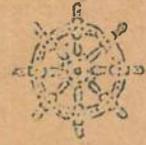


self-preservation - 10

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DOWN WITH THE SEA AND SHIPS

or

HOW MANY SHIPS COULD A SHIP-CHIPPER CHIP IF A SHIP-CHIPPER CHIPPED LIGHTSHIPS?

I little expected to receive a command of my own. Certainly not so early in my career. I'd only associated myself with the South Street Seaport a little over a week earlier. But there it was, the middle of Saturday afternoon, August 24th, 1968, and Dave Lutz had just left the ship for the day. As the sole remaining representative of the owners left on board, I was in command of the vessel. Filled with an overwhelming sense of my power and importance, but yet naturally modest and retiring, I continued to greet the visitors coming aboard with a pleasant and unassuming smile and politely to answer such questions as "What cargo did she carry?" "What time does Sloppy Louis' open?" and "What are those dead things in the water?" to the best of my ability. Between questions I hunted extensively for a pair of steel ball bearings to idle with, or a palm tree to decorate the bridge, and I wondered if anyone was scheduled to relieve me before the Explorer Scouts arrived at midnight.

Perhaps I should explain that the vessel is the lightship recently known as SCOTLAND. She was built in 1907 and first went into service as the AMBROSE. She then went to Sandy Hook as the SCOTLAND, had several adventures, and was taken out of service just a few years ago. She was laid up at St. George on Staten Island a while, then decommissioned and removed. Less than a month ago, she returned to New York, to pier 16 on the Manhattan side of the East River, where she is now the property of the South Street Seaport Museum.

She had arrived under tow, weathered and stripped of much of her gear. The Seaport is presently putting her into shape, mostly with volunteer labor. And she is presently open free to the public. While she's open, somebody has to be on board to watch the contributions box and count the number of visitors who fall overboard. I was functioning in this vital capacity, in behalf of the Museum.

I guess it was inevitable that eventually I'd get involved with a museum of some kind. And it is not as odd as it may seem that it is a maritime museum. Sailships and the sea are among the many hobbyhorses I've ridden. I had a bad attack of enthusiasm for that sort of thing back in the early '50's, when I subscribed to SHIPS AND THE SEA, built sailship models, and read MOBY DICK for the first time. And I've been a buff of the area around pier 16 for a long, long while.

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I discovered Fulton Street back when I got my first motorcycle. Greenhaus was cruising around with me as I got the hang of operating it, and he led me down to the Fulton Fish Market area one Saturday afternoon when it was closed and the streets nigh empty. Motoring among the aged and decrepit buildings of the neighborhood, we happened upon the Eagle Bag & Burlap Company, which was a small store specializing in exotic knickknacks and curios. I later took to doing much of my gift-shopping there. But EB&B wasn't the only attraction of the area.

The smell of rotting fish doesn't really bother me. I took great pleasure in wandering around the waterfront around the Market, admiring the neglected early 19th century buildings, the decaying docks and the filthy East River. Then last year I found something new had cropped up in the same block with EB&B.

It was the South Street Seaport Museum. I went into the little storefront operation (it was free) and browsed through a small collection of ship models, pictures and the like. I went back when they held a "sail-in" at pier 16, and watched a couple of schooners try to beat their way in against the wind and tide. And I joined up for an Associate Membership in the Seaport. This got me their newsletter (a bimonthly fanzine called the South Street Reporter). I began to find out what the Seaport was all about.

To oversimplify, it involves a movement to save a section of the old waterfront from the new-building-developers. Once the Fish Market has moved on to its new home in the Bronx, an area of several blocks full of early 19th century and such buildings will be restored into a maritime museum sort of thing resembling Mystic, Conn, but really quite a bit different both in concept and execution. It is an extremely ambitious project, and still in its early stages.

It caught my fancy. I had a copy of a 1822 edition of Maritime Law kicking around that I'd picked up cheap a few years ago, and I thought to myself that it might be of interest to the museum. So finally one day I hied myself down to Fulton Street and offered it to them. They accepted it, and my offer of volunteer labor, most graciously. When I admitted I could type, I was given a stack of envelopes to address. Further I was invited to join the work parties on the newly-arrived lightship.

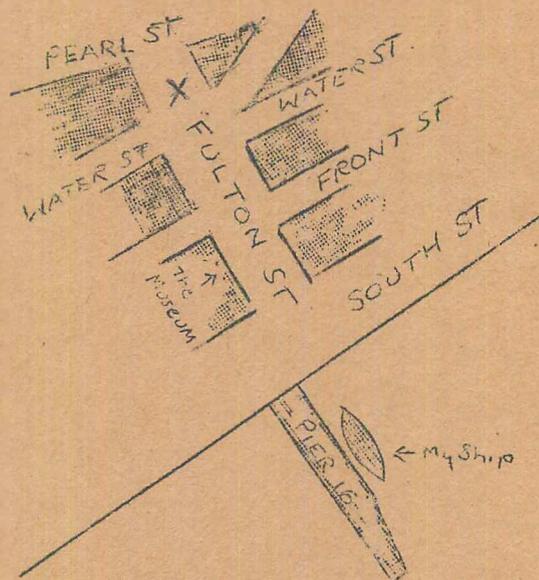
I took back the completed typing the following Saturday, and went on over to the ship. I began with sanding, and shortly promoted myself into puttying cracks in the deck houses. I coerced one friend into coming in on the work party bit, and talked two others into helping mind the store the weekend of the gala Antiques Festival and Pete Seeger concert. In return for this splendid show of enthusiasm on my part, but mostly through attrition, I finally achieved a command of my own. Now I am hunting about for brass door knockers to polish in hope of becoming an Admiral.

DIG WE MUST
or
GARBAGE IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

Playing sailor on a docked and decommissioned lightship isn't the only delight that section of the old waterfront has yielded this season. Nope, Fulton Street has turned out to be full of garbage--underneath as well as on the surface.

As you may know, a lot of Manhattan is made land. New Yorkers have long been fond of throwing their trash into the rivers and then building on it. Right now, it is South Street that runs along the waterfront at that part of the East River, but it has not always been so. When the Dutch arrived here, the river was quite a bit wider. Their shoreline road was along what is now Pearl Street.

The Dutch put up a plank bulkhead between Pearl Street and the river, and filled behind it, forming The Strand. Then the English came along. On toward the end of the 18th Century, they put in a new bulkhead further out, shoving the river over to make space for Water Street and then Front Street. Soon thereafter, they gave the river another push and squeezed in South Street. (See map.)



But it seems that before the English filled in beyond the Dutch bulkhead, they dumped their garbage into the river there. This came to my attention a few months ago when the city dug a deep hole in Fulton at Water Street. In doing so, they heaped up a good pile of dirt. I was gazing curiously into the hole when something on the dirt pile caught my eye.

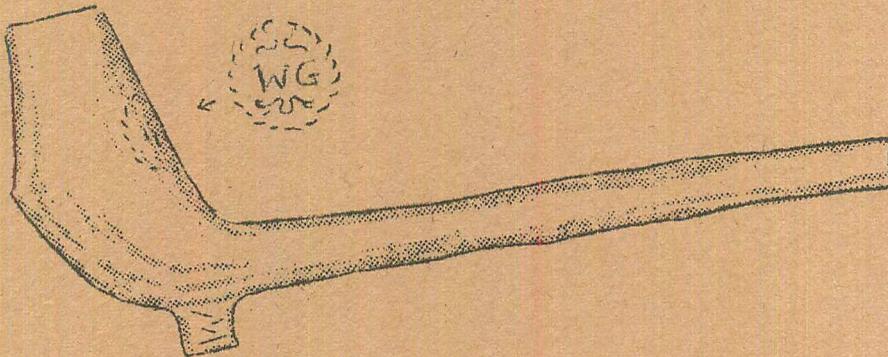
Fresh back from my fossil digs in Florida, I responded immediately to the sight of a blackened deer legbone lying atop the pile of earth. I began to scrutinize the dirt. It was full of all kinds of junk.

Being a pack rat by nature, I commenced to dig in the dirt pile on weekends and steal the garbage out of it. I lugged home bags full

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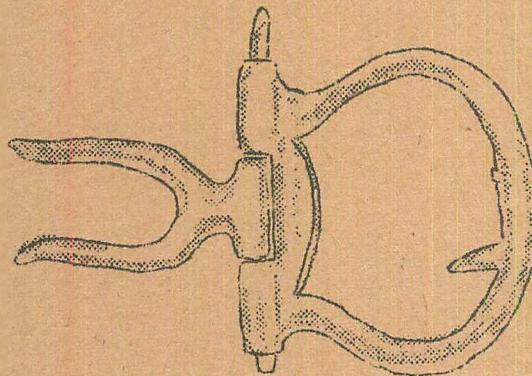
of broken bottle bottoms and necks (handblown type, all wildly irridescent from decades of burial), uncountable potsherds which stubbornly refuse to be pieced together into anything much, quantities of pieces of broken clay tobacco pipes, a few choice samples of bone and assorted miscellany.

The bottles seem mostly to have been of the rum, or wine, bottle type and look like late 18th century work. None of the potsherds have markings of any kind to help in identifying them. Some of the pieces of clay pipe have makers' marks, though. One stem has the inscription "W. Morgan -- Liverpool" molded into it. The best piece of clay pipe is in surprisingly good condition considering its circumstances. It is illustrated below. The mark on the bowl is incised. The initials molded onto the spur are also W.G.



Another excellent piece out of this old trash heap is the brass buckle illustrated below. This is in very good shape, except for that missing tine. It is of two pieces of cast brass (plus the hinge pin). The prongs for attaching it have been hammered sharp. It is a far more graceful and nicely finished piece than this crude reproduction shows.

There've been a batch of other goodies too: a handmade brass straight pin, a common bone utility button, a piece of turned wood which was evidently a handle for a knife or something like that, which is covered with a carved pattern, lots of rusty nails, and a piece of the jaw of a hog, with two incisors and a tusk extending $1\frac{1}{4}$ " beyond the bone.



Now I'm eagerly waiting for them to dig another hole in Fulton Street.

27 Aug 68-5



YOU WON'T FIND IT
or
WHAT ARE YOU, SOME KIND OF NUT?

I did my digging in the dirt pile on Fulton Street on weekends and in the evenings after the workers (especially the hole diggers) had cleared out of the area. But there was still some traffic through the neighborhood. I noticed that the cop cars cruised by with astonishing frequency and I wondered if there were dozens of them, or just one going around the block like a carousel horse.

It stopped. Grinning, looking a little embarrassed, the cop on the passenger side leaned out and called, "You know what I'm going to ask."

Aaron was with me that day, so we walked over to the car and showed the cop some of our finds, while explaining what we were up to. He was quite interested. He wasn't the only one.

Mostly, it has been cops who ask. But then they're the ones who pass frequently and see me at the dig hour after hour. One pair restrained their curiosity the first day that they saw me there, but couldn't resist asking when I came back to dig the second day. Passersby usually hurry along with the usual respect of the right of privacy, but more than a few give in and inquire. One asked if I was a geologist. Some kid me about finding gold. One dignified gentleman with a briefcase seemed terribly embarrassed to intrude on me, but too curious to restrain himself. A young kid joined us one afternoon, but devoted most of his energies to the oyster shells that abound in the mud there, and to bones which are of small interest to me in these circumstances. (Prehistoric fossils are a different matter entirely.)

I found that about half the people who inquired knew what I meant by artifact. Almost all of them seemed interested in my brief lecture on the development of the area. One asked me if I was an antique dealer. I replied that I was associated with the museum up the street, which satisfied him of my altruistic purpose. (Well, I am associated with the museum. If he assumed they were sponsoring me in the dig, he was jumping to a conclusion...) Some have been brief and satisfied with a quick answer. Others are garrolous. One, who works in a nearby warehouse, dropped by again the next evening to see if I'd found anything else, and came over to the lightship the following weekend to look it over. So far none have been unpleasant or abusive.

If you want to meet new people, trying digging in dirt piles at trafficked intersections. You never know who--or what--you might turn up.

A REPORT ON THE RELIGIOUS BURIAL CUSTOMS OF PREHISTORIC TURTLES (OR TORTOISES) IN WEST COAST FLORIDA, WITH PARTICULARS AS RELATED TO VELIKOVSKY'S THEORY OF WORLDS IN COLLISION

by L. Hoffman, G.H.&C.B.N.F. (Emeritus)

As you undoubtedly know, West Coast Florida is full of old fossils. This May I went down there to dig some of them. I stumbled almost by accident upon what has proven to be the richest fossil site I've found so far, and the first site I've come upon with late Pleistocene fossils in situ.

The location is on the bank of the canal, approximately 100 to 150 feet from my parent's backyard. The material was found at a depth of about 6 to 8 feet below the present surface, which is not a natural berm but which was built up with spoilage dredged in making the canal from the natural stream that existed there previously.

As can be seen in the accompanying cross-section (figure A), the site was workable only at low tide. The deposit was first discovered the morning after a brief squall, which evidently broken down some of the canal bank.

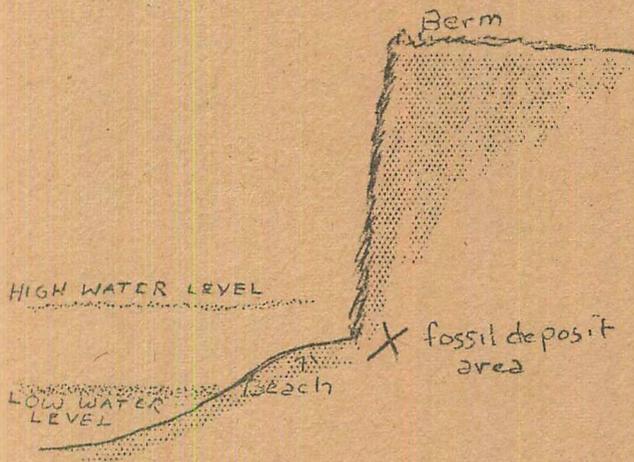
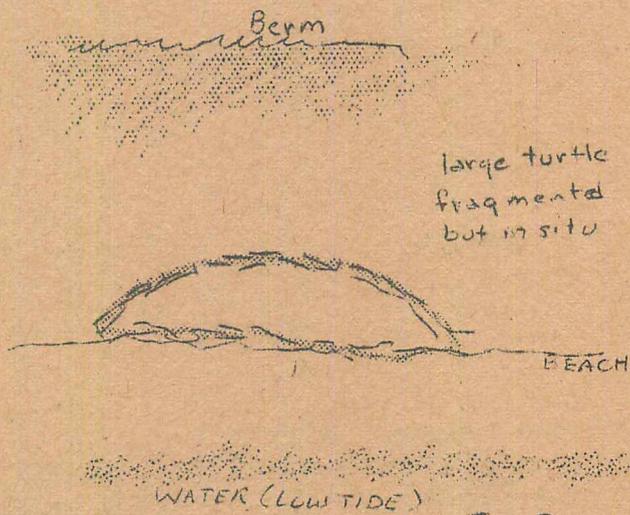


Fig. A

While walking along the berm, I happened to spot what appeared to be fossil material lying on the tidal beach below. I told my father. He brought a rope for me to hang onto, and I climbed down to the beach. There I found large pieces of fossilized turtle shell (for the purposes of this report, the term "turtle" will be used for both turtle and tortoise as the author can't always tell the difference.)

As I began gathering up these pieces, I found among them several prehistoric horse teeth. Delighted, I turned to announce this news to my father--and saw a cross section of the shell of a huge turtle embedded in situ in the wall of the canal bank. (See figure B). I immediately went into a frenzy of elation.



My father brought a shovel and bucket, cut crude steps down the bank and came down to take a look. After we had given some attention to the large turtle, and to several smaller ones in evidence, I began to explore the available portion of the tidal beach more thoroughly.

My passage was blocked at one end by a growth of reeds and a great deal of erosion breakdown. In the other direction, I was turned back by a fallen, but still growing pine tree. Between these barriers, I discovered several more protrusions of fossil bone.

On my first trip down to the beach, I brought up only the loose pieces of material which had been lying on the sand. The next trip down, I cleaned one of the pockets of broken bone from the wall of the canal. After cleaning these pieces, I could see the possibility of fitting them together, jigsaw puzzle style. I proceeded to do so, and found myself in possession of a large portion of a rib from a mammoth or mastadon (the ribs of these are even harder to tell apart than turtles and tortoises). Another such pocket yielded a large section of a similar rib. And, on venturing past the pine tree on the beach, I made a most wonderful find: the entire tooth of a mammoth (these are quite easy to tell from mastadon teeth). It was broken into three large pieces and a small splinter, but was complete. This splended find also sent me into fits of elation.

As soon as I'd gathered in all the loose material and obvious protrusions of bone, I began to explore the pockets of turtle material more closely. I found that almost every deposit yielded turtle along with other materials. However, only a few of the smaller bones of animals were found intact. Much of the bone was not adequately mineralized and lay in the mud only as rotten splinters which were not salvagable. A quantity of various teeth in good condition were gathered though.

The most productive deposits were found in immediate association with a clayish material which appeared green when freshly dug into. The recurring situation was clean golden sand, a layer of the greenish clay over it, a layer of sand containing a good deal of iron oxide atop them, and then the typical grayish Florida sand above to the surface.

While excavating in and around the large turtle shown in figure B, I came upon a goodly number of horse teeth. My first surmise was that this was the remains of a Great Horse-Toothed Turtle previously unknown to palentologists. But upon further exploration, I learned that whenever I dug into a pocket of turtle remains, I found assorted teeth of various types in association with the turtle.

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The following is a list of the materials take from this dig.

37 horse teeth
 10 ruminant teeth
 2 giant sloth teeth
 1 small tusk - partial
 7 miscellaneous teeth plus many fragments
 18 alligator or crocodile teeth
 53 sharks teeth
 9 drumfish teeth
 1 barracuda tooth
 7 mouthbars from stingrays
 several complete small bones from the legs of horses
 pieces which assembled into most of the skull and about one-half
 of the lower jaw of an alligator, plus additional pieces from the skull
 of a larger gator.
 pieces of gator vertebrae
 31 ass't'd small vertebrae, probably fish and/or turtle
 7 small vertebrae from pocket, making matched set
 1 spinal disk from a shark
 3 complete gator scutes plus fragments
 22 spurs from turtle armor
 16 small bones, probably turtle
 2 armadillo scutes
 2 smooth stones, not indiginous, possibly gastroliths
 6 mouthplates from bony fish
 4 large incomplete vertebrae
 8 gar scales
 12 misc fish scales
 2 antler bases
 1 toebone of deer
 1 ungulate (?) toebone approx 3/8" in length
 3 pieces of petrified vegetation
 Assorted other bones, mostly fragmentary
 uncountable quantities of turtle shell material

After a serious study of the finds and their situation, I concluded that the teeth had been intentionally placed in the turtle burials. This seemed extremely curious, until I gave further consideration to the layer of iron oxide which had covered so many of these burials.

During the time of the excavations, I was re-reading Velikovsky's *WORLDS IN COLLISION*, and I immediately recognized a link between his theory and my finds. In evidence, I quote:

"...On one occasion a comet took the striking form of a woman riding on a broom, and the celestial picture was so clearly defined that the same impression was imposed on all the peoples of the world. It is well known how, in modern times, the forms of comets impress people. One comet was said to look like "un crucifix tout sanglant," another like a sword; actually every comet has its peculiar shape which may also change during the visibility of the comet..."

(p 309)
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In the same volume (WORLDS IN COLLISION), on p 64, the author tells us:

"The comet was on its way from its perihelion and touched the earth first with its gaseous tail...One of the first visible signs of this encounter was the reddening of the earth's surface by a fine dust of rusty pigment..."

There is but one obvious and inevitable conclusion based on the amassed data: A visitation of the comet in question occurred previous to the burials in question. In this manifestation, the comet appeared to the turtles as a huge tooth in the sky. Overwhelmed by awe at this spectacle, they attached great religious importance to the terrestrial teeth which, to them, symbolized the Great Tooth In The Sky, and so adopted the custom of placing symbolic teeth with the deceased of their tribe.

A contact of the comet shortly thereafter rained iron oxide down upon the turtles. In their traumatic terror they suffered collective amnesia and the brief burial custom was forgotten. But fortunately a portion of their Valley of the Dead remained undisturbed until it was revealed to me this spring.

Regretfully, my working of this dig was cut short by a hurricane and the usual lack of funds which necessitated my return to New York. However, if the site is accessible on my next trip to Florida, I intend to excavate further in hope of finding additional evidence regarding this curious burial custom.

In the meantime, I hope to impress upon the anthropologists among you the importance of paying particular attention to folklore containing references to teeth, iron oxide and/or green clay, especially when such lore occurs among primitive turtles, with an eye to finding lingering mythic remnants of the historical events so dramatically confirmed by my extremely important and significant finds (for which I trust I will be suitably rewarded by an appropriate financial award or grant from some Institution or Foundation).

--L. Hoffman, G.H.&C.B.N.F. (Em.)

THE USUAL EDITORIAL APOLOGY FOR BAD REPRO
or
DON'T SQUINT, YOU'LL STRAIN YOUR EYES

The text in this issue seems to be cut cleanly and should print up, since I got the new impression roller for the mimeo. But the illos don't look so good on stencil. If they're illegible, don't worry. They are insignificant anyway.

*Hoping you are the same...
LeeH

*(c) Mr Bloch, of course

