

Dan Pawlowski
jayhawkdano@comcast.net

word count 87373

Fortunate Son
A Book of Fiction
By Dan Pawlowski

Prelude
Something Drunk This Way Came

Steven 'Stovepipe' Mitchell sat on a hill overlooking the Yale Physics Building relaxing. It was 1969 and relaxing was synonymous with smoking herb. The stars stretched out before him and the smoke from his joint strove to join them taking him along for the ride. Working to near around the clock on his research project in high-energy magnetism had earned him a little R-and-R. The rest of his team were also relaxing and had taken the night off. Problems with their power supply had put them up against their deadline. The end of the semester was just around the corner and things were beginning to look grim for our heroes.

The remnants of smoke slowly dissipated as the last embers of the joint winked out. Steven took it as a sign and started to head back down the hill when a glint of light caught the corner of his eye. Turning toward the source he saw a medal spangled military man teetering toward the side entrance of the labs. He was either drunk or gravity was just too much for him. Steven was betting on the former. He decided to observe for a while to see if the building just happened to be in the man's way. He didn't know what kind of uniform it was and since he had just

danced with Mary Jane he was not going to press his luck. He decided that he would see how this played out.

A slight breeze blew across his face as he retook his seat on the hill. He looked up into the night sky and the stars began to suck him in. It wasn't the weed. The cosmos always had this effect on him. His graduate work would be in astrophysics. Physics was just something to fall back on. A bright flash from the building interrupted his thoughts. He waited for an explosion or loud crash, which usually accompanied accidents in the labs but none came. *Strange*. He waited a few more minutes but nothing, no smoke, no crash, and no military man. He decided it was the pot and took it as a sign to knock off for the night.

Chapter 1: "Kappa Tapa Keg"

New Haven 1787

George awoke to an eyeful of tears. A deep breath revealed the cause. Eau-de-equine. He looked up and saw the horse's ass responsible. He stared it for what seemed like an eternity. In just the right moonlight, it was almost beautiful. For the most part life had been pretty good for George. Oh sure it had its ups and downs and since his current perspective involved the back end of a horse, he considered this a down. Lying on one's back staring up at the underside of a horse and buggy tends to lead one to a ponderous state*. Currently he was pondering how he got here. He thought about the events that had led him to this point and frankly they were a bit sketchy and did not explain horse.

The evening had started out as a short respite from his duty in the National Guard. Military service could be worse than the Guard, especially these days. Any other branch of service besides the National or Coast Guard could equal a one-way ticket to Vietnam. Fortunately his father was the kind of guy who could pull some strings and he did.

* No not New Jersey

Thanks to his father's influence he would be spending the war stateside.

To be honest George was enjoying his military service. He had discovered that he liked the structure his life was getting and there was another really good benefit. Chicks dig the uniform.

Never the less it was enough of a hardship to require a small break, which is why he made his way back to his old stumbling grounds of Yale University. Most people stomped their grounds but for George his alma mater was a more of a place of stumbling. That was the precise experience he had been reliving.

He had taken a short cut on the way back from a frat party and found himself in danger of being seen in a building where students are generally perceived as brainy, but he knew that anybody in his crowd would not be here tonight.

The Physics Building at Yale was unfamiliar territory to him. He had been history major and as a consequence he knew nothing about this building let alone anything about Physics. He thought this was going to be a nice shortcut on the way home rather than a lost journey through geekdom. He vowed never to drink and walk again. Next time he was definitely driving.

The night had been a rehash of his Friday nights in college consisting of frat parties, sorority girls and remembering his major. Of course he was totally plastered. He had found himself in a room labeled with a sign that spelled out Q- U- A- N- T- U-

M Physics lab. "What the heck is a Quantum?" he wondered in his affected Texas twang.

As he surmised the room full of lit up equipment he thought *these geeks sure have some perty lights.*

Coils, transistors and power supplies oh my, he pondered. It was all so Greek to him. But then again Greek was, well, Greek to him. Thank God his fraternity relaxed that stupid Greek Alphabet requirement.

He was hoping that among all this useless equipment he could also find a sink because it was quite possible that he would need to puke in the near future. A nearby humming noise drew him into another part of the lab. This room was filled with even 'pertier' lights than the last room.

It reminded him of a Christmas past in Kennebunkport and the time he got drunk and crashed his old Nash into the harbor during the annual boat parade. Pleasant memories, he thought. As he stumbled closer to the humming noise the dim outline of a large coil-like structure loomed ahead in the dark. His legs began to shake; he was either becoming frightened or about to pass out from the punch. A few more uneasy steps forward and it became clear the object was inanimate. It was this discovery that suppressed his need of 'killin it'.

In front of him now was a long tube like structure surrounded by a very large coil and emitting a loud humming sound. A woozy feeling enveloped George and he attributed it to the

booze. "I need to park my butt," he thought. Conveniently there was a nice chair in front of the coiled creature so he pulled it up and sat down. He put his head down and tried to rest but the entire room began to spin. Room Zooms* he thought. They had become a natural part of his college experience but these seemed to be different than the usual ones. They increased in speed and he felt like Dorothy in the "Wizard of Oz." Before passing out his last thought was *Gee I hope get to meet that Dorothy chick, she's a babe.*

At one point he came to and found himself staring into the black sky above. No 'party' lights, no light fixtures, nothing. He thought he noticed the ceiling being broken up by flocks of birds but that would be ridiculous. The punch at tonight's party must have been spiked. "This is the sixties," he thought, "it could have been anything." He drifted off again patiently waiting for that Dorothy chick.

Sometime during the night he thought he dreamt he was in a western and could have sworn he heard the clatter of horses in the distance, "whoa, that punch was heavy stuff," he thought and drifted back into unconsciousness, or consciousness, George was not sure which. He had never dreamed before.

* The first stage of Bed Spins. He had checked to see if he could quiz out of his science credit but evidently they don't count room zooms or Bed Spins towards classroom experience.

Hours later he opened his eyes but had some doubts as to being fully awake.

Looking up he was staring at the wooden undercarriage of an old horse drawn buggy. *Strange*, he thought, *there is no chewing gum on the undercarriage and I can actually smell horses.*

Looking around he found himself under the backside of a horse drawn buggy. That was when he noticed the potential beauty of a horse's ass. *Well that's enough for deep thought.* He rolled out from under the carriage, brought his knees up under himself and slowly rose on unsteady legs. There in front of him were two large draft horses.

"Wow. I must have wandered into some sort of agricultural project. Did Yale even have an Agricultural Department?" Further inspection of his surroundings led to more confusion. Nothing was familiar. There was way more countryside and stone fences than he seemed to recall existing on campus. That settled it; unless he made it himself there would be no more punch consumption at the next party. He must have strayed quite far from town and off into some nearby farm last night. *Well it would be a shame to let this horse and buggy go to waste*, he thought. Besides with a hangover announcing itself to his head it would be easier than walking. If the Ag Department put up a stink, his father could smooth it over.

George kicked some Yoo-Hoo cans out of his way and inspected his way around the buggy.

He was relieved to figure out that there was a place to sit down other than the horses.

Someday, he thought, I'm gonna have to learn how to ride one of those things. George settled in, grabbed the reins and uttered a drunken "yeeha" and hit the road.

Chapter 2: "BDWI - Buggy Driving While Intoxicated"

George managed to guide the buggy past a stable and down a dirt road. The first notion that stumbled through his mind was that it was awfully dark out here. He had no recollection of the New Haven countryside being so completely devoid of lights. Then again, most of his jaunts through the country were in the company of his good friend Johnny Walker and afterwards Johnny never let him remember anything. He must have wandered farther into the boondocks than he thought. Regardless of the blackness he spurred the horses on to a fast pace. He figured that if he shortened the amount of time spent not knowing where he was going he was better off. This attitude had worked out well in the past and he figured it would serve him well into the future.

The sweet smelling country air blew past him and he began to feel a little bit better. Not sober, just better. He thought he was starting to get the hang of this buggy thing. In the corner of his eye he blew by what looked like another buggy stranded by the side of the road. "*A farmer in trouble,*" he thought. *Those farmers sure are strange lot. They work too hard just to make a living.* At about the time George started feeling cocky, which was pretty much the way he felt before the Nash-bay inci-

dent, he hit a bone-jarring bump in the road. The horses stumbled ahead of him but managed to keep upright. Such was not the same for the wagon. The wooden buggy wheels shimmied violently as they rolled over a large object.

Big bunny, George thought. But something was awry; big bunnies don't utter blood-curdling screams before collapsing. His thoughts were interrupted by the sensation of the buggy slowly tipping and eventually changing its attitude 90 degrees. Well George thought it was 90 degrees, it could have been 180. Math was hard. George was thrown from the wagon but he managed to avoid any damage to himself. The wagon was not so fortunate.

George walked around the buggy surveying the damage and came to the conclusion that the buggy would not be going any further. Two of the wheels were completely destroyed. He was not mechanically adept and this buggy was definitely beyond his capabilities. There was no point in diagnosing the problem any further, a convenient decision because at this point he tripped over something in the dark. Lying face down on the road George took survey and decided that he was OK but as he rolled over he came face to face with a figure that was definitely not well. He almost leapt out of his skin when he realized the figure was a man. *Oh crap*, he thought. *I killed somebody*.

Thoughts raced through his mind. Fear seemed to wake up his brain. He thought about taking off but he knew it would not be hard to trace down the wagon that killed this man.

Nineteen-Sixty-Nine was not filled with horse and buggies. He calmed himself down, gathered himself up and cried. While this never helped in the past, it never hurt.

There was no use searching for a pay phone, this far out in the boonies the search would be fruitless. His Daddy would still be able to pull him out of this mess but it would have to wait. In the mean time he had better get some information on this poor soul so he could cover up his death later. He started rifling through the man's strange clothes for some form of identification but to no avail. How could someone not have any identification whatsoever?

He wasn't a vagrant; sure he had a strange jacket, odd trousers, interesting shirt and a triangle hat, but he wasn't a vagrant. He was pretty sure of that; he had actually seen a picture of one once somewhere. Searching through the inside jacket pocket yielded what appeared to be a letter on some odd stationary.

Sirs:

I am hereto speaking as a representative of the State of Rhode Island and as such speak for the populace. It is our contention that the upcoming "Grand Convention," whose sole purpose is to strengthen the Articles under which these colonies have chosen to bind themselves, is not in the best interests of the people of this fine state. If the goals of the Convention succeed, this bind-

ing would be much more federalized then we can support. When Rhode Island entered into the current contract with the colonies we believed in its loose ties to a weak central government. The new Constitutional Convention will not preserve these tenants. Therefore I am informing you through my intermediary, Mr. Dwight Foster, that Rhode Island cannot in good conscience participate in this "Grand Convention."

-The Honorable Jonathan Hazard, Representative Rhode Island State House.

April 1, 1787

George thought about the contents of this letter for a few seconds and his face took on a 'deer-in-the-headlights' quality that unbeknownst to him would come to mark his later life. Had he read that last part correctly? Was this a joke, was it really written in 1787? *This letter must be worth some bucks. I bet this guy was in a hurry to lock it up.* George glanced over at the man's clothing and an inkling of an idea formed in his head. Maybe he is in one of those weird anarchistic societies that do those renaissance festivals. He never understood those folks, even as a history major it was beyond him. Besides, he was not going to be using his history degree for anything; his Daddy would set him up. *Well there is one thing about this letter, he thought, this guy won't need it.* George neatly tucked the letter into his jacket and made his way to the gentlemen's buggy. He won't need this either he decided as he clambered aboard the now defunct owners carriage. As George sped away from the crumpled gentlemen in the funky clothes he thought he heard a moan from

the man. *Well if he is still alive I would be better off not sticking around,* thought George as he urged the horses on into the darkness.

George had a keen sense of direction and he was proud of the fact that alcohol never seems to get in the way, but complete darkness was another story. He decided the best plan of action was to ride with confidence and speed. Speed could get you out of trouble as quick as it had gotten you into it, or so he hoped, but the more George thought about it he concluded that is what got him into trouble in the first place. *Fool me once shame on you, fool me again and ...* he could never remember the rest of that saying. Regardless, he slowed down.

As the breeze blew through his hair it carried with it smells that George had rarely come in contact with if ever. Many of the fragrances were quite floral in nature. George thought it was strange to encounter so many unique odors out here but then again it wasn't like he ever took time out to enjoy the simple things. What with basic training, flight school and trying to avoid Viet Nam, George did not have much time for such activities.

George plowed on through the night and soon noticed a faint light glowing in the distance. It did not appear to be a streetlight and as he got closer to it he realized that it was coming from a window in a rather archaic looking building. George thought it was strange that while although it looked old

in design, colonial perhaps; the building itself appeared new. After parking the buggy, he walked towards the building and saw that the light emanated from a fireplace in the only room of the building. *Wow*, thought George, *no 'lectricity*. He thought all farmers had 'lectricity by now. George stumbled closer to the building and noticed some sort of posting on the side on the same stiff paper as the purloined letter from his accident victim. Upon reaching the building he was able to read the full contents of the notice and saw that it was advertising a sale.

BARN SALE AT JOHN SMYTHE'S SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1787

THOU HAS TOO MUCH. EVERYTHING MUST GO

A good olde fashioned Barn Sale containing some sparsely used farm implements, some olde kitchen utensils (many olde butter churns) and sundries. The following are available; inquire on pricing at the sale.

Mattocks (finally got a plow and some mules) 5

Hoes (Plow again) 5

Numerous scythes & sickles (not functional but wife says" their good for decorating walls and such")..."

George's head began to slowly spin resembling his appearance during SAT testing. 1787 again. Is that a coincidence? He

had no clue what a Mattock was, and knew a few definitions for hoes. It was probably the farming one. Either way those anarchists were taking this history stuff way too seriously or things were getting mighty confusing. Since the latter of the choices caused his head spinning to accelerate, he had to choose the former. He had recently worked out the whole former-latter thing and was quite proud.

Just as George was becoming comfortable with ignoring the clues, the front door of the place opened up releasing several inebriated men, all dressed in the same style as his accident victim. The men were carrying on a conversation loud enough for George to eavesdrop on from around the corner. "No Philip, no 'one-more-flagon' for the trail. Tomorrow is going to be an early day what with finally rebuilding the docks the bloody Red-coats destroyed during the war. Time to go home."

Upon hearing these words George's knees buckled and he slowly slid down the wall until he was safely resting on the ground. He was a bit confused, perhaps even on the verge of freaking out. All indications pointed to the fact that instead of 1969 this may be earlier, 1787 even. Normally this was out of the realm of most people's comprehension. But even he could reason that the odds of an entire town belonging to an anarchistic society and play-acting their way through the whole weekend were pretty remote. George kept in the shadows of the building while

he tried to gather all of his incongruous thoughts about recent events.

"Ok, think now. I have a letter that was written in 1787 by a Rhode Island Congressman. Oh and I may have killed him. The only modes of transportation I have seen are buggies. I am standing next to a new colonial style building but that does not mean much since this is Connecticut. What does seem to mean something is the flyer appearing to be advertising a barn-sale taking place in the magical year of 1787. Oh, and I just witnessed several drunks dressed in the same kind of clothes as the 'accident victim' talking about repairing damage from the war with the 'Bloody Redcoats'."

Now George knew a thing or two about hallucinogenic drugs (you know people talk, word gets around, you hear things). But all that he had heard did not mention numerous fictional characters revolving around the year 1787. They may have involved strange smells, although further inspection afterwards revealed he was to blame and could be identified. George never even pondered whether this could be a dream. He never dreamt. He never really knew why but he had his suspicions. He had heard that dreams were residual thoughts from the day. George didn't really have any thoughts during the day, let alone left over ones.

For the first time in his life he felt as if he did not belong. He was many miles or years, from home and he had no one to come pull his ass out this particular predicament. The list

of things that had been bothering him was now too large to ignore. He had been at this point in his life before. You start to open that overstuffed closet and crap falls out of it. You pick it up and throw it back in but not before more crap falls out. You keep this up for a few minutes but eventually you say the heck with it and let the help clean it up.

George looked around and there was definitely no telephone to call for help. He was pretty sure of that. He was a history major.

George stared out into the darkness pondering the situation. He felt a sudden jolt of hope. He just realized he was sitting OUTSIDE a pub and a cold brew was just seconds away. *I'll worry about what to do next later, he thought; now I have some 'drinkin' to do.*

Chapter 3:
“ Another Friday Night, Another Bar”

George approached the pub in a manner that seemed unnatural, cautiously. He stopped just short of the door and the reason for being cautious peeked out from behind a lonely and isolated cell in his brain. *I am going to look quite peculiar to these 1787 folks. I need to somehow blend in.* Walking back towards the borrowed buggy he wondered if there was anything in it that could be of use. He peered around the back of the buggy and noticed a large black leather satchel. Upon opening it George discovered a shave kit containing a straight razor, some kind of balm in a smaller leather bag he assumed was some sort of old fashioned after-shave. The kit rested on a bundle of cloth. As he unfolded the cloth he came upon a change of clothes. George held them up to himself and thought that they would be a bit tight but no worse than his old cheerleader outfit, and besides it would be kind of like Halloween.

Having changed and stowed his old clothes in the leather satchel, George wondered what he was going to use for money. He wasn't an expert but he was pretty sure that Jackson, Lincoln, and the rest of the gang had not yet met the criteria to be honored by currency (he was pretty sure one of those criteria was

having been born). George went back into the satchel to see what he could find. As he poured through the shave kit for something he might have missed he came upon the 'shave' pouch. Opening it he found much to his relieve a fair amount of old currency and coinage. It appears that his accident victim was well prepared for travel and since the amount seemed substantial, his choice of hiding place seemed appropriate. Feeling buoyed by his discovery, George sauntered* towards the pub entrance.

As he approached the door he noticed a sign over the door that read The Bull - Fine Drink and Sustenance.

Just what I need, fine drink and some nice hot sustenance, thought George as he opened the door to roughly two hundred years ago. His first impression as he gazed into the pub was love at first sight. The place was as familiar to him as an old girlfriend. He knew he had never been here before (way before actually) but the place welcomed him. The warmth from the hearth met his face and beckoned him to take a seat by it. George made his way to a lonely table by the fireplace. Taking up a chair he noticed the gaze of the twenty or so inhabitants of the pub fall upon him.

George knew he did not belong to this time but he wondered how they knew. "Forgive us sir," an apron-adorned man stated as he approached George. "We pretty much know every soul around

* Saunter is really the only way one could walk in these clothes.

here and yet your face is unknown to us. My name is Caleb Brown and I am the proprietor of the Bull. Would you like something to drink?"

Although George felt out place, or was it time, he had an excellent command of pub-speak. Well Caleb I am George and I would like a flagon of your finest ale please, and would you perhaps be able to nourish a weary traveler?" George had rattled that off quite quickly in hopes of not being too out of place. Just in case he threw in the trademark shit-faced grin that he had used in the past on several occasions (i.e. oral exams, fraternity rush parties, dates with really intelligent women etc...), with much success. Caleb Brown looked at him, blinked, and thought that something wasn't quite right but that darn smile of his made Caleb lose his train of thought. "No need to be formal here mister, this is a small town," Caleb managed to utter from out of his trance. "We have some mutton and corn left over from earlier," he offered. George thought he knew what mutton was and he definitely liked corn; besides hungry people cannot be choosers or something like that he mused. "That would be just fine" George replied. *Ok, I have managed to order food and more importantly drink, mused George, now I have to get my shit together and figure out just what the heck is going on.*

He wasn't the most observant person but putting all the signs together; The posting for the barn sale, the conversation about dock rebuilding, the mention of Redcoats, the acci-

dent with a man from an anarchistic* society; all seemed to add up to one thing. This was no anarchistic society. This was the real deal. The Redcoats, the flagons of ale, the funny clothes.

It was real. The next question coming to his beleaguered mind was, of course, how did this happen? George was pondering this when Caleb Brown showed up at his table with his ale and mutton. *Perfect timing* thought George. Acts of monumental thinking call for monumental portions of food and more importantly beer.

While the beer was warmer and had a bit more kick than he was used to, it was definitely tasty. As he cut up his mutton, he remembered what it was. *Lamb*, how convenient he thought. He liked Lamb.

George now felt up to the task of figuring out how he arrived at this place or rather this point in time. Having a full stomach and more importantly a bit of a buzz helped his concentration. It is how he got through his tougher college classes. As near as he could tell and as far back as his slightly pickled brain cells let him think back, his reality changed after he woke up under the wagon. Now he had woken up under various and more embarrassing items/people before and he was pretty sure this trend would continue into the future.

* Yes it's annoying but you know what he means.

What had set this particular instance apart was the fact that the wagon he woke up under existed at a different point in time and George was pretty sure this was an experience not shared by a large number of people. *Now, where was I before waking up under the wagon?* pondered George. *Hmm, I know there was drinking involved, that is pretty much a given. Where was I drinking?* He had a good idea that it was fraternity related but was it his fraternity? The more George thought about the party the more George thought about beer, and like that Russian guy's dog, Pavlovsky or somebody, the more he thought about beer, the more his need for beer increased. To fuel anymore thinking on this particular matter George would need to order another flagon. George was beginning to like that word, Flagon. George signaled to Caleb for a refill of his flagon.

George was getting back to the business of figuring out how he got here when a snippet of someone's conversation piqued his interest. *"..but Jebadiah I have never seen such an object, if not witchcraft then it has to be Deofol."* George leaned slightly towards the table the conversation seemed to emanate from in time to hear the man who would be Jebadiah exclaim.

"Alright Jacob enough of the Devil talk, besides nobody uses the name Deofol anymore. Let us set aside the origin of this object and discuss how you came upon it." With an exasperated tone the man who was Jacob recounted how he came upon the strange object. *"As I said I was plowing the last 20 acres of my*

farm along the east border, where the lode stone fence is, when something shiny caught my attention. I brought my horses to a halt and that is where I found the metal object you are now holding." George turned his attention to Jebadiah who was holding in his hands what appeared to be a campaign button with several words on it. George could barely make out the words "US out of Nam." George was stunned. He had seen that button a half a dozen times on campus.

There had been numerous anti-war rallies and he had observed them with casual detachment. His only concern about the war was in not going, and that is precisely why he found himself in the Texas Wing of the Air National Guard. Before he graduated he had pulled some strings to insure a cozy slot in the Guard. Being in the Guard was not a guarantee he would stay out of Nam but since his unit was known as the 'Champagne "Squadron," he was pretty sure that he was safe for now. Besides, he liked champagne. But all of that was irrelevant; his current state of affairs rendered him AWOL. Connections or not, getting out of an AWOL charge without a stint in Leavenworth would be slightly more than tricky.

George snapped out of his thought process, besides all this thinking was causing his head to hurt, and turned his attention back to the conversation Jacob and Jebadiah were having.

"Jacob has anything turned up missing at your place?"

"Nothing that I have noticed, why do you ask?" Jebadiah, paused

pondering how to broach the next question without Jacob speaking in tongues*. Jebadiah considered himself a man of reason perhaps even a man of science. Jacob on the other hand had two explanations for any phenomena in the Universe, the first being Biblical and the second being witchcraft.

"Well," uttered Jebadiah, "I have been talking to Stephan Smith, and it seems that a few hoes and rakes of his have disappeared." "I am not surprised, Jebadiah." snapped Jacob. "My neighbor to the South tends to be irresponsible with his farm implements." "That may be true, but after further inquiry he reluctantly admitted the incidents occurred while he was working his fields, seemingly from under his very nose. Since Stephan is a strict Quaker I have no thoughts to the matter of strong drink being involved." "It must be the work of witches," said Jacob.

"Jacob why would witches give strange objects to you and steal tools from Stephen?" asked Jebadiah.

"Who knows" blurted Jacob, his voice steadily growing into a crescendo, "Who knows why Witches do anything."

Jebadiah could tell Jacob was heading toward a 'tongue-lashing, of epic proportions and he needed to quell the storm. "Now, now Jacob, there is no need to get excited just yet. There is also one fact I have not mentioned.

* An eighteenth-century version of "Freaking Out."

It seems Stephan's tools had disappeared around the same type of stones that fence in his land as does yours." "Well it must be that those stones are Witches Stones." Jebadiah could see the storm approaching and decided that best thing right now would be to calm Jacob down enough to get him on his way.

"All right Jacob," Jebadiah uttered in a calming voice. "We have talked enough of this nonsense for now, you have had enough drink for tonight and I expect your wife will be expecting you soon. At the mention of his wife, a calm spread across Jacob's face. "You are right Jebadiah, and a good friend. I'd best be going." Jacob started to get up and walk towards the door but not before Jebadiah asked if he was in a condition to drive his buggy. Jacob assured him he was fine and even if he wasn't, "what harm could he do after dark on a Friday Night" and left.

Caleb arrived with a full flagon and interrupted George's thoughts with a question. "Forgive me for my inquisitiveness kind sir, but you know my name but I do not know yours." The question took George by surprise, but was able to cover his deer-in-the-headlights look with a quick return to his patented shit-eating grin. Suddenly an idea popped into his mind*, why not use the name of his accident victim? But the more he thought about it the more uncomfortable with the idea he became. It was one thing to run a guy over and leave him in a

* Hey it could happen. Brain cells probably give up their last good idea or memory before they die.

ditch. It was altogether something else to assume his identity.

"Why, I sir am George."

"Glad to meet you George. You can call me Caleb," he responded and presented his hand to George. George shook it and Caleb had started to speak again but Jebadiah requesting service caught his attention. "Sorry I must attend to my other customers, I am sure we'll talk more later," muttered Caleb before turning to service Jebadiah.

George was now left with his refill of ale and the conversation of Jacob and Jebadiah buzzing through his head like the fresh sound bites of the evening news looping through his brain.... "...but Jebadiah, I have never seen such an object in all my years ... " where the lode stone fence is, when something shiny caught my attention... ..It seems Stephan's tools had disappeared around the same type of stones that fence in his land as does yours."

The sound bites kept playing through George's mind till he became dizzy and he was forced to gulp down some of his freshly poured ale. This seemed to halt the words from marching across his brain. *Beer is magical*, he thought, *and it appears as though I am not the only thing that has been appearing in strange places*. He pondered the appearance of the "U.S. out of NAM" button and concluded it must have originated from the Yale Campus.

It then started to click into place, or rather gradually slid down hill to its final resting place with all the inevita-

bility of a tumbling rock. The foggy memories of the Physics Lab, "party" lights, and a strange humming noise came back to him.

George did not understand science, let alone physics but he now figured that that humming noise and the woozy feeling he felt in that lab were more than the affects of the punch he had that night. Somehow that lab and its experiments had something to do with how he arrived at this place in time and that humming noise and "party" lights probably had something to do with 'lectricity.

'Lectricity, thought George; *I wish I knew more about it than wall sockets and energy shares*. George thought again about the last phrase that had just looped through the space between his ears. *..It seems Stephan's tools had disappeared around the same type of stones that fence in his land as does yours*... "So is it possible for objects to come and go," wondered George. Suddenly things began to look up, not that George was too despondent. He had found a great bar. But now that he knew objects might be able to go back and forth through time it may also be possible for him to get back before he was declared AWOL. His Daddy had pull but he did not want to push it.

George was not exactly sure what kinds of experiments were being run in the physics department but he was starting to suspect that whatever the students were doing it was causing things travel back and forth in time. Those objects seem to be

appearing and disappearing from around this area in 1787. Unfortunately there were still many questions remaining that had to be answered and he was barely qualified to ask them let alone answer them. Is it possible to control what objects move in time? If so would it be possible for George to control them from this point in time rather than 1969? Sadly, George had no clue as to how to go about getting these answers. Even if he hadn't spent a great deal of his educational time avoiding how to do proper research it would not have mattered. Not here, not at this point in history. There would be no resources what so ever that could describe anything that could be possibly going on at the Yale physics lab in 1969.

George wished he knew more about 'lectricity. George also wished he had more beer. Fortunately luck favored him in that matter. As he continued to ruminate Caleb asked if he would like a refill. "Caleb, You read my mind." Caleb returned shortly with a full flagon. George thanked him and then asked him about the recent strange objects appearing and disappearing from the area.

"Oh, you must have heard Jacob there fretting and going on about witchcraft. I have heard about that kind of thing but have not experienced it myself. If you want my opinion, and as the owner of the local Publican, I feel it is my duty to offer it unsolicited. Jacob has been known to keep good company with drink. I would not put too much credence in the thoughts

and visions of that man, however I would put a little thought in what his friend Jebadiah has to say, I consider him an intelligent and reasonable man."

George thanked him and gave more thought to this. Perhaps Jebadiah could offer some more clues as to what was going on but more importantly some clues as how to get back to 1969 Yale. George promptly put the twinkle in his eye, sauntered over to Jebadiah's table and offered his hand. "Excuse me sir, my name is George. My friends call me W. I could not help but overhear your friends fantastic story, and I would like to hear more."

Jebadiah shook George's hand and introduced himself as Jebadiah Wells. George thought that the name Jebadiah sounded weird. "Nice to meet you," uttered George. Can I call you Jeb?" Jebadiah hesitated and was about to say "No, I prefer Jebadiah" but there was something about the look on this man's face that did not allow him to express his wishes, instead all he could manage to utter was "why of course."

"Well Jeb, what are your thoughts about what is behind these things appearing and disappearing?" George asked.

"Well George," (he respected himself too much to call a grown man by a letter of the alphabet) "I consider myself a learned man familiar with the scientific method. I do not give credence to Jacob's "Demonization-of-All-That-We-Do-Not-Understand Theory. I believe there must be some natural phenome-

na that could explain what is occurring. Initially I thought that perhaps there was some kind of bird or varmint involved, but as the size of the objects got larger I had to rule that out. I have noted one theme of commonality between the strange appearances of items on Jacob's land and the disappearances of his neighbor's tools. That being that they are all occurring along the borders of their land. Both Jacob's fields and Stephen's fields are bounded by the same kind of lodestone. I know lodestone has qualities that allow it to attract metal and to be used in compasses. Any other qualities it may have would be pure speculation on my part and would require the counsel of someone more learned than I but my instinct tells me that these disappearances and manifestations may be related to these lodestones."

George blinked once or twice and took a gulp of his beer hoping that it would add additional juice to his brain cells and help him digest what he just heard. Through the haze of Jebadiah's words George understood a few things. First, Jebadiah thought some stones (lode?) had something to do with the things appearing and disappearing; second, Jebadiah did not know enough about these stones to explain exactly what was happening; and of course third, beer is magical.

"So Jebadiah if one wanted to find out more about these stones who would one talk to?" Managed George after he came out of his haze. Before he could answer their attention was di-

verted by the creak of the pub doors. George glanced toward the entrance, which was soon occupied by what appeared to be the local constabulary. He wasn't exactly sure what the local police looked like in this day and age but these guys were dressed in the same uniform type clothes and triangle-looking hats and since the Revolutionary war was over he figured they had to be police types. *Hmm, wagon wheel, dead bunny er congressional aid in the road nearby, Christ, I bet they are looking for me.* George turned back towards Jebadiah but kept his ears open and tried to listen to the conversation the cops* were having with the owner.

He could make out little of what the discussion was about but several of the words he heard (victim, strange faces, relentless pursuit) indicated it was not good news for him. He would have loved to stay and get more information from Jebadiah and of course drink more ale. Mostly drink more ale, but he could not help but think that the cops were hot on his trail and it was time to cut his stay here short. He would have to learn more about 'lectricity elsewhere.

"Sorry to interrupt" blurted George, "but all of this ale is about to run through me."

"By all means, this pub has quite a nice outhouse."

"Good, Where would it be?"

* George had no idea what the law enforcement personnel were called in the period but he was sure of one thing. It did not sound as cool as "cops."

"Um," uttered Jebadiah**, "that would be out back."

"Is there a backdoor in this place?"

"Yes," answered Jebadiah. "That also would be in the back."

George excused himself with the promise to return shortly and carry on the conversation. He did not feel comfortable with lying to Jebadiah, especially since he had been so friendly, but he would feel much worse swinging from a yardarm or whatever it is they do to you for hit-in-run in this time period.

He felt even worse about not paying for the food and ale, (some of his best relationships were with bartenders and waitresses) but leaving money on the table before he went to the restroom would leave a clue as to his intentions. He hoped to make up for the dine-and-dash in the future.

The back door was exactly where Jebadiah said it would be and so was the outhouse for that matter. For a brief moment George hesitated as he glanced at it, Nature was calling but with authorities on his heels he could not afford to relieve himself.

That would have to wait. The fear of being caught outweighed George's innate sense of manliness, so he found tiptoeing to be an acceptable form of locomotion at this time and the patter of his footsteps was sufficiently covered by the din of merriment leaking out from the pub. He made it to the buggy and

*** While there is little research on the subject this is quite possibly the first time in American history the word "um" is uttered in everyday discourse.

was about to mount the horses and blaze off into the night before he thought better of it. If this was a movie it would have been a great exit but he decided that reality dictate a quiet getaway so instead he gently led them away from the pub and down the road until he rounded a bend in the road.

Mounting the horses George suppressed a yeeha but managed a quote from one of his favorite literary characters of his - "Exit Stage Left."*

* Ok, not a literary character but I am sure George is not the only person to consider Snagglepuss a great character in contemporary American Culture.