

## DUELING



"To be active, well, happy, implies rare courage.  
To be ready to fight in a duel or a battle implies  
desperation, or that you hold your life cheap."

– Henry Thoreau



There has been a great deal of scholarly effort expended, attempting to decipher the dueling cultures that existed during Henry Thoreau's era in sections of our nation where contact with slavery was constant. Were these cultures of honor, based upon maintaining the good esteem of one's peers? Etc.

I myself do not regard this as at all a difficult question. The answer, I would propose, is that in any society tainted by human slavery, the most important thing in the world is whether one oneself might be considered to be a slave, or **like unto** a slave – slavish, subdominant. Everything, literally everything, had to be surrendered if necessary, even one's life, in order to make certain that one maintained the certitude, that one was not any other person's inferior.

Thus these white Southerners were incredibly sensitive to any suggestion upon their honor – the alternative to a white Southerner being a so-called "man of honor" was to allow himself to be relentlessly abused, as one relentlessly abuses one's slaves. That was an alternative which no-one could contemplate.

To my way of thinking, it is as simple as that.

To get rid of the code of honor, to get rid of dueling – get rid of human enslavement.

To get rid of the code of honor, to get rid of dueling – create the sort of society in which it is an honor, rather than a debasement, to lead a life of service and accommodation to others.

To be rid of this, one might even -oh gosh- be willing to risk an experiment with Christianity.



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14TH CENTURY

1356

[John Barbour](#) was promoted to the archdeaconry of Aberdeen in [Scotland](#), from a post he had held for less than a year in Dunkeld Cathedral.

It was in about this year that Sir John Mandeville's TRAVELS began to be consumed (this was a composite of classical and medieval sources that offered information about such foreign wonders as the phoenix, the vegetable lamb, gold-guarding griffins, and gold-digging ants).

The Breton knight Bertrand du Guesclin –he had been knighted after kidnapping an English officer in 1354– fought a sword [duel](#) on horseback with an English knight, Thomas of Canterbury. When the Englishman lost his sword, the Frenchman jumped down and threw it into the crowd, heaving his own sword after it. The Englishman then tried to ride the Frenchman down with his horse. Du Guesclin ducked under the horse and stabbed it with his dagger, bringing it down and pinning the Englishman to the ground. At this the seconds

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intervened and all went to dinner with their ladies (but, too bad about that horse).

1352 The Turks first enter Europe.  
1354 The money in Scotland till now the same as in England.  
1356 The battle of Poitiers, in which king John of France, and his son, are taken prisoners by Edward the Black Prince.  
1357 Coals first brought to London.  
1358 Arms of England and France first quartered by Edward III.  
1362 The law pleadings in England changed from French to English, as a favour of Edward III. to his people.  
John Wickliffe, an Englishman, begins about this time to oppose the errors of the church of Rome with great acuteness and spirit. His followers are called Lollards.  
1386 A company of Linen-weavers, from the Netherlands, established in London. Windsor Castle built by Edward III.  
1388 The battle of Otterburn, between Hotspur and the Earl of Douglas.  
1391 Cards invented in France for the king's amusement.  
1399 Westminster Abbey built and enlarged; Westminster hall ditto.  
Order of the Bath instituted at the coronation of Henry IV.; renewed in 1725, consisting of 38 knights.  
1410 Guildhall, London, built.  
1411 The university of St. Andrew's in Scotland founded.  
1415 The battle of Agincourt gained over the French by Henry V. of England.  
1428 The siege of Orleans, the first blow to the English power in France.  
1430 About this time Laurentius of Harleim invented the art of printing, which he practised with separate wooden types. Guttemburgh afterwards invented cut metal types; but the art was carried to perfection by Peter Schoeffer, who invented the mode of casting the types in matrices. Frederick Corsellis began to print at Oxford, in 1468, with wooden types, but it was William Caxton who introduced into England the art of printing with fusile types, in 1474.

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



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1455

May 20, Tuesday: The Burgundian nobility flocked to witness a [trial by single combat](#) between Jacotin Plouvier and Mahuot Cocquiel, burghers of Valenciennes. The pair appeared in the Grand Place of the town before the cathedral of Nôtre-Dame-le-Grande in their bare feet with shaved heads, their bodies sewn into one-piece leather garments coated with grease. After these duelists had saluted Philippe III “The Good,” Duke of Bourgogne and Count of Hainault (the ruler who had captured Joan of Arc and turned her over to the English), and kissed the BIBLE, and kissed the ground, and made several signs of the cross, they drank some spiced drinks and rubbed their hands in ashes. Taking up oval shields of willow wood covered with sheep leather, bearing painted decorative emblems, when the glove was thrown up and the cry was *faites votre devoir faites votre devoir faites votre devoir* they went after each other with medlor wood staves three feet in length (somewhat more than three English feet), sharpened on each end. When Cocquiel used the edge of his shield to throw sand in Plouvier’s face, Plouvier dropped his stave and buckler and attempted to gouge out Cocquiel’s eyes with his thumbs. Although Cocquiel was able to prevent this by biting Plouvier’s fingers, Plouvier ground sand into Cocquiel’s eyes for some three-quarters of an hour until he cried “Enough!” When allowed to rise he attempted to resume the struggle but Plouvier twisted his arms until they broke. Jacotin Plouvier then beat him over the head four times with his stave and, entering the cathedral of Nôtre Dame, returned thanks to God for having caused justice to triumph. Placing the bleeding body of Mahuot Cocquiel upon a *rolleur*, the town authorities drew him to the gallows where, *pour la forme*, they hanged and strangled this murderous corpse (*pendu et étranglé comme meurtrier*).

We have this interesting story from Charles Dickens, who apparently copied it out of an account by André-Joseph-Ghislain Le Glay (1785-1863), Archivist of the Département du Nord which appeared in 1829 in ARCHIVES HISTORIQUES ET LITTÉRAIRES DU NORD DE LA FRANCE ET DU MIDI DE LA BELGIQUE (Dickens seems to have copied the date of the duel incorrectly, March instead of May and 1445 instead of 1455).

TRIAL BY SINGLE COMBAT

NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE MAY 20TH, 1455 AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFFY AT BEST).

AS OF MAY 20TH, 1455 YOU HAVE PRECIOUS LITTLE LEGITIMATE INFORMATION AS TO WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN ON MAY 21ST, 1455.



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1547

Toward dispelling accusations about his having had sexual relations with his mother-in-law, a French aristocrat named Guy Chabot de Jarnac challenged his accuser, François de Vivonne, sieur de La Châstaigneraie, to a [duel](#). Although both men were in their mid-to-late twenties, Vivonne was a renowned Breton wrestler of middle height, well-built, muscular and wiry. He was so confident of victory that before the fight he practiced little with the sword, and went into the lists despite having recently suffered an injury to his right arm. Chabot, on the other hand, had spent the month leading up to the duel practicing sword-and-buckler work with an Italian named Caizo. Having the right to choose weapons, Chabot also chose armor that made throwing difficult. When the fight started, Chabot faked a blow at Vivonne's head and then cut him to the bone behind the knee and Vivonne bled out. After Vivonne's friends (the most notable of whom was King Henri II) left the lists in shock the commoners rushed in to devour the feast that Vivonne had ordered prepared in anticipation of his victory.

The Florentine fencing master Alberto Marchionni declared that the flaming sword held by the Cherubim in Genesis 3:24 was the first weapon in human history. This claim is unlikely for various reasons, not the least of which is that while philosophy may be timeless, archaeological artifacts are not. Therefore a more probable conjecture would be that the Cherubim's flaming sword was a copper weapon originally held by a statue built to honor the Babylonian god Merodach.

**THE TASK OF THE HISTORIAN IS TO CREATE HINDSIGHT WHILE  
INTERCEPTING ANY ILLUSION OF FORESIGHT. NOTHING A HUMAN CAN  
SEE CAN EVER BE SEEN AS IF THROUGH THE EYE OF GOD.**

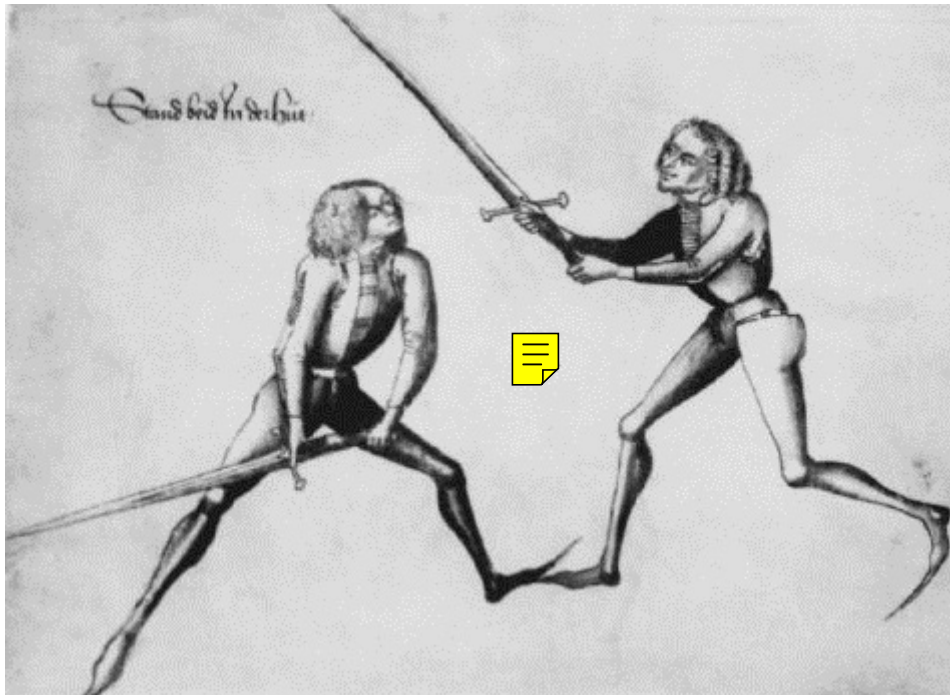


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1549

At Sedan in France, Claude d'Aguerre, Baron of Vienne le Chastel, and Jacques de Fontaine, Lord of Fendailles, engaged in a [duel](#) in armor, employing two-handed bastard swords (*épée bâtarde*). This being a formal duel, in the opening ceremonies the participants swore that they would employ no diabolical aids. In the course of the struggle D'Aguerre had forced Fontaine back into the ropes when Fontaine managed to cut D'Aguerre's thigh. D'Aguerre dropped his sword and struggled with Fontaine, bringing him to the ground. He beat Fontaine in the face and stuffed dirt into his mouth until he was forced to beg for mercy. The judges determined that D'Aguerre was the victor, and the better gentleman.



**“HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE” BEING A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN TIME (JUST AS THE PERSPECTIVE IN A PAINTING IS A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN SPACE), TO “LOOK AT THE COURSE OF HISTORY MORE GENERALLY” WOULD BE TO SACRIFICE PERSPECTIVE ALTOGETHER. THIS IS FANTASY-LAND, YOU’RE FOOLING YOURSELF. THERE CANNOT BE ANY SUCH THINGIE, AS SUCH A PERSPECTIVE.**



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**1550**

In Venice, Girolamo Muzio's book of rules for [dueling](#), *IL DUELLO*. This would be generally ignored as fancy-pants stuff except by attorneys — in a real contest, to forestall assassination, you needed to kill or at least cripple/maim your enemy. In this period some duels were still being fought with sword and buckler but some rapier duels were fought newstyle with cloak or dagger in the off hand. Since duelists needed to strip to their shirts to display that they were not wearing concealed armor or charms, a leather armor was developed that could be worn beneath the shirt, so eventually duelists would strip to the skin. The seconds, termed “godfathers” in Italy, could get killed (in a French duel of 1578 two seconds were killed and afterward two more died of wounds). Alfred Hutton has offered that principals fought “because they had to, seconds because they chose to, the thirds because it was a horrible cold morning and they wanted to warm themselves, and the fourths because they both agreed that people might say disagreeable things about them if they did nothing but stand twiddling their thumbs when all their friends were fighting.”

[Giovanni Battista Ramusio](#)'s *PRIMO VOLUME DELLE NAUIGATIONI ET VIAGGI NEL QUAL SI CONTIENE LA DESCRITTIONE DELL'AFRICA, ET DEL PAESE DEL PRETE IANNI, CON VARI VIAGGI, DAL MAR ROSSO A CALICUT & INFIN ALL'ISOLE MOLUCCHE, DOVE NASCONO LE SPETIERE ET LA NAVIGATIONE ATTORNO IL MONDO: LI NOMI DE GLI AUTTORI, ET LE NAUIGATIONI, ET I VIAGGI PIU PARTICOLARMENTE SI MOSTRANO NEL FOGLIO SEGUENTE* (NAVIGATIONS AND TRAVELS, VOLUME I). He didn't himself do any of the navigating or traveling, but simply collected the accounts of others and translated them into Italian.

**PRIMO VOLUME RAMUSIO**



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1563

Because so many [duelists](#) were dying from blood poisoning or infection, the Council of Trent threatened duelists, seconds, and the civil authorities who failed to suppress them with excommunication. (Rarely enforced in practice, these bans would be used mainly for preventing duels between aristocrats and commoners. After all, one accrued no fame by killing a merchant — but acquired much shame by losing to him. Meanwhile the soldier, seigneur, and abbé [Pierre de Bourdeilles, Lord Brantôme](#), was asserting that one of the reasons men dueled was in order to be mentioned in the chronicles of the age.)

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT







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17TH CENTURY

1607



[Jasper More](#), Lord of Larden, had a son as well as a daughter, and was rebuilding part of Larden Hall in stone, when his inheriting son was killed in a pistol [duel](#) over a woman. There arose the inevitable problem in regard to inheritance of lands and properties by primogeniture, according to which such lands and properties might not be split, or inherited by a female offspring. In the normal course of events, rather than allow female offspring to inherit, the law would have awarded all these lands and properties in one bundle to a cousin, Richard More, Lord of Linley. The Lord of Larden and the Lord of Linley would therefore arranged a marriage of convenience between [Jasper More](#)'s 23-year-old [Katherine More](#) and her relative, [Richard More](#)'s 16-year-old [Samuell More](#) (the two were related, but not within England's proscribed terms of consanguinity).<sup>1</sup> This smart maneuvering for purposes of cautious estate management would turn out, in the realm of the heart, to be one of the stupidest tricks a set of parents ever pulled on their children! What woe this careful Lord of Larden and this careful Lord of Linley were bringing upon their lineage!



1. This betrothed pair had the same last name, More, but actually [Katherine More](#) was no more closely related to [Samuell More](#) than she was to the Reverend Roger Williams, which is to say, the two were not all that closely related.



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1621

June 18, Monday (Old Style): The first [duel](#) of New England is said to have been between [Stephen Hopkins](#)'s servants Edward Doty and Edward Leister. Fighting with sword and dagger, they wounded each other. Since there weren't any statutes as yet against such an offense, the New Comers decided to tie the two men together hand and foot, and keep them like that 24 hours without giving them anything to eat or drink. (The servants pleaded, their master interceded, and they were released before the full period had elapsed.)

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?  
— NO, THAT'S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN'S STORIES.  
LIFE ISN'T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



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**1660**

When challenged to a [duel](#) and offered his choice of weapons, Sir William Petty, a myopic [London](#) economist, proposed that the fight take place in a darkened cellar and be conducted with carpenter's axes (this proposal met with general laughter and the dispute was settled amicably).

**THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT**





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**1665**

Dueling femmes fatale Madame de la Prè-Abbè and Mademoiselle de la Motte discharged pistols at one another from horseback at a range of about 10 yards, and after missing twice, resorted to fighting with swords.

**WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND  
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**



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**1868**

Dueling femmes fatale Marie P. and Aimée R. discharged pistols at one another over the affections of a lucky youth from Bordeaux, with Marie P. taking a ball in the thigh and Aimée R. being left in uncontested possession of the object of her desire.

**CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT**



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18TH CENTURY

1707

The [pirate](#) Thomas White sailed as quartermaster for John Halsey.

Julie de Maupin died. The novelist Thèophile Gautier made much of her alleged willingness to challenge anyone to a [duel](#), who was less than affirmative over her operatic talents. She had acquired her fencing prowess by training with a lover, Serane. (Other femmes fatale included Madame de la Prè-Abbè and Mademoiselle de la Motte, who in 1665 fired pistols at one another from horseback at a range of about 10 yards, then after missing twice, resorted to fighting with swords and, in 1868, the duelists Marie P. and Aimée R. who discharged pistols at one another over the affections of a lucky youth from Bordeaux, with Marie P. taking a ball in the thigh and Aimée R. being left in uncontested possession of the object of her desire.)

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.





DUELING

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1709

Henry Young was, we believe, the last person to get actually [hanged](#) in England, for being judged to have been defeated by his opponent in a [Trial by Combat](#).



NO-ONE'S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE



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1728

July 3, day (Old Style): A row of elms (*Ulmus americana*) was in this year being planted by the “Common Street” which was an extension of Treamount Street (Tremont Street), along one edge of Boston Common.



On the evening of this day, [Henry Phillips or Philips](#), a son of the Boston bookseller and publisher Samuel Phillips or Philips (active 1681-1720) and a Harvard graduate, and Benjamin Woodbridge, son of a Barbadian Admiralty judge, began to quarrel at Luke Vardy's Royal Exchange Tavern on King Street in [Boston](#), and went onto this Common to [duel](#), and Phillips ran Woodbridge through the chest with his sword. At 3AM Woodbridge's corpse would be discovered — but Phillips had been able to make it aboard the British man-of-war *Sheerness* in the harbor and would flee to England and then to France. In absentia he would be indicted and convicted of murder. He soon would fall ill, and would die before he could sign his will, and then there would follow a long dispute in London over his estate between his brother Gillam, on the one hand, and his mother and his sister, Faith Savage, on the other (Phillips v. Savage).



## DUELING

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1740

Some cultural historians emphasize the honor culture of dueling not as a uniquely Southern phenomenon, but as a carryover from a European aristocratic tradition.<sup>2</sup> However, dueling seldom occurred in colonial America. Prior to the 1760s this code appears to have been, in both the North and the South, little more than a cultural memory despite the aristocratic pretensions of the [Virginia](#) “Cavaliers” and their cultural progeny. Dueling seems not to have become pervasive even in Virginia, until the Revolution.<sup>3</sup> Although Thomas Gamble’s *SAVANNAH DUELS AND DUELLISTS: 1733-1877* assumes that “Duelling came into Georgia with the first settlers from England as an accepted element of the social code,”<sup>4</sup> that source also notes that –aside from a celebrated [duel](#) which occurred in this year– neither Savannah nor Charleston newspapers contain any record of any duel occurring between 1740 and 1775.<sup>5</sup>

2. Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *SOUTHERN HONOR: ETHICS AND BEHAVIOR IN THE OLD SOUTH* (NY: Oxford UP, 1982), 350-7.

3. Wright, Louis B. *THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES: 1607-1763*, (NY: Harper & Bros., 1957, page 6); Bruce Baird, “The Social Origins of Dueling in Virginia,” in Michael Bellesnles, ed., *VIOLENCE IN AMERICA: REVISIONIST HISTORICAL ESSAYS* (NY: New York UP)

4. Gamble, Thomas. *SAVANNAH DUELS AND DUELLISTS: 1733-1877*, (Savannah GA: Review Publishing & Printing Co., 1923, page 1)

5. Gamble, Thomas. *SAVANNAH DUELS AND DUELLISTS: 1733-1877*, (Savannah GA: Review Publishing & Printing Co., 1923, page 8)



## DUELING

## DUELING

1760

According to Bruce Baird, just prior to the American revolution the “upper class consensus that condemned all forms of ‘honor violence’” broke down in Virginia. He points to the arrival of the Scots-Irish in the back country, their increasing political power, and their tradition of honor brawling, as a contributing factor, although this would of course have been nowhere near as pervasive earlier as it would become later, under the new conventions of monitored aristocratic dueling.<sup>6</sup> Others argue that a Napoleonic revival of [dueling](#) on the continent was at this point spreading, from New Orleans in the 1790s northward through the “backwoods” states, “to societies where it had been little known before.”<sup>7</sup> Yet others attribute this development to the cultural influence of British and French army and naval officers during the American Revolution, in revitalized a tradition that had gone dormant in America because for a time aristocracy, and the professional military officer service as a life career, had not occurred here.<sup>8</sup>

6. Baird, Bruce. “The Social Origins of duelling in Virginia,” in Michael Bellesnles, ed., *VIOLENCE IN AMERICA: REVISIONIST HISTORICAL ESSAYS* (NY: New York UP, pages 1, 9-12)

7. Johnson, Paul. *THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN: WORLD SOCIETY 1815-1830*, (NY: Harper Collins, 1991, page 464)

8. Stevens, William Oliver, *PISTOLS AT TEN PACES: THE STORY OF THE CODE OF HONOR IN AMERICA* (Cambridge MA: Riverside Press, 1940, pages 9-26)



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1765

January 26, Saturday: A charter and seal and coat of arms were granted, for the Society of Artists of Great Britain.

Adriano in Siria, an opera by Johann Christian Bach to words after Metastasio, was performed for the initial time, in King's Theatre, London, in the presence of the King and Queen.

Madama l'umorista, a dramma giocoso by Giovanni Paisiello to words after Palomba, was performed for the initial time.

William, 5th Lord Byron killed William Chaworth in a [duel](#) and of necessity resigned his post as master of His Majesty's stag hounds.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

**THE FALLACY OF MOMENTISM: THIS STARRY UNIVERSE DOES NOT CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF MOMENTS. THAT IS A FIGMENT, ONE WE HAVE RECOURSE TO IN ORDER TO PRIVILEGE TIME OVER CHANGE, A PRIVILEGING THAT MAKES CHANGE SEEM UNREAL, DERIVATIVE, A MERE APPEARANCE. IN FACT IT IS CHANGE AND ONLY CHANGE WHICH WE EXPERIENCE AS REALITY, TIME BEING BY WAY OF RADICAL CONTRAST UNEXPERIENCED — A MERE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT. THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO INSTANT HAS EVER FOR AN INSTANT EXISTED.**

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April 16, Tuesday: William, 5th Lord Byron was acquitted of murder, but found guilty of manslaughter, by the House of Lords for having killed William Chaworth in a [duel](#), and was discharged by the paying of a fine and by his retiring to Newstead Abbey. While in residence there he would add what many have considered to be a number of “Gothic follies.”



GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

BETWEEN ANY TWO MOMENTS ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF MOMENTS,  
AND BETWEEN THESE OTHER MOMENTS LIKEWISE AN INFINITE  
NUMBER, THERE BEING NO ATOMIC MOMENT JUST AS THERE IS NO  
ATOMIC POINT ALONG A LINE. MOMENTS ARE THEREFORE FIGMENTS.  
THE PRESENT MOMENT IS A MOMENT AND AS SUCH IS A FIGMENT, A  
FLIGHT OF THE IMAGINATION TO WHICH NOTHING REAL CORRESPONDS.  
SINCE PAST MOMENTS HAVE PASSED OUT OF EXISTENCE AND FUTURE  
MOMENTS HAVE YET TO ARRIVE, WE NOTE THAT THE PRESENT MOMENT  
IS ALL THAT EVER EXISTS — AND YET THE PRESENT MOMENT BEING A





**DUELING**

**DUELING**

**MOMENT IS A FIGMENT TO WHICH NOTHING IN REALITY CORRESPONDS.**



DUELING

DUELING

1766

At the age of 17, [Vittorio Alfieri](#) obtained the King of [Italy](#)'s permission to travel abroad under the care of an English preceptor. First stop, Paris. At his 2d stop, Holland, he fell in love with a married woman, although she decided to stay with her husband. Next stop, the gloom of the north of Sweden. After that, another affair with a married woman, this one in London. His affair with Lady Penelope Pitt led to a [duel](#) with her husband, Lord Ligonier, and then to her disgrace and divorce, and he fled to Spain and Portugal, where he made the acquaintance of the Abbe Caluso.

**FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A “HISTORICAL CONTEXT” IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.**



## DUELING

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1767

September 18, Friday: Alerted by [Granville Sharp](#) to a situation in the Poultney Compter, that an apparently free black man who was accused of no offense had been kidnapped and held there and was being sold for transportation to the plantations of the West Indies, the Lord Mayor of [London](#), Sir Robert Kite, summoned all involved to appear before him. Meanwhile David Lisle had sold his interest in Jonathan Strong to James Kerr, a ship captain, for a mere £30. It was Kerr's intention to take Strong into custody and transport him to the West Indies for sale to a sugar plantation there. Strong was, however, allowed by the Lord Mayor to depart from this meeting at liberty, since he had not been accused of stealing anything. Lisle would challenge Sharp to a [duel](#) and, when rebuffed, would file a lawsuit. Clearly this had departed from the realm of economics and had become a dispute among white men over a matter of principle, as the £30 involved would hardly have been enough to quarrel over in such an expensive manner. The principle seems to have been a man's right to dispose of his own personal property in any manner in which he chooses so to do. In other words, what we had here was something which today we would have to classify as a "libertarian" issue. Was or was not Captain Kerr, as a British subject who was a man of property, to be free? Sharp began to devote all his considerable skills to a proof in court that [slavery](#) was not only morally but also legally reprehensible.



This would not be the case which ended slavery in England, as it would be continued and rescheduled on eight successive occasions. However, it was the case which mobilized Sharp, who would turn out to be the most energetic and dedicated and persuasive individual involved in this struggle to end slavery in England. It is to

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be noted that Sharp, like virtually all white people of his era, was committedly racist. His court arguments would include an offering that it would be bad public policy to continue slavery in England, since this would result in “unnatural increase of black subjects,” and since of course such persons were undesirables. These enslaved minority races, “not only Negroes, but Mulattos, and even *American Indians*,” would of necessity be filling places of service which would otherwise be available to Apprentices, “healthy and comely boys and girls, the children of our own free fellow-subjects.” [Sharp](#) would even make an invidious reference to the “mixed people” who would be “produced by the unavoidable intercourse with their white neighbors,” an argument which surely was not lost upon Lord Mansfield, he who had at home a beloved, adopted niece, Dido Elizabeth Lindsey (at the left in the illustration above — at the right is her biological cousin, Lady Elizabeth Murray), who was in fact (as you can clearly see) one of these “mixed people.”

[EMANCIPATION](#)[AMALGAMATION](#)

“EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES”: All the great geniuses of the British senate, Fox, Pitt, Burke, Grenville, Sheridan, Grey, Canning, ranged themselves on its side; the poet Cowper wrote for it: Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, in this country, all recorded their votes.



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**1770**

In a scheduled appeal to [Trial by Combat](#), the challenger or champion, having been adequately bribed, failed to make his appearance. Therefore the accused subject to this trial by combat was released.

**THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT**

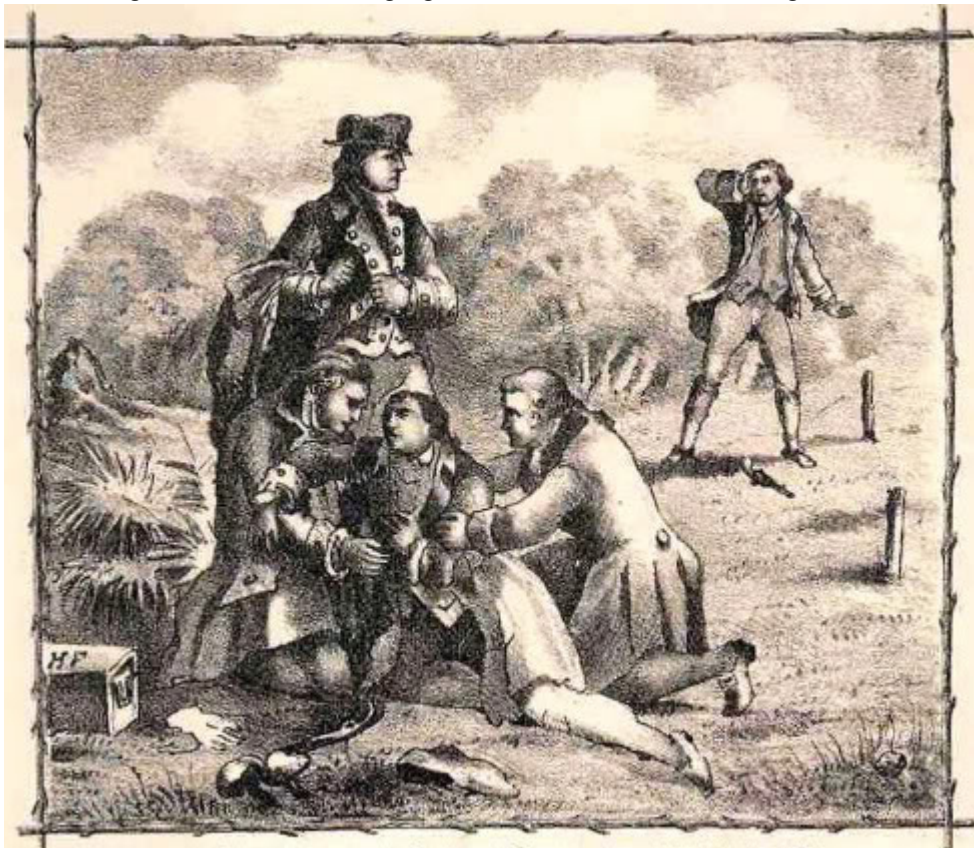


## DUELING

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1777

Near the hamlet of Thunderbolt outside Savannah, Georgia, alpha-male signer of the [Declaration of Independence](#) and Georgia slavemaster Button Gwinett met alpha-male revolutionary Brigadier General and Georgia slavemaster Lacklan McIntosh for a [duel](#) with pistols at 12 paces (approximately 60 feet). Both men were hit in the leg. Gwinett would die of gangrene and McIntosh would be charged with murder, but acquitted.



Anglo-Irish aristocrats agreed upon a detailed “Clonmel Code” for their gentlemanly [duels](#). Among this code’s 26 bullet points were:

- Acceptable reasons for issuing a challenge included being accused of cheating at cards or horse races, being accused of having insulted a lady, and having been subjected to a blow of the fist.
- Challenges might not be delivered during hours of darkness.
- The challenger had the right to choose the weapon but the other party might decline the sword in favor of the pistol (pistols would be usual in Britain but swords would be popular in Europe through WWII).
- Pistols had to be of a matched set loaded in the presence of the seconds. The owner of a set of pistols was to favor the other principal with first choice.
- Misfires, snaps, and half-cocks amounted to shots, and it was prohibited to intentionally discharge a weapon into the ground or air.





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- Ranges were upon agreement and might vary between 4 and 20 yards.
- It was the responsibility of the seconds to attempt to dissuade the principals, not only before a duel but after each firing.

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



DUELING

DUELING

1789

Hessian mercenaries serving in the British Army were settling disputes about women or cards by stripping to the waist and slashing at one another with knives until blood was drawn and honor satisfied. Middle-class versions of these working-class duels were also found in contemporary German universities. To reduce the risk of serious injury, at the universities the students would don canvas jackets, leather gloves, and iron goggles. Such encounters were denominated “Mensur” because they were “measured.” Such Mensur [dueling](#) tended to produce a really really manly facial scar of a sort that could be worn with pride and would be much favored by women and potential employers ([German](#) aristocrats were, meanwhile, dueling with pistols at point-blank range, and such pistol encounters were comparatively deadly, producing a casualty rate that approached 2 in 3).

After almost killing the Duke of York during a pistol [duel](#) on Wimbledon Common, Lieutenant Colonel Lenox of the Coldstream Guards was transferred to a less-prestigious regiment (the duel would do little harm to his career).

**HISTORY’S NOT MADE OF WOULD. WHEN SOMEONE REVEALS, FOR INSTANCE, THAT THIS RECORD OF DUELING DID LITTLE LONG-TERM HARM TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL LENOX, WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME LORD-LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA, S/HE DISCLOSES THAT WHAT IS BEING CRAFTED IS NOT REALITY BUT PREDESTINARIANISM. THE RULE OF REALITY IS THAT THE FUTURE HASN’T EVER HAPPENED, YET.**



DUELING

DUELING

19TH CENTURY

1801



November 23, Monday: Volume One of Muzio Clementi's CLEMENTI'S PRACTICAL HARMONY was published in London.



November 24, Tuesday: The New-York Evening Post reported that Philip Hamilton had died that morning in the twentieth year of his age at the home of his father Alexander Hamilton, after receiving a pistol ball through the body the previous afternoon in a duel with George Eacker — a lawyer who had refused to apologize for referring to him as a “damned rascal”:

On Friday morning last, young Hamilton and young Price, sitting in the same box with Mr. George I. Eacker, began in levity a conversation respecting an oration delivered by the latter in July, and made use of some expressions respecting it, which were overheard by Eacker, who asked Hamilton to step into the lobby. Price followed. Here the expression, “damned rascal,” was used by Eacker to one of them, and a little scuffle ensued, but they soon adjourned to a public house. An explanation was then demanded, which of them the offensive expression was meant for; after a little hesitation, it was declared to be meant for each. Eacker then said, as they parted, “I expect to hear from you;” they replied, “You shall;” and challenges followed. A meeting took place, between Eacker and Price, on Sunday morning; which, after their exchanging four shots each, was finished by the interference of the seconds.

Yesterday afternoon, the fatal duel was fought between young Hamilton and Eacker. Hamilton received a shot through the body at the first discharge, and fell without firing. He was brought across the ferry to his father's house, where he languished of the wound till this morning, when he expired.

...Reflections on this horrid custom must occur to every may of humanity; but the voice of an individual or of the press must be ineffectual without additional, strong, and pointed legislative interference. Fashion has placed it upon a footing which nothing short of this can control.



**DUELING**

**DUELING**



November 26, Thursday: English chemist Charles Hatchett read his paper “An Analysis of a Mineral Substance from North America Containing a Metal Hitherto Unknown” before the Royal Society in London. This described a new element, “Columbium” (which would eventually be known as Niobium).



**DUELING**

**DUELING**

**1802**



In a duel, Georgia Representative William Harris Crawford killed Peter Van Allen. On a following screen is Crawford as he would be depicted subsequent to the US Civil War, on a “United States Fractional Currency” greenback.



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## DUELING

## DUELING

1803

→ The United States naval officer Stephen Decatur offered this advice to another naval officer before a pistol duel: “Aim lower if you wish to live.”

→ Christmas, Sunday.: William Thornton and Francis Fitzhugh Conway, cousins, found themselves in competition for the attentions of a niece of James Madison, Miss Nellie Madison, who was a guest at Chatham during this year’s Christmas season. The cousins arrived at the Chatham festivities on horseback and their horses were stabled. Francis had outfitted his horse with a handsome new bridle and told the young lady in the course of the evening that he was going to “surprise” her. When it came time for him to display his horse, he found that the groom had switched the bridles. It was his cousin’s horse that impressed Miss Nellie. He accused his cousin of having paid the groom to switch the bridles, which meant they needed to have a duel. They met on a narrow pathway between Alum Spring Rock and a mill pond and each shot the other in the region of the bladder. The cousins died at about the same hour.



James DeWolf of Bristol gave his wife a pair of slaves as her Christmas present. “I went shopping in this boutique in Africa and brought you home a little something, Darling. It’s a matched set.”<sup>9</sup>

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Of the twenty years from 1787 to 1807 it can only be said that they were, on the whole, a period of disappointment so far as the suppression of the slave-trade was concerned. Fear, interest, and philanthropy united for a time in an effort which bade fair to suppress the trade; then the real weakness of the constitutional compromise appeared, and the interests of the few overcame the fears and the humanity of the



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many.



The DeWolf Carriage

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), by this point Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#), age 22, had reached a firm decision to “go to journey work” repairing timepieces, for his livelihood. Having just completed one apprenticeship which had been for seven years (we don’t know the nature of this), he apprenticed himself anew, to learn watch repair from Friend David Williams. While his brothers would be going into trade and traveling, he himself would be staying home and devoting himself to mundane activity — this in order to avoid any personal involvement at all in any slavery-related economic activity. He wrote in his journal of the religious anguish of his mind.

9. Clearly, there’s a terminology problem here. In an effort to resolve this terminology issue, at the Republican National Convention in New-York during August 2004 –at which the Republican Party would for four days make an effort to strip from its face its mask of hostility to the plight of the downtrodden and reveal its true countenance of benevolent conservatism and concern– these people would be sensitively referred to by a Hoosier Republican running for the US Senate as “involuntary immigrants.”

So, perhaps, this is a good point at which to insert a story about involuntary immigrants that has been passed on to us by Ram Varmha, a retired IBM engineer whose father had briefly served as Maharaja after the independence of Cochin. He relates the story as narrated to him by his paternal grandmother who lived in Thripoonithura, Cochin: “When my grandmother (born 1882) was a young girl she would go with the elder ladies of the family to the Pazhayannur Devi Temple in Fort Cochin, next to the Cochin Lanthia Palace built by the Dutch (Landers = Lanthia), which was an early establishment of the Cochin royal family before the administration moved to Thripoonithura. My grandmother often told us that in the basement of the Lanthia Palace, in a confined area, a family of Africans had been kept locked up, as in a zoo! By my Grandmother’s time all the Africans had died. But, some of the elder ladies had narrated the story to her of ‘Kappiries’ (Africans) kept in captivity there. It seems visitors would give them fruits and bananas. They were well cared for but always kept in confinement. My grandmother did not know all the details but according to her, ‘many’ years earlier, a ship having broken its mast drifted into the old Cochin harbor. When the locals climbed aboard, they found a crewless ship, but in the hold there were some chained ‘Kappiries’ still alive; others having perished. The locals did not know what to do with them. Not understanding their language and finding the Africans in chains, the locals thought that these were dangerous to set free. So they herded the poor Africans into the basement of the Cochin Fort, and held them in captivity, for many, many years! I have no idea when the initial incident happened, but I presume it took place in the late 1700s or early 1800s. This points to the possibility that it was, in fact, a slave ship carrying human cargo from East Africa to either the USA or the West Indies. An amazing and rather bizarre story. Incidentally, this is not an ‘old woman’s tale’! Its quite reliable. My grandmother would identify some of the older ladies who had actually seen the surviving Kappiries.”



## DUELING

## DUELING

1804



June 22, Friday: An officer in the Revolutionary Army who became Vice President of the United States, Aaron Burr, challenged former Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton to a [duel](#) of honor:<sup>10</sup>

Sir:

Mr. V. Ness has this evening reported to me verbally that you refuse to answer my last letter, that you consider the course I have taken as intemperate and unnecessary and some other conversation which is improper that I should notice.

My request to you was in the first instance prepared in a form the most simple in order that you might give to the affair that course to which you might be induced by your temper and your knowledge of facts. I relied with unsuspecting faith that from the frankness of a soldier and the candor of a gentleman I might expect an ingenuous declaration; that if, as I had reason to believe, you had used expressions derogatory to my honor, you would have had the spirit to maintain or the magnanimity to retract them, and that if from your language injurious inferences had been improperly drawn, sincerity and decency would have pointed out to you the propriety of correcting errors which might then have widely diffused.

With these impressions, I was greatly disappointed in receiving from you a letter which I could only consider as evasive and which in manner, is not altogether decorous. In one expectation however, I was not wholly deceived, for at the close of your letter I find an intimation, that if I should dislike your refusal to acknowledge or deny the charge, you were ready to meet the consequences. This I deemed a sort of defiance, and I should have been justified if I had chosen to make it the basis of an immediate message: Yet as you had also said something (though in any opinion unfounded) of the indefiniteness of my request; as I believed that your communication was the offspring, rather of false pride than of reflection, and, as I felt the utmost reluctance to proceed to extremities while any other hope remained, my request was repeated in terms more definite. To this you refuse all reply, reposing, as I am bound to presume on the tender of an alternative insinuated in your letter.

Thus, Sir, you have invited the course I am about to pursue, and now by your silence impose it upon me. If, therefore your determinations are final, of which I am not permitted to doubt, Mr. Van Ness is authorised to communicate my further expectations either to yourself or to such friend as you may be pleased to indicate.

I have the honor to be

Yours respt

A. Burr

10. Burr thus would make himself the first –but not the last– US vice-president to shoot someone while holding such office.



## DUELING

## DUELING



July 11, Wednesday: Vice President Aaron Burr mortally wounded former Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton in a pistol [duel](#) outside New-York, near Weehawken, New Jersey. Former Secretary of the Treasury Hamilton would be found to have previously penned the following message:

*My religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to the practice of dueling, and it would ever give me pain to be obliged to shed the blood of a fellow creature in a private combat forbidden by the laws.... I am conscious of no ill will to Colonel Burr, distinct from political opposition, which, as I trust, has proceeded from pure and upright motives ... it is not to be denied, that my animadversions on the political principles, character, and views of Colonel Burr, have been extremely severe; and on different occasions I, in common with many others, have made very unfavorable criticisms on particular instances of the private conduct of this gentleman.*

The resulting public outrage would render dueling untenable north of the Potomac River, except between military officers of equivalent rank.<sup>11</sup>



July 25, Wednesday: Dr. Timothy Minott died in [Concord](#) at the age of 78.

Timothy Minott [of [Concord](#)], son of Timothy Minott, teacher of the grammar-school, was born April 8, 1726, and graduated [at [Harvard College](#)] in 1747. He was a physician in [Concord](#), where he died, July 25, 1804, aged 78.<sup>12</sup>

11. When was the last [duel](#) in the USA?

12. [Lemuel Shattuck](#)'s 1835 [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#) Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: [John Stacy](#)  
(On or about November 11, 1837 [Henry Thoreau](#) would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study. On July 16, 1859 he would correct a date mistake buried in the body of the text.)

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## DUELING

## DUELING

The American public was being informed that former Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton had been killed in a [duel](#) with Vice President Aaron Burr:



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

25th of 7th M 1804 / Deeply affected with desires for my own lasting preservation & increase in the best things  
Oh may the Almighty God who is ever willing to preserve me from the pollutions of the World, still continue to keep me & difuse His blessed spirit more and more in my Soul

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



**DUELING**

**DUELING**

**1805**



At about this point the gazettes in the United States began a practice of posting the names and deeds of men who were too cowardly to accept challenges to [duel](#). Such postings were often harsh, as were the responses. For example, after a Southern duelist named Charles Dickinson hired space in a newspaper to call General Andrew Jackson of Tennessee “a damned liar, a worthless scoundrel, a poltroon, and a coward,” and then went on to call Jackson’s wife a harlot. Old Hickory responded by taking Dickinson’s shot, then calmly gut-shooting the man.



## DUELING

## DUELING

1806



An Englishman visiting Wheeling, Virginia, Thomas Ashe, witnessed a “free fighting” encounter between a Virginian and a Kentuckian. The two Americans started out with a bit of gentlemanly sparring while they were estimating each other, but soon the Kentuckian was chewing away at the Virginian’s nose while the Virginian was gouging out the Kentuckian’s eyes and ripping off his lips.

In this year, also, in a [duel](#) between Andrew Jackson and Charles Dickinson, a lawyer, both men were wounded but Jackson would recover. (Jackson would later involve himself in a “free fighting” encounter with the Benton brothers.)

In this year, also, in a [duel](#) between Georgia Representative William Harris Crawford (who had already killed a man, Peter Van Allen, in a previous duel, in 1802) and Georgia Militia Major General John Clark, General Clark’s pistol ball shattered Representative Crawford’s wrist. Here is General Clark:







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Disappointed when Crawford would not die, Clark would challenge him to a rematch but Crawford would decline. Enraged by this refusal, General Clark would in 1807 whip one of Crawford's political supporters, Judge Charles Tait, through the streets of Milledgeville with a riding crop. On a following screen is Crawford, as he would be depicted subsequent to the US Civil War on a "United States Fractional Currency" greenback.

## Famous Last Words:



"What school is more profitably instructive than the death-bed of the righteous, impressing the understanding with a convincing evidence, that they have not followed cunningly devised fables, but solid substantial truth."

— A COLLECTION OF MEMORIALS CONCERNING DIVERS DECEASED MINISTERS, Philadelphia, 1787



**"The death bed scenes & observations even of the best & wisest afford but a sorry picture of our humanity. Some men endeavor to live a constrained life — to subject their whole lives to their will as he who said he might give a sign if he were conscious after his head was cut off — but he gave no sign Dwell as near as possible to the channel in which your life flows."**

**—Thoreau's JOURNAL, March 12, 1853**

1794	George Jacques Danton	he had been convicted of not having made adequate use of the guillotine	<i>"Show my head to the people. It is worth seeing."</i>
1798	Giovanni Casanova	having spent his life collecting sequentially and in tandem 132 pubic scalps	<i>"I have lived as a philosopher and died as a Christian."</i>
1799	George Washington	fearing being buried alive (a common fear for that period), he was being heartily reassured by his physician	<i>"'Tis well."</i>
1806	Charles Dickinson	he was dueling with Andrew Jackson	<i>"Why have you put out the lights?"</i>
1809	Thomas Paine	his physician asked whether he wished to believe Jesus to be the son of God	<i>"I have no wish to believe on that subject."</i>
... other famous last words ...			





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## DUELING

## DUELING



March 31, Monday: A [duel](#) was fought near [Providence](#) at the Cold Spring, just over the Red Bridge across the Seekonk estuary from Massachusetts (where dueling was a criminal offense) into [Rhode Island](#) (a libertarian venue in which dueling had not yet been criminalized) — a piece of property incidentally belonging to Friend [Moses Brown](#). (If you'd like to go for a weird walk on the East Side, said source of drinking water had been between what is now Pitman Street and Waterman Street.)

Said duel was between a couple of [Harvard College](#) men, Mr. James Henderson Elliot of Boston and Mr. William Austin of Charlestown, Massachusetts. One duelist was a Federalist and the other a Democrat, and their confrontation was over a perceived insult to James Henderson Elliot's father, Major General Simon Elliot. The accusation was that after a militia officer, Joseph Loring, had been cleared of all charges against him, Major General Elliot had not immediately released him from custody but had allowed him to languish in confinement for some additional duration of time. Austin's second was Charles Pinckney Sumner and Elliot's was the portrait painter Henry Sargent. In the 3-shot exchange Austin was twice wounded, but not critically.<sup>13</sup>



April 5, Saturday: The [Providence, Rhode Island Phoenix](#) reported on the [duel](#) of March 31st as if it had been reporting on the innings of a ballgame:

The first round Mr. Austin's pistol flashed.  
Mr. Elliot fired and wounded Mr. Austin in the neck.  
The second round they both fired and Mr. Austin was wounded in the thigh.  
The third round had no effect.  
The parties immediately retired from the field for Boston. We understand Mr. Austin's wounds were not dangerous.

(Mr. William Austin of Charlestown, Massachusetts's children would not learn of their father's involvement in this escapade for many years — in fact only subsequent to his demise.)

13. Austin, Walter. A FORGOTTEN DUEL FOUGHT IN RHODE ISLAND BETWEEN WILLIAM AUSTIN, OF CHARLESTOWN AND JAMES HENDERSON ELLIOT, OF BOSTON, MARCH 31, 1806 (68 pages, privately printed, 1914)

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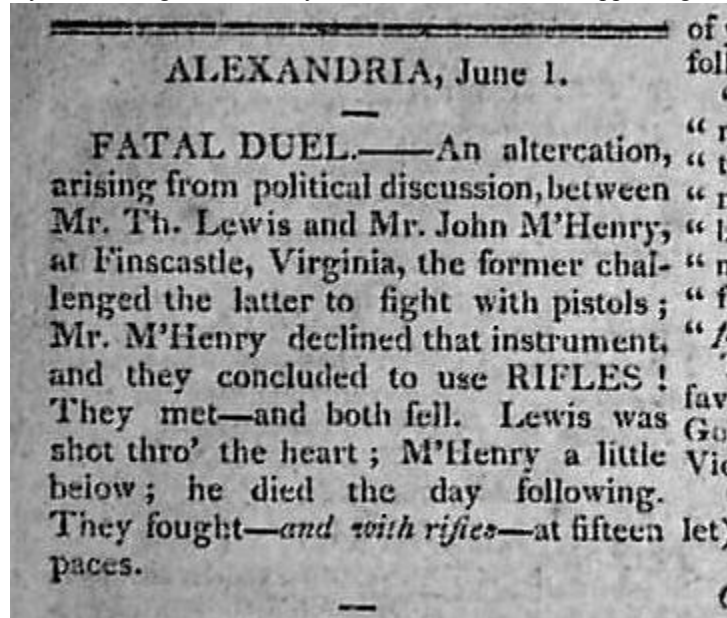
## DUELING

## DUELING

**1808**

➡ In Paris, after having had a dispute over a female, M. De Grandpre and M. Le Pique agreed to fight a [duel](#) while floating in a pair of balloons. When Grandpre was able to puncture Le Pique's balloon with a blunderbuss, Le Pique and his second plunged a half mile to their deaths. (This story as told does not include mention of what became of the female in question — would she have lived happily ever after with M. De Grandpre and his relentless blunderbuss?)

➡ June 8, Wednesday: Something akin to today's "Darwin Awards" was appearing in the American gazettes:



ALEXANDRIA, June 1.

**FATAL DUEL.**—An altercation, arising from political discussion, between Mr. Th. Lewis and Mr. John M'Henry, at Finscastle, Virginia, the former challenged the latter to fight with pistols; Mr. M'Henry declined that instrument, and they concluded to use RIFLES! They met—and both fell. Lewis was shot thro' the heart; M'Henry a little below; he died the day following. They fought—and with rifles—at fifteen paces.

[DUELING](#)

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

*4th day 8 of 6 M / Pretty buisy at white washing, in the evening at WmPattens with the Directors of the African benevolent society, the school is weak every way but in pecuniary assistance very much so & whether we can long continue it is doubtful, but when we have done what we can I trust we shall have our reward —*

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DUELING

DUELING

1809



September 21, Thursday: In England, the Perceval ministry began as British Foreign Minister George Canning and Secretary for War Lord Castlereagh engaged in a [duel](#) on Putney Heath. Canning was upset that Castlereagh had taken troops he had intended for Portugal and used them in the Walcheren operation. Canning was struck in the thigh. Public sentiment would turn against both the duelists.

[Sophia Amelia Peabody](#) was born to the dentist [Nathanael Peabody](#) and the Unitarian [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#). She would attend the 2d (soon to be Unitarian) Church in Salem, Massachusetts. She would attend a school run by her mother and by her sister Elizabeth Palmer Peabody there and upon graduation, would become a teacher in that school as well.

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

*5th day 21 of 9 M 1809// At meeting Our friends D Buffum & Mary Morton were very acceptably engaged in Short testimonies - In the eveng a little while at R Taylors*

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RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



DUELING

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1810



March 29, Thursday: John H. Farnham, a student of [Harvard College](#), wrote his sister Mary B. Farnham in Newburyport to tell of a [duel](#) that had taken place involving Daniel Ripley (a law student, son of the Reverend [Ezra Ripley](#) and Madam [Phoebe Bliss Emerson Ripley](#) of [Concord](#)):

*This morning I was saluted with no very agreeable piece of intelligence, which perhaps you may not be informed of & so I will give you a rough draft of. I was asked whether I had heard anything of Ripley's fighting a Duel. No I answered with much surprise when I learned that D.B. Ripley attended on tuesday evening the company of Cadets - that among the officers nominate for Election was a Mr. Wells for captain whose nomination Mr. Ripley & Mr. Bourne strenuously advocated. The election of Mr. Wells was last - after the business of the company was transacted, sat down to a party of whist - Bourne presently came up to the table & observed with marked [?] chagrin & contempt that had it not been for Ripleys foolish defence of said Wells as Captain, his election would have been carried. Poor Daniel was puzzled for an answer to so severe an attack. Presently he replied No sir, you mistake, had it not been for your duplicity he might have been elected. -Bourne knocked Ripley down. In the interim I know [not] what passed - but in the morning Ripley sent a note to B demanding some honorable satisfaction or reparation for the gross insult he had received. Bourne answered his note with contempt and scurrilous abuse & defiance. Ripley then sent him a challenge - which Bourne accepted - Each of them with their seconds - immediately took horses & carriages & rode as far as [Pawtucket](#) to boundary town between Massachusetts and [Rhode Island](#) [because duels were illegal in Massachusetts] - & walked out onto the field of combat - The first fire fell to Ripley - He fired & shot Bourne through the Coat - Bourne then apologised & said if Mr. Ripley was satisfied he was. Mr. Ripley was satisfied - thus ended this unfortunate affair, which will certainly be a great disadvantage to Ripley - although he had the best side....*

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*5th day 29 of 3 Mo // Our first meeting was Silent but I believe was a pretty to me favord time - the last [Monthly Meeting] was large & an abundance of buisness came before us - J Lawton & M Collins published their intentions of marriage & performed Well. - David Buffum expressed a prospect he felt to accompany Elisha Thornton to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting which was united with & he furnished with a Coppy of a Minute - buisness went on with much uniminity which was a comfort - Hannah Dennis Wife of George & Susanna Hicks Dined with us -*

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**DUELING**

**DUELING**

**1814**



[Russian dueling](#) rules required that the adversaries put up their sabres at first blood. The duelists would frequently be seen to be closing their eyes, bending forward, and waving their sabers as far in front of them as they could reach — in hope of inflicting some damage to the other guy so that the encounter could be over.



DUELING

DUELING

1816



Timothy Flint, leaving Ohio for the rural South, could not help but notice in his travels “more than one man who wanted an eye,” and inferred that he “was now in the region of ‘gouging’ or of men fighting by attempting to use their thumbs to scoop out the eyes of their opponents.

DUELING

This was a tactic employed by American white males, as a slave would not dare either to touch a white man rich or poor, or to damage the property of a rich white owner by gouging out the eye of another man of color.

Flint would put this interesting observation on record in his RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAST TEN YEARS BASED ON OCCASIONAL RESIDENCES AND JOURNEYINGS IN THE VALLEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI, which would see publication in Boston in 1826.



## DUELING

## DUELING

1817



Thomas Benton and Charles Lucas, American lawyers, had it out with pistols. Although Lucas suffered a cut to the neck which bled copiously, preventing him from continuing, there needed to be a 2d encounter and this time he took a bullet near the heart. As he lay dying Lucas shook Benton's hand and said that he forgave him.

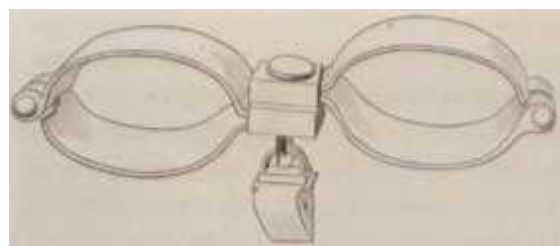
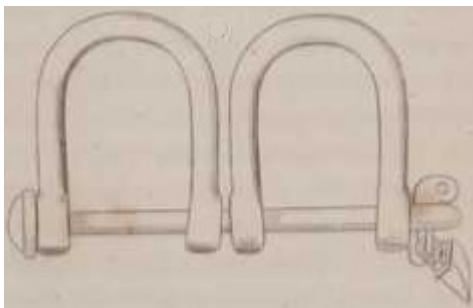
DUELING

Those who have paid attention to the O.J. Simpson trials will be interested in this. In England, Abraham Thornton, who stood accused of having raped and murdered Mary Ashford, was tried and, the verdict being not guilty, released. Mary's family being duly informed by their attorney that an old law would allow for a trial by combat (the nomenclature used for this double jeopardy was "Appeal of Murder") if her 10-year-old brother Henry Stout, Mary's heir-at-law, would champion her and challenge Abraham Thornton to a fight. This law would for the last time in England be used as the 10-year-old, acting through his mother, sued out an appeal to trial by combat on July 15, 1818. This brought forward an ancient statute of Henry VII which prescribed that such an accused, found not guilty, would nevertheless be confined or held to bail until the period had lapsed in which an appeal to trial by combat could be completed. Interestingly, if the still accused and still imprisoned defendant Abraham Thornton were to be "found guilty" by God during this trial by combat with the boy Henry Stout, the only outcome would be that he must [hang](#). There was no possibility of mercy or pardon by the King of England in such an appeal from a judicial decision in the King's court, to trial by combat because such an appeal was considered to be a civil matter rather than a criminal action.

TRIAL BY COMBAT



**Christmas Day:** On the previous evening two officers at Fort Independence on Castle Island had been playing cards, and one had accused the other of cheating. On this day the two officers fought a [duel](#) and one of them, Lieutenant Robert Massie, was killed — whereupon that lieutenant's friends are said to have taken the survivor down into the bowels of the fortification and shackled him to the floor of a tiny chamber which they then walled up.<sup>14</sup>



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

*5th day 25 of 12 M 1817 / My H being unwell with a pain in her*

14. "[Edgar A. Perry](#)" would, as an 18-year old enlistee, serve in Battery H of the 1st Artillery on this island and, in later life as [Edgar Allan Poe](#), although making the setting of his famous short story "The Cask of Amontillado" the catacombs of a European nobleman, may well have been basing the story on this grisly American incident of retribution. The incident seems to be factual, or at any rate, in 1905 when some workmen were renovating the fort they are said to have knocked down a wall and to have discovered behind it a skeleton in the remnants of an archaic military uniform.





DUELING

DUELING

*side & distress on her lungs - I rode to Portsmouth with Sister Ruth & Attended our Moy [Monthly] Meeting - In the first - A Sherman H Dennis & D Buffum appear'd in testimony - In the last we had but little buisness. - We dined at R Mitchell & rode home - & a very muddy ride it was*

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## DUELING

**1819**

➡ [Adam Gurowski](#) was expelled from the gymnasium of Kalisz, Poland for revolutionary demonstration (he would at various German universities continue his studies, at one point as a student of philosophy under [G.W.F. Hegel](#); at some point he would lose an eye, presumably as the unintended but not to be unexpected result of a student saber [duel](#) of the sort then so very popular).



At about this period a Germanization of Boston intellectual culture would be initiated, through the return from study at German universities of [George Ticknor](#)<sup>15</sup> and [Edward Everett](#).

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15. Both Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau would have classes under Professor Ticknor.



## DUELING

## DUELING

1820



January 10, Monday: In the diary of [Thomas Nuttall](#) we find: “*This evening we arrived near to the termination of the second Pine Bluffs, which continue along the river for nearly two miles. We passed through seven bends of the river, and came about 27 miles. The frost was now succeeded by mild and showery weather; and the bald eagles [Falco Leucocephalus] were already nestling, chusing the loftiest poplars for their eyries.*”

In Lawrenceburg, Indiana, this had been planned as Palmer Warren’s wedding day but his fiancée (whose name is not of record) had renounced another suitor, Amasa Fuller, in favor of him. The jilted suitor came to the office of bridegroom-to-be Palmer Warren with a pair of dueling pistols, charged with four balls each, and confronted him with a note he was to sign to the effect that in the presence of the Almighty God, he renounced all pretensions to the young lady and acknowledged that he was a base liar and scoundrel. When the favored suitor declined to sign said note and refused to participate in a demanded [duel of honor](#), the jilted suitor shot and killed him there in his office. Amasa Fuller would [hang](#) for the murder of Palmer Warren on August 14th and the result would be a ballad, “Fuller and Warren,” a variant of which has been recorded as follows:

Ye sons of Columbia, attention all I’ll pray,  
And listen to a story I’m going to tell:  
It happened here of late in an Indiana State,

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## DUELING

## DUELING

Of a hero who but a few could excel....

It seems clear why the name of the bride-to-be in question is not on the record! — how must that Hoosier lass have reacted to the contemporary singing of such a ballad?

The first system of musical notation for 'DUELING' is presented in a three-staff format. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 6/8. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle staff contains a single line of music with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a three-staff system with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a time signature of 6/8. It contains a single line of music with eighth and sixteenth notes. The system is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

The second system of musical notation for 'DUELING' is presented in a three-staff format. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 6/8. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle staff contains a single line of music with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a three-staff system with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a time signature of 6/8. It contains a single line of music with eighth and sixteenth notes. The system is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.



January 16, Sunday: [Johannes Rebmann](#) was born at Gerlingen near Stuttgart, [Germany](#). He would become the initial European to sight the snows of Mount Kilimanjaro — and be ridiculed.

[Commodore James Barron](#) wrote a [duel](#) challenge letter to [Commodore Stephen "Our Country Right or Wrong" Decatur](#): "Sir: Your letter of the 29th ultimo, I have received. In it you say that you have now to inform me that you shall pay no further attention to any communications that I may make to you, other than a direct call to the field; in answer to which I have only to reply that whenever you will consent to meet me on fair and equal grounds, that is, such as two honorable men may consider just and proper, you are at liberty to view this as that call. The whole tenor of your conduct to me justifies this course of proceeding on my part. As for your charges and remarks, I regard them not, particularly your sympathy. You know no such feeling. I cannot be suspected of making the attempt to excite it.

I am, sir, yours, etc.,  
James Barron."



## DUELING

## DUELING

Two Russian vessels, the *Vostok* and the *Mirny*, Captain Mikhail Petrovich Lazarev, in expedition led by Thaddeus von Bellingshausen, reached 69° 25 minutes South and 1° 11 minutes [West?] and were halted by the Fimbul Ice Shelf. They sighted the Antarctic continent on their horizon, the 1st human beings to do so.

In the diary of [Thomas Nuttall](#) we find: “Interest, curiosity, and speculation, had drawn the attention of men of education and wealth toward this country, since its separation into a territory; we now see an additional number of lawyers, doctors, and mechanics. The retinue and friends of the governor, together with the officers of justice, added also essential importance to the...”

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*1st day 17 [?] of 1 M / The Morning meeting was silent till near the close of it when our friend D Buffum was engaged in a short & very lively testimony & the meeting closed under a good savor. – Silent in the Afternoon. – Anne Dennis came home with is & took tea & set the evening, her company was very pleasant. –*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



January 24, Monday: [Commodore Stephen “Our Country Right or Wrong” Decatur](#) responded to [Commodore James Barron](#)’s [duel](#) challenge letter of the 16th, “Sir: I have received your communication of the 16th, and am at a loss to know what your intention is. If you intend it as a challenge, I accept it, and refer you to my friend, Commodore Bainbridge, who is fully authorized to make any arrangements he pleases as regards weapons, mode, or distance.

Your obedient servant,  
Stephen Decatur.”

In the diary of [Thomas Nuttall](#) we find: “On the 24th bodies of cane appear, indicative of an elevation above the usual inundations; it is, however, probable that these tracts are narrow, and flanked at no great distance by lagoons and cypress marshes subject to the floods. Many bends indeed presented nothing but cypress and black ash. From the Chicasaw Bluffs downward, along the banks of the Mississippi, we perceive no more of the Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), and but little of the Platanus, greatly reduced in magnitude, compared with what it attains along the Ohio. The largest tree of the forest here is that which is of the quickest growth, the Cotton-wood poplar (*Populus angulata*).”



March 22, Wednesday In a [duel](#) between [Commodore James Barron](#) and [Commodore Stephen “Our Country Right or Wrong” Decatur](#) on the usual [Washington DC](#) dueling field at Bladensburg, [Maryland](#), Barron took the ball in the muscle of the thigh and would survive this mere flesh wound and be reinstated during the following year to his career trajectory in the US Navy (an organization which, after all, is about killing people), while Decatur took the ball in the gut and within twelve hours was of course dead of peritonitis in the nation’s capital city at the age of 41 (stand sideways and suck it in, do your best not to get gut shot — gut shot is bad).

[Perry County](#) was created in Pennsylvania from part of Cumberland County and named in honor of [Oliver Hazard Perry](#), victor in the Battle of Lake Erie.



## DUELING

## DUELING

June 11, 1820: A duel between Lord Clare and Mr. Grattan terminated without injury.

August 13, 1820: In a duel between a Mr. Travers and a Mr. Hungerford, Mr. Travers was killed.

August 20, 1820: In a duel between Mr. Stewart and Mr. Townsend, fought with muskets, both men fell.

September 17, 1820: In a duel between Mr. Burrowes and Mr. Fulliot, Mr. Burrowes was killed and Mr. Fulliot's skull was fractured.



DUELING

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1821

➡ February 16, Friday: [Heinrich Barth](#) was born in Hamburg.

Publication of the Piano Concerto op.85 by [Johann Nepomuk Hummel](#) was announced in the *Wiener Zeitung*.

John Scott, the editor of London Magazine, had accused Blackwood's Magazine of libel. A representative of the journal, J.H. Christie, had challenged Scott to a [duel](#). Scott had accepted, and in this case “the sword proved to be mightier than the pen” — the editor would die of his wounds.

➡ April 10, Tuesday: In a [duel](#) between M. Manuel and M. Beaumont, M. Manuel was killed.

➡ April 21, Saturday: *Lion of the West* departed from Rochester, [New York](#), as the initial boat from there to Utica along the [Erie Canal](#).

Benderli Ali Pasha replaced Seyyid Ali Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

In a [duel](#) between Viscount Petersham and Mr. Wedderburne, there were no injuries.

➡ May 22, Tuesday: In a [duel](#) between a Mr. Cuddie and a Mr. Brittlebank, Mr. Cuddie was killed.



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## DUELING

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**1822**

➡ March 26, Tuesday: The convicted playwright [Silvio Pellico](#) was taken into custody to be delivered to serve his court-assigned sentence in prison.



In a [duel](#) between Sir Alexander Boswell and a Mr. Stuart, the son of the biographer was killed.





## DUELING

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May 2, Thursday: The Fellows of the Connecticut State Medical Society voted to petition the state legislature for an act of incorporation and funding of a public institution for the care of people with mental illness. The legislature did so and, on January 27, 1823, the Society voted to locate the facility at Hartford, on land owned by Ira Todd. The Connecticut Retreat for the Insane, later named the Hartford Retreat, opened for the admission of patients in 1824.<sup>16</sup>

PSYCHOLOGY

Maria Szymanowska performed before the Russian royal family at the Noblemen's Club in Moscow.

In a [duel](#) between the Duke of Buckingham and the Duke of Bedford on account of some disparaging remarks that had been made by the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Buckingham fired and missed, whereupon the Duke of Bedford discharged his pistol into the air, whereupon the antagonists shook hands.

### ENGLISH EVENTS OF 1822

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

*5th day - came on the Quarterly Meeting at large - In the first Meeting Thos Anthony & Wm Almy appeared in good solid testimonys, then Thos in Solemn reverend supplication, in which I thought life & power rose into dominion, & certainly my feelings were in a better state than they had been for sometime, having been much in poverty & leanness for some weeks - After a short testimony from Betsy Purinton the Meeting closed & we proceeded to the Usual buisness, which was transacted in harmony & good order, & I believe many minds were thankful they were present. - At early candle light John Wilbour appointed a Meeting for the inhabitants of [Greenwich](#), which was attended pretty largely & friends who were there from other Meetings also attended - John was much favored to open the Truths of the Gospel to the people - D Buffum said a few words, lively & powerful & Ruth Meely concluded in Solemn supplication -*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

16. Street, W.R. A CHRONOLOGY OF NOTEWORTHY EVENTS IN AMERICAN [PSYCHOLOGY](#). Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1994



## DUELING

## DUELING

1823



February 28, Friday: In a [duel](#) between General Pepe and General Carascosa, fought with swords, General Carascosa was wounded.

Franz Schubert wrote to the court secretary Ignaz Franz von Mosel, mentioning that his health “still does not permit me to leave the house.” This was the 1st mention of what could have been the illness that would eventually take his life.

Representative Mercer’s resolution in regard to the suppression of the international [slave-trade](#) received on this day both the support of the federal House of Representatives and the support of the federal Senate.

“Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to enter upon, and to prosecute, from time to time, such negotiations with the several maritime powers of Europe and America, as he may deem expedient, for the effectual abolition of the African slave trade, and its ultimate denunciation as piracy, under the law of nations, by the consent of the civilized world.” ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 17th Congress, 2d session, pages 928, 1147-55.

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: England did not, however, lose hope of gaining some concession from the United States. Another House committee had, in 1822, reported that the only method of suppressing the trade was by granting a Right of Search.<sup>17</sup> The House agreed, February 28, 1823, to request the President to enter into negotiations with the maritime powers of Europe to denounce the slave-trade as piracy; an amendment “that we agree to a qualified right of search” was, however, lost.<sup>18</sup> Meantime, the English minister was continually pressing the matter upon Adams, who proposed in turn to denounce the trade as piracy. Canning agreed to this, but only on condition that it be piracy under the Law of Nations and not merely by statute law. Such an agreement, he said, would involve a Right of Search for its enforcement; he proposed strictly to limit and define this right, to allow captured ships to be tried in their own courts, and not to commit the United States in any way to the question of the belligerent Right of Search. Adams finally sent a draft of a proposed treaty to England, and agreed to recognize the slave-traffic “as piracy under the law of nations, namely: that, although seizable by the officers and authorities of every nation, they should be triable only by the tribunals of the country of the slave trading vessel.”<sup>19</sup>

Rush presented this *project* to the government in January 1824. England agreed to all the points insisted on by the United

17. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92.

18. HOUSE JOURNAL, 17th Congress 2d session, pages 212, 280; ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 17th Congress 2d session, pages 922, 1147-1155.

19. BRITISH AND FOREIGN STATE PAPERS, 1823-4, pages 409-21; 1824-5, pages 828-47; AMERICAN STATE PAPERS, FOREIGN, V. No. 371, pages 333-7.



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States; viz., that she herself should denounce the trade as piracy; that slavers should be tried in their own country; that the captor should be laid under the most effective responsibility for his conduct; and that vessels under convoy of a ship of war of their own country should be exempt from search. In addition, England demanded that citizens of either country captured under the flag of a third power should be sent home for trial, and that citizens of either country chartering vessels of a third country should come under these stipulations.<sup>20</sup>

This convention was laid before the Senate April 30, 1824, but was not acted upon until May 21, when it was so amended as to make it terminable at six months' notice. The same day, President Monroe, "apprehending, from the delay in the decision, that some difficulty exists," sent a special message to the Senate, giving at length the reasons for signing the treaty, and saying that "should this Convention be adopted, there is every reason to believe, that it will be the commencement of a system destined to accomplish the entire Abolition of the Slave Trade." It was, however, a time of great political pot-boiling, and consequently an unfortunate occasion to ask senators to settle any great question. A systematic attack, led by Johnson of Louisiana, was made on all the vital provisions of the treaty: the waters of America were excepted from its application, and those of the West Indies barely escaped exception; the provision which, perhaps, aimed the deadliest blow at American slave-trade interests was likewise struck out; namely, the application of the Right of Search to citizens chartering the vessels of a third nation.<sup>21</sup>

The convention thus mutilated was not signed by England, who demanded as the least concession the application of the Right of Search to American waters. Meantime the United States had invited nearly all nations to denounce the trade as piracy; and the President, the Secretary of the Navy, and a House committee had urgently favored the granting of the Right of Search. The bad faith of Congress, however, in the matter of the Colombian treaty broke off for a time further negotiations with England.<sup>22</sup>

20. AMERICAN STATE PAPERS, FOREIGN, V. No. 371, pages 333-7.

21. AMERICAN STATE PAPERS, FOREIGN, V., No. 374, page 344 ff., No. 379, pages 360-2.

22. HOUSE REPORTS, 18th Congress 2d session, I. No. 70; AMERICAN STATE PAPERS, FOREIGN, V. No. 379, pages 364-5, No. 414, page 783, etc. Among the nations invited by the United States to co-operate in suppressing the trade was the United States of Colombia. Mr. Anderson, our minister, expressed "the certain belief that the Republic of Colombia will not permit herself to be behind any Government in the civilized world in the adoption of energetic measures for the suppression of this disgraceful traffic": AMERICAN STATE PAPERS, FOREIGN, V. No. 407, page 729. The little republic replied courteously; and, as a *projet* for a treaty, Mr. Anderson offered the proposed English treaty of 1824, including the Senate amendments. Nevertheless, the treaty thus agreed to was summarily rejected by the Senate, March 9, 1825: AMERICAN STATE PAPERS, FOREIGN, V. No. 407, page 735. Another result of this general invitation of the United States was a proposal by Colombia that the slave-trade and the status of Hayti be among the subjects for discussion at the Panama Congress. As a result of this, a Senate committee recommended that the United States take no part in the Congress. This report was finally disagreed to by a vote of 19 to 24: AMERICAN STATE PAPERS, FOREIGN, V. No. 423, pages 837, 860, 876, 882.

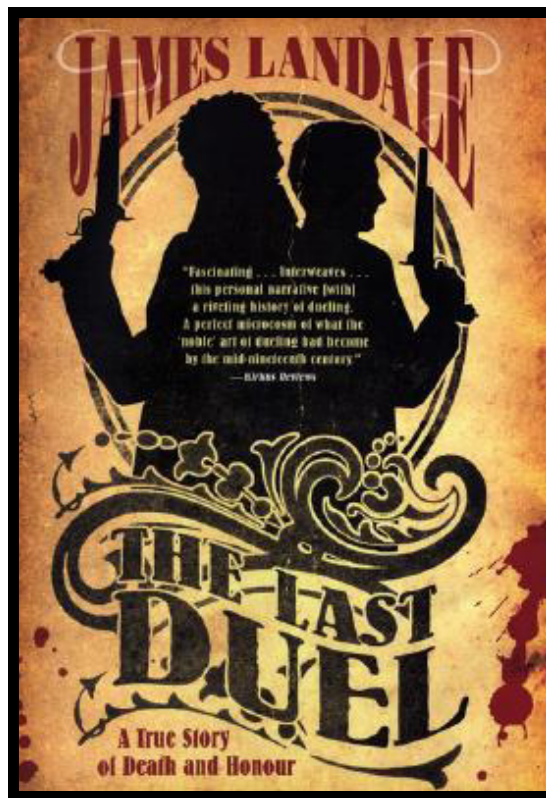


## DUELING

## DUELING

1826

- ➡ In a halfhearted [duel](#) between Secretary of State Henry Clay and Senator John Randolph, both men missed during the first exchange of shots. Lord knows why. After reloading, the two federal officials fired again, and this time Senator Randolph's coat was struck by a bullet. "You owe me a coat, Mr. Clay," Randolph commented, and with this humor the duo considered their duel to be done and over with, and they shook hands. (It is not on record, whether Randolph ever obtained that new coat.)
- ➡ August 23, Wednesday morning: In Scotland, a pistol [duel](#) was fought between David Lansdale, a linen merchant of Kirkcaldy, and his former banker, George Morgan of the Bank of Scotland. The linen merchant's grievance was that the banker had been spreading unfounded rumors about his business, resulting in unfair harassment from Lansdale's creditors. Refer to an account by a descendant, James Lansdale, *THE LAST DUEL: A TRUE STORY OF DEATH AND HONOR* (NY: Canongate, 2005). This would be the last Scottish duel in which there was a fatality.





## DUELING

## DUELING



September 21, Thursday: Four songs by Franz Schubert were published by Sauer and Leidesdorf, Vienna as his op.59: *Dass sie hier gewesen*, *Du bist die Ruh* and *Lachen und Weinen*, all to words of Ruckert, and *Du liebst mich nicht*, to words of Platen.

In a [duel](#) fought 6 miles south of Franklin, Kentucky, [Sam Houston](#) badly wounded General William A. White.



Lieutenant [John Franklin](#) and [George Back](#) in the 26-foot boats *Lion* and *Reliance* reached Fort Franklin three weeks after Richardson and Kendall, who had completed their survey. That winter Back would learn of his earlier promotion to Commander.

[THE FROZEN NORTH](#)

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*5th day 21st of 9th M 1826 / Our Frd Abigail Robinson was engaged in a very favourd testimony to the Truth, & our meeting was a good one. – no buisness in the Preparative Meeting. –*

[RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS](#)



DUELING

DUELING

1827



July 14, Saturday, dawn: A [duel](#) took place just off the [Providence/Pawtucket](#) turnpike, about a mile into the countryside to the east of [Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#). The participants, their seconds, and their surgeons had two days earlier arrived by stage from [Boston](#). Both duelists were speaking French and we have no clue as to their quarrel. They fired pistols at each other at a distance of nine feet (the usual distance for a pistol duel was “ten paces,” amounting I suppose to some 25 feet). One of them suffered a leg wound whereupon the other made haste to the docks of [Providence](#) and boarded that morning’s packet for New-York.



## DUELING

## DUELING

1830



An Ulster Scot visitor to America in the decade, Thomas Cather, would ascribe the prevalence of [dueling](#) here to the poor condition of our libel and slander laws:

The usual plan to obtain redress for libel (adopted particularly in the Southern and Western states) is both summary and effective. It saves a deal of litigation; the proverbial delays and expenses of the law are avoided, and the matter is brought to a speedy if not satisfactory issue.

The party who considers himself aggrieved provides himself either with a cowhide [whip], a Boey [Bowie] knife, or perhaps shoulders his rifle (according to the measure of the offence, or the irritability of his disposition) and at once proceeds against the delinquent, who, if he should be taken unawares, expiates his offence by having his throat cut, or his body drilled by a rifle bullet....

Editors in the United States, however, are generally prepared for such emergencies, and at times very interesting passages of arms occur between them and the gentlemen with whose characters they make free.<sup>23</sup>



**James Bowie**

23. Cather, Thomas. Thomas Yoseloff, ed., VOYAGE TO AMERICA: THE JOURNALS OF THOMAS CATHER (NY: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961; reprinted Westport CT: Greenwood, 1973, pages 141-2)





DUELING

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1832



December 16, Sunday, 3PM: Duelists arrived in [Rhode Island](#) by post chaises along the road from Massachusetts. After making certain that they were demonstrably no longer within the state of Massachusetts where dueling was a criminal offense, they walked into a field of the Cyrus Cook farm and began removing items of clothing. When it became evident that there was not only a herd of cows in that field, but that among these cows was a bull, the dueling party repaired to a nearby hollow, where the principals continued stripping to the waist (this made for a more sanitary puncture wound). When the seconds placed them back to back the younger man began to sob and needed the fortification of several drinks. On the initial exchange they both missed, so wildly that one of the seconds became frightened and for the remainder of the encounter would be witnessing from behind a tree. On the 2d exchange, one of the duelists shot himself in the leg and, honor being satisfied, the [duel](#) ended. Local lads would take custody of a shirt they had left behind.

On this day lava erupted from [Mount Vesuvius](#) and began to flow toward Torre del Greco. The flow would continue for eight days.



MOUNT VESUVIUS





DUELING

DUELING

1833



In [Rhode Island](#), John Brown Francis was in charge.

Near [Cumberland](#), one Sunday during this year, a couple of Bostonians fought a [duel](#). After one of the duelists sustained a wound to the knee the party returned into Massachusetts, where dueling was illegal. Sheriff Amos Cook, Jr., and Fenner Brown, sent to [Boston](#) to arrest the parties, returned emptyhanded. The bullet that caused this injury was recovered and became a souvenir at Cumberland Hill. A memory of this incident has been preserved in the placename “Duel Hollow,” about a mile north of Cumberland Hill.

Thomas Hamilton visited [Rhode Island](#).

THOMAS HAMILTON



## DUELING

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1834



January 31, Friday: Duelists from [Boston](#) fought on the [Moses Brown](#) farm (it seems likely that the [duel](#) occurred near the Cold Spring on the [Providence, Rhode Island](#) side of the Red Bridge). The duelists were Robert C. Hooper, Esq., a merchant, and Joseph Jones, Esq. (familiarily known as “Shocko” Jones because his hometown was [Shocko, North Carolina](#)). The North Carolinian was a student at the Harvard Law School and the quarrel was over an alleged slur on the honor of a Miss Marian Marshall. The duel was fought with pistols at eight paces. After exchanging shots the parties returned to Boston, arriving at Tremont House at 11:30 P.M.

[Daniel Webster](#) delivered an address on “The Removal of the Deposts” in the US Senate in which he derogated the presumption that the poor, because they are poor, inherently harbor animosity toward the rich, because they are rich. What a silly supposition, the exact opposite of the truth!<sup>24</sup>

Sir, there is one other subject on which I wish to raise my voice. There is a topic which I perceive is to become the general war-cry of party, on which I take the liberty to warn the country against delusion. Sir, the cry is to be raised that this is a question between the poor and the rich. I know, Sir, it has been proclaimed, that one thing was certain, that there was always a hatred on the part of the poor toward the rich; and that this hatred would support the late measures, and the putting down of the bank. Sir, I will not be silent at the threat of such a detestable fraud on public opinion. If but ten men, or one man, in the nation will hear my voice, I will still warn them against this attempted imposition.

Mr. President, this is an eventful moment. On the great questions which occupy us, we all look for some decisive movement of public opinion. As I wish that movement to be free, intelligent, and unbiassed, the true manifestation of the public will, I desire to prepare the country for another appeal, which I perceive is about to be made to popular prejudice, another attempt to obscure all distinct views of the public good, to overwhelm all patriotism and all enlightened self-interest, by loud cries against false danger, and by exciting the passions of one class against another. I am not mistaken in the omen; I see the magazine whence the weapons of this warfare are to be drawn. I hear already the din of the hammering of arms preparatory to the combat. They may be such arms, perhaps, as reason, and justice, and honest patriotism cannot resist. Every effort at resistance, it is possible, may be feeble and powerless; but, for one, I shall make an effort, – an effort to be begun now, and to be carried on and continued, with untiring zeal, till the end of the contest.

Sir, I see, in those vehicles which carry to the people sentiments from high places, plain declarations that the present controversy is but a strife between one part of the community and another. I hear it boasted as the unfailing security, the

24. Edwin P. Whipple's THE GREAT SPEECHES AND ORATIONS OF DANIEL WEBSTER WITH AN ESSAY ON DANIEL WEBSTER AS A MASTER OF ENGLISH STYLE (Boston: Little, Brown, 1879).



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solid ground, never to be shaken, on which recent measures rest, **that the poor naturally hate the rich.** I know that, under the cover of the roofs of the Capitol, within the last twenty-four hours, among men sent here to devise means for the public safety and the public good, it has been vaunted forth, as matter of boast and triumph, that one cause existed powerful enough to support every thing and to defend every thing; and that was, **the natural hatred of the poor to the rich.**

Sir, I pronounce the author of such sentiments to be guilty of attempting a detestable fraud on the community; a double fraud; a fraud which is to cheat men out of their property, and out of the earnings of their labor, by first cheating them out of their understandings.

"The natural hatred of the poor to the rich!" Sir, it shall not be till the last moment of my existence, -it shall be only when I am drawn to the verge of oblivion, when I shall cease to have respect or affection for any thing on earth, -that I will believe the people of the United States capable of being effectually deluded, cajoled, and **driven about in herds**, by such abominable frauds as this. If they shall sink to that point, if they so far cease to be men, thinking men, intelligent men, as to yield to such pretences and such clamor, they will be slaves already; slaves to their own passions, slaves to the fraud and knavery of pretended friends. They will deserve to be blotted out of all the records of freedom; they ought not to dishonor the cause of self-government, by attempting any longer to exercise it; they ought to keep their unworthy hands entirely off from the cause of republican liberty, if they are capable of being the victims of artifices so shallow, of tricks so stale, so threadbare, so often practised, so much worn out, on serfs and slaves.

"The natural hatred of the poor against the rich!" "The danger of a moneyed aristocracy!" "A power as great and dangerous as that resisted by the Revolution!" "A call to a new declaration of independence!" Sir, I admonish the people against the object of outcries like these. I admonish every industrious laborer in the country to be on his guard against such delusion. I tell him the attempt is to play off his passions against his interests, and to prevail on him, in the name of liberty, to destroy all the fruits of liberty; in the name of patriotism, to injure and afflict his country; and in the name of his own independence, to destroy that very independence, and make him a beggar and a slave. Has he a dollar? He is advised to do that which will destroy half its value. Has he hands to labor? Let him rather fold them, and sit still, than be pushed on, by fraud and artifice, to support measures which will render his labor useless and hopeless.

Sir, the very man, of all others, who has the deepest interest in a sound currency, and who suffers most by mischievous legislation in money matters, is the man who earns his daily bread by his daily toil. A depreciated currency, sudden changes of prices, paper money, falling between morning and noon, and falling still lower between noon and night, - these things



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constitute the very harvest-time of speculators, and of the whole race of those who are at once idle and crafty; and of that other race, too, the Catilines of all times, marked, so as to be known for ever by one stroke of the historian's pen, **those greedy of other men's property and prodigal of their own.** Capitalists, too, may outlive such times. They may either prey on the earnings of labor, by their **cent. per cent.**, or they may hoard. But the laboring man, what can he hoard? Preying on nobody, he becomes the prey of all. His property is in his hands. His reliance, his fund, his productive freehold, his all, is his labor. Whether he work on his own small capital, or another's, his living is still earned by his industry; and when the money of the country becomes depreciated and debased, whether it be adulterated coin or paper without credit, that industry is robbed of its reward. He then labors for a country whose laws cheat him out of his bread. I would say to every owner of every quarter-section of land in the West, I would say to every man in the East who follows his own plough, and to every mechanic, artisan, and laborer in every city in the country, – I would say to every man, everywhere, who wishes by honest means to gain an honest living, "Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing. Whoever attempts, under whatever popular cry, to shake the stability of the public currency, bring on distress in money matters, and drive the country into the use of paper money, stabs your interest and your happiness to the heart."

The herd of hungry wolves who live on other men's earnings will rejoice in such a state of things. A system which absorbs into their pockets the fruits of other men's industry is the very system for them. A government that produces or countenances uncertainty, fluctuations, violent risings and fallings in prices, and, finally, paper money, is a government exactly after their own heart. Hence these men are always for change. They will never let well enough alone. A condition of public affairs in which property is safe, industry certain of its reward, and every man secure in his own hard-earned gains, is no paradise for them. Give them just the reverse of this state of things; bring on change, and change after change; let it not be known to-day what will be the value of property to-morrow; let no man be able to say whether the money in his pockets at night will be money or worthless rags in the morning; and depress labor till double work shall earn but half a living, – give them this state of things, and you give them the consummation of their earthly bliss.

Sir, the great interest of this great country, the producing cause of all its prosperity, is labor! labor! labor! We are a laboring community. A vast majority of us all live by industry and actual employment in some of their forms. The Constitution was made to protect this industry, to give it both encouragement and security; but, above all, security. To that very end, with that precise object in view, power was given to Congress over the currency, and over the money system of the country. In forty years' experience, we have found nothing at all adequate to the



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beneficial execution of this trust but a well-conducted national bank. That has been tried, returned to, tried again, and always found successful. If it be not the proper thing for us, let it be soberly argued against; let something better be proposed; let the country examine the matter coolly, and decide for itself. But whoever shall attempt to carry a question of this kind by clamor, and violence, and prejudice; whoever would rouse the people by appeals, false and fraudulent appeals, to their love of independence, to resist the establishment of a useful institution, because it is a bank, and deals in money, and who artfully urges these appeals wherever he thinks there is more of honest feeling than of enlightened judgment, – means nothing but deception. And whoever has the wickedness to conceive, and the hardihood to avow, a purpose to break down what has been found, in forty years' experience, essential to the protection of all interests, by arraying one class against another, and by acting on such a principle as **that the poor always hate the rich**, shows himself the reckless enemy of all. An enemy to his whole country, to all classes, and to every man in it, he deserves to be marked especially **as the poor man's curse!**



DUELING

DUELING

1835



October: A [duel](#) took place near Scott's pond in [Smithfield](#), [Rhode Island](#) between two naval officers who had arrived by boat from New-York to [Providence](#) and then by coach. It appears that both officers sustained wounds.





## DUELING

## DUELING

1837

➡ Frederick Marryat's THE DOG FIEND, OR SNARLEYOW. The author, visiting America, observed the manner in which libel and slander were provoking duels:

Slander and detraction are the inseperable [sic] evils of a democracy, and as neither public nor private characters are spared, and the law is impotent to protect them, men have no other recourse than to defend their reputations with their lives, or to deter the defamer by the risk which he must incur. And where political animosities are carried to such a length as they are in this exciting climate, there is no time given for coolness and reflection. Indeed, for one American who would attempt to prevent a duel, there are ten who would urge the parties on to the conflict. The majority of the editors of the newspapers in America are constantly practicing with the pistol, that they may be ready when called upon, and are most of them very good shots. But the worst feature in the American system of duelling is, that they do not go out, as we do in this country, to satisfy honour, but with the determination to kill.<sup>25</sup>

Some editors did oppose dueling, referring to the practice as “this daring violation of law” or as “this most unchristian practice.”<sup>26</sup> However, many either did not oppose this practice or dared not speak out:

- The Nashville, Tennessee Daily Republican Banner resorted to a tone that was factual rather than either condemnatory or supportive.<sup>27</sup>
- The Arkansas Times and Advocate covered duels in a neutral-to-sporting tone.<sup>28</sup>
- The Helena, Arkansas Spy wrote of particular duels as unfortunate but declined to condemn the practice in general.<sup>29</sup>
- The Tuscumbia, Alabama North Alabamian reported on a number of duels with no apparent criticism of the practice.<sup>30</sup>

➡ Aleksandr Pushkin took part in a duel with pistols and was killed. Evidently he should have stuck to swords.

Skilled Swordsmen	
Saint Ignatius Loyola	President Harry S Truman
Michel Angelo	General George Patton

25. Marryat, Frederick. Jules Zanger, ed., DIARY IN AMERICA (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1839; reprinted Bloomington IN: Indiana UP, 1960, pages 195-6)

26. Editorial in the New Orleans Bulletin reprinted in “Duelling,” Milledgeville (Georgia) Federal Union, February 12, 1838, front page

27. “A duel was fought a week or two since,” Daily Republican Banner, November 25, 1837, page 2

28. “The Duel,” Times & Advocate, March 12, 1838, page 2

29. “Duel at Washington,” Spy, March 10, 1838, page 2

30. “Duel at New Orleans,” North Alabamian, February 17, 1837, page 2; “A Duel in Texas,” March 31, 1837, page 2; “Rencontre” and “A Duel on Horseback,” April 14, 1837, page 2



**DUELING**

**DUELING**

Skilled Swordsmen	
Sir Walter Raleigh	Heinrich Himmler
René Descartes	Hermann Göring
John Milton	Juan Péron
George Frederick Handel	Francisco Franco
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe	Benito Mussolini
Karl Marx	Oswald Mosley
Sir Richard Burton	Reinhard Heydrich
Aleksandr Pushkin	

There were rumors that the Russian secret police had known about the arrangements for the duel, and could have kept their national poet alive had they had any real need to do so.



## DUELING

## DUELING

1838

➡ To reduce violence in the southern United States, Governor John Lyde Wilson of South Carolina develops a new [dueling](#) code. The most significant changes were that gentlemen could not refuse a duel because their social status was higher than their challengers, and that fists could be substituted for guns or knives. Unfortunately, as most duelists were mean drunks rather than gentlemen, the new rules only led to eye-gouging, lip-tearing brawls becoming the precursors to gun or knife fights. Such violence was not restricted to the United States, either, and in 1870, the Montreal Gazette reported that the goal of Canadian logging camp wrestlers was to stick “the forefinger of the right hand fast in their antagonist’s hair, and with the thumb — as they term it — gouge out the daylights.”

➡ Wealthy New Yorkers begin frequenting “concert saloons.” These were the first modern nightclubs. Owners included John Jacob Astor. (While Astor occasionally gave money to temperance groups, his fortune was based on selling alcohol to Indians. Furs were simply a profitable sideline.) Dance revues, comedy acts, and prizefights were among the entertainment offered. The standards were not high: writing in 1882, James McCabe, Jr., said that in most such clubs, “The liquors furnished are of the vilest description. The girls are hideous and unattractive, and are foul-mouthed and bloated.” As for the name “saloon,” it is a mispronunciation of the French “salon,” meaning “hall.” The name moved west during the 1850s, where it frequently graced broken-down wagons and sod shacks. Western saloons that had female employees were known as “Pretty Waiters,” while those that offered dancing were called “Fandangos.” As for “Hell on Wheels,” those were railroad shows that featured boxing, wrestling, dancing, drinking, gambling, prostitution, and balloon rides. Spittoons existed mainly in the places fancy enough to afford bouncers, as in the rougher bars, fighters were too likely to use them as boxing gloves.

➡ The London Prize Ring Rules replace Broughton’s Rules in English prizefighting. These banned boots with spiked toes, and prohibited seconds from helping a semi-conscious fighter toe his mark at the beginning of a round. The reason was to facilitate wagering.



## DUELING

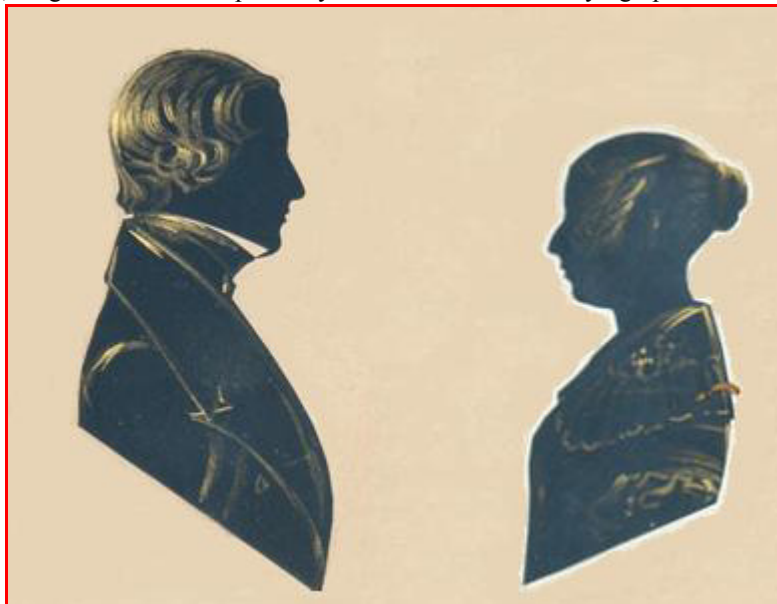
## DUELING



In [Washington DC](#), a Southern city in addition to being our nation's capital, US Congressman William Graves of Kentucky (using as his "second" Henry A. Wise of Virginia) and US Congressman Jonathan Cilley of [Maine](#) fought a [duel](#) at long range with rifles in which Graves killed Cilley. There was a general public outcry against such dueling. Even the justices of the US Supreme Court would disapprove of such antics.

The Conway family moved into their new brick home in Falmouth, Virginia near [Washington](#). Methodist prayer meetings would be held regularly, in their basement, for the benefit of themselves as well as for the benefit of the surrounding community. [Moncure Daniel Conway](#)'s mother Margaret Eleanor Daniel Conway had been raised as a Presbyterian but had been horrified at the doctrine of predestination and had converted to Methodism under the guidance of her husband Walker Peyton Conway. It is on record that she "used to quote with merry approval the negro hymn — 'I never foun' no peace nor res' / Till I jine the Methodes'."

After a secret engagement [William James Hubbard](#) got married with the very well situated Maria Mason Tabb of Gloucester, Virginia — and was painfully aware that he was marrying up.<sup>31</sup>



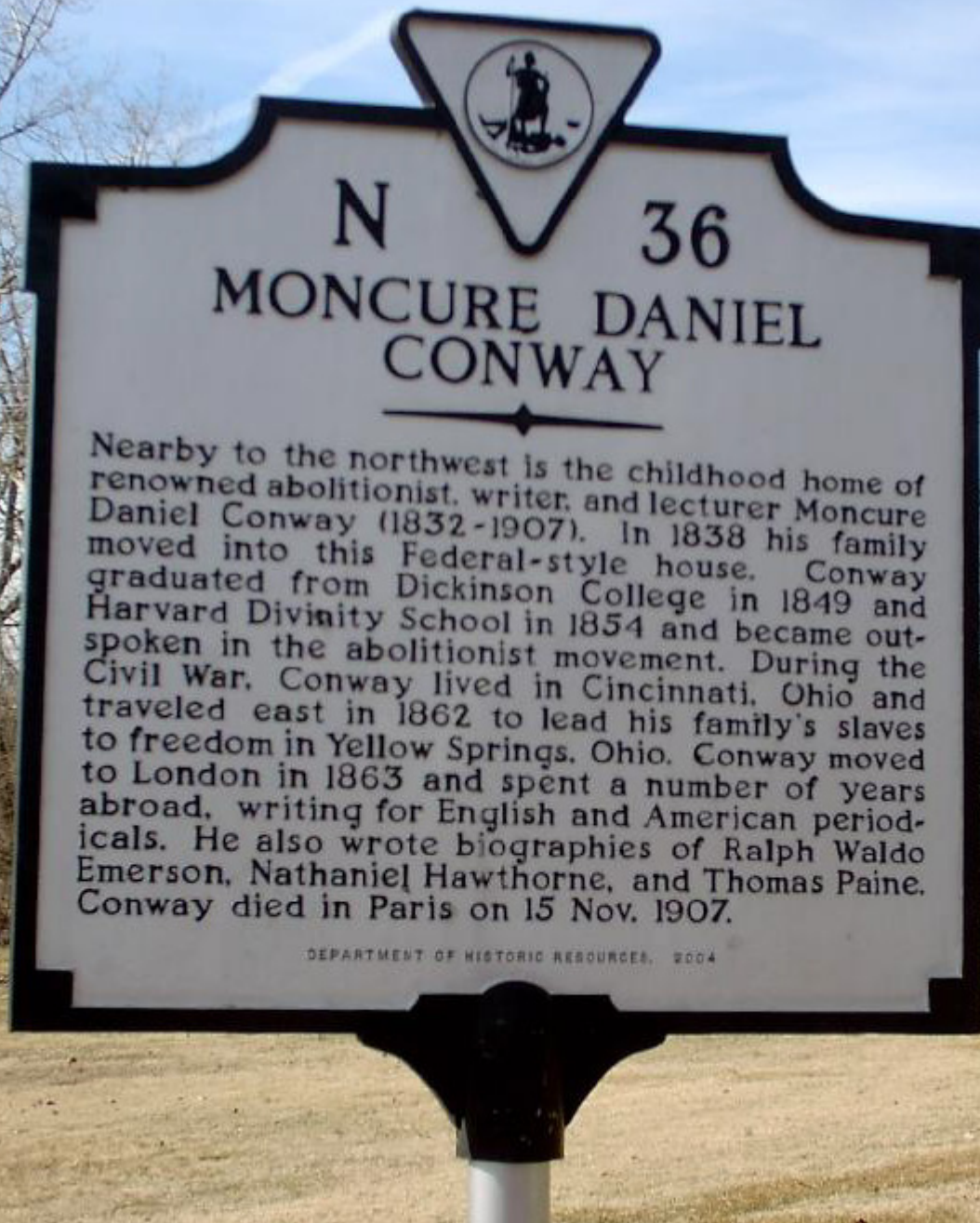
Few would wish a child to marry a poor unknown and I am too sensible of this fact to place myself in a situation to wound the most vulnerable of my feelings. Their quantum of pride is a drop in the ocean to mine. My misfortunes have made me painfully morbid and if I could be driven to derangement I should be mad upon that theme.

31. These [silhouettes](#) are not of this groom and bride, but they are representative silhouette busts actually cut by the groom, of somebody at some time or another.

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## DUELING

## DUELING

The newlyweds would honeymoon in Italy and meet Horatio Greenough and Hiram Powers. Their union would produce William James Hubard, Jr. (February 8, 1845), Ella Hubard (1847), and Lloyd Tabb Hubard (July 6, 1854).



 John Lyde Wilson's *THE CODE OF HONOR* attempted to regulate, and therefore moderate, dueling at such venues as "The Oaks" outside New Orleans and "Bloody Island" in the Mississippi River near St. Louis. Technically, such dueling by white gentlemen was illegal, of course they were being discouraged from honorably killing one another, man to man, but practically, it would have been difficult for a prosecutor, assuming he was willing to try this, to get a jury to convict a gentleman for "defending his honor" against another gentleman if he considered that that other gentleman had impugned it. The book was published in South Carolina, where the law had established a penalty of one year in prison and a fine of \$2,000.<sup>00</sup> for any person guilty of taking part in a **duel** — which tells us a lot about the status of "legality" in those years.<sup>32</sup>

Is this of any importance? Why, yes, anything that pertains to white men is important:



I freely admit that, according to white writers, white teachers, white historians and white molders of public opinion, nothing ever happened in the world of any importance that could not or should not be labeled "white."

— W.E. Burghardt Du Bois, "The Superior Race"



32. I ran into precisely the same ideas about the nature of legality in Austin, Texas in 1958, when I went to Woolworths to purchase a pistol. There were laws, of course, regulations having to do with waiting periods and permits and such, but when I inquired at the gun counter about the status of these regulations, the response I received was a grin and the remark "Oh, but you're not a nigger." So I paid the man \$14.<sup>99</sup> for a .455 Webley plus a few dollars for a box of 50 rimmed .45-caliber cartridges, he put them in a paper sack for me, and I walked out onto the Texas street free, white, and twenty-one. I hadn't even been asked to produce an ID. From this I learned that the purpose of the law is to protect the good people from the bad people, and since then I've never had occasion to be surprised at American justice, or at the conduct of our law officers.





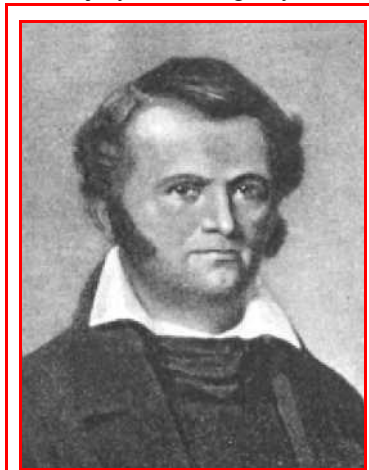
## DUELING

## DUELING

Approximately one of these duels in seven –of the ones which were not interrupted by negotiations between “seconds”– resulted in a death, since it frequently happened that the principals would resolve on the field before exchanging balls, or would prematurely and ostentatiously discharge their ball into the air and thus render themselves defenseless. When wounded, it was traditional to forgive one’s opponent.

After an initial misunderstanding with [John L. O’Sullivan](#), editor of [The United States Magazine and Democratic Review](#), over Salem coquette Mary Silsbee, [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) became friendly with him and an active contributor to his journal (he would produce 24 tales and sketches for its pages in the next seven years). Deeply moved by his friend Jonathan Cilley’s having been killed in this rifle duel by a young fellow congressman from the South –this is complicated: because he had supposed Hawthorne to have been supposing that responding to the challenge would be the gentlemanly thing to do– Hawthorne authored a memorial essay for this friend.

The Louisville [Journal](#) reported, at some time during this year, that “The trial of John Wilson, who officiated as Speaker of the Arkansas House of Representatives, during the last legislative session of that State, and who walked down from his chair and slew Major T.T. Anthony with a Bowie knife on the floor of the house, took place a few days ago. The verdict of the jury was, not guilty of murder, but excusable homicide.”



**James Bowie**



## DUELING

## DUELING

1839

➡ [Dueling](#) became illegal in the US. Imprisonment for debt became, under certain circumstances, illegal.

➡ John Henry Clifford became district attorney for southern Massachusetts (until 1849).

➡ February 20, Wednesday: The final lecture of [Waldo Emerson](#)'s "Human Life" series.

The United States Congress banned [dueling](#) in the District of Columbia. In the future political duels would necessitate a short carriage journey, to fields in the state of Virginia (a venue where such duels also, for whatever this is worth, were illegal).

Simon Mayr read the 1st part of his HISTORY OF THE ORATORIO AND THE MYSTERIES at the Ateneo of Bergamo.

According to the Congressional Globe, page 186, Appendix, Mr. Sevier of Arkansas made a comment on the floor of the US Senate in derogation of the seriousness of attention of the American people:

[They must] at all times have an idol to worship, and a clown to laugh at; they must have occasionally a [Sam Patch](#), a Morgan, an Abolitionist, or an Oceola, to marvel at, and to talk about.



**DUELING**

**DUELING**

**1840**

[Theodore Sedgwick Fay](#)'s THE COUNTESS IDA: A TALE OF BERLIN (two volumes) was written to promote a campaign against [dueling](#).

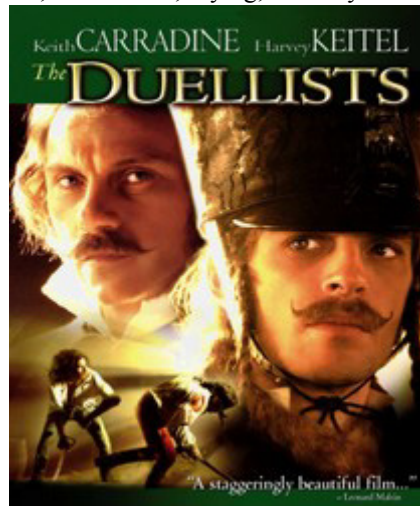


## DUELING

## DUELING

### DUEL

April: According to the Caledonian Mercury of Edinburgh, Scotland for April 6th there had just been an “AFFAIR OF HONOUR. — An article in the Jersey Times having given offence to Major Thoreau, that gentleman demanded satisfaction of Mr Rafter, which was instantly granted. The parties met in the neighborhood of Prince’s Tower. Major Thoreau fired at his antagonist, who, deliberately raising his pistol, fired in the air, resuming immediately his former position. On which Major Thoreau advanced to Mr Rafter, said, ‘Mr Rafter, you have overpowered my feelings more by firing in the air, than if you had fired at me,’ at the same time holding out his hand to Mr Rafter, who took it, saying, ‘I bear you no enmity whatever.’”

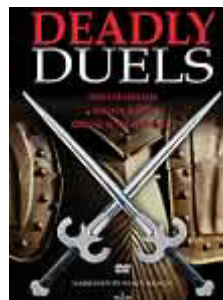


(Whatever this gazette article had been that had given such cause for offense to Major John Thoreau, it would seem to have made no mention of him by name.)



“To be active, well, happy, implies courage. To be ready to fight in a duel or a battle implies desperation, or that you hold your life cheap.”

— Henry David Thoreau

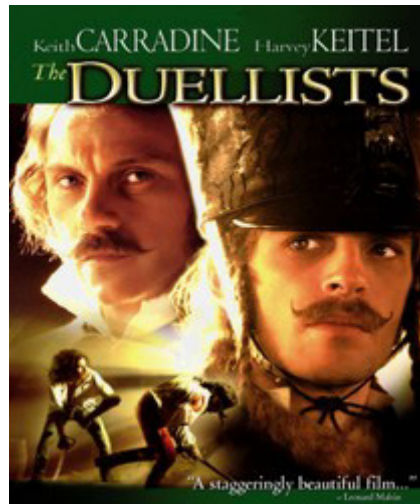




## DUELING

## DUELING

October 23, Friday evening: According to The Era of London for October 25, Sunday, 1840, and according to The Derby Mercury of Derby, England for October 28, Wednesday, 1840, there had been a “DUEL IN GURENSEY. — A [duel](#) was fought in Guernsey on Friday evening, between Mr. D. Herbert, Lieutenant 77th Regiment, and Mr. J.P. De St. Croix, attorney’s clerk and militia captain. The former gentleman was accompanied by Mr. G. Prettie, of the Custom-house; and the latter by the Anglo-Spanish Major, Mr. C.P. Thoreau; Dr. G.M. Jones attended as medical friend.



Two shots were exchanged, fortunately without taking effect (Mr. De. St. Croix’s friends say that his pistol missed fire once); the two principals then desired to exchange a third shot, but the seconds interfered; satisfaction, they thought, had been fully given; each, therefore, withdrew his friend from the ground, and both Mr. Herbert and Mr. De. St. Croix returned to [Jersey](#) on Saturday morning. — Jersey Gazette. [Will the statute be put in force in this case?]

MAJOR JOHN THOREAU



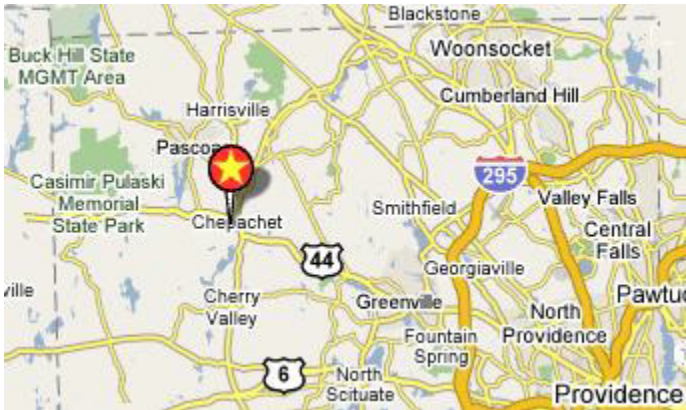
“To be active, well, happy, implies courage. To be ready to fight in a duel or a battle implies desperation, or that you hold your life cheap.”

— Henry David Thoreau



1842

June 25, Saturday: [Thomas Wilson Dorr](#) returned to [Chepachet, Rhode Island](#) to reconvene the People’s Legislature



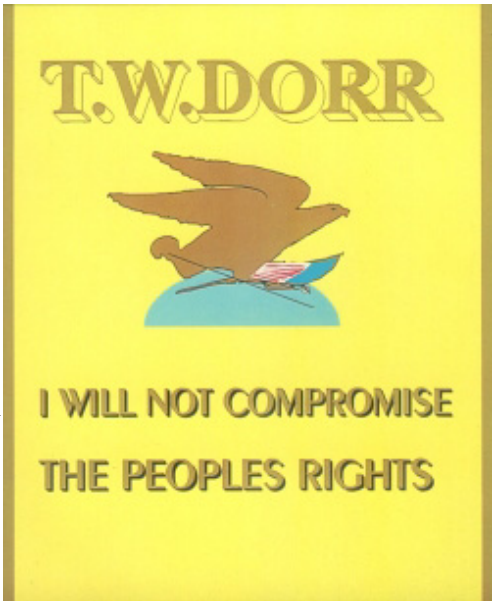
on the 4th of July. The Charter government would declare martial law, making such activities amount to

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

treason. Only a few hundred of his supporters, including not one of the elected legislators, would ever make an appearance.



Design of the  
Rebellion’s flag





## DUELING

## DUELING

Bronson Alcott spent an hour with [Thomas Carlyle](#), and found that

*Tw'as a dark hour with him. His wit was sombre as it was pitiless; his merriment had madness in it; his humor tragical even to tears.... His conversation was cynical, trivial, and gave no pleasure.*

Carlyle did, however, invite Alcott to return.

The editor of the New-York Courier and Enquirer, James Watson Webb, fought a [duel](#) with US Congressman Thomas F. Marshall of Kentucky and the New-York Herald reported that:

The duel between Thomas F. Marshall and James Watson Webb was fought this morning at four o'clock, at the old duelling ground, just this side of the State line, about seven miles north of this city. Mr. Marshall was attended by Dr. Carr of Baltimore, as second, and Dr. Gibson, of the same place, as surgeon. Mr. Morrel, of your city, acted as Webb's friend. The parties exchanged one shot without injury. Marshall demanded immediately a second pistol, and wounded Webb upon that fire, in the fleshy part of the hip, sustaining no damage himself. Marshall, who came determined to fight it out, demanded a third shot, but Webb could not stand it and the matter was made up....





**DUELING**

**DUELING**

**1843**

[Theodore Sedgwick Fay](#)'s HOBOKEN, A ROMANCE OF NEW YORK (two volumes) was, like his THE COUNTESS IDA before it, written to help in the ongoing campaign against [dueling](#).



## DUELING

## DUELING

1845

When US Congressmen Thomas Clingman of [North Carolina](#) and William Yancey of Alabama fought a [duel](#) in this year, the rules set down in writing in advance by their seconds were as follows:

- 1.) Weapons to be used, smooth-bore pistols of the usual dueling length.
- 2.) Distance ten paces (thirty feet).
- 3.) Pistols to be held perpendicularly, the muzzles up or down, at their selection.
- 4.) The word to be given in a clear, distinct tone, as follows, “Gentlemen, are you ready?  
Fire — one-two-three-halt!” at intervals of one second each.
- 5.) The wind and sun to be equally divided.
- 6.) The giving of the word and the choice of positions to be decided by the toss of a dollar.
- 7.) The pistols to be loaded by the seconds with powder and single ball, in the presence of all parties.
- 8.) Each party to be permitted to have on the ground a surgeon and three friends,  
all of whom must be unarmed.
- 9.) The seconds to be armed with pistols, loaded with powder and single ball.
- 10.) The seconds to be permitted to examine the person and dress of each principal.
- 11.) Neither principal to commence lowering or raising his pistol before the word “fire”  
nor after the word “halt.”

This confrontation, after a first volley in which both men were entirely untouched, was stopped by the police.

Monte, a card game in which players bet on a bottom and top layer of two cards each, had been around since 1836. This year marked the beginnings of draw poker: would such games be worth the candle? In this year, per Thomas Webster’s *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF DOMESTIC ECONOMY*:

... candles supply the most convenient and the most general mode of obtaining artificial light for domestic purposes. Until lately, two substances only, wax and tallow, were known as material for candles; spermaceti was next introduced, and at present various substances such as stearine, etc., are added.



## DUELING

## DUELING

1846

As John Hampden Pleasants, editor of the Richmond VA Whig, lay dying after a [duel](#), he made a comment that indicates the influence of a culture in which the real issues are enslavement and honor: “[W]hat a damned immolation this is to be such slaves to public opinion!”<sup>33</sup> The dueling tradition in which this editor would die must be understood as an outgrowth of a culture of honor, as distinguished from a culture of conscience. In an honor-culture, what restrains people from behavior in contravention of accepted norms is merely a sense of shame: “What might my peers think of me?” Such a culture has the disadvantage, that it restrains misconduct only where the actor’s peers might find out about it, and even in that case only where they might disapprove. At least during part of our antebellum period, at least in areas of Cavalier and Scots-Irish settlement, it was such an honor-culture of limited restraining capabilities that dominated our patterns of thought — hence such figures as Andrew Jackson. Where such an honor culture dominated us in antebellum years, contact with the peculiar institution of human enslavement seems also to be implicated (the tradition seems to have perpetuated itself into our contemporary era, in such backwaters as the state of Texas, where cultural contact with endemic racism substitutes for contact with the peculiar institution of human enslavement).

33. Stevens, William Oliver. PISTOLS AT TEN PACES: THE STORY OF THE CODE OF HONOR IN AMERICA (Cambridge MA: Riverside Press, 1940, pages 84-86)



DUELING

DUELING

1847

December 19, Sunday: At an Anti-Slavery meeting in the Minerva Hall of Rochester, [New York](#), [William Cooper Nell](#) and Giles B. Stebens were appointed as secretaries.

While laid up in Mexico City with his thigh wound, 2d Lieutenant [Thomas Mayne Reid, Jr.](#) almost engaged in a [duel of honor](#). The encounter was, however, on this day averted by means of a most carefully worded exchange of correspondence:

City of Mexico,  
December 19th, 1847.

Sir,

Captain McKinstry has received your note of yesterday, and has requested me, as his friend, to inform you that he has not made any remarks reflecting upon you as a gentleman and a man of honour.

Very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
John B. Grayson,  
Captain 165 A.

Lieutenant Mayne Reid,  
N.Y. Volunteers.



**DUELING**

**DUELING**

**1849**

[Adam Gurowski](#) emigrated to the United States of America.<sup>34</sup>

34. While lecturing at [Harvard College](#) he would attempt to entrap another professor into a [duel](#) (presumably, given his history, with swords).



## DUELING

## DUELING

Not just every lady in Amherst was locking herself in her room, because in this year Louise “Shirley” Clappe of Amherst, Massachusetts went off to [California](#) with her husband, Dr. Fayette Clappe, to provide medical care to the miners at Rich Bar on the Feather River:

*In the short space of twenty-four days,  
we have had murders, fearful accidents, bloody deaths,  
a mob, whippings, a [hanging](#), an attempt at suicide,  
and a fatal duel.*

“... and a fatal duel” — For a period in California dueling would be a major source of public entertainment and private grief.<sup>35</sup> Dueling was regional, like the chewing of tobacco; it was associated with the South. However, an interesting exception is the association of [dueling](#) with the gold rush in California, because Southerners there played a dominant role. Although only 17% of the white population of [California](#) in 1850 had been born in a slave state, and although this might seem a relatively small %age of the population, among all the Northern states and territories this was second only to the Oregon Territory.<sup>36</sup>

[“Charley” Parkhurst](#) went to [California](#) and got a job driving for the California Stage Lines. At some point she would lose an eye after being kicked by one of her horses.

35. Secrest, William B. BLOOD AND HONOR (Fresno CA: Saga-West Publishing Company, 1970, pages 3ff)

36. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CENSUS FOR DECEMBER 1, 1852 (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853, pages 16-19)

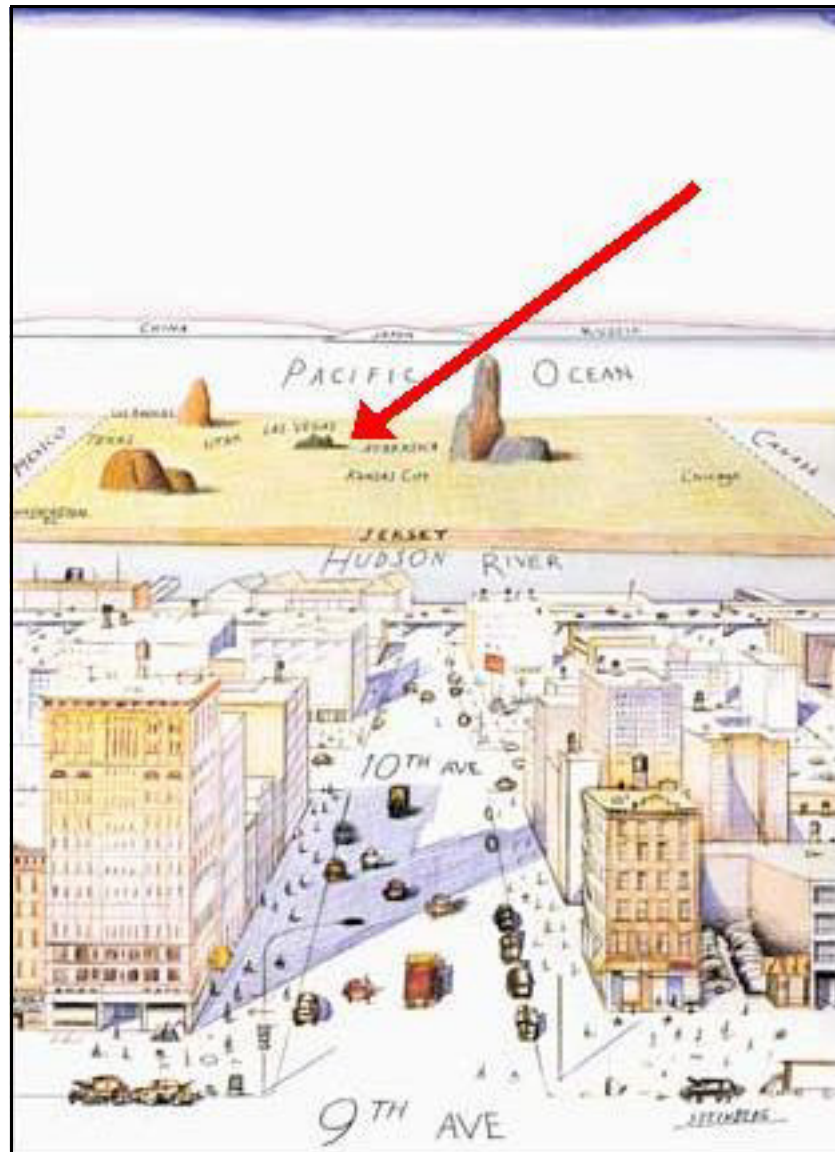
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DUELING

DUELING

1852

January 21, Wednesday: Note that in [Henry Thoreau](#)'s journal entry for this January day, he does not say that he had just witnessed this battle of the ants, and that it is clearly a warm-weather observation. He was merely writing it up as of this day, anent the visit by [Lajos Kossuth](#). Thoreau may have witnessed this insect social behavior during the presidency of [James Knox Polk](#), which was from 1845 to 1849, perhaps while he was staying at Walden Pond:



January 21, Wednesday: One day when I went out to my wood-pile or rather my pile of stumps – I observed two ants on the chips – the one red, the other much larger & black, fiercely contending with one another, and rolling over on the chips. It was evidently a struggle for life & death which had grown out of a serious feud. Having once got hold they never let go of each other – but struggled & wrestled & rolled on the chips – each retaining his hold with mastiff-like pertinacity. Looking further I found to my astonishment that the chips were covered with such combatants – that it was not a duellum but a bellum, a war between two races of ants – the red always pitted against the black – & frequently two red ones to one black. It was the only war I have ever witnessed – the only battle field I ever trod while the battle was raging – internecine war – The red republicans & the black despots or imperialists. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat yet without any noise that I could hear – and never soldiers fought so resolutely. I watched a couple in a little sunny valley amid the chips – that were fast locked in each others embraces – now at noon day prepared to fight till the sun went down. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversaries front – & through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board – while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side & as I saw on looking nearer had divested him of several of his members. None manifested a disposition to retreat from the combat equal or unequal. It was evident that their battle cry was conquer or die. They fought like mastiffs or bull dogs, who will not let go though all their legs are cut off. In the mean while there came along a single red ant on the side hill of this valley – evidently full of excitement – who had either despatched his foe. or had not yet taken part in the battles – The latter the most probable for he had lost none of his limbs. He saw this unequal combat from afar – for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red. He drew near with rapid pace – till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants – then watching his opportunity he sprang upon the black warrior & commenced his operations near the root of his right fore-leg leaving the other to select among his own members – And so there were 3 united for life & death apparently. United for life – until death. As if a new kind of attraction had been invented, which put all other locks & cements to shame – I should not wonder more if they had their respective musical bands stationed on some chip & playing their national airs the while to cheer the dying combatants – (Whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it) I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men – The more you think of it – the less the difference. And certainly there is no other fight recorded in Concord that will bear a moments comparison with this. I have no doubt they had as just a cause – one or even both parties as our forefathers – & that the results will be as important & memorable – And there was far more patriotism & heroism – For numbers & for blood it was an Austerlitz – or Dresden. I saw no disposition to retreat

I took up the chip on which the 3 I have particularly described were struggling carried it into my house & placed it under a tumbler on my window sill, wishing to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first mentioned red ant – I saw that though he was assiduously gnawing at the near foreleg of his enemy having severed his remaining feeler his own breast was all torn away exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior – whose own breastplate was apparently too thick for him – and the dark carbuncles of his eyes shone with ferocity such as wars only could excite. They struggled for half an hour longer under the tumbler and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies & the former were hanging on either side of him still apparently as firmly fastened as ever – and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles – being without feelers & with only one or two legs – & I know not how many other wounds – to divest himself of them which at length after half an hour more he had accomplished I raised the tumbler & he went off over the window sill in that crippled state – Whether he finally survived that combat & had a pension settled on him I do not know. But I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter.

Which party was victorious I never learned nor the cause of the war. But I felt for the rest of that day as if I had



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## DUELING

had my feelings harrowed & excited by witnessing the struggle the ferocity & carnage of a human-battle before my door.

To record truths which shall have the same relation & value to the next world. i.e. the world of thought & of the soul – that political news has to this.

This winter they are cutting down our woods more seriously than ever – Fair Haven Hill – Walden – Linnaea Borealis wood &c &c Thank God they cannot cut down the clouds.

History used to be the history of successive kings – or their reigns the Williams – Henries – Johns Richards &c &c all of them great in somebody's estimations– But we have altered that considerably– Hereafter it is to be to a greater extent the history of peoples. You do not hear some King Louis or Edward – or Leopold – referred to now by sensible men with much respect.

Heard Higginson lecture tonight on Mohammed– Why did I not like it better? Can I deny that it was good? Perhaps I am bound to account to **myself** at least for any lurking dislike for what others admire & I am not **prepared** to find fault with. Well I did not like it then, because it did not make me like – it – it did not carry me away captive. He is not simple enough. For the most part the manner overbore choked off & stifled – put out of sight & hearing the matter. I was inclined to forget that he was speaking – conveying ideas – thought there had been an intermission Never endeavor consciously to supply the tone which you think proper for certain sentences. It is as if a man whose mind was at ease should supply the tones & gestures for a man in distress who found only the words As when one makes a speech & another behind him makes gestures.– Then he reminded me of Emerson – & I could not afford to be reminded of Christ himself. Yet who can deny that it was good? But it was that intelligence – that way of viewing things (combined with much peculiar **talent**) which is the common property of this generation– A man does best when he is most himself.

I never realized so distinctly as this moment that I am peacefully parting company with the best friend I ever had, by each pursuing his proper path. I perceive that it is possible that we may have a better **understanding** now than when we were more at one. Not expecting such essential agreement as before. Simply our paths diverge–

It is interesting that in the above, which would find its way into [WALDEN, Thoreau](#) says that the ant war was “not a duellum but a bellum,” because later on, in a letter to H.G.O. Blake, Thoreau would attribute both these things to the sort of desperation that derives either from fearfulness or a sense that one's own life is a life not worth leading:

### DUELING



“To be active, well, happy, implies courage. To be ready to fight in a duel or a battle implies desperation, or that you hold your life cheap.”

– [Henry Thoreau](#)





## DUELING

## DUELING

WALDEN: I was witness to events of a less peaceful character. One day when I went out to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two reds ones to one black. The legions of these Myrmidons covered all the hills and vales in my wood-yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I have ever witnessed, the only battle-field I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine war; the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noon-day prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity than bull-dogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle-cry was Conquer or die. In the mean while there came along a single red ant on the hillside of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles, who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar, -for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red,- he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right fore-leg, leaving the foe to select among his own members; and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America, that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism displayed. For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden. Concord Fight! Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why here every ant was a Buttrick, -"Fire! for God's sake fire!"- and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer.



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WALDEN: ... There was not one hireling there. I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a three-penny tax on their tea; and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill, at least.

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near foreleg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breast-plate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddlebow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some Hotel des Invalides, I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

Kirby and Spence tell us that the battles of ants have long been celebrated and the date of them recorded, though they say that Huber is the only modern author who appears to have witnessed them. "Æneas Sylvius," say they, "after giving a very circumstantial account of one contested with great obstinacy by a great and small species on the trunk of a pear tree," adds that "This action was fought in the pontificate of Eugenius the Fourth, in the presence of Nicholas Pistoriensis, an eminent lawyer, who related the whole history of the battle with the greatest fidelity." A similar engagement between great and small ants is recorded by Olaus Magnus, in which the small ones, being victorious, are said to have buried the bodies of their own soldiers, but left those of their giant enemies a prey to the birds. This event happened previous to the expulsion of the tyrant Christiern the Second from Sweden." The battle which I witnessed took place in the Presidency of Polk, five years before the passage of Webster's Fugitive-Slave Bill.

**KIRBY AND SPENCE**

ANTS



## DUELING

## DUELING

1856

May 22, Thursday: Representative Preston S. Brooks, a State Rights Democrat from South Carolina, entered the chamber of the US Senate after it had adjourned and, while guarded by a man with a drawn pistol, used his new little gutta-percha cane with a gold head<sup>37</sup> to attack an unsuspecting Senator Charles Sumner, Republican



of Massachusetts, from behind and, after the senator had torn his desk from the bolts in the floor in an attempt to evade the blows, reduce him to unconsciousness. The cane in question was of a type used by Southerners to discipline unruly dogs. Sumner had been putting his senatorial postal frank upon copies of his speech to be mailed, at the time of the attack. It seems that in an attack on the peculiar institution of slavery, outside the congress of course because such attacks were forbidden within the hall of Congress, the Northern senator had somehow generally derogated the character of Southern slaveholders. (My caring and compassionate mother Mildred Geraldine Turner, when I called her recently at her retirement home in Florida on Mother's Day and tried to make conversation, wanted to talk about the recent beating of the criminal Negro by the police officers in Los Angeles: she had watched the videotape on TV and Rodney King "was probably asking for it." So I guess I should suppose that Senator Sumner, also, was probably asking for it. If a white man is going to side with Negroes, it is only appropriate that Senator Brook treat him like one, right?)<sup>38</sup> Although Brooks would resign, he would be re-elected. Senator Sumner was to spend the rest of his life like Bob Dole, getting mileage from his wounds, because for the rest of his life anybody and everybody who needed to be PC-correct was able to be PC-correct by worshiping this man and rhetorically kissing his stigmata.<sup>39</sup>

This attack was probably what would induce Harriet Beecher Stowe, who at the time happened to be struggling with a manuscript of the working title NINA GORDON, to add to the story a character named Dred who was a denizen of the Great Dismal Swamp.<sup>40</sup> The new character, drawing upon the CONFESSIONS OF NAT TURNER that had been taken down in 1831 by Thomas R. Gray shortly before [Nat Turner's](#) execution, would quickly take over the plot and the manuscript would become that of A TALE OF THE DISMAL SWAMP. Stowe's swamp Dred was the spokesperson for an angry Old Testament deity of retribution who would be required to cede to and be reformed by the self-sacrificing love of Jesus, as exemplified by Milly, in the manner in which the Old Testament of the Jews had once upon a time been required to cede to and be reformed by the New Testament

37. Gutta percha had first appeared in Europe in 1822 and had been an article of commerce since 1844. This was our first really plastic material, and was used to form picture frames and snuff boxes and other such small shaped items for the ready manufacture of which we now employ one or another of our commercial plastic feedstocks such as polyethylene, bakelite, etc.

38. I hope you have a mother as caring and compassionate as mine, and I hope you are as baffled as I am at how people of care and compassion can so commonly hold such attitudes. The best I can come up with, right at the present moment, is that it sure is a mysterious world, this one, isn't it? –The easiest answer, that these people are full of hate, is, bafflingly, not the correct answer.

39. What I am trying to do here is be as unsympathetic as no-government man Stephen Foster managed to be at that time:

*The men at Washington who do not want to get caned for a speech ought to leave the company of villains and come home.*

40. This incident would also trigger the sensational "slave auctions" staged by the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher.



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of the Christians.

It would take the senator some three years for to recover from the beating. Here is how the Representative described what he had done:

I struck him with my cane and give [sic] him about thirty first-rate stripes with a gutta percha cane which had been given me a few months before.... Every lick went where I intended. For about the first five or six licks he offered to make a fight, but I plied him so rapidly that he did not touch me. Towards the last he bellowed like a calf. I wore my cane out completely but saved the head which is gold. The fragments of the care are begged for as sacred relics. Every Southern man is delighted and the abolitionists are like a hive of disturbed bees. They are making all sorts of threats. It would not take much to have the throats of every Abolitionist cut.

(It should be noted that in this period in Southern [dueling](#), it was a known tactic to approach your unsuspecting and unarmed offender from the rear to shoot or stab him or club his senseless. This was referred to as “taking advantage.” In the American South at this time, since winning was coded as masculine and losing as feminine, being the winner amounted to nine tenths of the law. Especially when the assailant could profess that he was outraged by some sort of perceived personal slur, judicial punishment of the winner/survivor was seldom more than perfunctory. Someone who gouged out another’s eye might be congratulated with “Hey, you’re a regular chap you are!”)

The Richmond [Enquirer](#) would comment that:

We consider the act good in conception, better in execution, and best of all in consequences. These vulgar abolitionists in the Senate are getting above themselves. They have become saucy, and dare to be impudent to gentlemen.... They must be lashed into submission.

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois has attributed the notorious Southern penchant for violence to **hegemony**:



The white people of the South are essentially a fine kindly breed.... Perhaps their early and fatal mistake was that they refused long before the Civil War to allow the South differences of opinion.... Man act as they do in the South, they murder, they [lynch](#), they insult, because they listen to but one side of a question.



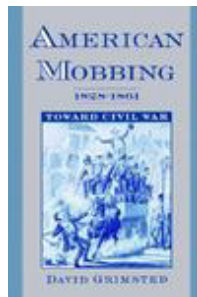
**DUELING**

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I note that David Grimsted, in analyzing this, has made use of a fave concept of mine, that of inversion:



When Southerners talked about their section's reverence for law compared to the North, or about abolitionist fantasies of cutting their throats, they inverted reality.







## DUELING

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1857

March: There appeared to have been a quarrel at a Saturday night party at [Brown University](#) in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) between two undergraduates, Clarence Bates of Louisville, Kentucky and Charles P. Williams. In the course of the party Bates was playing the fiddle when Williams made a comment about the young lady who was accompanying Bates. Bates offered Williams a calling card, while stating "I demand of you, sir, the satisfaction of a gentleman and to refer any friend you may find to serve you to my friend Nelson here." The [duel](#) was planned for Monday at dawn. At 5:30AM the participants set out in two buggies across the Seekonk, into a clearing in the woods near a farmhouse on the Massachusetts side. They fired at the drop of a handkerchief, and Williams's hat fell off while Bates clutched his arm and cried out. Later, however, when it appeared that they were going to be arrested and imprisoned, Williams began to aver that the hole in his hat had been produced not by a bullet, but by his poking his finger through the material. Bates removed some clothing and demonstrated that in fact there was not so much as a scratch on either arm. They explained that the incident had been a school hoax. President Barnaby Sears expelled the southerner, and suspended Williams and the two students who had acted as seconds.

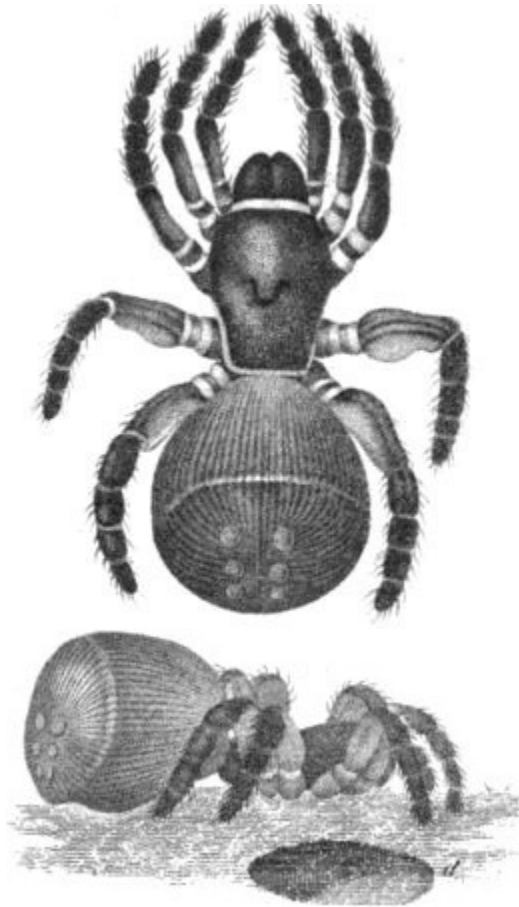


## DUELING

## DUELING

Fall/Winter: In Liverpool, England, Ada Shepard was the governess and tutor for the [Hawthorne](#) children.

[Dueling](#) had of course been outlawed in America at this point for a good number of years. But it still occurred in our South, and when Southern men came to the North, their macho glares and studied “honor” was something challenging and intimidating for Northern men — not to mention the problem this occasioned for Northern women. [Waldo Emerson](#) therefore, in his journal, elaborated a plan to improve the situation. Were we at war with them, he supposed, we could just have the US Army kill them as they tried to come across the border, and thus save ourselves all this bother of attempting to treat them with Christian decency, as if they were brothers or neighbors or something, and of struggling to do unto them as we would have them do unto us. In Emerson’s version of the Golden Rule, clearly, we should do unto others what we suspect they might like to do unto us — only we should do it unto them first.





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We should treat them as we would treat spiders, for like spiders they are fanged animals:

*The shooting complexion, like the cobra capello & scorpion, grows in the South. It has no wisdom, no capacity of improvement: it looks, in every landscape, only for partridges, in every society, for duels. And, as it threatens life, all wise men brave or peaceable run away from the spider-man, as they run away from a black spider: for life to them is real & rich, & not to be risked on any curiosity as to whether spider or spider-man can bite mortally, or only make a poisonous wound. With such a nation or a nation with a predominance of this complexion, war is the safest terms. That marks them, &, if they cross the lines, they can be dealt with as all fanged animals must be.*



What a sacrifice it was that we lost this man from the pulpit. He could have been another Cotton Mather!

Seriously, I think we are getting closer here, to understanding what the American Civil War was all about:

- The only people whose attitudes mattered in America at that time, at a first order of approximation, were the white people. True, there were a few people around like Frederick Douglass whose attitudes mattered even though he was only half white, but the reason why such people stand out is because there were so very few of them.
- The only people whose attitudes mattered in America at that time, at a first order of approximation, were the adult males. True, there were a few people around like Harriet Beecher Stowe whose attitudes mattered even though they lacked a penis, but the reason why such people stand out is because their significant audience was a white male audience and therefore to be of any significance their writings needed basically to be elaborations upon white male attitudes.
- Given the two points above, there is only one option, which is, that if we are to understand the American Civil War we must understand it as an argument between two groups of white men. White men had become sensitized to one another and had separated themselves into groups according to different ways in which they had become thus irritable. There was a northern group of white men and a southern group. Ralph Waldo Emerson is a paradigm case and we can see above how he had become sensitized and irritable toward the southerners (he had no affection for black people, in fact he was such a victim of what was at that time called “Negrophobia” that he could not bear to have a black barber, or have his plate placed on the table by a black hand). Part of it, clearly, was the duel culture of the South, which the North experienced as a threat: the Southron was “fanged,” like a “spider.” From a northern point of view, here were all these trashy no-account Southern types, supporting themselves by means of their black slaves, and they were in your face, strutting around in their boiled and starched white shirts, armed to the teeth and supremely belligerent. From a southern point of view, here were all these pseudo pious, hypocritical Northern types, supporting themselves by means of their satanic mills full of recent immigrant labor while they put down the decent God-fearing gentlemen of the South — acting as if the decent God-fearing Southrons were mere pieces of filth.
- That is enough to account for how the civil war started. Now we should understand how it continued and to understand how it continued, we need to understand that once a war has begun, a new imperative always seizes control of the situation. That new imperative is, that the only thing of prime importance is for your side to win. Each side needs to do anything and everything, that



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will cause their side to be the winning one. In order to win, of course, one must have a spirit-enabling righteous cause, something “worth dying for.” Winning cannot be merely about the imperative that your side must triumph, but must be about the imperative of holiness. The winner must demonstrate that God was on his side. –Thus the myth that would spring into life and flourish during the war, that what it was about was the elimination of human slavery.

- Now we need to understand how it is that the North won. The nation’s capital was in the south, was in fact inside Virginia, and the war would end with a triumphant Southern capture of the capital city and a seizure of the apparatus of federal government, and therefore a shorter and less bloody war would likely have been won by the South (that was what Gettysburg was all about).
- A longer and bloodier war of attrition favored the North, because the North had more immigrants that it could pour into its front lines to get blown away serially, regiment after regiment. The South was much more severely limited in terms of its available cannon fodder. Also, the industrial North had a far greater capacity for the manufacture of weaponry, and for the importation of ammo. Everything about a longer and bloodier war favored the North, and the North in fact did succeed in transforming this into an exceedingly long (five years) and exceedingly bloody (millions of dead and maimed) armageddon. The North won not in spite of the fact that the war was exceedingly long and exceedingly bloody, but because it was able to maneuver the war to be exceedingly long and exceedingly bloody.
- The North did not triumph because God was on its side, and the war wasn’t about freeing the blacks. Virtually instantly, when the war was over, the blacks were no longer useful either as labor or as a sacred cause, and were therefore abandoned. –Abandoned not merely by the southern white men whose attitudes mattered, but abandoned as well by the northern white men whose attitudes mattered. –And we transited into Jim Crow America. The “Negrophobes,” such as Waldo Emerson, had imposed their will.



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## DUELING

1859

September 13, Tuesday: In what would be one of the last American duels, there was a shootout between Senator David C. Broderick and Judge David S. Terry near Lake Merced, California. The two gentlemen, both of them Democrats although disagreeing in their politics in regard to [human enslavement](#), discharged a matched set of Belgian pistols at one another, and the senator, a champion of the white working class, fell mortally wounded. The judge, it seemed, a member of the “Chivalry” wing of their party,<sup>41</sup> had been most assiduously practicing his pistol marksmanship prior to issuing the challenge to the [duel](#). Also, the single-shot pistol of the pair which had been handed to the senator had been carefully prepared by filing of the sear, so that it was on such a hair trigger that it would discharge at the lightest touch of the trigger mechanism.

(In 1889 the surviving California judge, David S. Terry, would be shot dead in a train station at Lathrop CA by the bodyguard of US Supreme Court Justice Stephen Field who was passing through, when it seemed to them that he was attacking that Justice.)

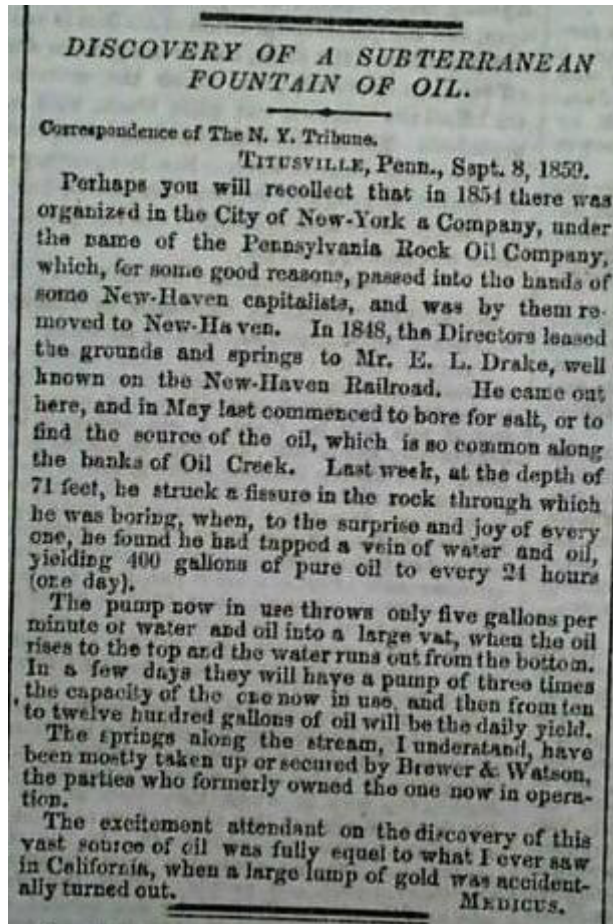
41. In this context “Chivalry” does not mean “truth, justice, and the American way” but means, instead, “let’s force someone else to do the work while we relax and enjoy our privileges.” In 1998 the cased set of .58 pistols used in that 1859 set-to, along with their copper powder flask, loading rod, and mallet, was sold at auction. “Used only once.” The winning bid for the weapons of death was \$34,500. A golf course now honors the spot at which the champion of the white working class fell.

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## DUELING

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Newspapers were reporting the discovery of oil by Edwin Laurentine Drake in Titusville, Pennsylvania:



September 13: P.M.—Up Assabet.

The *Bidens chrysanthemoides*, now apparently in its prime by the river, now almost dazzles you with its great sunny disk. I feast my eyes on it annually. It grows but sparingly near the village, but those few never fail to make their appearance at last. The yellow lily's is a cool yellow in comparison, but in this is seen the concentrated heat of autumn.

Now, while other fruits are ripe or ripening, I see the great peduncle of the peltandra, eighteen or twenty-four inches long, curving downward, with its globular mass of green fruit, often two inches in diameter, at the end, looking like slung shot. This mass of viscid seeds or nuts must be the food of many creatures. Also the pontederia spike is now generally turned downward beneath the water and increased in size, though some have flowers still at their tips. So, too, probably (for I do not see them) the yellow and white lilies are ripening their seeds in the water and mud beneath the surface. [Yes. I see them,—the former urn-shaped. Vide 14th.]

The bloom and freshness of the river was gone as soon as the pickerel-weed began to be imbrowned, in the latter part of August. It is fall and harvest there now.

I remember my earliest going a-graping. (It was a wonder that we ever hit upon the ripe season.) There was more fun in finding and eying the big purple clusters high on the trees and climbing to them than in eating them. We used to take care not to chew the skins long lest they should make our mouths sore.


Some haws of the scarlet thorn are really a splendid fruit to look at now and far from inedible. They are not only large, but their beauty is enhanced by the persistent calyx relieving the clear scarlet of the fruit.



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There are various degrees of living out-of-doors. You must be outdoors long, early and late, and travel far and earnestly, in order to perceive the phenomena of the day. Even then much will escape you. Few live so far outdoors as to hear the first geese go over.

I see some shrub oak acorns turned dark on the bushes and showing their meridian lines, but generally acorns of all kinds are green yet. The great red oak acorns have not fallen. It is a wonder how pigeons [**American Passenger Pigeon**  *Ectopistes migratorius*] can swallow acorns whole, but they do.

Many hemlock leaves which had prematurely ripened and withered in the dry weather have fallen in the late winds and washed up along the side of the river,—already red there.



## DUELING

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October 22, Saturday: The Lunatic Asylum West of the Alleghany Mountains opened for patients in Weston, Virginia. This facility would wind up in West Virginia due to the Civil War and be renamed the West Virginia Hospital for the Insane. It would later be known as Weston State Hospital and then as Weston Hospital.<sup>42</sup>

PSYCHOLOGY

The Reverend Samuel Joseph May sailed from England for the United States.



[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) wrote from his Canadian hideout to his co-conspirator of the Secret “Six” conspiracy, the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), in exile in Rome: “Our old friend struck his blow in such a way, —either by his own folly or the direction of Providence,— that it has recoiled, and ruined him, and perhaps

42. Street, W.R. A CHRONOLOGY OF NOTEWORTHY EVENTS IN AMERICAN [PSYCHOLOGY](#). Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1994



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those who were his friends.... The poor old man fought like a hero, and will die like one, —by the rope, it is most likely. Two of his sons were shot by his side, and three-fourths of his men. There has been nothing so much in the ‘high Roman fashion’ seen in this country for many a year. Now he lies in a Virginia jail, tormented with questions, wounded, and waiting his trial for murder and treason.... What course the government will pursue remains to be seen; but most likely they will follow up the matter as closely as possible; and we shall have plenty of treason-trials, and bloody threats, and some bloodshed. All this will weaken the Slave Power; and the good of the tragedy will outweigh the evil, no doubt.”

[Henry Thoreau](#) developed his thoughts on Captain John Brown., positing a future in which just as the American society was doing away with [dueling](#) or fighting one another with pistols, in course of time it might be possible also to do away with fighting one another with lawyers — “Such improvements are not altogether unheard of.”



October 22: P.M.—To Cliffs and Fair Haven.

I am surprised to find in the field behind the top of the Cliffs a little vetch still perfectly fresh and blooming, where Wheeler had grain a year or two since, with numerous little plump pods four or five eighths of an inch long and commonly four roundish seeds to each. It must be, I think, Gray’s *Vicia tetrasperma*, though he makes that have white flowers (apparently same as Bigelow’s *V. pusilla*, also made to have white flowers, but Dewey calls them “bluish white”), while these are purple. Otherwise it corresponds.

A marsh hawk sails over Fair Haven Hill. In the wood-path below the Cliffs I see perfectly fresh and fair *Viola pedata* flowers, as in the spring, though but few together. No flower by its second blooming more perfectly brings back the spring to us.

In my blustering walk over the Mason and Hunt pastures yesterday, I saw much of the withered indigo-weed which was broken off and blowing about, and the seeds in its numerous black pods rattling like the rattlepod though not nearly so loud.

The very surface of the earth itself has been rapidly imbrowned of late, like the acorns in their cups, in consequence of cold and frost; and the evergreens and few deciduous plants which are slow to wither, like Jersey tea, are more and more distinct.

*F. hyemalis* quite common for a week past.

One would say that the modern Christian was a man who had consented to say all the prayers in their liturgy, provided you would let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward. All his prayers begin with “Now I lay me down to sleep.” He has consented to perform certain old-established charities, too, after a fashion, but he doesn’t wish to hear of any new-fangled ones; he doesn’t want to have any codicils added to the contract, to fit it to the present time,—unexpected demands made on him, after he has said his prayers. He shows the whites of his eyes on the Sabbath and the blacks all the rest of the week.

It was evidently far from being a wild and desperate and insane attempt. It was a well-matured plan.

The very fact that he had no rabble or troop of hirelings about him would alone distinguish him from ordinary heroes. His company was small indeed, because few could be found worthy to pass muster. He would have no rowdy or swaggerer, no profane swearer, for, as he said, he always found these men to fail at last. He would have only men of principle, and they are few. When it was observed that if he had had a chaplain his would have been a perfect Cromwellian company, he said that he would have had a chaplain if he could [HAVE] found one who could perform that service suitably.

Each one who there laid down his life for the poor and oppressed was thus a picked man, culled out of many thousands, if not millions; a man of principle, of rare courage, and of devoted humanity; ready to lay down their lives any moment for the weak and enslaved. It may be doubted if there were any more their equals in all the land, for their leader scoured the land far and wide, seeking to swell his troop. These alone stood forward, prepared to step between the oppressor and the oppressed. Surely they were the very best men you could select to be hung. That was the greatest compliment this country could pay them. They were ripe for the gallows.

I regard this event as a touchstone designed to bring out with glaring distinctness the character of this government.

A man of Spartan habits, who at sixty has scruples about his diet at your table, must eat sparingly and fare hard, as becomes a soldier, he says, and one who is ever fitting himself for difficult enterprises.

A man of rare common sense and directness of speech, as of action; a Transcendentalist above all, a man of ideals and principles,—that was what distinguished him. Of unwavering purposes, not to be dissuaded but by an



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experience and wisdom greater than his own. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life.

He did not go to the college called Harvard; he was not fed on the pap that is there furnished. As he phrased it, "I know no more of grammar than one of your calves." But he went to the great university of the West, where he sedulously pursued the study of Liberty, for which he had early betrayed a fondness, and, having taken many degrees, he finally commenced the practice of Humanity, as you all know.

I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung. Perhaps he saw it himself. If any leniency were shown him, any compromise made with him, any treating with him at all, by the government, he might be suspected.

We needed to be thus assisted to see our government by the light of history. It needed to see itself.

Compare the platform of any or all of the political parties, which deem themselves sane, with the platform on which he lay and uttered these things!!

I foresee the time when the painter will paint that scene, the poet will sing it, the historian record it, and, with the Landing of the Pilgrims and the [Declaration of Independence](#), it will be the ornament of some future national gallery, when the present form of slavery shall be no more. We shall then be at liberty to weep for John Brown. Then and not till then we will take our revenge.

I rejoice that I live in this age, that I was his contemporary.

When I consider the spectacle of himself, and his six sons, and his son-in-law, enlisted for this fight, proceeding coolly, reverently, humanely to work, while almost all America stood ranked on the other side, I say again that it affects me as a sublime spectacle. For months if not years, sleeping and waking upon it, summering and wintering the thought, without expecting any reward but a good conscience and the gratitude of those made free. If he had had any journal advocating "his cause," it would have been fatal to his efficiency,—any "organ," as the phrase is, monotonously and wearisomely playing that same old tune, and then passing round the hat. If he had acted in any way so as to gain the respect or toleration of the government, he might have been suspected. It was the fact that the tyrant must give place to him, or he to the tyrant, that distinguished him from all other reformers that I know.

For once the Sharp's rifle and the revolver were employed in a righteous cause. The tools were in the hands of one who could use them. I know that the mass of my neighbors think that the only righteous use that can be made of them is to fight duels with them when we are insulted by other nations, or hunt Indians, or shoot fugitive slaves with them.

Talk of political parties and their platforms! he could not have any platform but that of the Harper's Ferry engine-house.

I am aware that I anticipate a little,—that he was still, at the last accounts, alive in the hands of his foes; but that being the case, I find myself most naturally thinking and speaking of him as physically dead.

The same indignation that cleared the temple once will clear it again. The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it. No man has appeared in America as yet who loved his fellowman so well and treated him so tenderly. He lived for him; he took up his life and he laid it down for him.

Though you may not approve of his methods or his principles, cease to call names, to cry mad dog. The method is nothing; the spirit is all in all. It is the deed, the devotion, the soul of the man. For you this is at present a question of magnanimity. If the schoolboy, forgetting himself, rushed to the rescue of his drowning playmate, what though he knock down somebody on his way, what though he does not go to the same church with you, or his father belong to the same political party! Would you not like to claim kindred with him in this, though in no other thing he is like, or likely, to you?

Heroes have fought well on their stumps when their legs were shot off, but I never heard of any good done by a government that had no heart, or at least had not brains of a high order.

This is not the time to hear what Tom, Dick, or Harry is doing, or in such a case would have done. We shall have time enough to find that out in, if we do not know it already. We ask you to the extent of your ability to appreciate this man and his deed, in spite of the difference between you and him. Who cares whether he belonged to your clique, or party, or sect, or not?

A man does a brave and humane deed, and at once, on all sides, we hear people and parties declaring: "I didn't do it, nor countenance him to do it, in any conceivable way. It can't fairly be inferred from my past career." Now, I am not interested to hear you define your position. I don't know that I ever was, or ever shall be. I am not now, at any rate. I think [IT] is mere egotism, and impertinent.

On the whole my respect for my fellow-men, except as one may outweigh a million, is not being increased these days. I have noticed the cold-blooded way in which newspaper-writers and men generally speak of this event, as if an ordinary malefactor, though one of unusual pluck,—as the Governor of Virginia says, using the language of the cockpit, "the gamest man he ever saw,"—had been caught and were about to be hung. He was not dreaming



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of his foes when the Governor thought he looked so brave.

Think of him,—of his rare qualities!—such a man as it takes ages to make, and ages to understand; no mock hero, not the representative of any party. A man such as the sun may never rise upon again in this benighted land, to whose making went the costliest material, the finest adamant, the purest gold; sent to be the redeemer of those in captivity;—and the only use to which you can put him, after mature deliberation, is to hang him at the end of a rope. I need not describe him. He has stood where I now stand; you have all seen him. You who pretend to care for Christ crucified, consider what you are about to do to him who offered himself to be the savior of four millions of men!

I wish to correct the tone and some of the statements of the newspapers respecting the life and character and last action of John Brown. The newspapers seem to ignore, or perhaps they are really ignorant of, the fact that there are at least as many as one or two individuals to a town throughout the North who think much as I do about him and his enterprise. I do not hesitate to assert that they are an important and growing party.

I speak for the slave when I say that I prefer the philanthropy of John Brown to that philanthropy which neither shoots me nor liberates me.

Talk of failure and throwing his life away! he is not dead yet in any sense, and if he were dead he would still live. Were the battles of Black Jack and Ossawatimie and many encounters of less note useless and a failure? I think that it was he more than any other who made Kansas as free as she is, who taught the slaveholder that it was not safe for him to carry his slaves thither. None of the political parties have ever accomplished anything of the sort. It was he who taught Missouri that it was not profitable to hold slaves in that neighborhood. Was it a failure to deliver from bondage thirteen human beings and walk off with them by broad daylight, for weeks if not months, at a leisurely pace, through one State after another, for half the length of the North, conspicuous to all parties, with a price set upon his head, going into a court-room on his way and telling what he had done? To face singly in his work of righteousness the whole power of this unrighteous government, and successfully too! Who has gained the most ground within five years,—Brown or the Slave Power?

And this, not because the government was lenient, but because none of its menials dared to touch him. They counted the cost and concluded that a thousand dollars was not enough.

There are a few—there are more than you suppose—who cannot help thinking of that man now in the clutches of the enraged slaveholder.

He is one of that class of whom we hear a great deal, but, for the most part, see nothing at all,—the Puritans. It is in vain to kill him. He died lately in the time of Cromwell, but he reappeared here. Why should he not? Some of the Puritan stock are said to have come over and settled in New England. They were a class that did something else than celebrate their forefathers' day and eat parched corn in remembrance of their ancestors. They were neither Democrats nor Republicans. They were men of simple habits, straightforward, prayerful; not thinking much of rulers who did not fear God, not making many compromises, or seeking after available candidates.

He is of the same age with the century. He is what is called a thin and wiry-looking man, being composed of nerves instead of flesh, some five feet nine or ten inches high, with a sharp eye, and the last time he was hereabouts wore a long white beard; with a very soldier-like bearing.

I understand his grandfather was an officer in the Revolution; that he himself was born in Connecticut, but early went to Ohio with his father. His father was a contractor who furnished beef to the army there in the last war, and young Brown, accompanying his father to the camp and assisting him in his employment, saw considerable of military life,—more perhaps than he would if he had been a soldier, for he was sometimes present at the councils of the officers. He saw enough, at any rate, to disgust him with war and excite in him a great abhorrence of it; so much so that, though he was offered some petty office in the army, he not only refused it, but also refused to train when he was warned, and was fined for it. He was then about eighteen. He said that few persons had any conception of the cost, even the pecuniary cost, of firing a single bullet in war. Above all, he learned by experience how armies were collected, supplied, and maintained in the field for a length of time,—a work which required at least as much experience and skill as to lead them in battle. And he then resolved that he would never have anything to do with war, unless it were a war for liberty. I should say that he was an old-fashioned man in his respect for the Constitution and the [Declaration of Independence](#), and his faith in the permanence of this Union. Slavery he saw to be wholly opposed to all of these, and he was its determined foe. When the troubles first broke out in Kansas, he sent several of his sons thither to strengthen the party of the Free State men, fitting them out with such weapons as he had, telling them if the troubles should increase, and there should be need of him, he should follow, to assist them with his hand and counsel. It was not long before he felt it to be his duty to give the Free State men of Kansas, who had no leader of experience, the benefit of what experience he had had.

At a time when scarcely a man from the Free States was able to reach Kansas by any direct route, at least without



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having his arms taken from him, he, carrying what imperfect firelocks and other weapons he could collect, openly drove an ox-cart through Missouri, with his surveyor's compass exposed in it, and, passing for a simple surveyor, who by his very profession must be neutral, he met with no resistance and in the course of his leisurely journey became thoroughly acquainted with the plans of the Border Ruffians. For some time after his arrival he pursued, before he was known, similar tactics. When, for instance, he saw a knot of the Ruffians on the prairie, discussing, of course, the single topic that then occupied their minds, he would take his compass and one of his sons, and perhaps proceed to run an imaginary line which passed through the very spot on which that conclave had assembled, and then of course he would have some talk with them, learn their news and their plans, and when he had heard all they had to impart, he would resume his surveying, and run on his line till he was out of sight. This is enough to show that his plans were not crazily laid.

For a good part of his life he was a surveyor, part of the time, I think, in Illinois. At one time he was engaged in wool-growing, and went to Europe once as the agent of some wool-growers; and there too he carried his common sense with him. I have been told, for instance, that he made such a remark as this,—that he saw why the soil of England was so rich and that of Germany (or a part of it at least) so exhausted, and he thought of writing to some of the crowned heads about it. It was because in England the peasantry lived on the soil which they cultivated, while in Germany they were gathered into villages at night. It would be worth the while to have collected all the remarks of such a traveller.

Of course, he is not so foolish as to ask or expect any favors from the government, nor probably will his friends for him.

No wonder it struck the politicians and preachers generally very forcibly that either he was insane or they, and they, being the painters, or judges, this time, decided, naturally enough, that it must be he. Such, however, as far as I learn, has not been nor is likely to be the decision of those who have recently stood face to face to him and who are now about to hang him. They have not condescended to such insult. The slaveholders and the slaves who have really dealt with him are not likely sincerely to question his sanity, but rather political or religious parties, who stand further off from a living man.

I almost fear to hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if any life, can do as much good as his death. No doubt many of you have seen the little manuscript book which he carried about him, during the Kansas troubles,—his “orderly book,” as I think he called it,—containing the names of his small company, a score at most, and half of them his own family, and the rules which bound them together,—a contract which many of them have sealed with their blood. There was one rule, as I remember, which prohibited prophane swearing in his camp. I believe that he never was able to find more than a score or so of recruits whom he would accept, and only ten or a dozen in whom he had perfect faith.

Perhaps anxious politicians may prove that only seventeen white men and five negroes were concerned in this enterprise, but the anxiety to prove this might suggest to themselves that all is not told. Why do they still dodge the truth? Do they not realize why they are so anxious? It is because of a dim consciousness of the fact, which they do not distinctly face, that at least five millions of the inhabitants of the United States who were not pining to attempt, would have rejoiced if it had succeeded. They at most only criticise the tactics.

He said that if any man offered himself to be a soldier under him who was forward to tell what he could or would do if he could only get sight of the enemy, he had but little confidence in him.

One writer says, I know not with what motive, that it is a fact “illustrative of Brown's insanity, that he has charts of nearly all the great battle-fields of Europe.” I fear that his collection is not to be compared for completeness with that which this government possesses, however his sanity may be compared with its, though it did not make them itself, but there are two or three fields in Kansas of which he did not need to make any chart.

At any rate, I do not think it is sane to spend one's whole life talking or writing about this matter, and I have not done so. A man may have other affairs to attend to.

The murderer always knows that he is justly punished; but when a government takes the life of a man without the consent of his conscience, it is an audacious government, and is taking a step toward its own dissolution. Is it not possible that an individual may be right and a government wrong? Are laws to be enforced simply because they were made, and declared by any number of men to be good, when they are not good? Is there any necessity for a man's being a tool to perform a deed of which he disapproves? Is it the intention of lawmakers that good men shall be hung ever? Are judges to interpret the law according to the letter, and not the spirit? Who is it whose safety requires that Captain Brown be hung? Is it indispensable to any Northern man? If you do not wish it, say so distinctly. What right have you to enter into a compact with yourself (even) that you will do thus or so, against your better nature? Is it for you to make up your mind,—to form any resolution whatever,—and not accept the convictions that are forced upon you, and which even pass your understanding?

Any man knows when he is justified, and not all the wits in the world can enlighten him on that point.

I do not believe in lawyers,—in that mode of defending or attacking a man,—because you descend to meet the

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judge on his own ground, and, in cases of the highest importance, it is of no consequence whether a man breaks a human law or not. Let lawyers decide trivial cases. If they were interpreters of the everlasting laws which rightfully bind man, that would be another thing.

Just as we are doing away with duelling or fighting one another with pistols. I think that we may in course of time do away with fighting one another with lawyers. Such improvements are not altogether unheard of. A counterfeiting law-factory, standing half in a slave land and half in a free! What kind of laws for freemen can you expect from that? Substantial justice!! There's nothing substantial about it, but the Judge's salary and the lawyer's fee.

The thought of that man's position and probable fate is spoiling many a man's day here at the North for other thinking. We do not think of buying any crape this time.

It seems that one of his abettors had lived there for years, and Brown took all his measures deliberately. The country was mountainous, and it was given out that they were concerned in mining operations, and to play this part required very little invention on his part, such had been his previous pursuits and habits. Having been a surveyor, he would not make a strange figure in the fields and woods; this, too, would account [FOR] quantities of spades and pickaxes, and strangers from time to time visiting and conferring with him in a somewhat mysterious manner.

I have no respect for the judgment of any man who can read the report of that conversation and still call the principal insane. It has the ring of a saner sanity than an ordinary discipline and habits of life, than an ordinary organization, secures. Take any sentence of it,—“Any questions that I can honorably answer, I will; not otherwise. So far as I am myself concerned, I have told everything truthfully. I value my word, sir.”

He never overstated anything, but spoke within bounds. I remember particularly how, in his speech here, he referred to what his family had suffered in Kansas, never giving the least vent to his pent-up fire. It was a volcano with an ordinary chimney-flue. Also, referring to the deeds of certain Border Ruffians, he said, rapidly paring away his speech, like an experienced soldier keeping a reserve of force and meaning, “They had a perfect right to be hung.”

I would fain do my best to correct, etc., little as I know of him.

But I believe, without having any outward evidence, that many have already silently retracted their words.

They (Allen and Stark) may have possessed some of his love of liberty, indignation, and courage to face their country's foes, but they had not the rare qualities—the peculiar courage and self-reliance—which could enable them to face their country itself, and all mankind, in behalf of the oppressed.

He could give you information on various subjects, for he had travelled widely and observed closely. He said that the Indians with whom he dealt in Kansas were perhaps the richest people in a pecuniary sense on the earth. The money that this government annually paid them gave so much to each member of the community. They were, moreover, more intelligent than the mass of the Border Ruffians, or that class of the inhabitants of Missouri.

Much of the time of late years he has had to skulk in the swamps of Kansas with a price set upon his head, suffering from sickness and poverty and exposure, befriended only by Indians and [A] few white men. When surprise was expressed that he was not taken, he accounted for it by saying that it was perfectly well understood that he would not be taken alive. He would even show himself openly in towns which were half composed of Border Ruffians, and transact some business, without delaying long, and yet nobody attempted to arrest [HIM], because, as he said, a small party did not like to undertake it, and a large one could not be got together in season. I thought the same of his speech which I heard some years ago,—that he was not in the least a rhetorician, was not talking to Buncombe or his constituents anywhere, who had no need to invent anything, but to tell the simple truth and communicate his resolution. Therefore he appeared incomparably strong, and eloquence in Congress or elsewhere was at a discount. It was like the speeches of Cromwell compared with those of an ordinary king. They have tried a long time; they have hung a good many, but never found the right one before.

Dispersing the sentiments of humanity! As if they were ever found unaccompanied by its deeds! as if you could disperse them as easily as water with a watering-pot and they were good only to lay the dust with!

A few ministers are doing their duty in New York. This use of the word “insane” has got to be a mere trope. Newspaper-editors talk as if it were impossible that a man could be “divinely appointed” in these days to do any work whatever, as if vows and religion were out of date as connected with any man's daily work, and as if a man's death were a failure and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success. They argue that it is a proof of his insanity that he thought he was appointed to do this work which he did,—that he did not suspect himself for a moment!

If they do not mean this, then they do not speak the truth and say what they mean. They are simply at their old tricks still.

He said truly that the reason why such greatly superior numbers quailed before him with a handful of men only



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was, as some of his prisoners stated, that the former lacked a cause,—a kind of armor which he and his party never lacked. He said that when the time arrived, few men were found willing to lay down their lives in defense of what they knew to be wrong. They did not like that this should be their last act in this world.

As if the agent to abolish slavery could only be somebody “appointed” by the President or some political party. All this—his insanity (monomania, says one), etc.—made him to be “dreaded by the Missourians as a supernatural being.” Sure enough, a hero in the midst of us cowards is always so dreaded. He is just that thing. He shows himself superior to nature. He has a spark of divinity in him.

“Unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!”

I have read all the newspapers I could get within a week, and I do not remember in them a single expression of sympathy for these men.

Most of them decided not to print the full report of Brown’s words in the armory “to the exclusion of other matter.” Why, they have matterated, and there is no safety for them but in excluding the dead part and giving place to the living and healthy. But I object not so much to what they have not done as to what they have done. He was by descent and birth a New England farmer, a man of great common sense, deliberate and practical as that class, and tenfold more so. He was like the best of those who stood at our bridge once, on Lexington Common, and on Bunker Hill, only he was firmer and higher-principled than any that I chance to have heard of as there. It was no Abolition lecturer that converted him.

A Western paper says, to account for his escape from so many perils, that he was concealed under a “rural exterior,” as if in that prairie land a hero should by good rights wear a citizen’s dress only. It would appear from published letters that the women of the land are where the men should be. What sort of violence is that which is encouraged not by soldiers but by citizens, not so much by laymen as by ministers of the Gospel, not so much by the fighting sects as by Quakers, and not so much by Quaker men as Quaker women? The enemy may well “quake” at the thought of it. Is not that a righteous war where the best are thus opposed to the worst?

Governor Wise speaks far more justly and admiringly of him than any Northern editor that I have heard of. “They are themselves mistaken who take him to be a madman. . . . He is cool, collected, and indomitable, and it is but just to him to say that he was humane to his prisoners. . . . And he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth. He is a fanatic, vain and garrulous (!), but firm, truthful, and intelligent. His men, too, who survive, are like him. . . . Colonel Washington says that he was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death. With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand, and held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm, and to sell their lives as dear as they could. Of the three white prisoners, Brown, Stevens, and Coppoc, it was hard to say which was the most firm.” There is another man with whom the South and a good part of the North heartily sympathize. His name is Walker.

I subscribed a trifle when he was here three years ago, I had so much confidence in the man,—that he would do right,—but it would seem that he had not confidence enough in me, nor in anybody else that I know, to communicate his plans to us.

I do not wish to kill or to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both of these things would be by me unavoidable. In extremities I could even be killed.

This event advertises me that there is such a fact as death,—the possibility of a man’s dying. It seems as if no man had ever died in America; for in order to die you must first have lived. I don’t believe in the hearses and palls and funerals that they have had. There was no death in the case, because there had been no life; they merely rotted or sloughed off, pretty much as they had rotted or sloughed along. No temple’s veil was rent, only a hole dug somewhere. The best of them fairly ran down like a clock. I hear a good many pretend that they are going to die; or that they have died, for aught I know. Nonsense! I’ll defy them to do it. They haven’t got life enough in them. They deliquesce like fungi, and keep a hundred eulogists mopping the spot where they left off. Only half a dozen or so have died since the world began. Memento mori! they don’t understand that sublime sentence which some worthy got sculptured on his gravestone once. They’ve understood it in a grovelling and snivelling sense. They’ve wholly forgotten how to die. Be sure you die. Finish your work. Know when to leave off. Men make a needless ado about taking lives,—capital punishment. Where is there any life to take? You don’t know what it means to let the dead bury the dead.

Beauty stands veiled the while, and music is a screeching lie.

These men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live. If this man’s acts and words do not create a revival, it will be the severest possible satire on the acts and words of those who are said to have effected such things.





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Do you ever think you have died, or are going to die, sir? No! there is no hope of you, sir. You haven't got your lesson yet. You've got to stay after school.

It is the best news that America has ever heard.

Franklin,—Washington,—they were let off without dying; these were merely missing one day.

It has already quickened the public pulse of the North; it has infused more, and more generous, blood into her veins and heart than any number of years of what is called commercial and political prosperity could. How many a man who was lately contemplating suicide has now something to live for!

Mr. Giddings says of them that "their sad fate will occupy a brief page in the history of our nation." Does he think that the history of the Republican Party—hitherto, for it may be re-created by his death—will be in the proportion of a sentence to that page?

When I reflect to what a cause this man devoted himself, and how religiously, and then reflect to what cause his judges and all who condemn him so angrily and fluently devote themselves, I see that they are as far apart as the heavens and earth are asunder. The amount of it is our "leading men" are a harmless kind of folk, and they know well enough that they were not divinely appointed, but elected by the votes of their party.

The most sensible of the apparently editorial articles on this event that I have met with is in the Wheeling Intelligence. Vide Supplement to Journal, October 29th.



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February 1, Wednesday: The Niagara Falls Gazette expressed scepticism about the promised exploits of the touring tight-rope performer “Charles Blondin” (M. Jean-François Gravelot, 1824-1897): “The English mind has been surely excited on the subject of Blondin and his performances at the Falls. The ‘stilt’ hoax, the ‘Georgia Railroad’ yarn, the Silver Lake ‘snaik’ story, and other American ‘sells’ by which their most solemn journals have been victimized together with the wiggish letter to the New York Times last summer, which declared Blondin to be a myth, have combined their cautioning influence to render our British brethren confirmed skeptics as regards the rope walking achievements of the little Frenchman.”<sup>43</sup> The performer appears to have been touring, having performed the night before at the Theatre Royal in Liverpool. Midway on his path above the Niagara Falls he would stop on the highwire to cook and eat an omelette. Nowadays he is in the Kensal Green Cemetery of London and may for all we know still be cooking his omelettes.<sup>44</sup>

The Democratic candidate having withdrawn, the American candidate for the Speakership of the House of Representatives finally achieved the necessary 119 votes. The longest speakership struggle in our nation’s history had been completed. During this struggle the representatives had been coming into the chambers armed for their own protection, and had friends sitting in the galleries who were likewise armed and alert to defend them by firing down onto the floor if and when the occasion arose. In the course of the debating over the Speakership, Representative L.O.B. Branch of North Carolina had challenged Representative Galusha Grow of Pennsylvania to a duel and the two Representatives had had to be arrested and placed under heavy bond. Representative John A. Logan had become so enraged in the midst of a violent argument with Representative William Kellogg over an alleged insult to Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois that he had drawn and

43. Once upon a time a yarn had been pulled over the eyes of a New-York Times reporter, that Georgian white men fought duels aboard their state railroad trains.

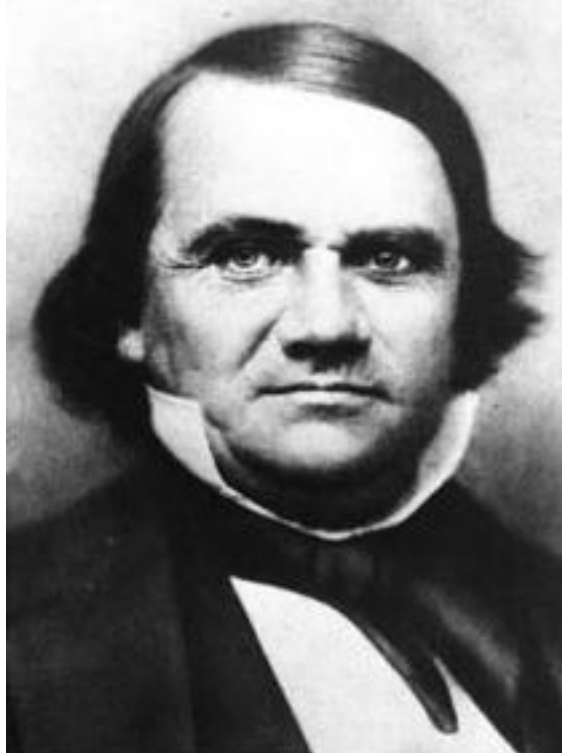
44. High-Density Lipoproteins have no medical significance subsequent to death.



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brandished his pistol, proclaiming “By God, if I can’t talk, I can do something else.”



While Representative John B. Hasking of New York had been in the process of making derogatory remarks about a Democratic colleague, he had accidentally dropped his pistol onto the floor, although it appears not to have discharged. Senator William Bigler of Pennsylvania commented in regard to all this that “Nothing has made so much bad blood as the endorsement of the Hinton Rowan Helper book and attempt now making to promote a man who did this to the responsible station of speaker of the House. The next most offensive thing is the sympathy manifested for old Brown.”

A person evidently named R. Redington was writing [Henry Thoreau](#) to inquire if he had written more than two books, to request that, if so, he be informed where these books might be purchased, and to request in addition that two copies of each of his existing books be sent to Little, Brown, & Company:

*Cle[ve]land Ohio  
Feby 1 1860  
H.D. Thoreau  
Dr Sir  
I would  
inquire if you have publish-  
ed any other of you writings  
than[?] “A week on the C & M” and  
“Walden” if so will you inform  
me [where] they can be had [ ] or*

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*if you can furnish them  
and will send me two copies  
of each to the care of Little  
Brown & Co Boston—if they are  
in pamphlet form by mail.  
I will remit you the bill  
soon on them on recd—  
Truly Yours  
R. Redington  
Where can the two works named  
above be had?—*



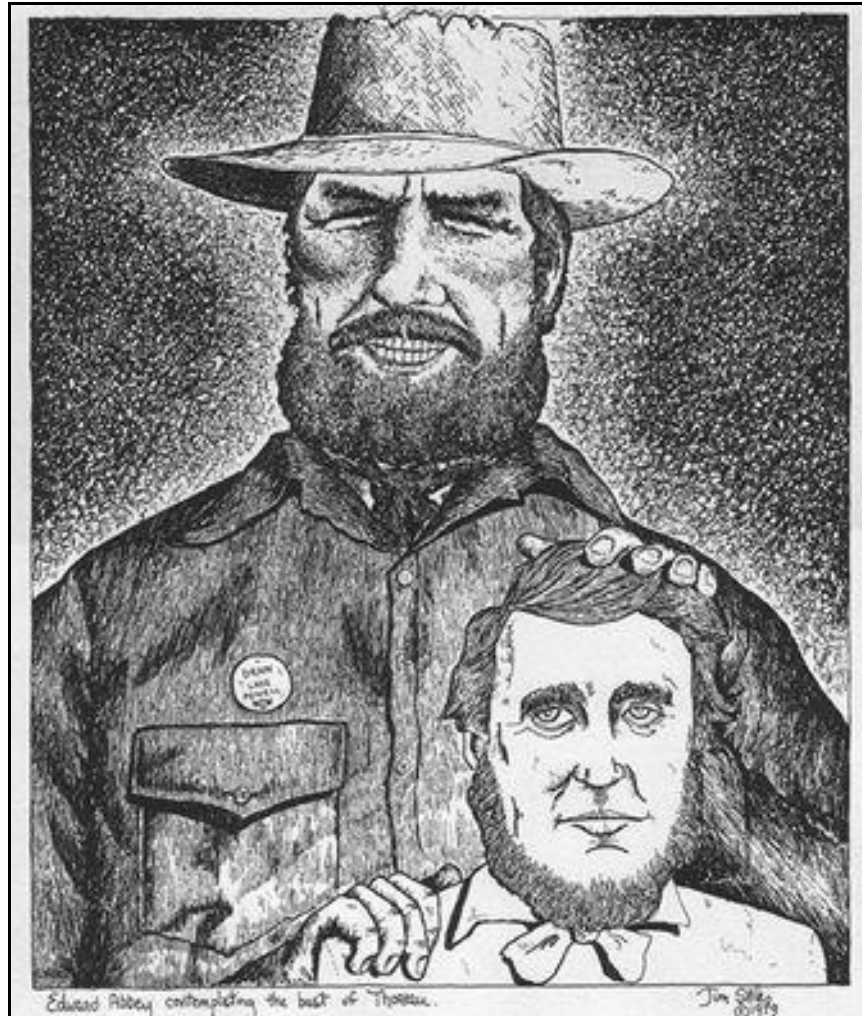
Feb. 1. 2 P. M.—5°. A cold day.  
Two or three inches of dry snow last night.  
Grows colder apace toward night. Frost forms on windows.

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

## DUELING

## DUELING

May 20, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to H.G.O. Blake asking rhetorically “What is the use of a house if you haven’t got a tolerable planet to put it on?” In this century [Ed Abbey](#) would use this sort of trope to inquire, in print and in speeches, such as for instance in [http://ralpheyhanson.com/west/docs/abbey\\_transcript.html](http://ralpheyhanson.com/west/docs/abbey_transcript.html), “What is the use of a xxxx if you haven’t got a tolerable planet to put it on?”





## DUELING

## DUELING

We may note, our guy also in this correspondence with Blake in Worcester made an interesting comment in regard to war and [dueling](#):



"To be active, well, happy, implies rare courage.  
To be ready to fight in a [duel](#) or a [battle](#) implies  
desperation, or that you hold your life cheap."  
— [Henry Thoreau](#)



Concord May 20<sup>th</sup> 1860

Mr Blake,

I must endeavor to pay some of my debts to you.

To begin where we left off then.

The presumption is that we are always the same; our opportunities & Nature herself fluctuating. Look at mankind. No great difference between two, apparently; perhaps the same height and breadth and weight; and yet to the man who sits most E. this life is a weariness, routine, dust and ashes, and he drowns his imaginary cares (!) (a sort of friction among his vital organs) in a bowl. But to the man who sits most W., his contemporary (!) it is a field for all noble endeavors, an elysium, the dwelling place of heroes & demigods. The former complains that he has a thousand affairs to attend to; but he does not realize, that his affairs, (though they may be a thousand,) and he are one.

Men & boys are learning all kinds of trades but how to make men of themselves. They learn to make houses, but they are not so well housed, they are not so contented in their houses, as the woodchucks in their holes. What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on? if you can not tolerate the planet it is on? Grade the ground first. If a man believes and expects great things of himself, it makes no odds where you put him, or what you show him, (of course, you cannot put him anywhere, nor show him anything), he will be surrounded by grandeur. He is in the condition of a healthy & hungry man, who says to himself — How sweet this crust is!

If he despairs of himself, then tophit is his dwelling place, and he is in the condition of a sick man who is disgusted with



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the fruits of finest flavor.

Whether he sleeps or wakes, whether he runs or walks, whether he uses a microscope or a telescope, or his naked eye, a man never discovers anything, never overtakes anything or leaves anything behind, but himself. Whatever he says or does he merely reports himself. If he is in love, he loves, if he is in heaven he enjoys, if he is in hell he suffers. It is his condition that determines his locality.

The principal, the only thing a man makes is his condition, or fate. Though commonly he does not know it, nor put up a sign to this effect. "My own Destiny made & mended here." [not Yours] He is a master-workman in this business. He works 24 hours a day at it and gets it done. Whatever else he neglects or botches, no man was ever known to neglect this work. A great many pretend to make shoes chiefly, and would scout the idea that they make the hard times which they experience.

Each reaching and aspiration is an instinct with which all nature consists & cooperates, and therefore it is not in vain. But alas! each relaxing and desperation is an instinct too. To be active, well, happy, implies rare courage. To be ready to fight in a duel or a battle implies desperation, or that you hold your life cheap.

If you take this life to be simply what old religious folks pretend, (I mean the effete, gone to seed in a drought, mere human galls stung by the Devil once), then all your joy & serenity is reduced to grinning and bearing it. The fact is, you have got to take the world on your shoulders like Atlas and put along with it. You will do this for an idea's sake, and your success will be in proportion to your devotion to ideas. It may make your back ache occasionally, but you will have the satisfaction of hanging it or twirling it to suit yourself. Cowards suffer, heroes enjoy. After a long day's walk with it, pitch it into a hollow place, sit down and eat your luncheon. Unexpectedly, by some immortal thoughts, you will be compensated. The bank whereon you sit will be a fragrant and flowery one, and your world in the hollow a sleek and light gazelle.

Where is the "Unexplored Land" but in our untried enterprises? To an adventurous spirit any place, - London New York, Worcester, or his own yard, is "unexplored Land," to seek which Fremont & Kane travel so far. To a sluggish & defeated spirit even the Great Basin & the Polaris are trivial places. If they ever get there (& indeed they are there now) they will want to sleep & give it up, just as they always do. These are the regions of the Known & of the Unknown. What is the use of going right over the old track again?

There is an adder in the path which your own feet have worn. You must make tracks into the Unknown. That is what you have your board & clothes for. Why do you ever mend your clothes, unless that, wearing them, you may mend your ways?

Let us sing H.D.T.





DUELING

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May 20. A strong, cold west wind. 60° at 2 P. M.

To Walden.

The *Carex vulgaris* is more glaucous than the *stricta*. Mouse-ear down at last.

*Scirpus planifolius* — how long? — apparently in prime in woods about the bottom of the long south bay of Walden, say two rods southwest.

Judging from [Hind](#)'s Report of his survey of the region between the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Rivers, the prevailing trees — and they are small — are aspens and willows, which, if let alone, i.e., if the prairies were not burned by the Indians, might at last make a soil for nobler forests. No wonder that these small trees are so widely dispersed; their abundant fine and light seed, being buoyed up and wafted far through the atmosphere, speedily clothe the burnt tracts of British America. Heavy-seeded trees are slow to spread themselves, but both air and water combine to transport the seeds of these trees.



DUELING

DUELING

1886

June 1, Tuesday: [Mr William White Cooper](#), oculist to [Queen Victoria](#), Knight Bachelor designate, died at Fulmer in Buckinghamshire. (Sir D'Arcy Power had it that Mr White Cooper had been the last medical man to fight a [duel](#); however, the details of said "last duel" are unknown and we are now aware that it was not the last, for in 1898 in Paris Dr. Jean Charcot and Dr. Lagelouze would engage in an honor [duel](#) with swords. The Queen would direct that despite the fact that he had died merely as a Knight Bachelor designate rather than as one who had actually completed the ceremony of kneeling on a pillow before her and being "dubbed," his wife should be entitled to the honour and precedence of Dame Cooper. He had, surviving him, also three sons and two daughters.)



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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: September 23, 2015



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DUELING

# *ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT*

## *GENERATION HOTLINE*



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



**DUELING**

**DUELING**

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

First come first serve. There is no charge.  
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.