



Thoughts on History

June 2018

Welcome, Summer!

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“Side” facts and ideas from history research for my books.

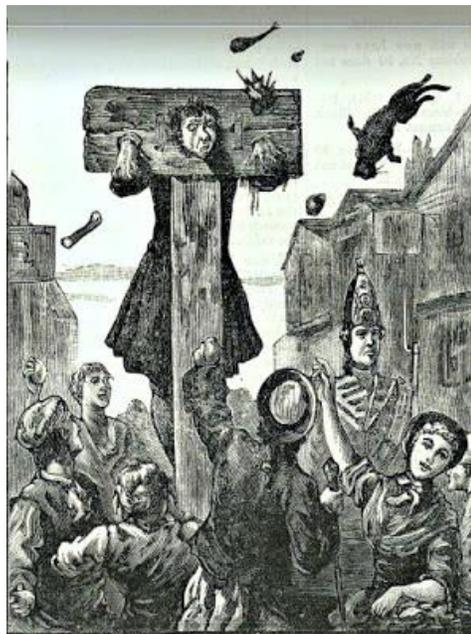
Finally: A Good Place

Thoughts on History is late coming out as I’ve held it up until I could announce my new book’s availability. And finally, good news! *A Good Place* is now available: on Amazon as a Kindle or print book or as e-books on Smashwords, Nook, or Kobo. For these sites, they can be found under Carolyn Osborne. For Apple iBooks, it’s Carolyn Melander Osborne. *A Good Place* has been actively “in progress” for 15 months and is at long, long last a reality.

A story of settlers on the banks of the James River in the early years of the Virginia colony, it’s about four historically documented people: John Powell, his new wife, his daughter Mary and their indentured servant Thomas Prater. It’s a tale of how they, along with three fictional characters: a transported Puritan prisoner, an undersized eight-year-old orphan, and a Manahoac slave, struggle to make the Virginia wilderness a place that could be good for them. The book includes very important dogs.

A Good Place is the third volume of *Helena’s Stories*, historical narrative about the personal lives of documented people in historically interesting circumstances.

To learn more, please visit my website: <https://carolynowrites.wordpress.com>.



Stocks and Pillories

In *A Good Place*, we encounter punishment by whipping and pillory. In the clip below, Thomas Prater has a moment of truth as he gets used to the life of an indentured servant.

“Do not dare to move or disturb each other’s bed or possessions ... or I will whip you. Is that clear?”

We all nodded. It gave me pause, though—what Powell was saying. I had no question he was right,

but because of my contract, this stranger suddenly had the right to beat me. He had power over me that only my father had before. For the first time, I genuinely felt like a servant... it was not a good feeling and I better understood my father’s outrage last March when I proposed indenture. from *A Good Place*, Chapter Seven

I first saw Jamestown and Williamsburg when I was nine and our parents bundled all of us into the car for a family road trip to “The South.” It was fun, and I loved the reconstructions, especially the large, open green of Williamsburg, the livestock, and the woodsy, pioneer feeling of Jamestown.

My most vivid memory, though, was of stocks and pillories and the many children playing around them. I suspect they’re still a top attraction for families with children. It was clear



that part of their charm was a creepy awareness that these were not items of fun in their original use.

The stocks and pillory often are spoken of together because they both were means of publicly shaming a restrained culprit, but they were different in their severity. People in the stocks were seated and restrained by their feet, and sometimes their hands. Other than restlessness and fatigue, they usually were not very likely to suffer physically from the actual restraint, although the actions of amused, bored, or angry onlookers could add greatly to their misery. Often a culprit would be shamed further by being barefooted in the stocks where passers-by could tweak, slap or tickle his or her feet.

The pillory was a different matter. Culprits condemned to the pillory stood with their hands and head restrained at or above average shoulder level, usually for an hour or more. Shorter persons were set on a stool or block, and some taller ones had to stoop to fit the pillory's height. Sometimes the punishment was repeated over several days.

The prime motivator for the stocks and pillory, as

well as for public whipping was to use public shaming as a control of culprits' and other's behavior. The pillory was usually in a town center where people would often meet, and it was elevated so all could see. Crowds usually gathered and threw insults, garbage—including dead cats—and dirt or manure at the person confined there (see the next page for an interesting exception). In some cases, a pillory would be announced in advance, and a notice was usually posted at the pillory stating the culprit's crimes. Anyone who had been pilloried could be ruined socially, commercially, and perhaps physically by the experience.

The verb "to pillory" is used today, meaning to expose someone to public ridicule or abuse.



Restraint in the pillory could quickly become extremely painful, and harassment by onlookers sometimes turned violent toward the culprit. Several instances were recorded in England of culprits dying in the pillory's restraints: through the crowd's actions, ill health, accident or suicide—strangling themselves in the headstall by kicking away the stool they stood on. At times, culprits would be fastened to the crossbar of the pillory by nails driven through their ears and into the wood. Often, after the sentence was served, the culprit's ears were cut off altogether to free his or her head.

Pillory originally meant confining a culprit through a combination of iron bars and shackles. In the colonies, wood was cheap and easily obtained, so the wooden style became the standard. It's thought that nearly every colonial town had its stocks and pillory. Except to a rowdy crowd of observers, they were not fun at all.

"It was, in short, the platform of the pillory; and above it rose the framework of that instrument of discipline, so fashioned as to confine the human head in its tight grasp, and thus hold it up to human gaze. The very ideal of ignominy was embodied and made manifest in this contrivance of wood and iron. There can be no outrage ... more flagrant than to forbid the culprit to hide his face in shame."

Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapt. 1

The last known:

In England, pillory was abolished in 1837. The last recorded use of the stocks was in 1872 for a drunk and disorderly charge.

In the United States, pillory as covered by federal laws was abolished by act of Congress in 1839. However, the state of Delaware did not abolish it until 1905.

Mastiffs

A Good Place is the first of my books to have dogs in it. It was great fun to create and write about Bronson, Daisy, and Rufus: the mastiffs on whom the Powell family relied for protection as well as companionship. The choice of mastiffs as their dogs was consistent with the time. By 1600, there were various breeds of dogs popular in England and Europe. Hounds, terriers and spaniels were already nicely differentiated types, though as always there were crossbreeds. But the big, heavy dogs tended to be lumped together as “mastiffs” or “molossers.” There were varieties in this “mastiff” group, including bull dogs, pugs (despite their smaller size) and a mysterious “bandogge” which is referenced in *A Good Place* in the story of the *Bedelia* and her would-be pirate crew (Chapter 15). A bandogge apparently was a singularly ugly mastiff. In other parts of the world “mastiff types”—large, strong, highly reliable dogs—included rottweilers and other cattle dogs, military and various mountain dogs. The “molossers” group ultimately generated more than fifty currently identified breeds of heavy dog.



So, the Powells’ mastiffs were not the English Mastiff of today, but shared ancestry with that modern breed. Size, shape, coats and colors varied, but day in and day out in the early English colonies these big, solid, good dogs were just mastiffs: workers and guardians for the settlers.

Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
The Devil always builds a chapel there;
And ‘twill be found, upon examination,
The latter has the larger congregation.

Daniel Defoe (1701) from *The True-born Englishman*

No Dead Cats for Daniel Defoe

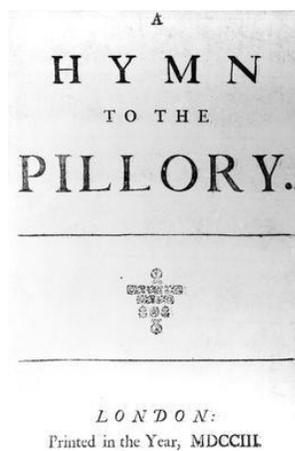
The life of English novelist, poet and pamphleteer Daniel Defoe (b. 1660, d. 1731) was spent in the midst of the turmoil of the Reformation. He’s primarily remembered as the creator of such vivid characters as Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders and was one of the earliest and most powerful influences on the development of the modern novel in English.

A prolific writer and a religious Nonconformist—the son of Presbyterian Dissenters—Defoe published around three hundred works including books, pamphlets and journals. He wrote about politics, crime, metaphysics and psychology, business and economics, and, of course, religion. Some were extremely sensitive topics at that time, and he is known to have used nearly 200 different pen names.

Defoe was the son of a well-off guildsman—a tallow chandler. He was a small child during the Great Plague of London in 1665 followed by the Great Fire of 1666, which destroyed much of his neighborhood. Defoe’s novel, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), was no doubt colored substantially by his family’s recollections.

Early in 1702, newly-crowned Queen Anne launched a strong offensive against Dissenters. In December of that year, Defoe published a highly controversial pamphlet, *The Shortest-Way with the Dissenters; Or, Proposals for the Establishment of the Church*. It was a satirical, anti-Anglican work written in a style identical to the anti-Dissenter pamphlets of the Queen’s campaign. Some people found that confusing. Defoe apparently anticipated his own punishment, for his irreverence toward the current holy cause and so early in 1703 he wrote and published his “A Hymn to the Pillory,” which was very widely read.

(continued on next page)





H. CROWE. PINXE

J. C. ARMYTAGE. SCULPT.

DE FOE IN THE PILLORY.

Thou art no shame to Truth and Honesty,
Nor is the Character of such defac'd by thee,
Who suffer by Oppressive Injury.

Shame, like the Exhalations of the Sun,
Falls back where first the motion was begun:
And he who for no crime shall on thy Brow appear,
Bears less Reproach than they who plac'd him
there.

Daniel Defoe (1703), from *A Hymn to the Pillory*

Defoe was indicted for “seditious libell” in March of 1703. He evaded capture for a while, but by that May was apprehended, tried and convicted. He was sentenced to three consecutive days on the pillory, a heavy fine and six months in prison.

According to a lovely legend, the publication of *Hymn to the Pillory* before his conviction caused Defoe to have a large, supportive audience while on the pillory. The crowd is said to have thrown flowers instead of the usual garbage, dead cats, and other foul objects. Many in the crowd stood with him and drank to his health while he was in the pillory.

The validity of the wine and flowers story is questioned by scholars, but even so, it's a story worth telling for the sentiment involved. At his own risk, Defoe was an effective proponent of free speech and a free press. Eminent researcher and Defoe specialist Dr. John Robert Moore said, "no man in England but Defoe ever stood in the pillory and later rose to eminence among his fellow men."

The Word is “Stock”

Stock is a very old word in the English language that over time has developed a powerful range of applications. It appeared well before the year 900 as the noun *stoc* in Old and Middle English, meaning a tree stump, a stake, post, or log. That’s probably related to the German *Stock* and Old Norse *stokkr* meaning tree-trunk. In the past 1,100+ years the word has acquired very many uses and meanings, all of which somehow link, although sometimes pretty remotely, to that tough old Nordic tree. Here are a few:

Tree Trunks: this relationship’s pretty clear.

The stocks: It’s thought that, like “pillory” (named for the central pillar supporting it), the “stocks,” also restraining devices, were named for the two posts that hold the contraption in place.

Stockings: These close-fitting garments that cover the foot and leg and get lost in the laundry had acquired their name from *stoca*, “leg covering,” or maybe from *stocu* “sleeve.” Like *stoca*, *stocu* is likely derived from Old English *stoc*. That may have come though people observing that legs resemble tree trunks, or maybe that tree trunks resemble legs.

Transitions: More abstract, but still wood, or stick shapes, that provide stability.

Anchor stock: The classic design of an anchor is a double hook with a center post (called a spar) that ends in a connection for the anchor chain. Below the connecting ring is the stock, a horizontal bar that can be swiveled around the spar (that action’s called stocking). In use, the anchor stock is fastened in place perpendicular to the hooks. When one hook grabs the harbor floor, the stock rests on the ground keeping the other hook upright. That makes the grip of the embedded hook much stronger. When the anchor’s not in use, the stock is lined up with the hooks so it’s flat: safer and easier to store.



Lock, Stock and Barrel: This expression has to do with completeness. Most of us (including me, until recently) assume this has to do with the contents of a shop or warehouse, but, apparently not. The lock, stock and barrel are the primary components of an old flintlock gun which could be broken down into parts. You can have any two of the parts, (like the stock and the barrel), but without the third part, you don’t have a gun. The stock is the butt of the gun, which stabilizes it for shooting.

It’s All About Stability: A base or foundation, assets, a reliable resource.

Stock, Livestock: Stock can mean inventory (both a noun and also the verb, meaning “to supply”). Livestock is the part of a farm’s assets that are living animals being raised or maintained to provide food, work, or valuable offspring.

Stock shares: These are portions of the overall value of a company available for purchase by investors.

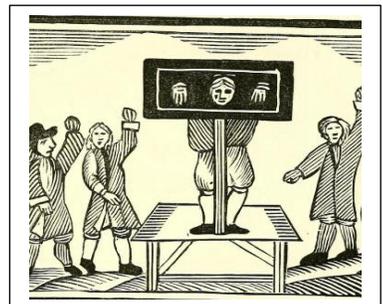
Taking stock: This process can be as simple as looking in the fridge before going shopping. Or, it can be making a formal inventory of a cargo. Yet more complicated, it can mean soul-searching before making a decision. In each case, you assess what’s available to you: from diet soda, to cases of wingnuts, to personal integrity.

He comes from good stock: People used to place a whole lot of stock (see?) in family connections as indicators of an individual’s potential. Genetic heritage was considered a primary resource. Despite occasional grindingly painful setbacks, this attitude is slowly being ameliorated by humanism, overall improvements in health and nutrition and better access to education. We still have a long way to go.

The last known:

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End Notes

Page 2: *Crowds usually gathered and threw insults, garbage—including dead cats*: It's said that for centuries, street urchins "got by" in part by collecting rotten produce, carrion and manure and peddling them to the crowd at a pillory.

Page 4: *Defoe was the son of a well-off guildsman—a tallow chandler*. Tallow chandlers made candles from animal fat rather than the more expensive beeswax candles. The Tallow Chandlers' Guild controlled the production and sale of animal-based oils.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Defoe

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worshipful_Company_of_Tallow_Chandlers

Page 4: *A prolific writer and a religious nonconformist—the son of Presbyterian dissenters*. Dissenters were 17th and 18th Century Protestants (Presbyterians, other Calvinists, Methodists, etc.) who opposed some practices of the Anglican Church. The Puritans of the late 16th and early 17th Centuries (such as Edmund Foxe in *A Good Place*) were retroactively labelled Dissenters as well.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonconformist>

Page 4: *Dr. John Robert Moore* (1890-1973) was a Distinguished Service Professor of English at Indiana University and one of the foremost authorities on Daniel Defoe. He did much of the sorting out and authenticating of Defoe's works, which had been published under various pen names. Quoted in Wikipedia from Richetti.

What was the difference between Nonconformists and Dissenters?

Dissenters separated from the Church of England, opposed government interference in religion, founded their own schools, churches and communities. Nonconformist was a broad term for anyone who would not adhere to all the prescribed Anglican practices, and included Dissenters.

Other Sources

Page 1 Header: from *River Landscape in the Late Afternoon* (1663) by Adriaen Van de Velt

Source: [www/the-athæneum.org](http://www.the-athæneum.org)

Page 2-6 Graphics of Pillory and Stocks: <http://qi.com/infocloud/stocks-and-pillories>

Page 2 The Last Known: <https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/>

Page 3 Mastiffs graphic: *Studies of a Dog* (undated) by Adriaen Van de Velt [www/the-athæneum.org](http://www.the-athæneum.org)

Page 3 Mastiff: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molosser>

Page 3 Defoe: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Defoe

Page 4 Graphic: *Defoe in the pillory* (1862) line engraving by James Charles Armytage after Eyre Crowe:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pillory#/media/File:Daniel_Defoe_by_James_Charles_Armytage.jpg

Page 4 Defoe: John J. Richetti (2005), *The Life of Daniel Defoe*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing

quoted in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Defoe

Page 5 Stockings: www.dictionary.com/browse/stocking

Page 5 Anchor stock: <https://www.britannica.com/technology/stock-anchor>

Page 5 Lock, stock and barrel: Web Garrison, *Why You Say it* (1992), Rutledge Hill Press, Nashville, p. 106

Page 5 Stock: <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/stock>

Page 5 Stock: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stock>

Page 6 Dissenters: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molosser>

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