valuable legacy to his country (printed variously) sells from 12 1/2 to 50 cents" and was therefore a bargain — since the cost of this almanac was but 10 cents.



PHILLIPS'S UNITED STATES DIARY: OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1797. [Warren, Rhode Island](#): Nathaniel Phillips.

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1797. [Providence](#): B. Wheeler.

The United States arms appear on the title page.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1797. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

A cut of the eclipse is shown.



THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1797. By Elisha Thornton and Eliab Wilkinson. [Providence](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

It contains two cuts of the eclipse and the man of signs.



1798

[Benjamin West](#) became the [College of Rhode Island](#)'s Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.

PHILLIPS'S UNITED STATES DIARY; OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1798. [Warren, Rhode Island](#): Nathaniel Phillips. (These almanacs had been put out in Warren since 1793, but this one would be the last of the series.)

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, OR AN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1798. [Providence](#): B. Wheeler.

The United States arms appear on the title page.

THE RHODE-ISLAND CALENDAR OR [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1798. By Isaac Bickerstaff. Printed for and sold by Joseph J. Todd, at his bookstores in [Providence](#) and [Newport](#).

There is no ruled border on the text.

NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1798. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

Cut of man of signs appears.



1799

[Benjamin West](#) left his position at the [College of Rhode Island](#) to open a school for navigation in his home in [Newport, Rhode Island](#).

FLEETS' REGISTER AND POCKET [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1799. Boston: Printed and sold by J. & T. Fleet. The first 20 pages of this were devoted to an almanac, most likely by Nathanael Low. The remainder consisted of tabulations of various items of interest such as that the Federal tax on slaves was 50 cents per head, and the names of the ten coroners doing business in Cumberland County.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1799. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): Carter and Wilkinson.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

It has man of signs cut.



1800

THE NEW-ENGLAND ALMANACK FOR 1800. By Isaac Bickerstaff. Providence, Rhode Island: John Carter.²⁵

THE UNITED STATES ALMANACK FOR 1800. By Eliab Wilkinson of Smithfield. Warren: Nathaniel Phillips.

THE NEW-ENGLAND CALENDAR, AND EPHEMERIS FOR 1800. By Eliab Wilkinson of Smithfield. Warren: Nathaniel Phillips.

Two pages are used for each month.

25. John Carter (1745-1814) had been an apprentice in the print shop of Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, and in that of William Goddard in Providence. Along with William Goddard and later William's mother Sarah Goddard he published the Providence Gazette, until in 1768 at the age of 23 he became sole proprietor. In 1772 he had become Providence's 1st postmaster. He was one of the partners of the Carter and Wilkinson publishing firm. His daughter Ann Carter got married with Nicholas Brown, his daughter Rebecca Carter got married with Amos Throop Jenckes, and his daughter Elizabeth Ann Carter got married with Walter Raleigh Danforth. Walter Raleigh Danforth (1787-1861), a son of Job Danforth (1745-1830), would graduate from the College of Rhode Island (Brown University) in 1805 and become clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court of Providence in 1807, editor of the Providence Gazette in 1820. He would in 1825 found a weekly newspaper named Microcosm.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

THE NEW-ENGLAND CALENDAR, AND EPHEMERIS FOR 1800. By Eliab Wilkinson of Smithfield. [Newport](#): Printed for Jacob Richardson.

Two pages are used for each month.

THE NEWPORT [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1800. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth.

Probably compiled by Remington Southwick as one by him is referred to in the *American Minerva* of Dedham, Oct. 9, 1800. There is an ornamental cut on title page and the man of signs cut on page two.






ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1801

 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1801. By Isaac Bickerstaff, [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1801. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth.


(Same, with “Great Allowance to those who purchase quantities” on the front page.)

THE NEWPORT [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1801. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth.

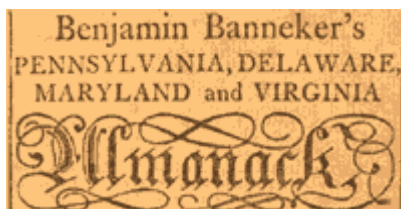
THE NEW-ENGLAND CALENDAR AND EPHEMERIS FOR 1801. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth for Jacob Richardson.

No copy located. Mentioned by Hammett.

1802

 [Benjamin West](#) became Postmaster of [Providence, Rhode Island](#).

The last issue of Benjamin Banneker’s [almanac](#).



THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1802. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): John Carter.

RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1802. [Newport](#), Oliver Farnsworth.

THE NORTH-AMERICAN [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1802. [Providence](#), Bennett Wheeler.

(Same) Second edition.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1803


 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1803. By R. Southwick. 1803. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter

WHEELER'S NORTH-AMERICAN CALENDAR, AND RHODE ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1803. [Providence](#), Bennett Wheeler.

RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1803. By R. Southwick. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth.


[ALMANACK](#) FOR 1803. By R. Thomas. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth.

1804

 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1804. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.


THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1804. By Benjamin West. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth.

1805

 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1805. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1805. By Benjamin West. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth.

1806

 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1806. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1806. By Benjamin West. [Newport](#): Oliver Farnsworth.

THE COLUMBIAN CALENDAR OR [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1806. By Remington Southwick. [Newport](#). Printed for the author.

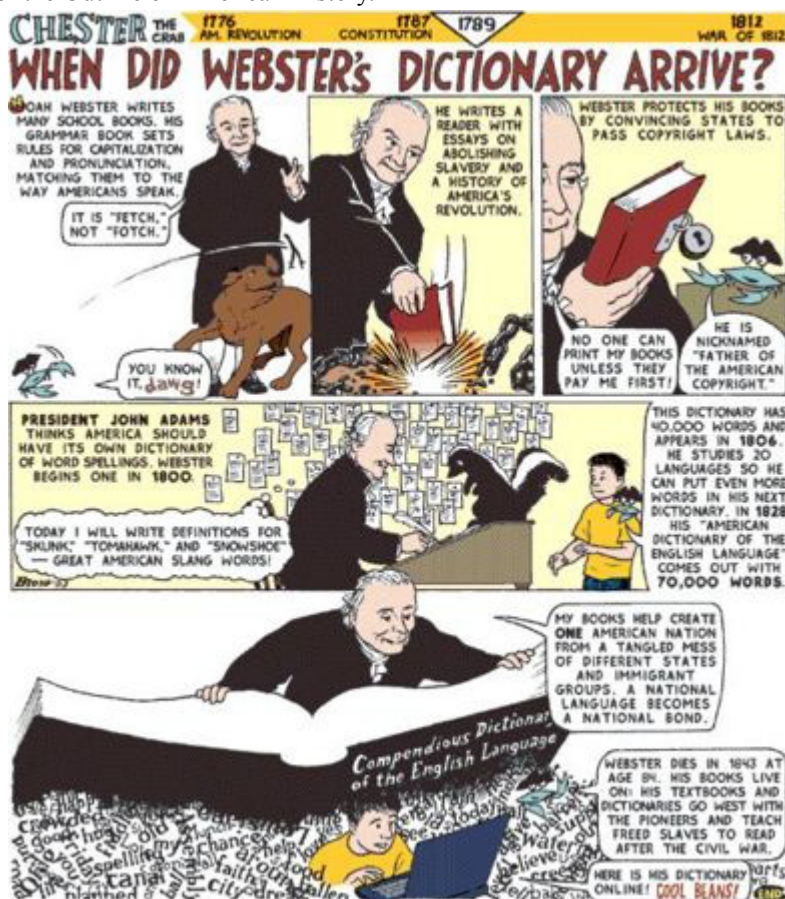
A [LUNAR CALENDAR](#) FOR A. M. 5566. (1806) By [Moses Lopez](#). [Newport](#): Newport Mercury (a copy is preserved at the [Touro Synagogue](#)).

This Almanac was calculated for the Jews who at this time had a very prosperous colony in Newport.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

➡ [Noah Webster, Jr.](#)'s A COMPENDIOUS DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE contained not only definitions of 37,000 words but also listings that up to that time had ordinarily been typical only of [almanacs](#), such as "Tables of Moneys," "Tables of Weights and Measures," "List of Post-Offices in the United States," and "Chronological table of the Most Remarkable Events, in or Respecting America, Intended For the Outline of American History."



1807

➡ THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1807. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.


CURTIS'S POCKET [ALMANACK](#), AND REGISTER OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE FOR THE YEAR 1807. Samuel Curtis. Amherst, New Hampshire: Printed by Joseph Cushing. The 1800 census of New Hampshire by town, its militia officers, its postmasters, its attorneys, its county criers, its ministers, etc. The description of [Dartmouth College](#) indicated that its library comprised some 3,000 volumes.




ALMANACS

ALMANACS


1808

 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1808. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.


1809

 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1809. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

1810


 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1810. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

1811


 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1811. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

THE NEW-HAMPSHIRE AND MAINE FARMERS' [ALMANACK](#) FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1811.
Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Published by Charles Tappan. Sold at his Bookstore, No. 1, Market-street...
In addition to hints as to the best mode of taking honey and of the management of pigs, this provided detail about various counterfeit bank bills in circulation at the time and about "uncurrent bills" that could be accepted only for "a part of their nominal or original value."

1812

 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1812. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

1813


 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1813. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): John Carter.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1814


 THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1814. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): John Carter.

THE NEW-ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1814. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): John Carter. Sold also by George Wanton, [Newport](#).

1815

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1815. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Brown & Wilson.

The old Bickerstaff Almanac appears with a new title this year.

 The bowling game of “Nine Pins” had been being played for some time, although eventually it would be discredited and banned due not only to its association with tippling and with gambling, but also to its unfortunate tendency to induce farmhands to the intolerable practice of discontinuing their labors while there still remained enough light in the sky to see. In this year the following diatribe appeared in the OLD FARMER’S [ALMANAC](#):

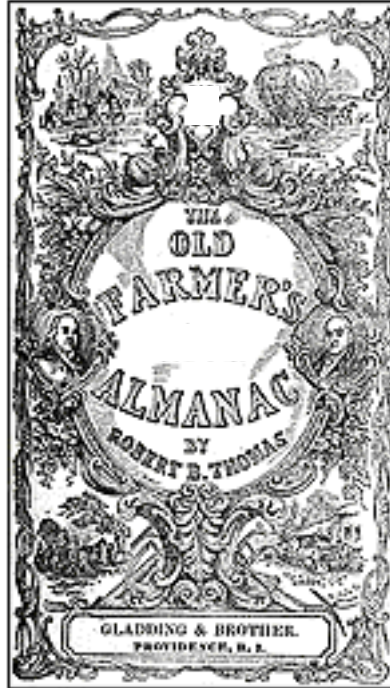
Bowling greens have become of late mightily fashionable, to the ruin of many unfortunate young men. Scarcely a day passes without the rattle of pins in front of landlord Toddy Stick’s house. Every boy is distracted to get away from his work in order to take his game. At sun two hours high, the day is finished, and away goes men and boys to the bowling alley. Haying, hoeing, ploughing, sewing, all must give way to sport and toddy.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

This publication also urged the dairywomen of New England to “Pray put your [snuff](#) box aside when you are working over your butter” — although it neglected to specify just why.



1816



THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1816 (Isaac Bickerstaff, [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Brown & Wilson).

THE MANUFACTURER'S POCKET-PIECE, OR, THE COTTON-MILL MORALIZED: A POEM, WITH ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES / BY [WALTON FELCH](#) (Published for Samuel Allen, [Newburyport, Mass.]: <http://opac.newsbank.com/select/shaw/37574>).

1817




THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1817. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS


1818

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1818. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

1819

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1819. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.


1820

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1820. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1820. [Providence](#): Hugh H. Brown.

This new series started by the publishers of the Bickerstaff series continued for 12 years.

1821

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1821. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Brown and Danforth.²⁶

THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1821. [Providence](#): Brown & Danforth.


26. John Carter (1745-1814) had been an apprentice in the print shop of Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, and in that of William Goddard in Providence. Along with William Goddard and later William's mother Sarah Goddard he published the [Providence Gazette](#), until in 1768 at the age of 23 he became sole proprietor. In 1772 he had become Providence's 1st postmaster. He was one of the partners of the Carter and Wilkinson publishing firm. His daughter Ann Carter got married with Nicholas Brown, his daughter Rebecca Carter got married with Amos Throop Jenckes, and his daughter Elizabeth Ann Carter got married with Walter Raleigh Danforth. Walter Raleigh Danforth (1787-1861), a son of Job Danforth (1745-1830), graduated from the College of Rhode Island (Brown University) in 1805 and became clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court of Providence in 1807, editor of the [Providence Gazette](#) in 1820. He would in 1825 found a weekly newspaper named [Microcosm](#).



ALMANACS


ALMANACS

1822

 The printer Everard Peck began publishing a WESTERN AGRICULTURAL [ALMANAC](#), with astronomical calculations by Lyman Wilmarth and innkeeper Oliver Loud (both of Bushnell's Basin in Rochesterville, New York).


THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1822, by Isaac Bickerstaff, and THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1822. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Brown and Danforth.

1823

 RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1823. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Brown and Danforth.


RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1823. [Providence](#): Brown and Danforth.

1824

 RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1824. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Brown and Danforth.

RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1824. [Providence](#): Brown and Danforth.

1825

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1825. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Brown & Danforth.

THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1825. [Providence](#): Brown & Danforth. Also [The Providence Annual Advertiser](#).



ALMANACS


ALMANACS

1826

 THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1826, and THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1826. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Carlile & Brown.

In Rochester, New York, Oliver Loud and Everard Peck's WESTERN [ALMANACK](#) replaced its "Advice to Farmers" pages with a table of interest rates. Everard Peck began selling also THE CHRISTIAN [ALMANACK](#), published by the American Tract Society.

1827

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1827. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Carlile & Brown.


THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1827. [Providence](#): Carlile & Brown.

1828

 THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1828 and THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1828. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

In Rochester, New York, Oliver Loud and Everard Peck's WESTERN [ALMANACK](#) carried its 1st patent medicine advertisement.

1829

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1829. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1829. [Providence](#): Hugh H. Brown.

THE CHRISTIAN [ALMANACK](#) FOR RHODE-ISLAND. Vol. 2, No.2. American Tract Society. [Providence](#).


This almanac was probably not printed within the state.



ALMANACS


ALMANACS

1830

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1830. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1830. [Providence](#): Hugh H. Brown.

1831

 In Rochester, New York, Loud and Peck's WESTERN [ALMANACK](#) contained a piece arguing against "ardent spirits." Everard Peck began publishing a TEMPERANCE ALMANAC devoted to the promotion of temperance.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1831. By Isaac Bickerstaff. THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1831. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

In this year a Providence Athenaeum was chartered. [John Russell Bartlett](#) was one of the founding members. A library collection had been in existence in [Providence](#) since about 1754 and in 1836 Nicholas Brown and the heirs of Thomas P. Ives would offer a building lot on a steep slope of College Street at the corner of Benefit Street and these two associations would merge into a "The Athenaeum" corporation by the issuance of 699 shares of stock, which would be purchased by 685 individuals. This corporation would complete its building (a two-story granite structure which must have resembled somebody's idea of a Grecian temple) late in 1837. The building would stand upon a terrace approached by flights of steps between which eventually would be positioned (in 1873) a drinking-fountain with an appropriate inscription: "Come hither every one that thirsteth." The lower floor would consist of a reading room while the upper floor would store the collection of 40,000 volumes.

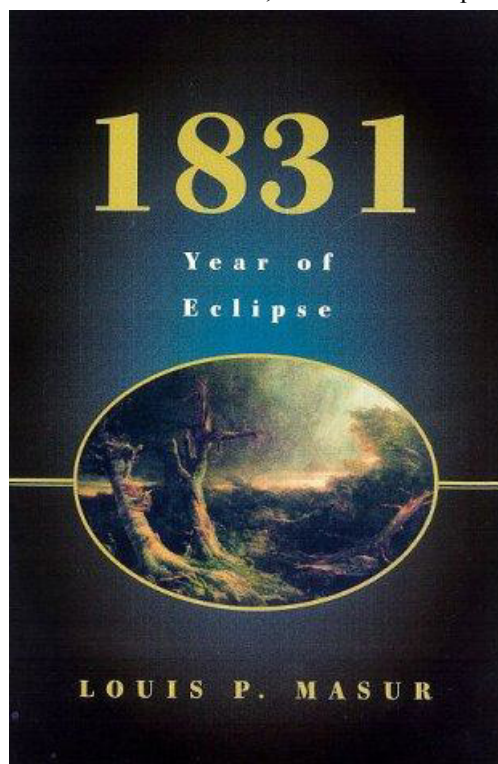


ALMANACS

ALMANACS

 February 12, Saturday: At this point the Glasgow Skating Club's *SKATERS MANUAL* contained descriptions of 13 combined [skating](#) figures.

According to Chapter I of the history of this year by Professor Louis P. Masur, titled *1831: YEAR OF ECLIPSE* (Hill and Wang, 2001. ISBN: 0-8090-4118-9), everyone, presumably even [Nat Turner](#), even the recreational [skaters](#) on the frozen Delaware River, knew that an eclipse was coming:



Everyone knew it was coming. "THE GREAT ECLIPSE OF 1831 will be one of the most remarkable that will again be witnessed in the United States for a long course of years," alerted *ASH'S POCKET ALMANAC*. One editor reported that the February 12 eclipse would even surpass historic occasions when "the darkness was such that domestic fowls retired to roost" and "it appeared as if the moon rode unsteadily in her orbit, and the earth seemed to tremble on its axis." On the day of the eclipse, from New England through the South, Americans looked to the heavens. One diarist saw "men, women and children ... in all directions, with a piece of smoked glass, and eyes turn'd upward." The Boston *Evening Gazette* reported that "this part of the world has been all anxiety ... to witness the solar eclipse.... Business was suspended and thousands of persons were looking at the phenomena with intense curiosity." "Every person in the city," noted the Richmond *Enquirer*, "was star gazing, from bleary-eyed old age to the most bright-eyed infancy."

Unlike previous celestial events, thought some commentators, the eclipse of 1831 would not produce superstitious dread that the world would end. "Idle fears and gloomy forebodings of evil formerly raised by the appearance of phenomena caused by



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

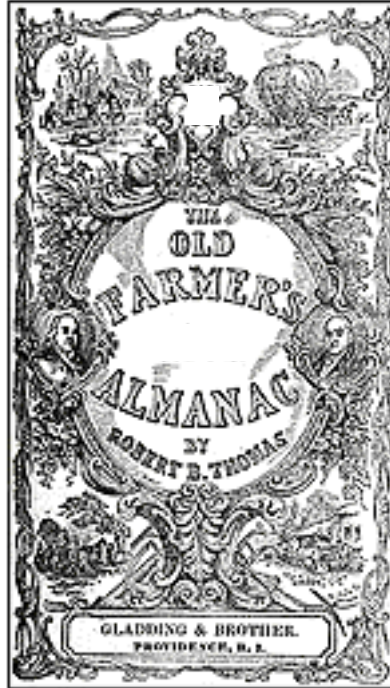
the regular operation of natural laws," one writer claimed, "have yielded to pleasing admiration; a change which the march of science and general diffusion of knowledge have largely contributed to effect." Another writer mocked the notion that eclipses were "signs or forerunners of great calamities." Eclipses, he thought, "necessarily result from the established laws of the planetary revolution, and take place in exact conformity with those laws.... Those who entertain the opinion that eclipses of the sun are tokens of the Divine displeasure can produce no warrant from scripture for their irrational belief. If we would look for the signs of the displeasure of God towards a nation, we can see them, not in eclipses, but in national sins and depravity of morals." Rational explanations of atmospheric events, however, offered little solace to most Americans. In many, "a kind of vague fear, of impending danger—a prophetic presentiment of some approaching catastrophe"—was awakened, and "the reasonings of astronomy, or the veritable deductions of mathematical forecast," did little to diminish the anxiety. One correspondent reported that an "old shoe-black accosted a person in front of our office, the day previous to the eclipse, and asked him if he was not afraid. For, said he, with tears in his eyes, the world is to be destroyed tomorrow; the sun and moon are to meet ... and a great earthquake was to swallow us all!—Others said the sun and the earth would come in contact, and the latter would be consumed. Others again, were seen wending their ways to their friends and relations, covered with gloom and sadness; saying that they intended to die with them!" The day after the eclipse, preachers employed LUKE 21:25 as the text for their sermons: "there shall be signs in the sun." "In strict propriety of language," one minister observed, "it is not the sun that is eclipsed. Not the slightest shadow is cast upon the least portion of his broad disk. His beams are shot forth precisely the same. It is over us only that the momentary darkness is spread, and it is truly the earth that is eclipsed." The spectacle, however, proved anticlimactic. "The darkness being less visible than generally expected," the heaven-gazers felt "bamboozled." "At the moment of greatest obscuration," reported one paper, "a foolish feeling of disappointment was generally prevalent and this was expressed by many in such terms as they might have used after having been taken in by the quacking advertisement of an exhibitor of fireworks or phantasmagoria. It was not half as dark as they expected." "The darkness was that of a thunder gust," snorted one observer: "The light of the sun was sickly, but shadows were very perceptible." "The multitude have been sadly disappointed," reported one editor. "They looked for darkness and the shades of light; they expected to drink in horrors, and feel the power of superstition without its terrors or apprehensions; they expected to work by candlelight, see cows come home, and poultry go ultimately to roost—to count the stars and tell them by their names; in short, to see something that they might talk about now and hereafter—something to

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

tell their children and grandchildren."



With the anticipation more disturbing than the event, some sought to cast blame. Almanac makers and newspaper editors were chastised for their extravagant predictions of darkness and glowing descriptions of the wonders that would be seen. Some thought the astronomers deserved condemnation for offering elaborate calculations that fizzled. Others blamed regional temperaments for the heightened expectations. "Our Yankee proneness to exaggeration," thought the Boston Patriot, "was manifested in a ludicrous manner on the occasion of the late eclipse." Southerners agreed: "Our eastern brethren are, as usual, up in arms about the matter – they talk of a convention. Truth to say, expectations were scarcely realized. On such occasions, people now-a-day show a shockingly morbid appetite – they look for portentous signs, for ghastly gleanings of fiery comets, the rushing up, with dire intimations of the 'northern lights,' and expect to see 'clouds of dark blood to blot the sun's broad light, / And angry meteors shroud the world in night.'"

However much the eclipse disappointed, it served as metaphor and omen. Edward Everett, senator from Massachusetts, reported that "a motion was made in the House of Representatives to adjourn over till Monday in consequence of the darkness which was to prevail." The motion did not pass, and Everett quipped, "After sitting so frequently when there is darkness inside the House, it would be idle I think to fly before a little darkness on the face of the heavens." The United States Gazette, which feverishly opposed the reelection of President Andrew Jackson, joked that "the solar eclipse has not attracted as much attention here, as the late curious obscuration of one of the smaller stars in the

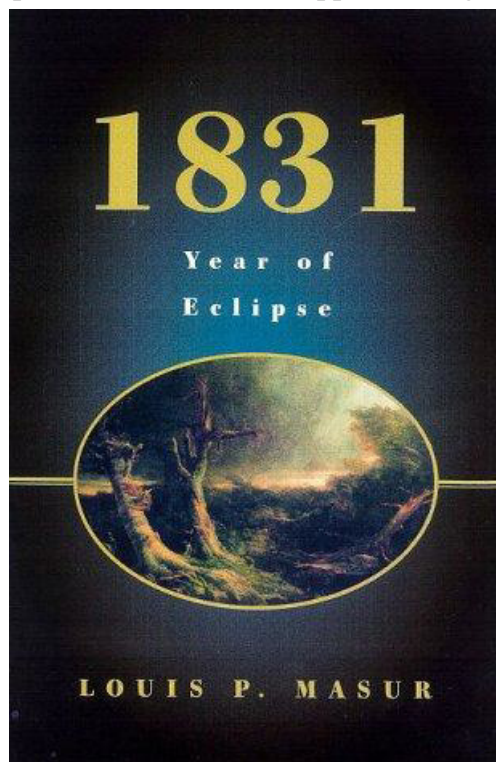


ALMANACS

ALMANACS

constellation, Jupiter Jackson." With greater sobriety, the editor of the Philadelphia Gazette observed that "the affairs of the Eastern hemisphere ... have reached a thrilling and portentous crisis. An irresistible spirit of reform seems burning with occult but mighty energy among the nations.... An eclipse in Europe at the present time might be considered as an omen. In this country, where it has lately occurred, the sunshine of regulated freedom appears alone to rest." Unmoved by editorial, ministerial, astronomical, or political pronouncements and predictions, on the day of the eclipse some Philadelphians went ice-skating. The coldest winter in decades had frozen the Delaware River, and thousands of citizens chose to pass the day in recreation. The Saturday Bulletin reported, "It is probable that fifteen thousand persons were amusing themselves by sliding and skating on the river, while the numerous booths, or travelling dram-shops which were located at short distances apart, throughout the whole city front, were observed to do a brisk business in hot punch, smoked sausages, crackers, and ten-for-a-cent cigars. Sober citizens, whom we have observed never exceed a regular dog-trot, while walking our streets, were now capering around with the agility of a feather in a whirlwind." One artist drew the scene. On February 12, Edward William Clay set up his easel by the Delaware River and produced an image of citizens at play. Men of all classes slip and swirl, some into one another's arms, as they skate the day away. To the right, a rough-hewn citizen warms himself with a drink; a woman looks on contentedly. A black man, in stereotypical comic fashion, slides helplessly away, his hat lost. All is movement and motion, energy and action. But the sky is gray,

the light is pale, and dusk is approaching.



Louis P. Masur titled his book 1831: YEAR OF ECLIPSE: That’s apparently short for 1831: YEAR OF THE ECLIPSED ECLIPSE. Now is somebody going to write a history book titled 1957: YEAR OF THE THIRD WORLD WAR THAT DIDN’T HAPPEN AS EXPECTED?

Although nothing whatever was visible to the naked eye at any point north of the Gulf Coast (where a brief minor “nibble” might possibly have been noted by some extraordinarily attentive observer), [Maria Mitchell](#), age 12, assisted her father in his attempts to use his amateur astronomical equipment to view the moon as it passed, invisible to the naked eye, close by but at no point touching upon the disk of the sun. Although it is of record that this attempt was made (they were attempting to determine the exact longitude of [Nantucket Island](#)), I very much doubt that –so close to the solar brilliance– they would have been able by the use of available instruments to make any readings at all.

Louis P. Masur to the contrary notwithstanding, here are the salient events that might have (but did not) create scholarly monographs entitled perhaps 1806: YEAR OF ECLIPSE or perhaps 1868: YEAR OF ECLIPSE:

Date	Type	Size	Length	Name
May 3, 1375 BCE	Total	1.029	02m05s	Ugarit Eclipse
June 5, 1302 BCE	Total	1.080	06m24s	Early Chinese Eclipse
April 16, 1178 BCE	Total	1.060	04m34s	Homer’s “Odyssey”
April 20, 899 BCE	Annular	0.959	03m05s	China’s “Double-Dawn” Eclipse
June 15, 763 BCE	Total	1.060	04m59s	Assyrian Eclipse
April 6, 648 BCE	Total	1.069	05m02s	Archilochus’s Eclipse



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

May 28, 585 BCE	Total	1.080	06m05s	Herodotus/Thales Eclipse (Medes vs. Lydians)
May 19, 557 BCE	Total	1.026	02m22s	The Siege of Larisa
October 2, 480 BCE	Annular	0.932	07m58s	Xerxes's Eclipse
August 3, 431 BCE	Annular	0.984	01m04s	Peloponnesian War
March 21, 424 BCE	Annular	0.943	04m38s	8th Year of Peloponnesian War
November 24, 29 CE	Total	1.022	01m59s	Crucifixion of Christ?
March 19, 33 CE	Total	1.058	04m06s	Crucifixion of Christ?
April 30, 59 CE	Total	1.019	01m50s	Plinius's Eclipse
March 20, 71 CE	Hybrid	1.007	00m35s	Plutarch's Eclipse
June 6, 346 CE	Total	1.059	03m58s	no name
July 19, 418 CE	Total	1.046	03m52s	no name
November 24, 569 CE	Total	1.036	03m17s	Eclipse Preceding Birth of Mohammad
January 27, 632 CE	Annular	0.984	01m40s	Death of Mohammad's Son Ibrahim
December 7, 671 CE	Annular	0.924	10m18s	no name
May 5, 840 CE	Total	1.076	05m46s	Emperor Louis's Eclipse (Treaty of Verdun)
May 14, 1230	Total	1.060	03m17s	Major European Eclipse
May 3, 1715	Total	1.063	04m14s	Edmund Halley's Eclipse
August 5, 1766	Annular	0.943	05m15s	Captain Cook's Eclipse
June 16, 1806	Total	1.060	04m55s	Tecumseh's Eclipse
August 18, 1868	Total	1.076	06m47s	King of Siam's Eclipse
July 29, 1878	Total	1.045	03m11s	Pike's Peak Eclipse
January 22, 1879	Annular	0.970	03m03s	Zulu War Eclipse
April 17, 1912	Hybrid	1.000	00m02s	The "Titanic" Eclipse
May 29, 1919	Total	1.072	06m51s	Einstein's Eclipse (Test of General Relativity)
January 24, 1925	Total	1.030	02m32s	NYC's Winter Morning Eclipse
August 31, 1932	Total	1.026	01m45s	Great Maine Eclipse

1832




THE RHODE-ISLAND REGISTER AND UNITED STATES CALENDAR FOR 1832. THE RHODE-ISLAND ALMANACK FOR 1832. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.




ALMANACS

ALMANACS


1833

-  THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1833. By R.T. Paine. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.
This almanac really belongs to the Bickerstaff series, Bickerstaff's name appearing again next year.

1834

-  THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1834. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.


1835

-  Alonzo Lewis drew and George W. Boynton engraved a 31 inch by 22 inch map of [Boston](#), known as the "Bewick Company's Map." A map known as "Annin's Small Map," 4 inches by $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches including only the peninsular portion of the city, appeared in the BOSTON [ALMANAC](#).

MAPS OF BOSTON

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1835. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.


1836

-  500 townspeople of Rochester, New York signed a [temperance](#) petition urging the federal Congress to address the nation's [alcohol](#) problem.

Samuel Green of the NEW ENGLAND [ALMANACK](#) AND FARMERS FRIEND wrote that [tobacco](#) was an insecticide, a poison, a filthy habit — and could kill a man.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1836. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

This year the letter "k" was omitted from the word "almanac."

 December 8, Thursday: [David Henry Thoreau](#) supplemented his borrowings from the [Harvard Library](#) by checking out, from the library of the “[Institute of 1770](#)”, William Beckford’s ITALY: WITH SKETCHES OF SPAIN AND PORTUGAL (London and Philadelphia: R. Bentley, 1834),



WM. BECKFORD, ITALY

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**ALMANACS****ALMANACS**

[George Combe](#)'s LECTURES ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY: DELIVERED BEFORE THE "EDINBURGH PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY," AND REPORTED FOR THE "EDINBURGH CHRONICLE." (Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon; New-York: Daniel Appleton & Co.),

**MORAL PHILOSOPHY**

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

TERRIBLE TRACTORATION, AND OTHER POEMS. BY CHRISTOPHER CAUSTIC, M.D. FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, ABERDEEN, AND HONORARY MEMBER OF NO LESS THAN NINETEEN VERY LEARNED SOCIETIES [pseud.]. 3d American ed. (Boston: Russell, Shattuck & co., 1836, a book of poetry and commentary of a sort which can be best described by suggesting that it might have been better had the author of it, the journalist [Thomas Green Fessenden](#), persisted in his prior career as an attorney at law),

TERRIBLE TRACTORATION

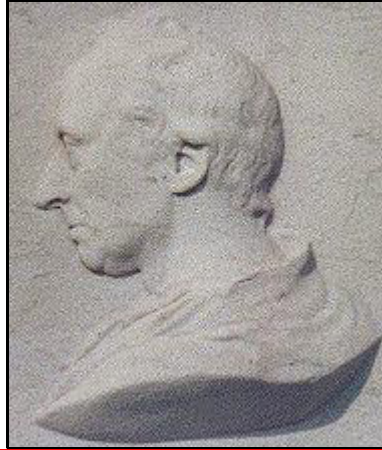
and the 3d of the five volumes of [Professor Adam Ferguson](#)'s THE HISTORY OF THE PROGRESS AND



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

TERMINATION OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC (1773, new edition, Edinburgh, 1813).



THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, III

This volume covers the period from Gaius [Julius Caesar](#)'s departure for Gaul to his defeat of Pompey at Pharsalus in Thessaly.

Our guy would comment later of the catacombs full of preserved death, of our museums full of stuffed animals, and of such history textbooks stuffed full with irrelevant facts, that:



"I hate museums, there is nothing so weighs upon the spirits. They are catacombs of nature. They are preserved death. One green bud of Spring one willow catkin, one faint trill from some migrating sparrow, might set the world on its legs again.

I know not whether I muse most at the bodies stuffed with cotton and sawdust – or those stuffed with bowels and fleshy fibre.


The life that is in a single green weed is of more worth than all this death. They are very much like the written history of the world – and I read Rollin and Ferguson with the same feeling."

–JOURNAL; September 24, 1843





1837

 George W. Boynton engraved a 5¹/₂ inch by 5 inch map of [Boston](#) for the BOSTON [ALMANAC](#) of this year.

THE [RHODE-ISLAND ALMANAC](#) FOR 1837. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): Hugh H. Brown.

[Walton Felch](#)'s A COMPREHENSIVE GRAMMAR, PRESENTING SOME NEW VIEWS OF THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE: DESIGNED TO EXPLAIN ALL THE RELATIONS OF WORDS IN ENGLISH SYNTAX, AND MAKE THE STUDY OF GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION ONE AND THE SAME PROCESS. ABRIDGED FROM A WORK PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION (Otis, Broaders and Company, 122 pages). [Volume 2832 of Harvard reading textbooks preservation microfilm project]

FELCH'S GRAMMAR


He would republish this in 1841 (the copy behind the big button above is actually the republished version, the original version owned by [Henry Thoreau](#) not being readily available as yet in electronic text), and would argue that the "prevailing system of grammar, which in substance we have received from the ancients, will be found, upon careful inspection, to be radically defective and erroneous; — how defective and erroneous, no one is prepared to conceive, till he has given the subject more attention than a short essay like this article could evince." His authorial intent was to correct the absence of a progressive or ethical agenda in current grammar construction: "And in the first place, the purpose of grammar is not distinctly set forth. Indeed, it is proposed as 'the art of speaking and writing correctly.' Thus our grammarians would give us 'the art' without the science, — a heap of blind, and peradventure incongruous, rules of composition, with no principle for their basis. And it seems not to have entered their thoughts, that one may speak grammatically and yet incorrectly; — that his speech may be incorrect in point of perspicuity, meaning, fact, time, place, order, taste, manners, morals, &c."

It was in this year that [Concord](#) would be erecting a Battle Monument at the Old North Bridge, commemorating the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, and marking the graves of the fallen British soldiers. This would lead the above grammarian, moralist, and phrenologist [Walton Felch](#), sometime between 1838 and 1844, to commit his act of “authorized grave robbing” (authorized, indeed, formally, by the Concord Board of Selectmen!). With full permission he recovered the skulls of two of the British soldiers, one of them with a most picturesque bullethole. The soldiers’ skulls would become exhibits for his phrenological lectures, for both of them displayed, he asserted, the same over-developed bump over the brain area of combativeness and the same deficient hollow over the brain area of merriment — soldiery, he would point out, had for such persons been a natural fit.



Theirs but to do or die.

1838

 THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1838. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

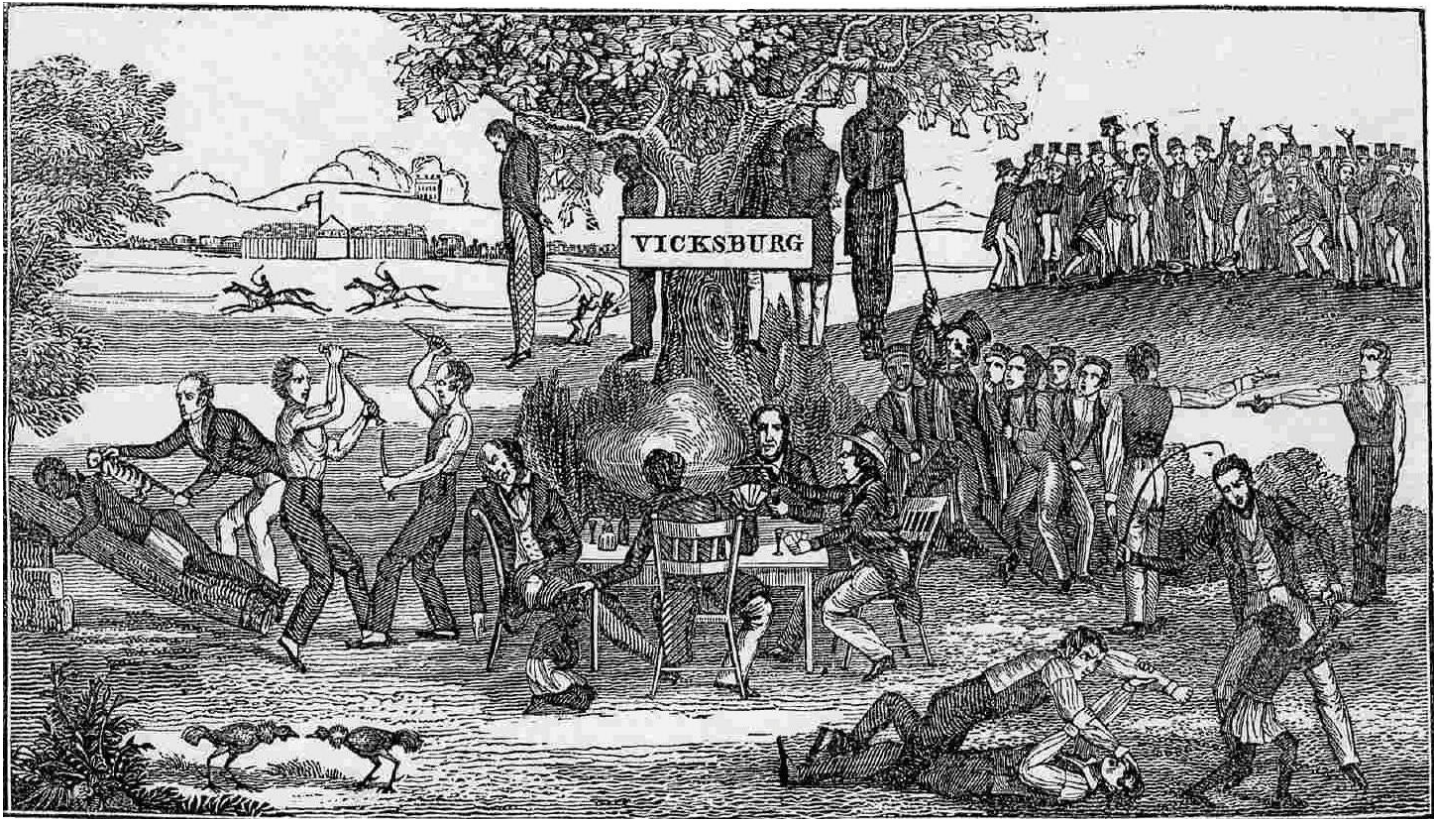
1839

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1839. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

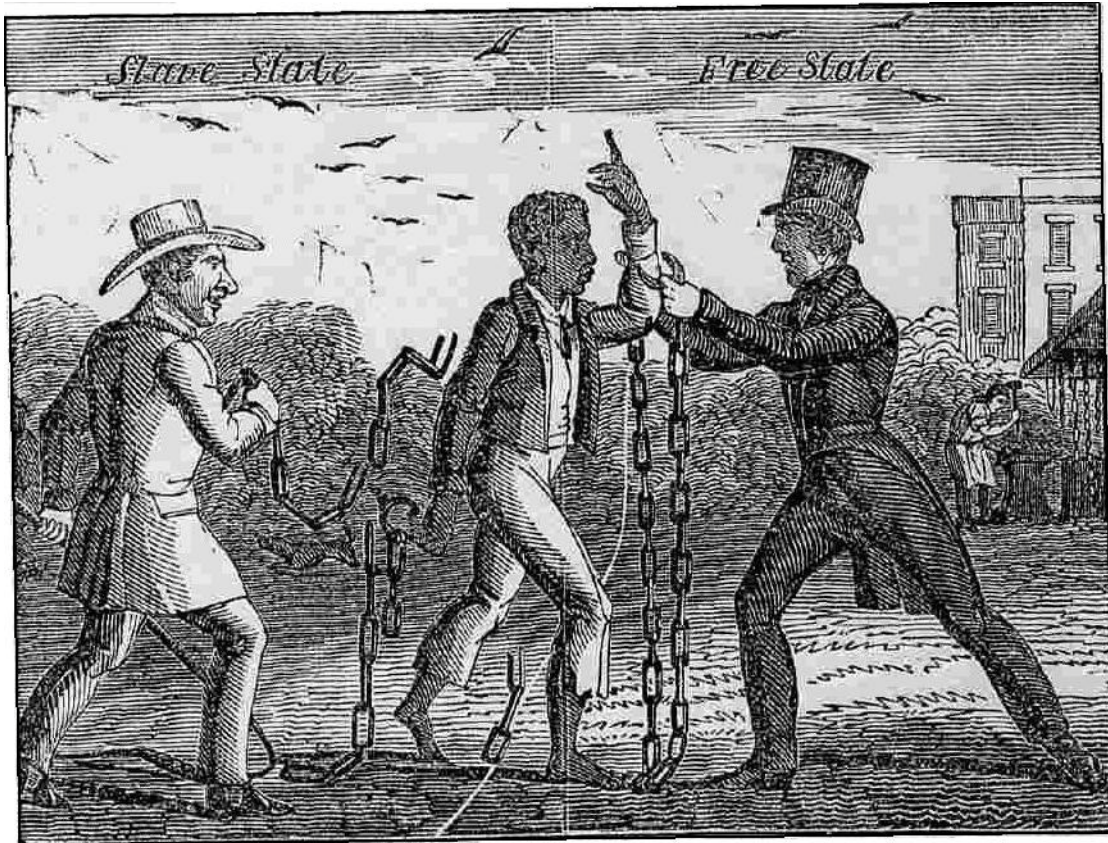
1840

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1840. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

The American Anti-Slavery Society issued its 5th annual almanac, the [AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY ALMANAC](#) FOR 1840. The cover depicted slavemasters with a shackled slave. Inside were 16 woodcuts of slaves in chains, slaves being hunted by dogs, "Selling a Mother From Her Child," whipping, branding, burning at the stake, etc. with accompanying stories:



"Our Peculiar Domestic Institutions."



Northern Hospitality—New York nine months law.²⁷

27. The slave steps out of the slave state into the state of New York, and his chains fall.

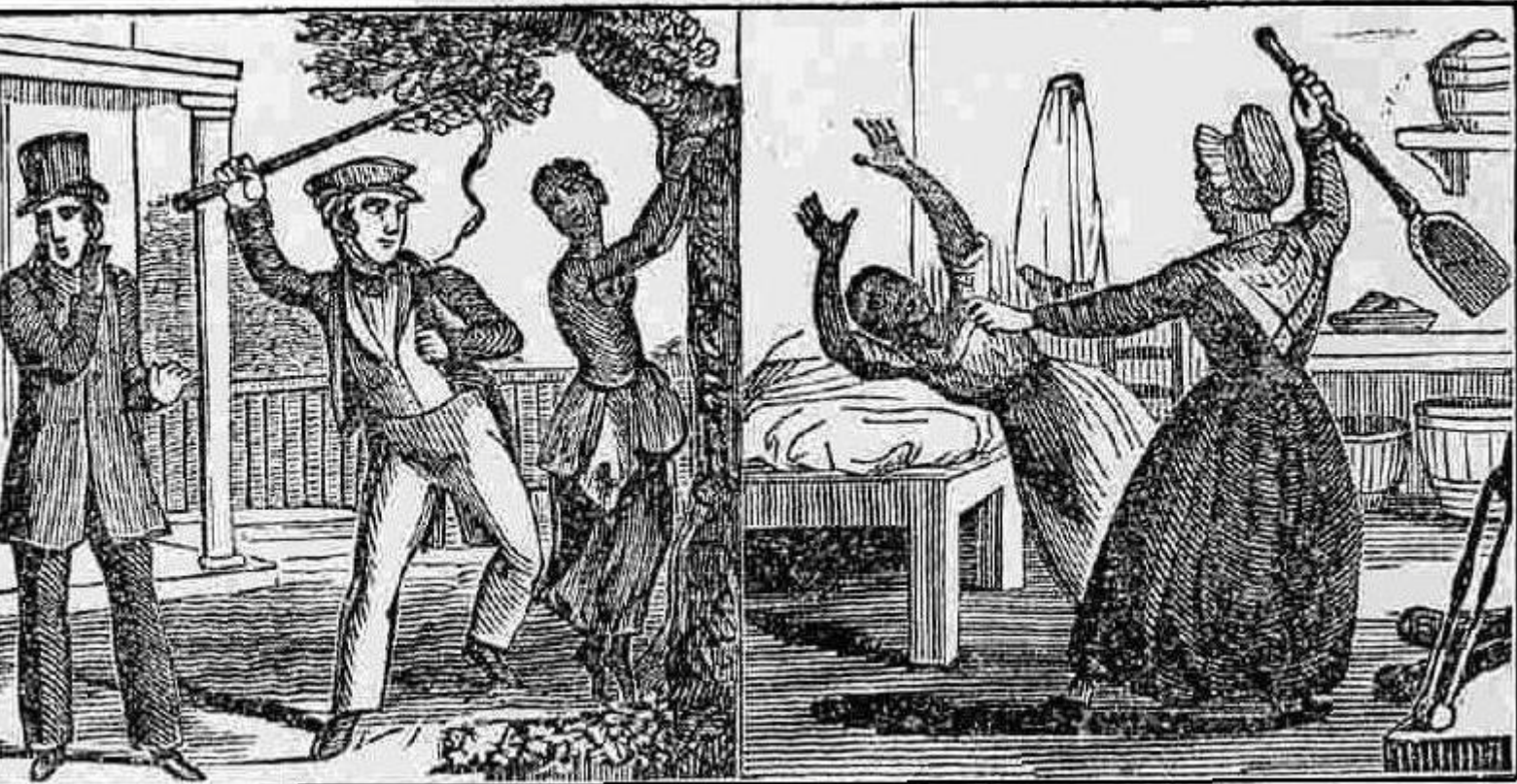
New York, although a free state, stands ready to reenslave him if he should remain for more than 9 months.



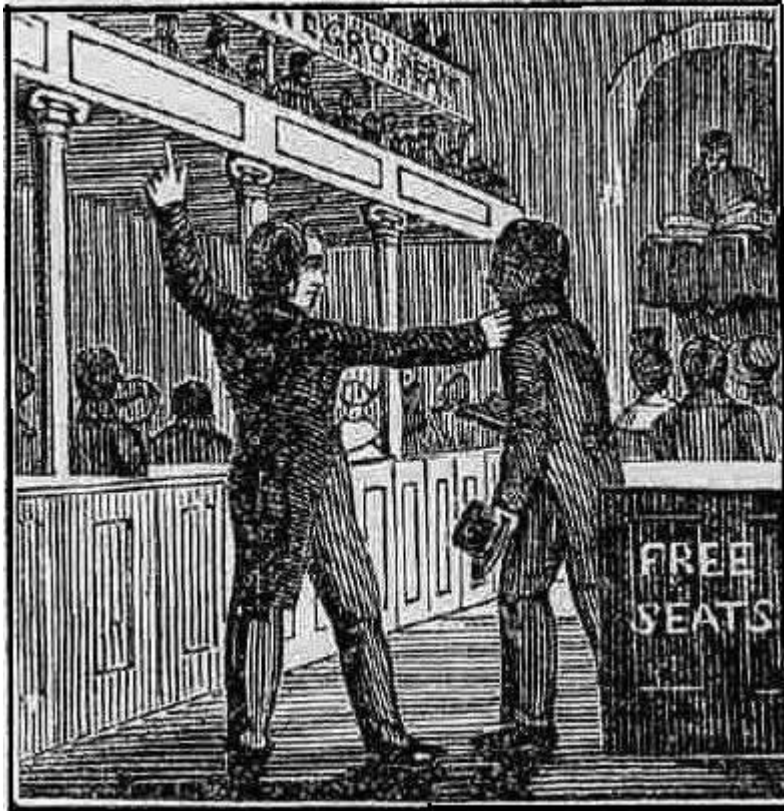
Burning of McIntosh at St. Louis during April 1836

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



Showing how slavery improves the condition of the female sex



The Negro Pew, or "Free" Seats for black Christians

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



Mayor of New-York refusing a Carman's license to a colored Man

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



Servility of the Northern States in arresting and returning fugitive Slaves

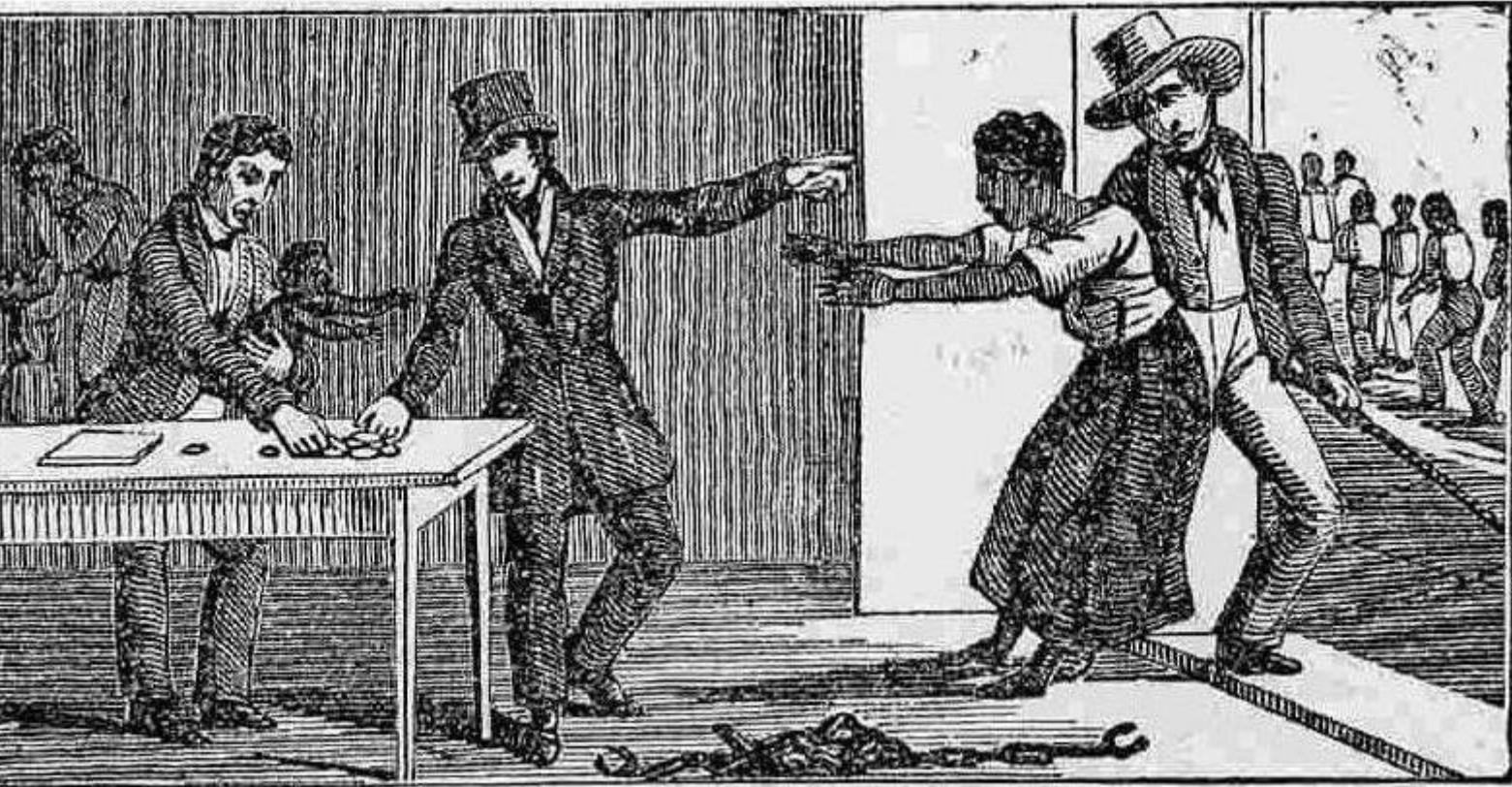
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



Selling a Mother from her Child

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



Hunting Slaves with dogs and guns. A Slave drowned by the dogs.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



“Poor things, ‘they can’t take care of themselves.’”

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



Mothers with young Children at work in the field

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



A Woman chained to a Girl, and a Man in irons at work in the field



Branding Slaves

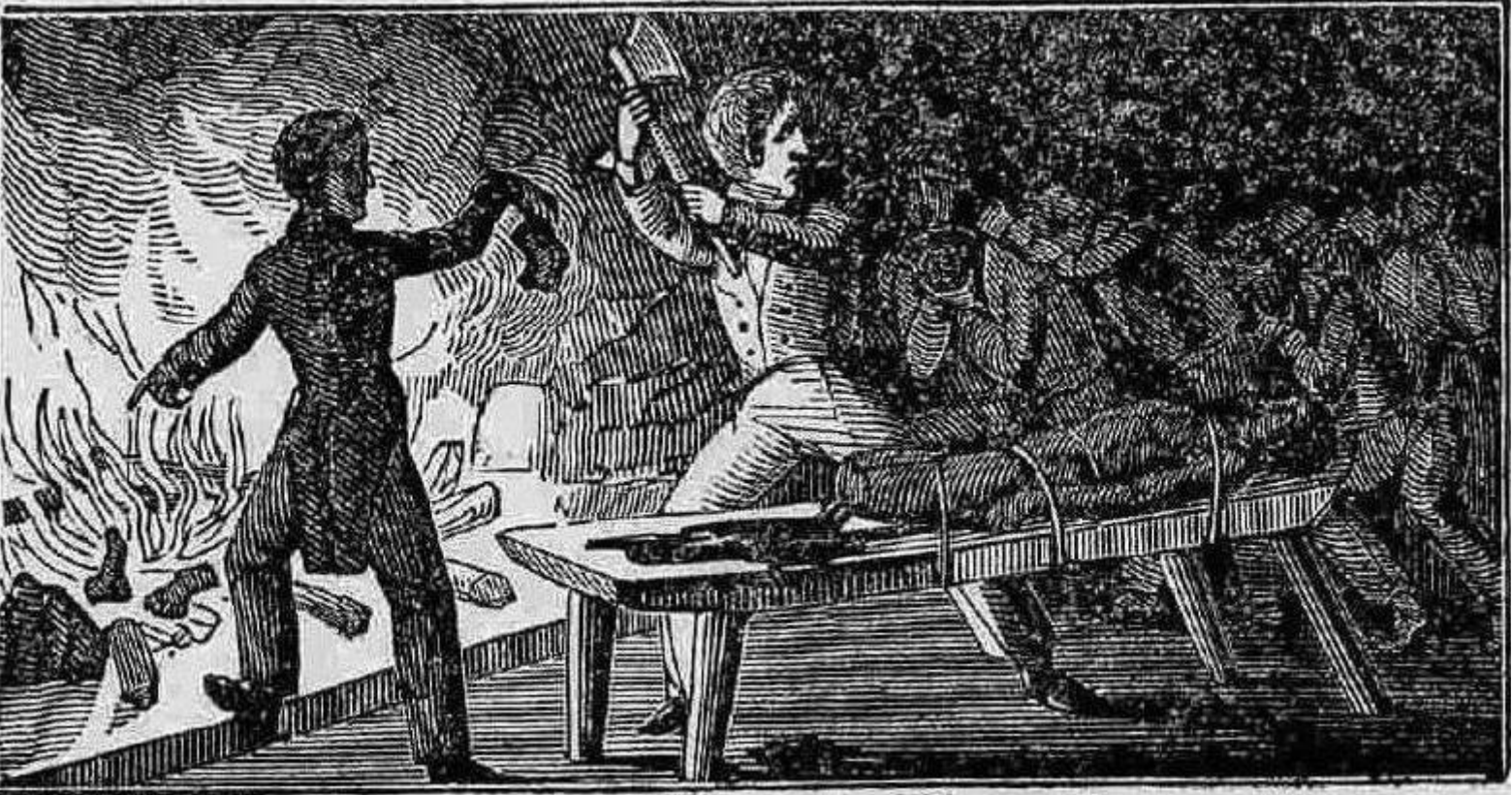
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



Cutting up a Slave in Kentucky

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS



Paid, Unpaid

1841

CROCKETT'S [ALMANAC](#). Philadelphia, New-York, Boston, and Baltimore: Fisher & Brothers, 1841, 1847, and 1852.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1841. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

1842

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1842. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1843

[John Downes](#) married Charlotte S. Murdock, a Worcester woman 28 years younger than he and scarcely a year older than his daughter Frances by his previous marriage, and moved to Philadelphia to publish the UNITED STATES [ALMANAC](#) in 1843 and 1844.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1843. By Isaac Bickerstaff. ([Providence, Rhode Island](#)): Hugh H. Brown.

THE PROVIDENCE [ALMANAC](#) AND BUSINESS DIRECTORY FOR 1843. By Benjamin F. Moore. ([Providence](#)): B.F. Moore.

This is really a business directory with an almanac in the front part, rather than a true almanac. It appeared until 1850 and again from 1855 to 1857.

1844

George W. Boynton engraved a 11 1/2 inch by 9 inch plan of the city of [Boston](#) for Dickinson's BOSTON [ALMANAC](#).
A new building was erected on Bedford Street for the Boston Latin School, at a cost of \$57,510.81:



THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANACK](#) FOR 1844. BY ISAAC BICKERSTAFF. ([Providence, Rhode Island](#)): Hugh H. Brown).

THE PROVIDENCE [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1844. BY BENJAMIN F. MOORE. ([Providence](#)): B.F. Moore).



ALMANACS

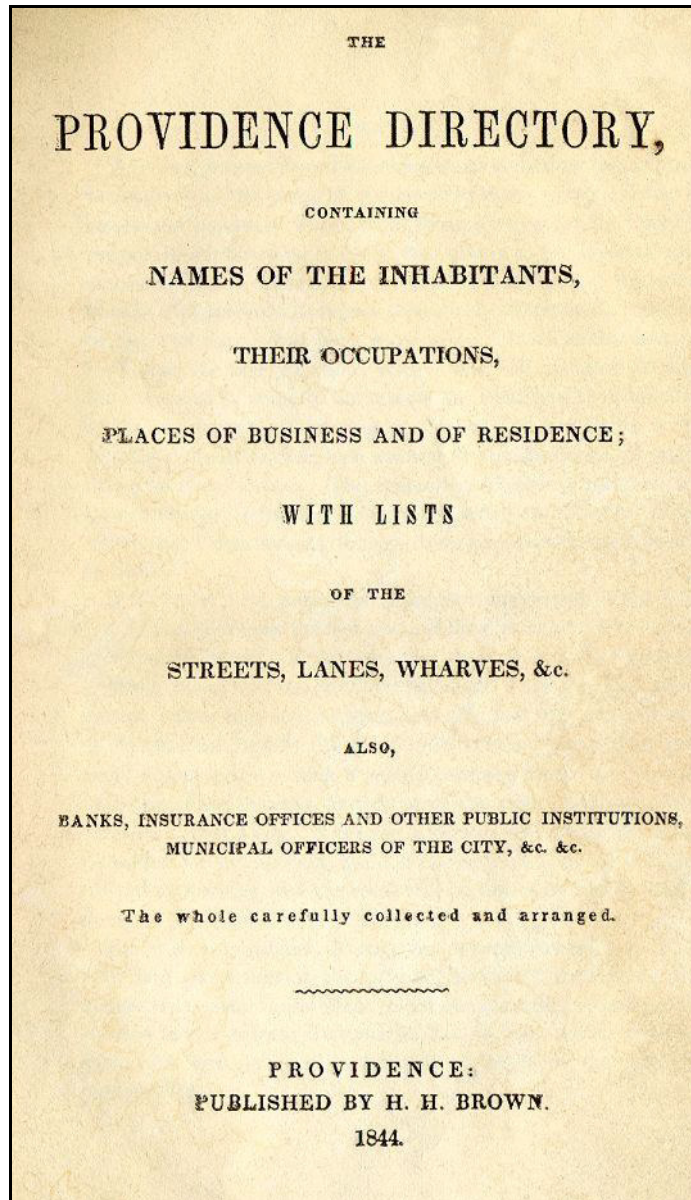
ALMANACS

In this year Hugh H. Brown, a publisher of [almanacs](#) in [Providence, Rhode Island](#), published a city directory that extrapolated from a volume of history published in the previous year at the press of Knowles & Vose, in creating “A Chronological History of Remarkable Events, in the Settlement and Growth of Providence.” That nearly 700-page volume from the other press in the previous year had been a production of William Read Staples, associate Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, and was entitled ANNALS OF THE TOWN OF PROVIDENCE, FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT IN JUNE, 1832. What follows is an indication of the peculiar manner in which the important events of the history of the town were at this point being portrayed:



ALMANACS

ALMANACS





ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1636. First settlement of the town, by Roger Williams and his companions, viz. William Harris, John Smith (miller), Joshua Verin, Thomas Angell and Francis Wikes.

The tract of land which constituted the town of Providence, which then extended to the present limits of the county, was purchased by Mr. Williams for a valuable consideration, as appears from a deed made to him, and signed by the two Narragansett chiefs, Connanicus and Meauntunomie, 1639, which was in confirmation of a parol grant made two years prior to that date. These lands were in 1661 parcelled out in equal proportions to the rest of the Company, by Mr. Williams. Soon after this, "the Town street was laid out, which is now known as North Main and South Main streets. To each member of the Company were assigned a home lot and a six acre lot; and the home lot of Mr. Williams was in the vicinity of what is now St. John's Church." The spring of fresh water, where it is believed these pilgrims first stopped, is a little southerly from the church, in the rear of the large brick block of Nehemiah Dodge, on the westerly side of North Main st.

1640. Until this year, the government was purely democratic. A town government was now organized, by the appointment of five Disposers, whose duties were to settle all differences between individuals, to dispose "of lands, and also of the town's stock and all general things," and by the further appointment of "one to keep record of all things belonging to the town and lying in common," which answered to the more modern office of Town Clerk. In this first delegation of power, the inhabitants provide for the preservation of "liberty of conscience."

1643. In the summer of this year, Roger Williams sailed from New-York to England. for the purpose of procuring a charter of incorporation for the colonies of Rhode-Island and Providence. Miantonomi, one of the Narragansett Chiefs, a true friend to Williams and his company, was this year barbarously murdered by Uncas, sachem of the Mohegans, pursuant to a decision of Commissioners of the United Colonies of Plymouth, Massachusetts, Hartford and New-Haven.

1644. Mr. Williams obtained a Charter, which united Providence, Portsmouth and Newport in a corporate body, styled "The incorporation of Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay, in New-England," giving full power for making and executing "civil laws" - "conformable to the laws of England," and returned through Boston, being protected from arrest there, by a letter addressed to the Governor of Massachusetts by members of the English Parliament.

1647. The first General Assembly, or "General Court," or Court of Commissioners of this Colony, was held at Portsmouth, May 16, as was composed of delegates chosen by the towns of Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick, which body accepted and adopted the Charter, and organized the government under it. The meeting at Providence gave written instructions to the ten "loving and well betruusted friends and neighbors," whom they appointed delegates, and in view of the dangers they



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

might encounter, in their journey to the North end of Rhode-Island, they invoke "the Lord's Providence for their safe arrival there," and conclude their letter of instructions in these words:- "Thus betrusting you with the premises, we commit you unto the protection and direction of the Almighty, wishing you a comfortable voyage, a happy success, and a safe return unto us again." A code of laws was enacted and established by this General Court.

1650. The General Assembly (which title the Commissioners now first assumed) probably with a view to put the inhabitants in a posture of defence against the Indians, passed an order for the towns to furnish themselves with arms and warlike stores, and Providence was required to have one barrel of powder, 500 pounds of lead, six pikes and six muskets, to be kept fit for use. Warwick was to have a similar supply, and each of the towns of Portsmouth and Newport were required to furnish more than double the quantities of such arms ammunition.

1651. Mr. Coddington, who went to England last year, returned this summer, with a commission appointing him Governor of the Islands of Rhode-Island and Conanicut during his lifetime, which put an end to the then existing Colony government under the Charter. Providence and Warwick continued united, and appointed Mr. Williams to visit England, to procure a new charter for their government. About this same time, a large number of the inhabitants of Portsmouth and Newport, who were disaffected towards Gov. Coddington, appointed Dr. John Clark to go to England, procure a revocation of his commission; and these agents sailed in company.

1652. These agents presented a joint petition to the Council, who vacated Coddington's commission, and directed a re-union of all the towns under the Charter. Hugh Bewitt, who had been tried by the General Court of trials, and convicted of "Treason against the power and authority of the State of England," was again tried before the Court of Commissioners, and acquitted.

1654. All the towns re-united this year, under the Charter, the towns on the main land having been separated from those on the island since the commission to Gov. Coddington. Trade with the Dutch was prohibited. A law was passed against selling liquors to the Indians. There was a General Election at Warwick Sept. 12. First recorded election of military officers in Providence.

All the inhabitants were required, by the Court of Commissioners, to sign a submission to the Protector and the Parliament. The sale of liquors and wines was regulated: Indians were to be whipped, or laid "neck and heels" for being drunk, and the ordinary keeper who sold him the liquor, was to be fined. A prison and a pair of stocks were ordered to be built in Providence. The number of freemen in Providence was forty-two. Four military trainings a year were ordered by the Town.

1656. A law was passed that publications of marriage should



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

be made in a Town meeting, or on a training day at the head of the company, or by a magistrate's certificate posted up in some public place. In town-meeting, the erection of a fort was authorized on Stamper's hill.

1657. William Harris was put under 500 pounds bond on a charge of High treason, made by Mr. Williams. He was never tried.

1658. This town refuses to banish such Quakers as are here, or to prohibit others from coming, though strongly urged to such a course by the Commissioners of the united Colonies, and replies to the intolerant request, that they prize freedom of conscience as the greatest happiness men can possess in this world. This place had then become a city of refuge to the cruelly persecuted Quakers of Massachusetts. By a municipal vote, all those who enjoyed lands within the jurisdiction of the town were freemen.

1659. On the accession of Charles II. a commission was ordered by the General Assembly to be sent to Mr. Clark, in England, to procure a renewal of the charter from that monarch.

1662. Up to this time, the act requiring the conveyances in land to be made in writing was not generally observed, and regulations were made on this subject to prevent apprehended difficulties, confusion and litigation. A bridge was order by the town to be built over Moshassuck river, near the dwelling of Thomas Olney, jun. This is supposed to have been at or near what is now called Randall's bridge.

1663. Town meetings were called to elect Commissioners, to meet at Newport in November, to receive the Charter which was reported to have arrived; and the President of the Colony issued an order to the Captain or other commissioned officer of this town, and probably to the other towns, to warn and require all the freemen of the town to accompany the commissioners, in their arms, to solemnize the Charter. The box containing the Charter was produced before a great assembly of the people, which was opened by order, and the "king's gracious letter," the Charter, were read in the hearing and view of all the people. Mr. Clarke had been a very efficient agent in England in procuring this Charter, and grants of money had been made to him at various times, and at this time a gratuity of £100 was voted to him. The old government was then dissolved, and a new government was organized under the charter of Charles II, and "continued as the basis of the State Government" till it was superseded by the adoption of a Constitution in 1843. This is the "Old Charter," about which so much as been written and spoken for the last few years, in this much agitated and disturbed community. It was an exceedingly liberal instrument to emanate from a royal hand and was adapted to the wants of the colonists at the time it was granted, and for a long period after; but was not suitable for the fundamental law in these days of progressive improvement; many of its provisions had become obsolete, and none of them restrained or limited the power of the General Assembly.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1664. At the October session of the General Assembly, a tax of £600 was ordered, of which the proportion of Newport was £285, and Providence £100 - the rateable property of Newport in the valuation at the time, being estimated at nearly three times as much as Providence. The tax assessed by Providence, to pay the proportion of the above, was to be paid "in wheat at four shillings and sixpence per bushel, peas at three shillings and sixpence, pork at £3, 10 per barrel, or horses or cattle equivalent."

1665. On the proposition of Roger Williams, he was authorized to receive tolls for passing Weybosset bridge, for which he engaged to keep it in repair. Toll was to be exacted from strangers, and "of townsmen what they are free to give."

1666. Nothing was paid from or received in the Town Treasury.

1672. Roger Williams held a public disputation with three Friends or Quakers, which continued three days at Newport and one in Providence. Deputies or members of the General Assembly were for the first time required to take an oath or affirmation on commencing their official duties. This was protested against by those of Providence.

1676. Thirty houses were burnt by the Indians. The war commenced the year previous, and the master-spirit who moved all the tribes was the famous king Philip. He was killed in battle this year, and peace was restored.

1678. A ferry was established across Seekonk river, where Central bridge is now.

1700. The burial ground at the North end of the city was established

1703. The Colony was divided into two counties - Providence Plantations, and Rhode-Island.

1710. Paper money, for the first time in this State, was authorized by the General Assembly to be emitted. It became very common afterwards for 60 or 70 years.

1717. The town debt had been accumulating several years, and this year the tax was more than double the ordinary amount, and was assessed for £150.

1727. Joseph Jenckes, of Providence, being elected Governor, removed with his family to Newport, all his predecessors in that office having resided there.

1739. A public ferry was established where Washington bridge now is, at India Point.

1744. The General Assembly granted a lottery to raise funds for building a bridge at Weybosset, which bridge was built the following year, and was 18 feet wide. What an appearance would such a bridge make now, in the focus of this city's business!

1748. Population of Providence was - whole number of whites 3177, Negroes 225, Indians 50.

1749. There were 31 licensed Tavern-keepers.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1754. The inhabitants petitioned this town for power to purchase a "large water engine," which was afterwards, in the course of two or three years, procured.

1755. Population of Providence, 747 men, 741 women, 655 boys, 754 girls, 262 blacks, 275 men able to bear arms, 406 enlisted soldiers.

1758. The old Court House erected in 1730, was destroyed by fire, and with it the books of the Providence Library Company. The town was authorized to appoint fire-wards.

1759. A new Court House was ordered to be built by the General Assembly, which was completed in a few years, by the grant of a lottery, and by the issue of bills of credit.

1761. Weybosset bridge was destroyed by a heavy gale of wind and the highest tide ever known before that time. To rebuild it, the General Assembly made a grant, and authorized a lottery. It was rebuilt with a draw to admit the passage of vessels, as many were built then as far north as St. John's church, and West India cargoes were unladen at wharves in that vicinity. Newport was still much ahead of Providence in the valuation of taxable property, as appears by a State tax assessed this year, Newport paying £3,200, and Providence £972.

1762. The first printing office was established by William Goddard. The first play performed in New-England, was in this town, this year. Such performances were afterwards prohibited by law.

1765. Some spirited instructions were passed at a Town meeting to the town's representatives in the General Assembly, against the right of Great Britain to impose taxes without the Colony's consent. They were strong, bold and explicit. They were shadows of "coming events," which led to the [declaration of Independence](#). The General Assembly acted up to them, and their acts, and similar ones followed by other Colonies, produced the repeal of the odious Stamp act the next year.

1767. The act of the British Parliament laying a duty on Tea and other articles went into operation, and the inhabitants in Town meeting prepared an agreement, to be signed individually, pledging themselves to each other not to import nor use those articles.

1768. A large elm tree, near Olney-street, was dedicated as the tree of liberty, and an address made by Silas Downer.

1772. The British armed schooner Gaspee was destroyed in Providence river, on the west shore. She had been sent to enforce the British revenue laws. This was the prologue to the revolutionary drama which was soon performed with unbounded applause. Some of the most worthy citizens were engaged in this enterprise.

1774. Population of this town 4321. Number of dwellings 421; families 655.

1781. Gen. Washington visited Providence. His arrival was



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

announced by a salute from the artillery. He was conducted to the house of Hon. Jabez Bowen (now Manufacturer's Hotel,) and the town was illuminated at night. Next day he dined with the citizens in the Court House, and in the evening attended a splendid ball. A formal address was presented to him by a committee of the most distinguished citizens, to which he made a felicitous reply, and expressed much gratification at the respectful attentions he received.

1782. Population of the town 4306.

1783. The news of the restoration of peace, and the acknowledgment of our independence, was celebrated with great pomp, April 22. There was feasting and training, a sermon and an oration, canon-firing, bell-ringing and flag-displaying, from morning till night; and fire-works and a brilliant illumination terminated the joyful demonstration in a blaze of splendor.

1787. The first ship, from this State, sailed for Canton - the General Washington, Captain Jonathan Donnison. The number of vessels in this port, then, exceeded that of New York, being 110, and the tonnage 10,590.

1788. The anniversary of Independence and the adoption of the Federal Constitution by nine States, were jointly celebrated on the 4th of July. There was a military parade, bells were rung and cannon fired. An address was delivered by Rev. Dr.

ALMANACS

ALMANACS

Hitchcock, in the First Baptist meeting house; and an ox was



REV.^D ENOS HITCHCOCK. D.D.
Engrav'd for the R.I.L.Repository.

roasted whole on the plains North of the Cove, at which five or six thousand persons were present. Some three or four hundred men from the country, of the anti-federal party, which then had the ascendancy on the State, appeared near the ground under arms, and threatened an attack. A committee of citizens was delegated to meet and remonstrate with them - the difficulty was compromised, and the enemy quietly withdrew, and left the citizens to enjoy their feast.

1790. A State convention at Newport, in May, voted, to adopt the Federal Constitution; and this State came into the Union, the last of the original thirteen; and the event was commemorated by great public demonstrations of joy. The population of the town was 6380. President Washington again visited this town, with several distinguished public men in his suite. His arrival was announced by a discharge of artillery and the ringing of bells. A procession of citizens was formed, and he was conducted to the Golden Ball Inn, kept by Henry Rice, now the Mansion House. He was complimented by



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

a public dinner, at which three hundred citizens attended. A very respectful and cordial address was made to him by a Committee appointed by the town, to which he suitably replied, and departed in the evening.

1791. The Providence Bank was incorporated, being the first in the State.

1792. Weybosset Bridge was rebuilt, with a draw to admit vessels into the cove. It was fifty-six feet in width, ornamented with handsome balustrades, and furnished with six lamps. The town was aided in raising funds for its erection by the grant of a lottery, which was called the Great Bridge Lottery.

1796. A canal company was incorporated to run a canal to Worcester. The Massachusetts legislature refused a charter, and the project failed at that time. In 1823, it was revived and accomplished, but was unproductive, and proved a total loss of the funds invested by the public spirited proprietors.

1797. The town was visited by the yellow fever. Many deaths occurred; the schools were suspended, streets deserted, and consternation depicted on every countenance. President John Adams visited the town in August, stopping at Esek Aldrich's Hotel (now Washington Hotel,) and was honored with testimonials of great respect, with the ringing of bells, firing of cannon, a military escort, and an address from the Town's Committee. The College edifice was brilliantly illuminated in the evening.

1800. The death of Washington was solemnized with a great display of funeral ceremonies, on the 7th of January, which day was intensely cold. The bells tolled through the day; a vast procession was formed, consisting of the military corps, the incorporated societies, municipal officers, and youths in all the schools, with appropriate badges, and a long train of citizens and strangers. Minute guns were fired while the procession was in motion. Col. George R. Burrill delivered an eloquent eulogy in the Baptist meeting-house. The interior of the house was shrouded in black drapery. The mournful retinue again formed, and proceeded to St. John's Church, where, after an address from the Rector, Rev. Mr. Clark, the bier was deposited under the church. Throughout the day, a solemn gloom pervaded the whole town. In George Washington, greatness and goodness were combined: this whole people were his beneficiaries; and now, they mourned his death with feelings of awakened gratitude, with an unfeigned and heart-felt sorrow, like that of affectionate children, who mourn the death of a beloved and venerated parent.

The General Assembly passed an act for the establishment of Free Schools. It had been long urged in the newspapers of this town, but the Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers were the immediate operatives in this good work, and a reference of their memorial to the Legislature produced a favorable report. This town was immediately divided into four districts, and four schools were established therein, and the masters



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

first appointed were John Dexter, Moses Noyes, Royal Farnum and Rev. James Wilson. The schools were permanently continued by the town, notwithstanding the State law was repealed in 1803, and in 1819 the fourth district on the West side was divided, and a fifth district established. The salaries of the preceptors was \$500 each, of the ushers \$250. The General Assembly in 1828 passed a new act to establish public schools; and this town then ordered primary schools in each district, to contain the youngest children, and to be kept by females; and a school for colored children was opened the same year.

1801. The south part of the town was ravaged by a disastrous fire, January 21. It commenced about ten o'clock, A.M. in John Corlis's store, rear of South Main-street, between Planet and Power-streets, and continued through the day. More than thirty buildings were destroyed, amongst which were some handsome dwellings and large stores. Hacker's Hall was one of the victims of the devouring element. This had, for many years, been occupied as a school room, but had, for a generation, then passed away, been the principal dancing hall or assembly room for the gay and fashionable men and women of Providence, and was elegantly finished with fluted pilasters and carved cornices. The damage by this fire was estimated at \$300,000, or more, and it was then and now is designated as the Great Fire. On rebuilding, South Main-street was very considerably widened and improved, from Planet-street, to some distance south.

1807. In February of this year, a very destructive freshet took place, by which both the bridges across Seekonk river were carried away, the bridges at the north part of town much damaged, many mills and dams swept away near this town, and losses sustained to a very large amount.

1812. The news of the Declaration of War with Great Britain was received June 24, and was noticed by the tolling of bells and displaying the flags at half mast. The majority here was opposed to the war and to the administration of the general government, but they promptly held meetings and passed spirited resolutions to make united efforts against a foreign enemy. The chartered companies were filled with new members, volunteer associations were formed, and those who were exempt by law from the performance of military duty, were organized into several corps, and officered and disciplined for service.

1815. The glad tidings of Peace were announced here February 12, and our streets were thronged with delighted men and women, and resounded with acclamations of joy. The town was brilliantly illuminated in the evening, and although it was intensely cold, the streets were thronged to a late hour by persons of both sexes and of all ages, and the sound of mirth resounded from almost every dwelling. Many, however, who had been carried along by this tide of rejoicing, had cause to mourn when the excitement had subsided, and the "sober second thought" of reflection had returned. They had speculated largely, when prices were high, and vast amounts were invested in merchandise, the value of which, on restoration of peace,



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

"fell, like Lucifer, never to rise again." Many failures were the consequence; but to people at large, peace came as a blessing.

This year was signalized by the Great Storm and high tide. The storm commenced Sept. 22, and the wind was violent, and increasing through the night and the succeeding morning, many houses were unroofed, and other blown down. The tide on the 23d, rose to an extraordinary height, the gale from the South-East was of unparalleled severity, both combined, they drove the principal part of the shipping in the harbor from its moorings up the river against Weybosset bridge, which in short time gave way, and the whole was driven up and landed on the northern shore of the cove. A large sloop was left a considerable distance North of Great Point, now the site of the State Prison, and between that point and the upper part of the Canal basin, were upwards of thirty sail, of a burthen from 500 tons downwards. The water entirely filled the lower stories of the buildings in Market-street, west of the bridge, and a portion of the brick wall of the Washington Insurance building, in the third story, was broken in by the bowsprit of the ship Ganges, as she was driven rapidly by in the foaming current. A sloop of some 50 or 60 tons was driven across Weybosset-street, into Pleasant-street, where she grounded. The Baptist meeting-house, built for Rev. Mr. Cornell, near Muddy Dock, now Dorrance-street, was entirely destroyed. Many houses, stores and barns were swept from the wharves in South Water, Weybosset and some other streets, into the cove, where many of them were crushed to pieces. The water at the junction of Westminster and Orange-streets was at least six feet in depth. Two human beings only here lost their lives in this storm, which was matter of great wonder, when so many were perilled. No measures were taken to ascertain the damage done by the storm, but it was estimated at about a million of dollars.

1817. President Monroe visited the town, June 30. His arrival had been anticipated, and the citizens had appointed a Committee to receive and welcome him, which Committee consisted of the Town Council and ten other gentlemen. He was received amidst the ringing of bells, the discharge of cannon, and other demonstrations of joy, and was escorted from his place of landing from the steam-boat, by a civic and military procession, to the Golden Ball Inn (now Mansion House) where the Committee made him a very respectful address, to which he made a suitable response. On the following day he passed through the principal streets, on horseback, and at 11 o'clock left the town, under escort of the Light Dragoons.

1820. Population of the town, 11,745. The streets were furnished with lamps, and a spirit seemed to be awakened for public improvements. The melancholy tidings of the death of James Burrill, Jr. U.S. Senator from this State, were received here on the 30th of December, and cast a deep gloom over the whole community. On Sunday, the 31st, the unwelcome news was announced from the pulpits of all the churches, and at the close of morning service, the bells commenced a tolling and



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

continued till night, and the flags at half-mast were displayed on the numerous flag-staves through the day. He was a citizen justly honored and esteemed, and went off in the height of his useful Senatorial career. The newspapers, which had a few days before recorded his eloquent speech on the Missouri question, were now shrouded in mourning at the irreparable loss.

1821. The Court of Common Pleas was then in session at Providence, and on Monday morning, the 1st of January, Gen. Bridgham, in behalf of the Bar, and as President of the General Bar meeting, rose and addressed the Court in the most feeling and impressive manner, on this melancholy event [the death, late in the previous year, of James Burrill, Jr. U.S. Senator from this State]. To which Chief Justice Martin responded in a brief and appropriate notice of the deceased, and in respect to his memory the Court then adjourned. At a General Bar Meeting assembled on the 3d, Resolutions expressive of grief and the highest respect to the memory of the deceased were passed, and Hon. Tristram Burges was appointed to deliver an eulogy on the 15th January - on which day, the members of the bar, and a great portion of the citizens, formed a procession, and marched to the First Congregational Church, where a most impressive and eloquent eulogy was pronounced by Mr. Burges, and solemn dirges and funeral ceremonies were performed. The auditory was bathed in tears, and the speaker himself was so strongly affected, that utterance was sometimes difficult. The newspapers at Washington, and letter writers there to papers in other places, laid their partisan feelings to rest, and spoke in the most respectful terms of his character as a man, a lawyer and a statesman.

Mr. Burrill was born in this town in the year 1772; graduated at the University here in 1788; at the age of 19, was admitted to the bar, and at 25 elected Attorney General, which office held sixteen years, and resigned in 1814. In October of that year he was elected a member of the General Assembly, and was soon after chosen Speaker of that body, and continued as such while he held a seat in the House, but from which he was soon after transferred to the bench of the Supreme Judicial Court, as Chief Justice. In February, 1817, he was elected Senator to Congress, and before the expiration of half his constitutional term, was carried to the silent grave. He was a fine belles lettres scholar, and eminent lawyer, and able statesman. He was remarkably domestic in his habits, home was the cynosure of his delights, and there he was beloved and honored.

1824. A convention was called by the State to frame a written Constitution for the State, to which this town sent its quota of delegates. The Convention met at Newport, and formed a Constitution, which was submitted to the freemen, and was rejected. There was an almost unanimous vote in this town in its favor. - On the receipt of intelligence that Lafayette had again arrived in this country, the bells were rung, and the great guns were fired in this town. A Town meeting was called,



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

a resolution was passed to invite this friend of American and human rights, to visit this town, and a committee of arrangements was appointed, consisting of the Town Council, and such as they might associate with them, to carry out the objects of the meeting. The distinguished visitor arrived at the westerly line of the town in Olneyville, August 23, at noon, where he was met and addressed by the committee of arrangements, and with them, was escorted by a vast civic and military procession to the State House. The streets were lined with citizens eager to see their country's friend, the companion in arms and beloved of Washington; and thousands of "happy human faces" gave him evidence that he was a welcome and honored guest. He was conducted to the Senate Chamber, where he was received by the Governor, and was then introduced by the Committee to the crowd of citizens, who pressed forward to touch the patriot's hand. He dined with the Committee and other citizens, reviewed the troops after dinner, and then departed for Boston. In front of the State House, he was recognized by Captain Stephen Olney as an old comrade, and their mutual rapturous joy, at this meeting, produced a strong sensation on the surrounding crowd.

1827. A committee was appointed by the town to build the Dexter Asylum, who immediately proceeded to the duties of their appointment, and under whose directions the present capacious building was completed in 1830. This building is 170 feet in length; the centre part is 55 feet deep, and the wings 45 feet. Its cost was \$43,000. Its materials are brick and stone. The forty acre lot on which this Asylum stands, is surrounded by a stone wall 3 feet in thickness at the ground, and 8 feet in height, as directed in the Will of Ebenezer Knight Dexter, who gave this lot, and the bulk of his estate, real and personal, to the town, for the purpose of an asylum for the poor. The liberal donor died on the 10th day of August, 1824. He had been United States Marshal for many years previous to his death. The funds and property of this legacy are called the Dexter Donation, and are under the superintendence of five commissioners. The present master of the Asylum, Gideon Palmer, has held that place from the commencement of its operations. The Will of Mr. Dexter was drawn with great care by Gen. Samuel W. Bridgham, who was named therein as Executor, and charged with seeing the testator's objects carried into effect. He discharged his duty with fidelity. - The first public meeting was holden in April, in the First Baptist Meeting house on the subject of promoting Temperance. It was well attended, and addressed by several of the clergy and other citizens. There were several meetings held at the same place by adjournment, at which many appeals were made to the citizens to practice moderation and temperance, but none broached the doctrine of total abstinence. These meetings, however, were the parent of the numerous temperance, total abstinence and cold water societies which now abound here, shedding their benign and healthy influence over the moral atmosphere of the community.

1828. Cove-street was completed, and a new bridge was built,



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

by the Providence Washington Insurance Company, connecting it with Canal-street.

1830. Population of the town was 16,842. – A proposition for a City Charter failed to procure the number of votes required by the legislature, which was three-fifths of the number of persons voting.

1831. A riot of four days continuance commenced Sept. 21, in Olney's lane, North end. It originated with some sailors and the colored people living in the lane, one of the former being shot by a black man, and instantly killed. An immediate attack was made on the houses, and two were promptly destroyed. Each evening the mob increased in number, and violence. The efforts of the Town Council and the Sheriff to suppress it were ineffectual, and the services of the military were called into requisition by the Governor. On the fourth evening, the corps, near Shingle Bridge, were assailed by the crowd, with stones and other missiles, and were commanded to fire, which they did, and four men fell mortally wounded. The crowd dispersed, and quiet was restored. Nearly twenty small houses had been destroyed or badly injured. – At a town meeting, Nov. 22, more than three-fifths of the votes polled were in favor of a City Charter.

1832. The City Government was organized, and Samuel W. Bridgham was elected Mayor, on the 4th Monday of April, being the first election under City Charter. He retained his office, by repeated elections, to December 1839, when he died, and was succeeded by Thomas M. Burgess, the present Mayor. The Asiatic Cholera made its appearance here in August. It had, for some time, been doing the work of death in New-York and Philadelphia, and other cities, and its appearance in this city occasioned universal dismay. The Board of Health had a daily session, a new hospital was built, and every precaution was adopted by the city authorities to prevent its spread. Its ravages, however were not so disastrous or fatal, as was apprehended, and after a few weeks, it entirely disappeared.

1839. The Public Schools of this city were re-organized under a new system; the number of schools was increased, and several new, elegant and spacious school-houses were erected.

1842. The Constitution called "the People's Constitution," adopted by the Convention, and declared to be the paramount law of the State, January 12. This Constitution was formed by a Convention of delegates chosen by the Suffrage party, in primary meetings, which were not prescribed by any legislative act or resolution. –Town meetings were held April 21, to vote for the adoption or rejection of the Landholder's Constitution, formed by a Convention under the authority of the Legislature, and the same was rejected. –The legislature under the People's Constitution assembled and their officers were inaugurated. This was the only session holden by that body, or under that Constitution. At the close of the session, several of the members were arrested for treason, and misdemeanor, and this city and the whole State became the



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

theatre of a most unhappy controversy, which continued its agitation through the summer. The events of that period are of such recent occurrence as to preclude the necessity of a more minute account here.

1843. The present State Constitution formed by a convention called together by authority of the General Assembly, was, by the proclamation of Gov. Samuel W. King, on the 23d of January, declared to be established, and the people of the State were required to conform to the same. Under this constitution, two elections of Governor and General Officers have been successfully holden, and the same is now in force, as the paramount law of Rhode Island.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1845

[Henry Thoreau](#), in describing the French Canadian [Catholic](#) Alek Therien in this year, was supposing him



to be 28 years old although actually he was 34:

WALDEN: Who should come to my lodge this morning but a true Homeric or Paphlagonian man, -he had so suitable and poetic a name that I am sorry I cannot print it here,- a Canadian, a wood-chopper and post-maker, who can hole fifty posts in a day, who make his last supper on a woodchuck which his dog caught. He, too, has heard of Homer, and, "if it were not for books," would "not know what to do rainy days," though perhaps he has not read one wholly through for many rainy seasons. Some priest who could pronounce the Greek itself taught him to read his verse in the testament in his native parish far away; and now I must translate to him, while he holds the book, Achilles' reproof to Patroclus for his sad countenance. -"Why are you in tears, Patroclus, like a young girl?" -

"Or have you alone heard some news from Phthia?
They say Menœtius lives yet, son of Actor,
And Peleus lives, son of Æacus, among the Myrmidons,
Either of whom having died, we should greatly grieve."

He says, "That's good." He has a great bundle of white-oak bark under his arm for a sick man, gathered this Sunday morning. "I suppose there's no harm in going after such a thing to-day," says he. To him Homer was a great writer, though what his writing was about he did not know. A more simple and natural man it would be hard to find. Vice and disease, which cast such a sombre moral hue over the world, seemed to have hardly any existence for him. He was about twenty-eight years old, and had left Canada and his father's house a dozen years before to work in the States, and earn money to buy a farm with at last, perhaps in his native country. He was cast in the coarsest mould; a stout but sluggish body, yet gracefully carried, with a thick sunburnt neck, dark bushy hair, and dull sleepy blue eyes, which were occasionally lit up with expression. He wore a flat gray cloth cap, a dingy wool-colored greatcoat, and cowhide boots. He was a great consumer of meat, usually carrying his dinner to his work a couple of miles past my house, -for he chopped all summer,- in a tin pail; cold meats, often cold woodchucks, and coffee in a stone bottle which dangled by a string from his belt; and sometimes he offered me a drink. He came along early, crossing my bean-field, though without anxiety or haste to get to his work, such as Yankees exhibit. He wasn't a-going to hurt himself. He didn't care if he only earned his board. Frequently he would leave his dinner in the bushes, when his dog had caught a woodchuck by the way, and go back a mile and a half to dress it and leave it in the cellar of the house where he boarded, after deliberating first for half an hour whether he could not sink it in the pond safely till nightfall, -loving to dwell long upon these themes. He would say, as he went by in the morning, "How thick the pigeons are! If working every day were not my trade, I could get all the meat I should want by hunting, -pigeons, woodchucks, rabbits, partridges,- by gosh! I could get all I should want for a week in one day."

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN



He was a skilful chopper, and indulged in some flourishes and ornaments in his art. He cut his trees level and close to the ground, that the sprouts which came up afterward might be more vigorous and a sled might slide over the stumps; and instead of leaving a whole tree to support his corded wood, he would pare it away to a slender stake or splinter which you could break off with your hand at last.

He interested me because he was so quiet and solitary and so happy withal; a well of good humor and contentment which overflowed at his eyes. His mirth was without alloy. Sometimes I saw him at his work in the woods, felling trees, and he would greet me with a laugh of inexpressible satisfaction, and a salutation in Canadian French, though he spoke English as well. When I approached him he would suspend his work, and with half-suppressed mirth lie along the trunk of a pine which he had felled, and, peeling off the inner bark, roll it up into a ball and chew it while he laughed and talked. Such an exuberance of animal spirits had he that he sometimes tumbled down and rolled on the ground with laughter at any thing which made him think and tickled him. Looking round upon the trees he would exclaim, - "By George! I can enjoy myself well enough here chopping; I want no better sport." Sometimes, when at leisure, he amused himself all day in the woods with a pocket pistol, firing salutes to himself at regular intervals as he walked. In the winter he had a fire by which at noon he warmed his coffee in a kettle; and as he sat on a log to eat his dinner the chicadees would sometimes come round and alight on his arm and peck at the potato in his fingers; and he said that he "liked to have the little *fellers* about him."

In him the animal man chiefly was developed. In physical endurance and contentment he was cousin to the pine and the rock. I asked him once if he was not sometimes tired at night, after working all day; and he answered, with a sincere and serious look, "Gorrappit, I never was tired in my life." But the intellectual and what is called spiritual man in him were slumbering as in an infant. He had been instructed only in that innocent and ineffectual way in which the Catholic priests teach the aborigines, by which the pupil is never educated to the degree of consciousness, but only to the degree of trust and reverence, and a child is not made a man, but kept a child. When Nature made him, she gave him a strong body and contentment for his portion, and propped him on every side with reverence and reliance, that he might live out his threescore years and ten a child. He was so genuine and unsophisticated that no introduction would serve to introduce him, more than if you introduced a woodchuck to your neighbor. He had got to find him out as you did. He would not play any part. Men paid him wages for work, and so helped to feed and clothe him; but he never exchanged opinions with them. He was so simply and naturally humble -if he can be called humble who never aspires- that humility was no distinct quality in him, nor could he conceive of it. Wiser men were demigods to him. If you told him that such a one was coming, he did as if he thought that any thing so grand would expect nothing of himself, but take all the responsibility on itself, and let him be forgotten still. He never heard the sound of praise. He particularly revered the writer and the preacher. Their performances were miracles.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

When I told him that I wrote considerably, he thought for a long time that it was merely the handwriting which I meant, for he could write a remarkably good hand himself. I sometimes found the name of his native parish handsomely written in the snow by the highway, with the proper French accent, and knew that he had passed. I asked him if he ever wished to write his thoughts. He said that he had read and written letters for those who could not, but he never tried to write thoughts, -no, he could not, he could not tell what to put first, it would kill him, and then there was spelling to be attended to at the same time!

I heard that a distinguished wise man and reformer [[Waldo Emerson?](#)] asked him if he did not want the world to be changed; but he answered with a chuckle of surprise in his Canadian accent, not knowing that the question had ever been entertained before, "No, I like it well enough." It would have suggested many things to a philosopher to have dealings with him. To a stranger he appeared to know nothing of things in general; yet I sometimes saw in him a man whom I had not seen before, and I did not know whether he was as wise as Shakspeare or simply ignorant as a child, whether to suspect him of a fine poetic consciousness or of stupidity. A townsman [[Waldo Emerson?](#)] told me that when he met him sauntering through the village in his small close-fitting cap, and whistling to himself, he reminded him of a prince in disguise.

His only books were an almanac and an arithmetic, in which last he was considerably expert. The former was a sort of cyclopaedia to him, which he supposed to contain an abstract of human knowledge, as indeed it does to a considerable extent. I loved to sound him on the various reforms of the day, and he never failed to look at them in the most simple and practical light. He had never heard of such things before. Could he do without factories? I asked. He had worn the home-made Vermont gray, he said, and that was good. Could he dispense with tea and coffee? Did this country afford any beverage beside water? He had soaked hemlock leaves in water and drank it, and thought that was better than water in warm weather. When I asked him if he could do without money, he showed the convenience of money in such a way as to suggest and coincide with the most philosophical accounts of the origin of this institution, and the very derivation of the word *pecunia*." If an ox were his property, and he wished to get needles and thread at the store, he thought it would be inconvenient and impossible soon to go on mortgaging some portion of the creature each time to that amount. He could defend many institutions better than any philosopher, because, in describing them as they concerned him, he gave the true reason for their prevalence, and speculation had not suggested to him any other. At another time, hearing Plato's definition of a man, -a biped without feathers,- and that one exhibited a cock plucked and called it Plato's man, he thought it an important difference that the *knees* bent the wrong way. He would sometimes exclaim, "How I love to talk! By George, I could talk all day" I asked him once, when I had not seen him for many months, if he had got a new idea this summer. "Good Lord," said he, "a man that has to work as I do, if he does not forget the ideas he has had, he will do well.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

May be the man you hoe with is inclined to race; then, by gorry, your mind must be there; you think of weeds." He would sometimes ask me first on such occasions, if I had made any improvement. One winter day I asked him if he was always satisfied with himself, wishing to suggest a substitute within him for the priest without, and some higher motive for living. "Satisfied!" said he; "some men are satisfied with one thing, and some with another. One man, perhaps, if he has got enough, will be satisfied to sit all day with his back to the fire and his belly to the table, by George!" Yet I never, by any manœuvring, could get him to take the spiritual view of things; the highest that he appeared to conceive of was a simple expediency, such as you might expect an animal to appreciate; and this, practically, is true of most men. If I suggested any improvement in his mode of life, he merely answered, without expressing any regret, that it was too late. Yet he thoroughly believed in honesty and like virtues.

There was a certain positive originality, however slight, to be detected in him, and I occasionally observed that he was thinking for himself and expressing his own opinion, a phenomenon so rare that I would any day walk ten miles to observe it, and it amounted to the re-origination of many of the institutions of society. Though he hesitated, and perhaps failed to express himself distinctly, he always had a presentable thought behind. Yet his thinking was so primitive and immersed in his animal life, that, though more promising than a merely learned man's, it rarely ripened to any thing which can be reported. He suggested that there might be men of genius in the lowest grades of life, however permanently humble and illiterate, who take their own view always, or do not pretend to see at all; who are as bottomless even as Walden Pond was thought to be, though they may be dark and muddy.

Since we may wonder, what is a Paphlagonian man, here was Paphlagonia:



Since in this passage Thoreau commented on the publishing institution known as the “almanac,” here are a couple of the almanacs that were being issued in this year, in [Providence, Rhode Island](#):

- THE PROVIDENCE [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1845.
- THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1845. By Isaac Bickerstaff

[WALDEN](#): His [Alek Therien the woodchopper’s] only books were an almanac and an arithmetic, in which last he was considerably expert. The former was a sort of cyclopaedia to him, which he supposed to contain an abstract of human knowledge, as indeed it does to a considerable extent.

Douglas R. Anderson, in *A House Undivided*, has commented on Alek Therien’s recorded comment about the world, “I like it well enough,” that “Thoreau, by and large, likes it well enough too, and [Walden](#) is the record of this curiously adversarial contentment.” It has been noted that Therien’s name evokes the Greek for “animal,” therion. This was not a reason for [Thoreau](#) to alter the name in publishing his comments, for truly the more respectable citizens of [Concord](#) town, from their own point of view at least, would have been looking down on Therien the French-Canadian day laborer as virtually an animal, lower than an Indian, lower even than the Irish, and also, Thoreau, from his point of view, would have looked up to Therien as an animal, a truly natural part of the Walden Woods biome.²⁸



Ancient Taoists apparently believed that people overemphasized differences in individual human virtue. According to them, everyone shared a basic goodness, which striving could only confuse and conceal. Similarly, the ancient Greek Cynics advocated lives of simplicity, naturalness, and lack of striving. Like the Taoists, they

28. ■ Douglas R. Anderson. *A HOUSE UNDIVIDED: DOMESTICITY AND COMMUNITY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

mocked social conventions and philosophical theorizing. Therien does not strive or question, yet he exhibits the sort of natural goodness and acceptance of his lot in life that the Taoists and Cynics would have equated with virtue. Such ideas have been largely ignored in the contemporary virtue ethics revival; not because they are rationally untenable, I believe, but because they are uncongenial to the scholarly mandarins writing the books. yet these are perennial alternatives within virtue ethics, ineradicably grounded in human experience. Thoreau to his credit seriously considers them, entertaining both the ideas that Therien is subhuman and superhuman.

Like the ancient moralists, Thoreau countenances no distinction between pure and applied ethics.

1846

In England, the beginning of George Cruickshank's COMIC [ALMANAC](#), as well as of the [Reynolds's Miscellany](#).

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1846. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

THE PROVIDENCE [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1846. [Providence](#).

Henry Thoreau had in his personal library the 1846, 1849, 1850, and 1851 issues of AMERICAN [ALMANAC](#) AND REPOSITORY OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE (Boston: Grey & Bowen).

ALMANAC FOR 1846

ALMANAC FOR 1849

ALMANAC FOR 1850

ALMANAC FOR 1851



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

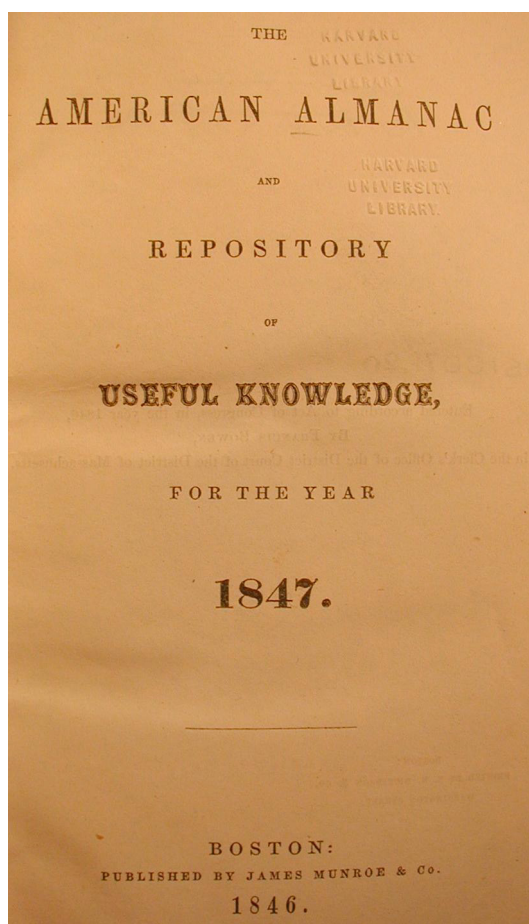
1847

THE [PROVIDENCE ALMANAC](#) FOR 1847.

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1847. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

The Boston [almanac](#) for this year contained a comet list attributed to Professor Benjamin Peirce of [Harvard College](#). This list contained no predictions of future returns, listing only previous visits and orbital calculations.

ASTRONOMY



(Professor Peirce's list ends with a comet seen during 1846 and thus does not include the comet discovered by [Maria Mitchell](#) on October 1st, 1847.)



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1848

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1848. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

THE PROVIDENCE [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1848. [Providence](#).

THE NEW FARMER'S [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1848. By A. Maynard. [Providence](#): Charles Burnett, Jr.

1849

THE RHODE-ISLAND [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1849. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence, Rhode Island](#): Hugh H. Brown.

THE PROVIDENCE [ALMANAC](#) FOR 1849.

[Henry Thoreau](#) had in his personal library the 1846, 1849, 1850, and 1851 issues of AMERICAN [ALMANAC](#) AND REPOSITORY OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE (Boston: Grey & Bowen).

ALMANAC FOR 1846

ALMANAC FOR 1849

ALMANAC FOR 1850

ALMANAC FOR 1851



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

[Caleb G. Forshey](#) was a member of a Louisiana delegation to the national railroad convention held in Memphis, Tennessee.

[Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury](#) spoke out on the need for a transcontinental railroad to join the eastern United States to California. He recommended a southerly route with Memphis, Tennessee as the eastern terminus, since that city was halfway between Lake Michigan and the Gulf of Mexico. He argued that a southerly route running through Texas would avoid winter snows and could open up commerce with the northern states of Mexico. Maury also advocated construction of a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama.



The Nautical [Almanac](#) Office originated in Cambridge, Massachusetts as an organization entirely distinct from the [US Naval Observatory](#) (in 1866 this would be, however, relocated to the grounds of that observatory in Washington DC — and in 1894 it would get reclassified as a “branch” of that naval organization).



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1850

THE [RHODE-ISLAND ALMANAC](#) FOR 1850. By Isaac Bickerstaff. [Providence](#): Hugh H. Brown.

THE [PROVIDENCE ALMANAC](#) FOR 1850. By John F. Moore.

[Henry Thoreau](#) had in his personal library the 1846, 1849, 1850, and 1851 issues of AMERICAN [ALMANAC](#) AND REPOSITORY OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE (Boston: Grey & Bowen).

ALMANAC FOR 1846

ALMANAC FOR 1849

ALMANAC FOR 1850

ALMANAC FOR 1851

1851

Henry Thoreau had in his personal library the 1846, 1849, 1850, and 1851 issues of AMERICAN [ALMANAC](#) AND REPOSITORY OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE (Boston: Grey & Bowen).

ALMANAC FOR 1846

ALMANAC FOR 1849

ALMANAC FOR 1850

ALMANAC FOR 1851

1852

From his earliest education Chauncey Wright had excelled in mathematics. (He had also made himself acquainted early on with evolutionary ideas by way of VESTIGES OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CREATION.) The generosity of a Northampton patron had enabled him to attend [Harvard College](#), but when he graduated in this year, he did so with no distinction greater than being voted “homeliest man in the class.” William James would help him secure a lectureship but the dean would soon learn that this man’s “heavy artillery was mostly directed over their heads,” and so he would need to become a “computer” for the AMERICAN EPHEMERIS AND NAUTICAL [ALMANAC](#). This would pay the bills of a modest bachelor lifestyle in Cambridge, and the depressed mathematical genius would prove himself capable of producing a year’s output of calculations in but three months — which would allow him ample opportunity to devote himself to the sort of intellectual conversations and collegiality that animated his life.



1855

The Reverend [Jared Sparks](#), who as President of [Harvard College](#) had arranged for [Henry Thoreau](#)’s continuing [Harvard Library](#) privileges after graduation, issued a well-regarded almanac in this year as he had in previous years. It seems to me that it is appropriate to select this particular almanac issue for use as an illustration of the sort of thing to which Thoreau was referring with approval, when he wrote in his [WALDEN](#) manuscript that:

[WALDEN](#): His [Alek Therien the woodchopper’s] only books were an almanac and an arithmetic, in which last he was considerably expert. The former was a sort of cyclopaedia to him, which he supposed to contain an abstract of human knowledge, as indeed it does to a considerable extent.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

For convenience I have divided this lengthy publication into three Adobe Acrobat PDF files, as follows:



TABLE OF CONTENTS	ASTRONOM. TABLES	GENERAL INFO.
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1856

[John Downes](#) moved to Washington DC to become a computer of astronomical ephemerides for the United States Coast Survey. When the government began the UNITED STATES NAUTICAL [ALMANAC](#), he became their first computer and retaining that position until his death in 1882.



1860

March 23: [Henry Thoreau](#) instanced for the 21st time (Dr. Bradley P. Dean has noticed) a cloud form category of [Luke Howard](#): “40°; rather windy. Small dark-based **cumuli** spring clouds, mostly in rows parallel with the horizon.”



March 23. 2 P. M.—40°; rather windy. Small dark-based cumuli spring clouds, mostly in rows parallel with the horizon.

I see one field which was plowed before the 18th and spring rye sowed. The earlier the better, they say. Some fields might have been plowed earlier, but the ground was too wet. Farmer says that some fifty years ago he plowed and sowed wheat in January, and never had so good a crop.

I hear that Coombs has killed half a dozen ducks, one of them a large gray duck in Goose Pond. He tells me it weighed five and a half pounds,—while his black ducks weigh only three and a half,—and was larger than a sheldrake and very good to eat. Simply gray, and was alone, and had a broad flat bill. Was it the gadwall? or a kind of goose?

It will be seen by the annexed scrap [TABLES FROM THE PATENT OFFICE REPORTS, 1853, P. 332; 1854, P. 427; 1855, P. 375.] that March is the fourth coldest month, or about midway between December and



November. The same appears from the fifteen years' observation at Mendon. [AMERICAN [ALMANAC](#) AND REPOSITORY OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE FOR 1830-61, page 86. (Boston: Grey & Bowen.) Thoreau had in his personal library the issues for 1846, 1849, 1850, and 1851.] The descent to extreme cold occupies seven months and is therefore more gradual (though a part of it is more rapid) than the ascent to extreme heat, which takes only five months. The mean average temperature of the coldest month (February) being 23.25, and of the warmest (July) being 72.35, the whole ascent from extreme cold to extreme heat is 49.10°, and in March (32.73) we have accomplished 8.48°, or a little less than one sixth the ascent. (According to the Mendon fifteen years' average the whole ascent is 47.5, and in March we have advanced 9.2, a little more than one fifth.) It appears (from the scrap) that December, January, and February, the three winter months, differ very little in temperature, and the three summer months and September are next most alike, though they differ considerably more. (Same from Mendon tables.) The greatest or abruptest change is from November to December (in Mendon tables from September to October), the next most abrupt from April to May (in Mendon tables from March to April). The least change (according to the above tables) is from December to January. (According to Mendon tables, the same from December to January as from January to February.) The three spring months, and also October and November, are transition months, in which the temperature rapidly changes.

March 24: [Henry Thoreau](#) instanced for the 22d time (Dr. Bradley P. Dean has noticed) a cloud form category of [Luke Howard](#): "They are real wind-clouds this afternoon; have an electric, fibry look. Sometimes it is a flurry of snow falling, no doubt. Peculiar cold and windy **cumuli** are mixed with them, not black like a thundercloud, but cold dark slate with very bright white crowns and prominences."



March 24. The sheldrakes [**Common Merganser** ■ *Mergus merganser*] appear to be the most native to the river, briskly moving along up and down the side of the stream or the meadow, three-fourths immersed and with heads under water, like cutters collecting the revenue of the river bays, or like pirate crafts peculiar to the stream. They come the earliest and seem to be most at home.

The water is so low that all these birds are collected near the Holt. The inhabitants of the village, poultry-fanciers, perchance, though they be, [know not] these active and vigorous wild fowl (the sheldrakes) pursuing their finny prey ceaselessly within a mile of them, in March and April. Probably from the hen-yard fence with a good glass you can see them at it. They are as much at home on the water as the pickerel is within it. Their serrated bill reminds me of a pickerel's snout. You see a long row of these schooners, black above with a white stripe beneath, rapidly gliding along, and occasionally one rises erect on the surface and flaps its wings, showing its white lower parts. They are the duck most common and most identified with the stream at this season. They appear to get their food wholly within the water.

March 24. Cold and rather blustering again, with flurries of snow.

The boatman, when the chain of his boat has been broken with a stone by some scamp, and he cannot easily transport his boat to the blacksmith's to have it mended, gets the latter to bend him a very stout iron wire in the form of an S, then, hooking this to the two broken ends and setting it upright on a rock, he hammers it down till it rests on itself in the form of an 8, which is very difficult to pry open.

2 P. M.—About 39. To Copan.

I see a male frog hawk beating a hedge, scarcely rising more than two feet from the ground for half a mile, quite below the level of the wall within it. How unlike the hen-hawk in this!

They are real wind-clouds this afternoon; have an electric, fibry [sic] look. Sometimes it is a flurry of snow falling, no doubt. Peculiar cold and windy cumuli are mixed with them, not black like a thundercloud, but cold dark slate with very bright white crowns and prominences.

I find on Indian ground, as to-day on the Great Fields, very regular oval stones like large pebbles, sometimes five or six inches long, water-worn, of course, and brought hither by the Indians. They commonly show marks of having been used as hammers. Often in fields where there is not a stone of that kind in place for a mile or more.

From Holbrook's clearing I see five large dark-colored ducks, probably black ducks, far away on the meadow, with heads erect, necks stretched, on the alert, only one in water. Indeed, there is very little water on the meadows. For length of neck those most wary look much like geese. They appear quite large and heavy. They probably find some sweet grass, etc., where the water has just receded.



There are half a dozen gulls on the water near. They are the large white birds of the meadow, the whitest we have. As they so commonly stand above water on a piece of meadow, they are so much the more conspicuous. They are very conspicuous to my naked eye a mile off, or as soon as I come in sight of the meadow, but I do not detect the sheldrakes around them till I use my glass, for the latter are not only less conspicuously white, but, as they are fishing, sink very low in the water. Three of the gulls stand together on a piece of meadow, and two or three more are standing solitary half immersed, and now and then one or two circle slowly about their companions.

The sheldrakes appear to be the most native to the river, briskly moving along up and down the side of the stream or the meadow, three-fourths immersed and with heads under water, like cutters collecting the revenue of the river bays, or like pirate crafts peculiar to the stream. They come the earliest and seem to be most at home.

The water is so low that all these birds are collected near the Holt. The inhabitants of the village, poultry-fanciers, perchance, though they be, [know not] these active and vigorous wild fowl (the sheldrakes) pursuing their finny prey ceaselessly within a mile of them, in March and April. Probably from the hen-yard fence with a good glass you can see them at it. They are as much at home on the water as the pickerel is within it. Their serrated bill reminds me of a pickerel's snout. You see a long row of these schooners, black above with a white stripe beneath, rapidly gliding along, and occasionally one rises erect on the surface and flaps its wings, showing its white lower parts. They are the duck most common and most identified with the stream at this season. They appear to get their food wholly within the water. Less like our domestic ducks. I saw two red squirrels in an apple tree, which were rather small, had simply the tops of their backs red and the sides and beneath gray!

Fox-colored sparrows go flitting past with a faint, sharp chip, amid some oaks.

According to a table in the "American Almanac" for '49, page 84, made at Cambridge, from May, '47, to May, '48, the monthly mean force of the wind for the twelve months (I putting January, February, March, and April, '48, before May, etc., of '47), numbering them 1, 2, 3, etc., from the highest force downward, was—

1848	1847										
Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
6	5	3	3	3	2	1	4	4	6	5	4

For quantity of clouds, they stood—

4	9	7	10	7	5	8	6	3	11	2	1
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For depth of rain in inches,—

7	6	9	12	10	2	8	3	1	11	4	5
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That is, for force of wind, March, April, and May were equal, and were inferior to July and June; for quantity of clouds March and May were equal, and were preceded by December, November, September, January, June, and August. For depth of rain, September stood first, and March ninth, succeeded only by May, October, and April. The wind's force was observed at sunrise, 9 A. M., 3 P. M., and 9 P. M., and in March the greatest force was at 3 P. M., the least at 9 P. M. So, for the whole year the greatest force was at 3 P. M., but the least at sunrise and 9 P. M. both alike. The clouds were observed at the same time, and in March there was the greatest quantity at 9 P. M. and the least at sunrise, but for the year the greatest quantity at 3 P. M. and the least at sunrise and 9 A. M. alike.

At Mendon, Mass., for the whole year 1847 alone (i. e. a different January, February, March, and April from the last) it stood, for force of wind,—

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
3	5	3	1	4	1	3	2	3	2	3	3

For clouds

5	1	6	8	7	9	11	8	3	10	4	2
---	---	---	---	---	---	----	---	---	----	---	---

According to which, for force of wind, March, July, September, November, and December were equal, and were inferior to April, June, August, and October; and for clouds March was sixth. The wind's force for March was greatest at 9 A.M. and 3 P. M., which were equal; but for the year greatest at 9 A. M. and least at sunrise. For March there was the greatest quantity of clouds at 9 A. M., but for the year at both sunrise and 9 A. M.

In the last table eight points of the wind were noticed, viz. northwest, north, northeast, east, southeast, south, southwest, west. During the year the wind was southwest 130 days, northwest 87, northeast 59, south 33, west 29, east 14, southeast 10, north 3 days. In March it was northwest 9 days, southwest 8, northeast 5, south 4, west 3, north 2.



ALMANACS

ALMANACS

1894

September 20: The Nautical [Almanac](#) Office on the grounds of the [US Naval Observatory](#) in Washington DC was reclassified as a “branch” of the Observatory (although for several years it would succeed in being more or less autonomous).

1896

The Rhode Island Historical Society published Horatio Rogers’s MARY DYER OF RHODE ISLAND: THE QUAKER MARTYR THAT WAS HANGED ON BOSTON COMMON. The title of this treatise tells us how accurate the treatise is and what sort of publishing house the [Rhode Island](#) Historical Society is, since the sheriff in Boston hanged Friend [Mary Dyer](#) not on Boston Common but at the margin of the town where Boston had its gallows, on the neck connecting it with the mainland.

During the last quarter of the century various comic and advertising [almanacs](#) had been being issued in [Providence](#), Pawtucket, and Westerly, [Rhode Island](#), and a series of French Catholic almanacs had been published in Woonsocket from 1882 to 1893, and an almanac had been printed in Swedish in Providence in 1894. The annual almanacs being put out in Providence had been becoming more and more of the nature of a business directory, until in this year the label “almanac” was dropped.

1899

[Annie Russell Marble](#)’s NATURE PICTURES BY AMERICAN POETS. SELECTED AND EDITED BY ANNIE RUSSELL MARBLE, M.A. was published in New York by Macmillan and her “Early New England [Almanacs](#)” appeared in [The New England Magazine](#).

EARLY NE ALMANACS

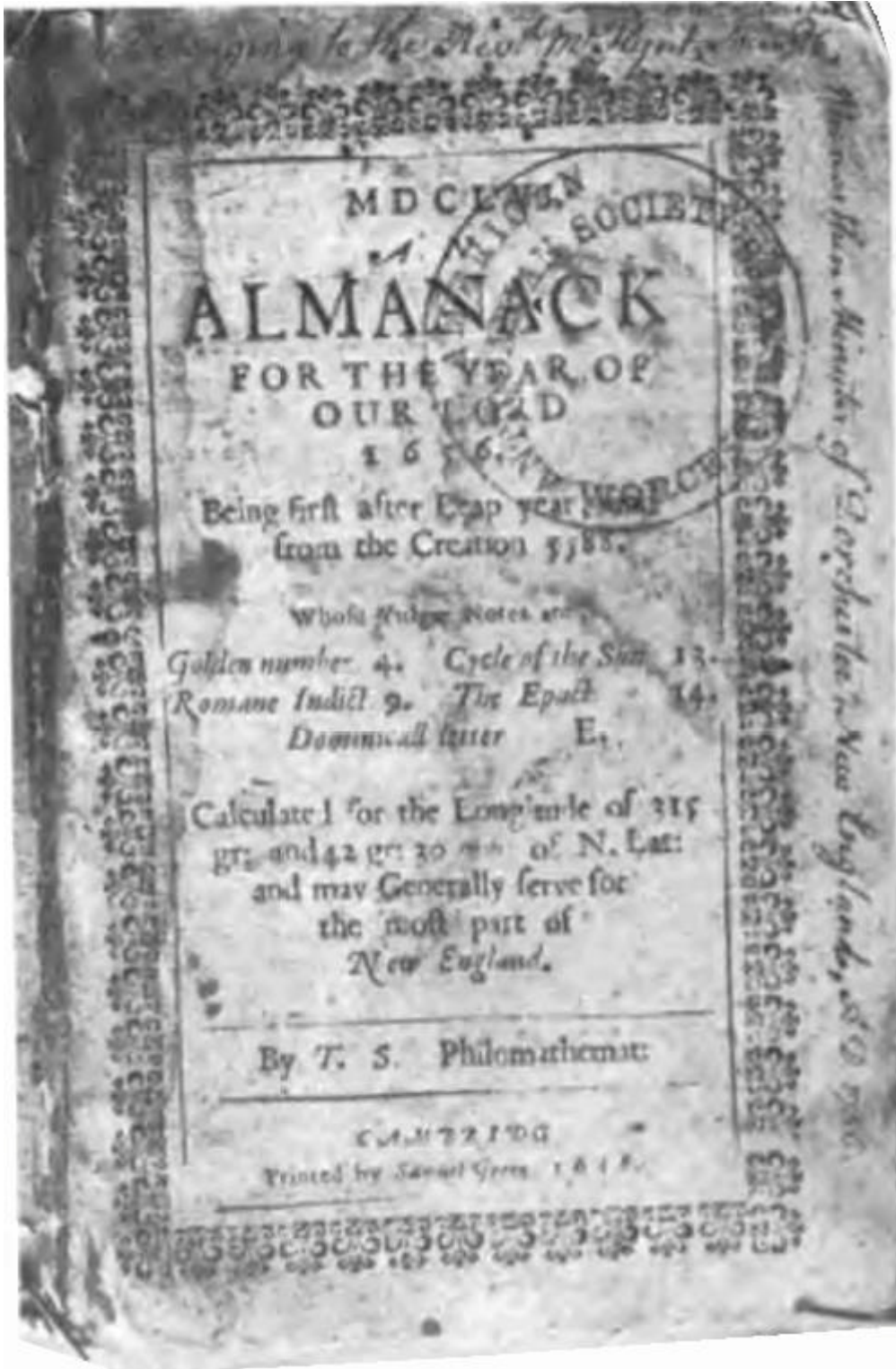
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WHAT?

INDEX

ALMANACS

ALMANACS





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ALMANACS



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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: 2 March 2013



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ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT GENERATION HOTLINE



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



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

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