

FACT OR FICTION?

One of the interesting questions readers typically ask themselves when reading historical fiction novels is; which parts are historical, and which are fiction? Without Googling the answers, test your knowledge of these various People, Places, and Things featured in *Road to The Breaking Series*, books 1 & 2.

QUESTIONS

PEOPLE:

Were the following people real (i.e. based on a real, historical person or persons) or fictional?

1. **Captain Nathaniel Chambers**
2. **Sergeant Jim Wiggins**
3. **Sergeant Tom Clark**
4. **U.S. 8th Army Infantry Regiment**
5. **Captain William Montrose Graham (Nathan's mentor from the Mexican War)**
6. **Moat Kangly (outlaw)**
7. **Evelyn Hanson**
8. **Elijah Walters**
9. **Tonkawa Indians**
10. **Robert E. Lee (as colonel commanding all U.S. Army forces in Texas)**
11. **Gold-tooth (a.k.a. "Mr. Smith", bank robber and kidnapper)**
12. **Robert Ballantyne (Lieutenant, Texas Rangers)**
13. **Juan Cortina (bandit in the Brownsville, Texas area)**
14. **Miss Ava Dupree (dress shop proprietress)**

15. Slaves on Mountain Meadows Farm (Megs, Cobb, Tony, Rosa, etc.)
16. Captain McMasters (of SS Abigail Adams)
17. Albert Harvey (first mate, SS Abigail Adams)
18. Abigail Adams (wife of second US President)
19. Adilida Boudreau
20. LeBlanc (parish gendarme, New Orleans)
21. Antoine Dubuclet (black slave owner, New Orleans)
22. Nat Turner (leader of slave uprising, Virginia)
23. Slave Traders
24. John Letcher (Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia)
25. Wilfred Templeton (the Virginia Governor's chief aide)
26. John McQueen (former US Congressman, South Carolina)
27. Lewis Harvie (Delegate, Commonwealth of Virginia)

PLACES:

Were the following places real (i.e. described in the books as they would have been in the year 1860) or fictional? (either made up, or were not as depicted)?

1. Fort Davis, Texas
2. Del Rio, Texas
3. The Cantina, Acuña, Mexico
4. Big Stan's route from Siberia (and stops along the way)
5. San Antonio, Texas (it's history of warfare)
6. The Alamo
7. Alleyton, Texas (end of the line Westward for the Texas railroad)
8. Galveston Island, Texas (was it really so flat?)
9. Pilotsville (La Belize), Mouth of the Mississippi River
10. St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans
11. Gallatin Street, New Orleans
12. Covington, Virginia (last stop on the rail line Westward to Greenbrier County)
13. Hotel at White Sulphur Springs, Virginia
14. Lewisburg, Virginia
15. Yale College
16. Caldwell Place next to Greenbrier River Covered Bridge
17. United States Military Academy, West Point, New York
18. Mountain Meadows Farm and Walters Farm, Greenbrier County, Virginia

THINGS:

Did the following things (physical items as well as ideas, concepts, etc.) actually exist in the America of 1860 as described in the book?

1. Muzzle-loading, percussion-cap military rifles
2. Battle of Molino del Rey (Mexican War)
3. Bible verses quoted by Nathan Chambers
4. Irish slang used by Jamie O'Brien
5. Russian curse words used by Stan
6. Telegraph lines to Texas
7. Draw Poker
8. Railroads from Texas to the East Coast
9. German immigrants in San Antonio
10. Using alcohol as an antiseptic
11. Tonkawa Indian legend of "The Breaking"
12. Lewis & Clark's portable compass
13. Odd Texas weather
14. Currency of the Canal Bank, New Orleans
15. Big Stan's tremendous size and strength
16. Harry the Dog's tremendous size and strength
17. Price of a single slave
18. Miss Abbey's flower garden
19. Treatment of Slaves at Mountain Meadows Farm and Walters Farm
20. Photographic (or Eidetic) memory
21. Onerous 'Nat Turner' laws against blacks (both free and slaves)
22. Slaves' day off for the Sabbath (and Saturday night celebrations)
23. Talk of Secession before Lincoln's election
24. Bourbon whiskey
25. Davenport and Company, Richmond (slave auction house)
26. Slave weddings and vows
27. North / South split in the Methodist Church
28. Fields slaves' resentment of house slaves

ANSWERS

PEOPLE:

Were the following people real (i.e. based on a real, historical person or persons) or fictional?

1. **Captain Nathaniel Chambers – FICTION:** The story's main protagonist is entirely fictional. Too bad!
2. **Sergeant Jim Wiggins – FICTION**
3. **Sergeant Tom Clark – FICTION:** Along with the rest of Nathan's men; William, Jamie, Stan, and Georgie.
4. **U.S. 8th Army Infantry Regiment – FACT:** Nicknamed the "Fighting Eagles", in addition to manning Fort Davis, Texas (until the outbreak of the Civil War) the 8th Infantry participated in the Mexican War, American Civil War, Philippine Insurrection, Moro Rebellion, World War I, World War II, Vietnam War and Iraq Campaign.

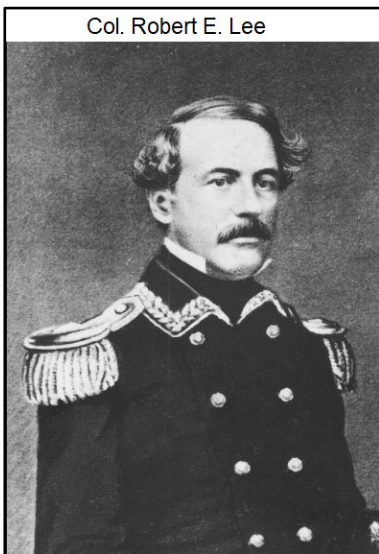


5. **Captain William Montrose Graham (from the Mexican War) – FACT:** He was also a Virginian and graduated the United States military academy in 1817. In the Mexican war he was engaged in the battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Pahna, Monterey, Contreras, Churubusco, and Molino del Rey, where he was killed while leading an assault on the enemy's works. After his death he was lionized as a hero of the war in U.S. newspapers of the day.
6. **Moat Kangly (outlaw) – FICTION:** As an individual he is fictional; however, he is representative of actual outlaws who allied themselves with the Comanches, trading stolen horses with them and sometimes arranging for the ransom of hostages.
7. **Evelyn Hanson – FICTION:** The story's most important female character is also entirely fictional, however, there are several well-documented instances of upper-class women being involved in the Underground Railroad and in espionage during the Civil War.
8. **Elijah Walters – FICTION:** Fictional, but representative of the very worst side of slavery (and neighbors!)

9. **Tonkawa Indians** – **FACT:** Though Billy Creek is fictional, the Tonkawas were much as I’ve described them; at war with most other Indian nations (especially the Comanche and Apache) and closely allied with the U.S. Army (and unfortunately for them, the C.S.A. Army during the Civil War) for whom they gave invaluable service as scouts. Even the rumors of cannibalism are historically accurate (at least as rumors that were generally believed at the time.)



10. **Robert E. Lee (as colonel commanding all U.S. Army forces in Texas)** – **FACT:** Lee was the temporary commanding officer of all U.S. Army troops in Texas for most of 1860 while General David Twiggs was home on sick leave. Why would a colonel be put in charge of such a large and important force, you might ask? Because at the time there were only 4 generals in the entire U.S. Army!



11. **Gold-tooth (a.k.a. “Mr. Smith”, bank robber and kidnapper)** – **FICTION**

12. **Robert Ballantyne (Lieutenant, Texas Rangers)** – **FACT:** Robert Ballantyne was born in Roxburghshire, Scotland October 12, 1828 and immigrated to the United States in 1841 at age 13. On March 29, 1860 Robert, now aged 31, raised a company of “Minutemen” (a.k.a. “Texas Rangers”) from among the citizens of Bandera County to protect settlers from Indians and in that service had many hair-raising escapades. He was also employed by the army as a scout and guide.

The bank robbery in Banderas town and his subsequent chase after Gold-tooth and alliance with Nathan Chambers are fictional, however.

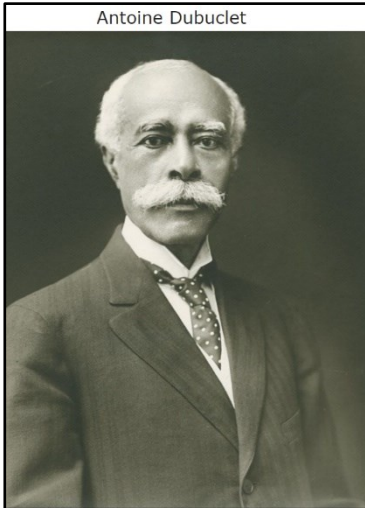
- 13. Juan Cortina (bandit in the Brownsville, Texas area) – FACT:** Also known by his nicknames Cheno Cortina, the Red Robber of the Rio Grande, and the Rio Grande Robin Hood, Cortina was a Mexican rancher, politician, military leader, outlaw and folk hero. By the time Robert E. Lee went to Brownsville in May 1860 Cortina had retreated across the border into Mexico. Lee's threat to invade Mexico convinced the Mexican government to issue assurances Cortina's cross-border activities would be curtailed. Cortina crossed the border again at the very beginning of the Civil War but was defeated by Confederate forces and retreated back into Mexico, never to return.



- 14. Miss Ava Dupree (dress shop proprietress) – FICTION:** However, the dresses and accessories described in her shop are historically accurate.
- 15. Slaves on Mountain Meadows Farm (Megs, Cobb, Tony, Rosa) – FICTION:** All the slaves in the story are fictional.
- 16. Captain McMasters (of SS Abigail Adams) – FICTION**
- 17. Albert Harvey (first mate, SS Abigail Adams) – FICTION**
- 18. Abigail Adams (wife of second U.S. President) – FACT:** She was the wife and closest advisor of John Adams (first Vice President and second President), as well as the mother of John Quincy Adams (sixth President.) She is sometimes considered to have been a Founder of the United States and is now known as the first Second Lady (wife of the Vice President) and second First Lady of the United States, although these titles were not used at the time.

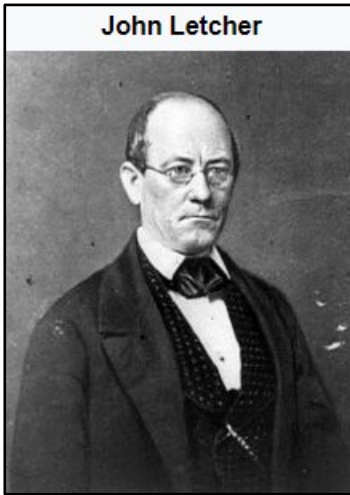


19. **Adilida Boudreau – FICTION:** She is fictional, but if you're a George Strait fan (like me) the name will sound familiar!
20. **LeBlanc (parish gendarme, New Orleans) – FICTION:** However, he is representative of typical corrupt policemen in N.O. at the time, including the arrest ransom scheme LeBlanc runs in the story.
21. **Antoine Dubuclet (black slave owner, New Orleans) – FACT:** Before the American Civil War, Dubuclet was one of the wealthiest African Americans in the nation. After the war, he was the first person of African descent to hold the office of Louisiana treasurer. In 1860, he owned more than one hundred slaves.



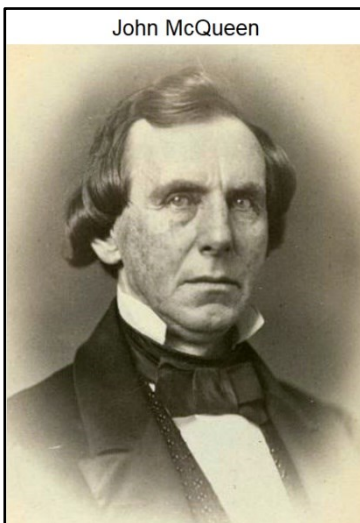
22. **Nat Turner (leader of slave uprising, Virginia) – FACT:** an enslaved African American mystical preacher who led a two-day rebellion of both enslaved and free black people in Southampton County, Virginia, beginning August 21, 1831. The rebellion caused the death of approximately 60 white men, women and children. Whites organized militias and called out regular troops to suppress the uprising. In addition, white militias and mobs attacked blacks in the area, killing an estimated 120, many of whom were not involved in the revolt. In the aftermath Virginia and other Southern states passed new laws to control slaves and free blacks.
23. **Slave Traders – FACT:** Though the cross-Atlantic slave trade had long-since been abolished, the trade thrived within the U.S. borders, either via established slave auction houses, or private traveling traders such as those that visited Mountain Meadows in the story. And often children were the ones being sold (for their future potential worth.)

24. John Letcher (Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia) – FACT: John Letcher was elected as Governor of Virginia in 1859 and served from 1860–1864. Letcher was prominent in the organization of the Peace Convention that met in Washington, D.C., February 8, 1861, to devise means of preventing the impending American Civil War. He discouraged secession but was active in sustaining the ordinance passed by Virginia on April 17, 1861.



25. Wilfred Templeton (the Virginia Governor’s chief aide) – FICTION: The Governor is as historically accurate as possible, but his right-hand-man is entirely made up.

26. John McQueen (former US Congressman, South Carolina) – FACT: Yep, and he was really that bad! Unashamedly racist and pro-slavery. Of Lincoln’s election he said, “They have chosen their leader upon the single idea that the African is equal to the Anglo-Saxon, and with the purpose of placing our slaves on equality with ourselves and our friends of every condition!”



27. Lewis Harvie (Delegate, Commonwealth of Virginia) – FACT: One of Henry Wise’s cohorts and leader of the Slave Power’s pro-secession movement (for more details see *Sedition –Road to the Breaking Book 3.*)

PLACES:

Were the following places real (i.e. as described in the book as they would have been in the year 1860) or fictional? (either made up, or not as depicted)?

1. **Fort Davis, Texas – FACT:** The fort was just as I've described it, and is now an historical site, though the fort was subsequently moved from the original site inside the box canyon to an adjacent site outside the canyon as show in the photo.



2. **Del Rio, Texas – FACT:** It is a real town in Texas along the Rio Grande. The first American to build there was in 1862, but it had first been settled by Spanish in the 18th century. It is 152 miles west of San Antonio. Del Rio is connected to Ciudad Acuña by the Lake Amistad Dam International Crossing and Del Río – Ciudad Acuña International Bridge. It is also home to Laughlin Air Force Base, the busiest pilot-training base in the United States Air Force. Fans of the Coen Brothers' 2007 movie *No Country for Old Men* will recognize Del Rio as the scene of much of the action.



3. **The Cantina, Acuña, Mexico – FICTION:** Although there really is a town called Acuña just across the border from Del Rio (see above), the cantina of the shootout with Gold-tooth is entirely fictional.
4. **Big Stan's route from Siberia (and stops along the way) – FACT:** The Russian-American company and its monopoly on trade in Novo Arkhangelsk, Alyaska (Sitka, Alaska), the tiny town named for a local Indian chief, consisting of a row of cabins led by an American named Arthur Denny (Seattle), a raucous boom town called *Port Land* by Stan (Portland, Oregon), and the even larger and more rambunctious city of San Francisco are all depicted as they were in the 1850s when Stan would have made his way toward his eventual stop in west Texas.
5. **San Antonio, Texas (it's history of warfare) – FACT:** San Antonio was, as described in the story, the most fought over real estate in North America, and in the 1840s was suffering from that

devastation. But by 1860 it was booming again and served as the headquarters of the US Army in Texas.

- 6. The Alamo – FACT:** As described in the story, this fortified Spanish mission church (named for the Cottonwood trees that surrounded it) was the site of the most famous battle in Texas history. But it served as an army quartermaster station at the time Nathan and company passed through San Antonio.



- 7. Alleyton, Texas (end of the line Westward for the Texas railroad) – FACT:** In 1859 William A. Alley, Jr., whose family had settled the area in 1821, arranged for the extension of the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railway to his property and donated land for the right-of-way and for the building of shops, a roundhouse, a depot, and loading facilities. When the line was completed to Alleyton in 1860, it was the furthest point west from Houston one could travel by rail.

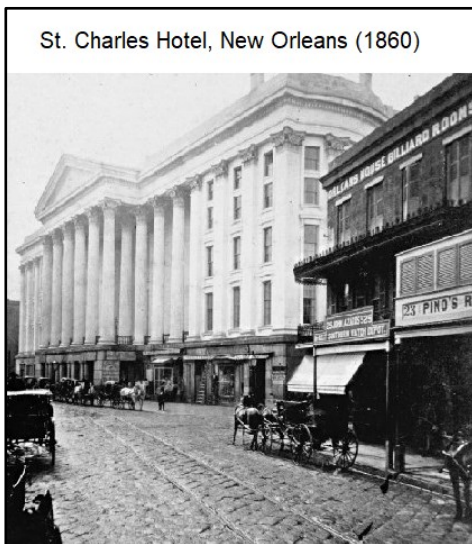
- 8. Galveston Island, Texas (was it really so flat?) – FACT:** The Captain's fear of the island would prove prophetic. Forty years after Nathan's visit, in the year 1900 a category-four hurricane made landfall on the Gulf Coast, the eye of the storm crossing directly over Galveston Island. With sustained winds of 145 miles per hour, the storm pushed a 15-foot-high surge of water ahead of it that swept over an island whose highest point of land was just eight feet above sea level. Houses made of wood were swept off their foundations and shattered like kindling. Over eight thousand souls perished in a single day, the worst natural disaster in the history of the United States. In addition to the number killed, every house in the city sustained damage, with at least 3,636 destroyed. Approximately 30,000 people in the city were left homeless, out of a total population of 38,000. The disaster ended the Golden Era of Galveston, as the hurricane alarmed potential investors, who turned to Houston instead. The Gulf of Mexico shoreline of Galveston island was subsequently raised by 17 feet and a 10-mile-long seawall erected.



9. **Pilotsville (La Belize), Mouth of the Mississippi River – FACT:** The complicated conditions on the Mississippi River required ships to have river pilots help them navigate the bar, with its changing currents, mud, and sandbars, to avoid running aground. La Belize was founded to give these pilots a place to live and work. After the Americans took control of the territory by the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, they sometimes called the village Pilotsville. Shortly after Nathan and company visited, a series of three hurricanes in 1860 (beginning in August) completely destroyed La Belize, and the pilots were forced to rebuild five miles further upstream. The new site was named Pilottown.



10. **St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans – FACT:** The St. Charles Hotel was in fact one of the first great hotels in North America. The version Nathan stayed in was the second incarnation of the building, the original, magnificently domed version having burned down in 1851. Although there are no photos (that I could find) of its interior, there is an unfinished sketch of the foyer in the US Library of Congress (see below.) The sketch, dated 1866, was used extensively in the book to describe the room Nathan and his gawking men walked through on their visit. You will notice the hotel in the background of the Book 1 cover.



11. **Gallatin Street, New Orleans – FACT:** Located just a half-block from the waterfront, Gallatin Street was notorious as the epicenter of vice and corruption in New Orleans in the late 1800s, even as I have portrayed it in the book.
12. **Covington, Virginia (last stop on the rail line Westward to Greenbrier County) – FACT:** In the 1850s the Virginia Central Railroad was extended to a point about 10 miles east of Covington, making access from fictional Mountain Meadows Farm a matter of less than a day's journey by horseback or

carriage on the main east-west road. The planned extension of the line from Covington to Ohio over the Alleghenies was started in 1855 with grading work and tunnel building well underway when the project was interrupted by the outbreak of the America Civil War.

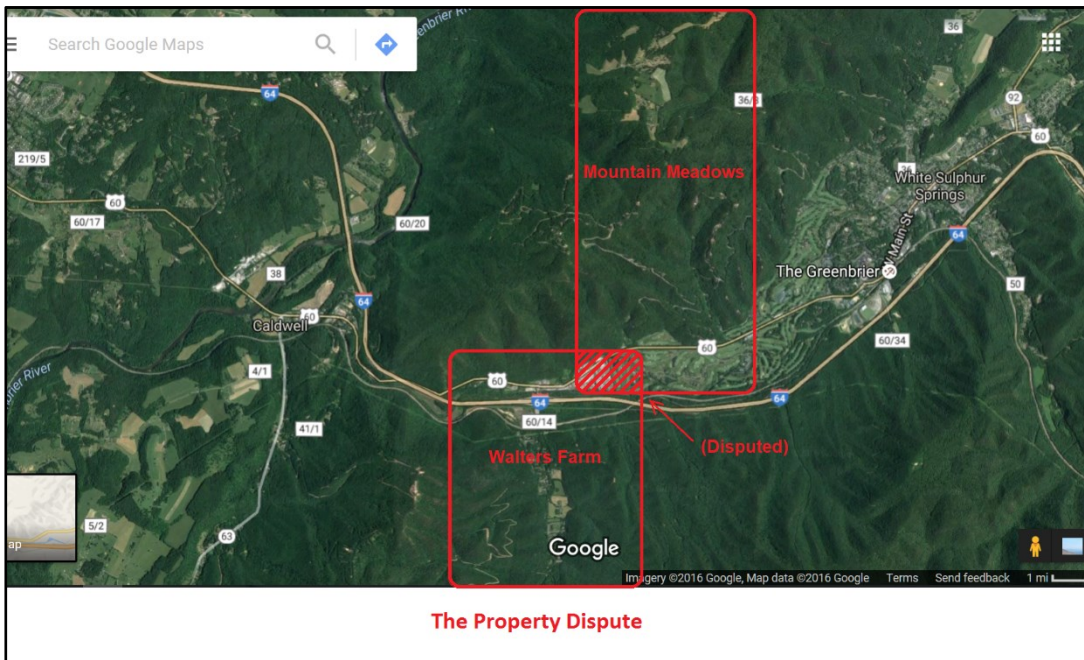
- 13. Hotel at White Sulphur Springs, Virginia – FACT:** The original hotel, the Grand Central Hotel, was built in 1858, so when Nathan returned from the West it would've been sparkling and new. It was also known as "The White" and later "The Old White". Beginning in the late 1700s and throughout the 1800s visitors drank and bathed in the sulphur water to cure ailments. The hotel gained notoriety in the twentieth century—by then named "The Greenbrier"—for serving as the secret location of an immense underground Cold War bomb shelter intended to house the U.S. Congress in the event of a nuclear war.



- 14. Lewisburg, Virginia – FACT:** Lewisburg is the largest city in and the county seat of Greenbrier County (now West Virginia.) It was fought over during the Civil War with several engagements taking place there.
- 15. Yale College – FACT:** Founded in 1701, it is the fourth-oldest institution of higher education in the United States. It moved to New Haven, Connecticut in 1716. In the 19th century, the college expanded into graduate and professional instruction, awarding the first Ph.D. in the United States in 1861 (as William foretold!)
- 16. Caldwell Place next to Greenbrier River Covered Bridge – FACT:** Elmhurst, also known as The Caldwell Place, is a historic inn and tavern located at Caldwell, Greenbrier County, West Virginia. It was built in 1824 on the banks of the Greenbrier River near where a toll bridge crossed. It is a two-story red brick building, still standing and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Fighting took place around it during the Civil War, and the bridge was destroyed at one point.



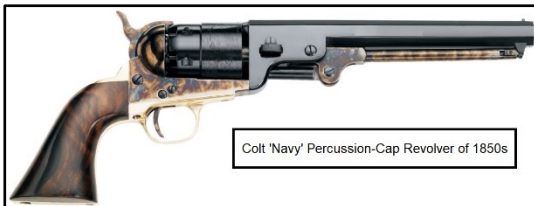
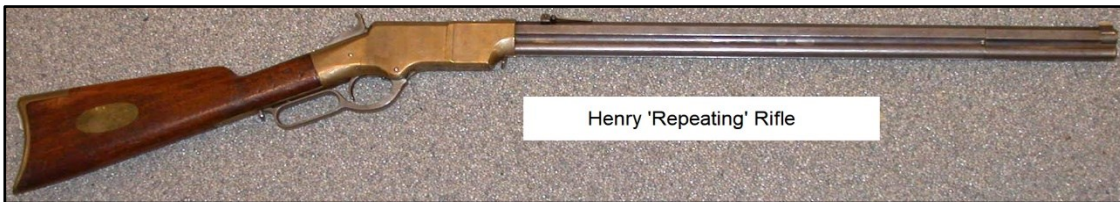
17. **United States Military Academy, West Point, New York – FACT:** The Continental Army first occupied West Point, New York, on 27 January 1778, making it the oldest continuously operating Army post in the United States. President Thomas Jefferson directed the founding of the US Military Academy there in 1801. Famous graduates of West Point served on both sides during the Civil War, including **USA:** George Armstrong Custer, Ulysses S. Grant, Winfield Scott Hancock, George B. McClellan, George Meade, William Tecumseh Sherman, Phillip Sheridan, Oliver O. Howard and **CSA:** Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, George Pickett, J. E. B. Stuart, John Bell Hood, Simon Bolivar Buckner.
18. **Mountain Meadows Farm and Walters Farm – FICTION:** Though the farms are fictional, their general location within the state of Virginia (now just over the border in the state of West Virginia) is real. On the main east-west road from Richmond (a road later called The Midland Trail) about mid-way between White Sulphur Springs and Lewisburg. Mountain Meadows is to the north of the road, and Walters Farm to the south (and west of MM) on the south side of Howard Creek. From a satellite image, there appears to be agricultural activity in the area, but not as extensive as in the story. And I expect the region in general is more mountainous than I have depicted it.



THINGS:

Did the following 'things' (physical items as well as ideas, concepts, etc.) actually exist in the America of 1860?

- 1. Muzzle-loading, percussion-cap military rifles – FACT:** Yep, “repeating rifles” (i.e. rifles that use modern-style cartridges) were under development but weren’t in common use or mass production at the beginning of the war. The two most common ones, the Henry Rifle and the Sharps Carbine came out during the war, and the army reluctantly provided some cavalry units with the Sharps, but refused to purchase the Henry because they believed the soldiers would waste too much ammunition if they had that type of rifle! So, the army continued to issue old-style muzzle-loading rifles to the end of the war, though many soldiers used their own money to buy the repeaters. Only the Union side had the Henry rifle, and the Confederates took to calling them “that damned Yankee gun they load on Sunday and shoot all week without reloading” due to its 16 rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber! On the pistol side, Smith & Wesson had patented a cartridge revolver in 1857. But it was a small caliber (.22) so not considered adequate for army use, though many officers bought them for personal self-defense (i.e. a pocket gun.) S&W so vigorously defended its patent, and didn’t have the capacity to meet the demand, that that type of weapon was never in wide use until after the war. Then many of the percussion type revolvers were retrofitted for cartridges (and the “Wild West” was born!)



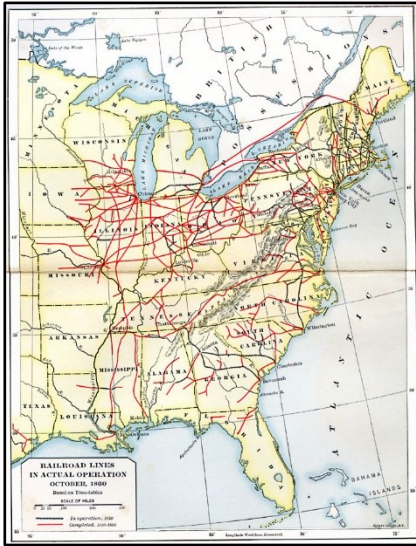
2. **Battle of Molino del Rey (Mexican War) – FACT:** It was one of the bloodiest engagements of the Mexican–American War as part of the Battle for Mexico City. It was fought in September 1847 between Mexican forces under General Antonio León versus an American force under Major General Winfield Scott. Scott’s forces advanced inland from Veracruz winning several battles as they approached Mexico City. Mexican forces were reportedly guarding an important mill complex being used to produce cannon at Molino del Rey, so Scott ordered an attack. Led by Major General William J. Worth, the Americans assaulted both Molino del Rey and nearby Casa de Mata, eventually capturing both positions. But American casualties were high, and it’s generally considered a pyrrhic victory as the reports of cannon being manufactured there proved false.



3. **Bible verses quoted by Nathan Chambers – FACT:** All Bible quotes in the book are from the King James Bible (except those used by the Methodist Pastor during the wedding; I found some of the more modern translations worked better for this purpose.) Nathan always seems to have the appropriate verse for any occasion (particularly the war/fighting related ones, no surprise there!)
4. **Irish slang used by Jamie O’Brien – FACT:** The following are Irish slang terms used by Jamie, and their meaning (in “American!”):
- Craic** — a good time/fun
 - On the lash** — to go out drinking
 - Like a blind cobbler’s thumb** — hammered, i.e. ugly, messed up
 - Whanker** — fool
 - Acting the maggot** — being a jerk
 - Langered** — drunk
 - Knackered** — exhausted
 - Kicked and booted** — assaulted
 - Dotey** — an attractive woman, i.e. one you would dote on
5. **Russian curse words used by Stan – FACT:** Under stress, Stan falls back to his native tongue. Here are some of the choice words and phrases used by Stan:
- Blyad** — fuck
 - Der'mo** — shit
 - Eto piz'dets** — this is fucked up!
 - Bezobraznik** — hooligans, miscreants, scoundrels
6. **Telegraph lines to Texas – FACT:** In 1854 connections were completed from Houston and Galveston to New Orleans via Shreveport and with Alexandria, Louisiana, and Natchez, Mississippi (and from

there, all points east.) In 1856 work began to extend the line from Galveston to San Antonio and Austin, but it wasn't completed until 1862, too late for Nathan and company.

7. **Draw Poker – FACT:** First recorded to be played in New Orleans in 1829, Poker was played with a deck of 20 cards and four players betting on which player's hand was the most valuable. The full 52-card "French" card deck was introduced some years later with the "draw" concept added around 1850.
8. **Railroads to the East – FACT:** As shown in the railroad map from 1860, below, the East was fairly well connected, making possible Nathan's ride from New Orleans all the way back to Virginia. Note, however, the disconnect going west, forcing them to travel by steamboat from Texas to Louisiana.



9. **German immigrants in San Antonio – FACT:** Starting in the late 1840s during a period of German revolutions and upheavals, thousands immigrated to Texas from Germany. They generally opposed slavery, which later brought them into conflict with the secessionist movement. Visitors to San Antonio in the mid-1800s heard German on the streets as frequently as English or Spanish.
10. **Using alcohol as an antiseptic – FICTION:** William was definitely ahead of his time in this regard, though the scientists he cites as opposing the 'laudable puss' theory are factual (and they did use wine in an attempt to treat wounds.) They just hadn't yet made the connection to germs. Germ theory was, however, being worked on during the time of the Civil War and came to fruition in the 1880s.
11. **Tonkawa Indian legend of "The Breaking" – FICTION:** But it makes a good story and nice metaphor for the America Civil War.

- 12. Lewis & Clark's portable compass – FACT:** In the spring of 1803, Meriwether Lewis purchased three pocket compasses for \$2.50 each from Philadelphia instrument maker Thomas Whitney in preparation for the famous cross-country journey. One compass survived the trip and is currently displayed in the Smithsonian (see below.)



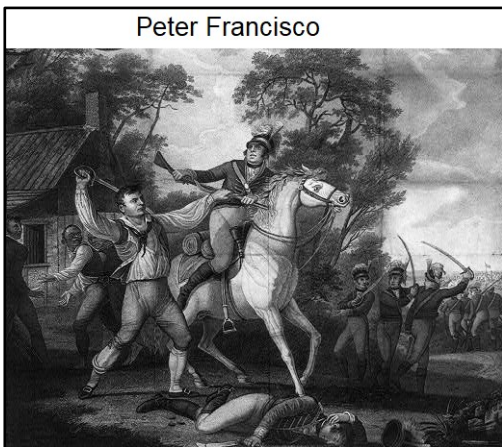
- 13. Odd Texas weather – FACT:** My parents spent several years living in Houston before I was born and I have always heard the stories of the odd weather, especially in the summer. Extremely hot days with torrential downpours (lasting only a few minutes) raising humidity levels to an unbearable level. The average summer temperature is > 90 degrees Fahrenheit with 90 percent humidity, similar to tropical climates such as in Central America. Monsoon-like thunderstorms are not uncommon, and flooding is a regular problem.

- 14. Currency of the Canal Bank, New Orleans – FACT:** The New Orleans Canal and Banking Company was chartered on March 5, 1831, in order to finance the digging of the New Basin Canal, a waterway that would allow goods to be transported directly into the American side of New Orleans via Lake Pontchartrain. Built from 1832 to 1838, the monumental undertaking cost the lives of countless Irish immigrants (mostly from cholera and yellow fever) who dug the sixty-foot wide, seven-foot-deep canal by hand using shovels and picks. After construction the Canal Bank went on to be one of the most prosperous banks in America. And, as you can see from the image below, their currency was just as described in the book (see the cut scenes document): *“The face of the intricately printed five-dollar notes had George Washington on the left, and General Lafayette on the right -- and in proper New Orleans style, a group of buxom, scantily dressed women lounging around together on top of a large numeral ‘5’, in the middle. The notes bore the inscription ‘The New Orleans Canal & Banking Company will pay five dollars to the bearer on demand’; and because of the reputation of the bank, people generally believed it, and accepted the paper as if it were gold.”*



- 15. Big Stan's tremendous size and strength – FACT:** Stan's great size and strength may seem a wild exaggeration for his time period, but in fact, one of the real-life heroes of the American Revolution was of that same stature. Peter Francisco, born in Portugal, became known as the “Virginian Hercules” or the “Virginia Giant” during the war because of his massive size and strength. He was six feet eight inches tall and weighed 260 pounds, which is almost identical to how Stan is described

in the book.



- 16. Harry the Dog's tremendous size and strength – FACT:** Harry is described as a cross between an English Mastiff and an Irish Wolfhound and weighing as much as Big Stan (over 250 pounds.) A “normal” male Mastiff weighs between 150 and 250 pounds and the breed holds the record for the greatest weight ever for a dog at 343 pounds. An Irish Wolfhound is leaner (averaging 115 to 180 pounds), but taller at about 36 inches to the top of his back (compared to 30 inches for the Mastiff.) When standing on his hind legs he is generally taller than his human master. A “large” combination of the two would be a truly intimidating specimen!

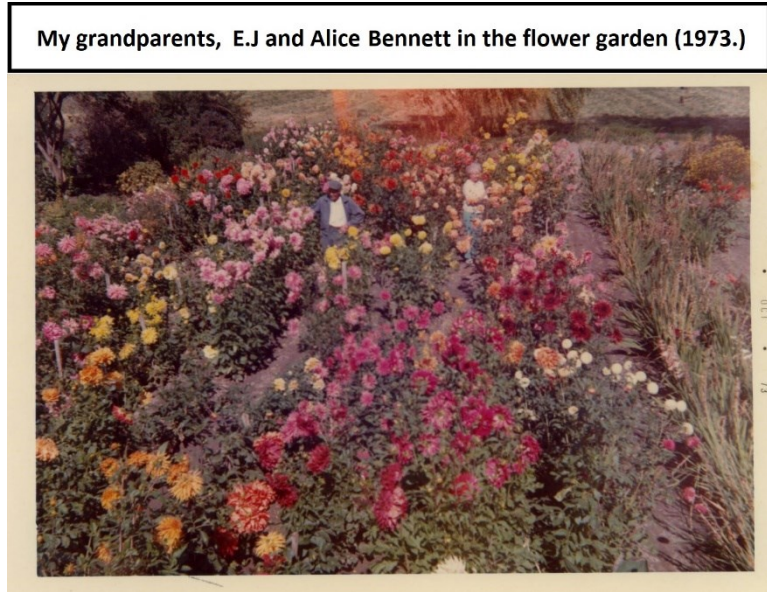


- 17. Price of a single slave – FACT:** The average price of a slave in 1860 was \$800 (a “prime field hand” would cost about 50% more, other slaves would cost less.) This was at a time when the average white laborer made between one and two dollars a day. So, taking the high end of the equation (a \$1200 slave vs. a \$2/day worker), a purchased slave would become entirely free labor in less than two years, i.e. in 600 days. Doing the math, the economic appeal becomes immediately obvious. The moral side of the equation, however ... not so much!

18. Miss Abbey's flower garden – FICTION (sort of): Although Miss Abbey's flowers are fictional, they are based on my memories, photos, and stories I've been told of my grandmother's flower garden on the family farm in southern Idaho (see below.) It was more than an acre in size, and featured gigantic dahlias, which were her pride and joy. I recall seeing a newspaper clipping with a photo of her and her dahlias, and remember it saying women would come from all over the county to see them.



Alice Bennett & her famous dahlias



My grandparents, E.J and Alice Bennett in the flower garden (1973.)

19. Treatment of Slaves at Mountain Meadows Farm and Walters Farm – FACT: The treatment of slaves varied greatly from farm to farm and region to region throughout the South. Some farms employed relatively benign treatment (such as described for Mountain Meadows, especially after Nathan's arrival), while others were brutal and inhuman (e.g. Walters Farm.) Regular whippings, horrible living conditions (overcrowded cabins with little protection from the weather, slaves without clothing, etc.) were not uncommon. For a good introduction to these varying conditions, please read the excellent book *To be a Slave* by Julius Lester.

20. Photographic (or Eidetic) memory – FICTION: Although there is some evidence to suggest small children may have Eidetic memory (where they "picture" something they've just seen in their mind), it is only short-term, fades quickly, and is imperfect. Long term, "photographic" memory (i.e. seeing a document, list, etc. and being able to recall it in detail later) such as Nathan Chambers exhibits has never been scientifically proven to exist and is now considered nothing more than popular myth.

21. Onerous "Nat Turner" laws against blacks – FACT: Following a long trend toward more lenient slave laws, in reaction to the Nat Turner uprising 1832 Virginia enacted a series of laws not only to control slaves but also free blacks, including:

- a. Blacks (including free men) prohibited from preaching
- b. Restrictions on blacks attending religious meetings
- c. Free blacks prohibited from owning slaves
- d. Blacks prohibited from possessing firearms
- e. Blacks prohibited from dispensing liquor
- f. Death penalty without benefit of clergy for a black person killing a white person.

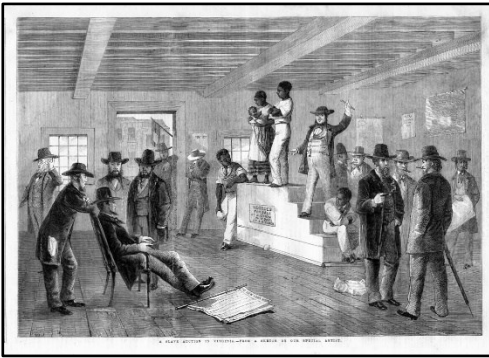
g. Prohibition on writing advocating slave insurrection

- 22. Slaves' day off for the Sabbath (and Saturday night celebrations) – FACT:** Even on some of the more barbaric farms the Sabbath was respected as a day off for the slaves. As quoted by Nathan in the book, the Commandment is pretty explicit on this matter, so it was difficult even for slave masters to ignore. And although Saturday night shenanigans weren't necessarily sanctioned by the white masters, they were a natural, organic result of no work on a Sunday. Again, I recommend the book *To be a Slave* by Julius Lester for an excellent description of some of these Saturday night festivities.
- 23. Talk of Secession before Lincoln's election – FACT:** South Carolina, the first state to secede from the Union in December 1860 (following Lincoln's election, but four months before he took office) had previously threatened to secede in the 1830s over trade tariffs voted in by the Federal Congress. Later, in the 1840s and 50s talk of secession in the South revolved around issues of slavery, its expansion westward in the new states and territories, and the growing abolitionist movement in the North. So, when the pro-abolition Republican Party looked poised to place their president in the White House, the secession idea came to a head, with South Carolina once again leading the way.
- 24. Bourbon whiskey – FACT:** Although there are many different conflicting legends about the origins of the name for this uniquely flavored whiskey (with its distinctive combination of distilled corn aged in charred oak barrels), the most likely scenario is the name 'Bourbon' or 'Old Bourbon' stenciled on the barrels before shipping out of Maysville, Kentucky on the Ohio River (to indicate the port of origin.) Bourbon was the name of the original, very large county that encompassed a vast area in what is now West Virginia and Kentucky. The current Bourbon County in Kentucky is one of several smaller counties carved from the original.



- 25. Davenport and Company, Richmond (slave auction house) – FACT:** The Richmond slave trade was concentrated around the Shockoe Bottom industrial area bordered by the James River. Several dozen auction houses did business in the area, which also included slave holding pens and jails along with lodging for whites involved in the slave trade. Davenport and Company was one these

businesses conducting slave auctions as described in the books (see image below.)



- 26. Slave weddings and vows – FACT:** In 1860 marriage was considered a civil right and a legal contract, therefore it only applied to free people. Though slave marriages were not considered legal, they were allowed by custom with the permission of their owners, or secretly via their own ceremony (i.e. “jumping the broom.”) For those weddings performed in the more traditional manner the wedding vows promised not “until death do us part,” but rather “until death or distance ...” And married couples didn’t typically live under the same roof—in fact each spouse could have a different owner, miles apart, if they came from different farms. The threat of forcible separation always loomed over these families, and countless numbers suffered it in fact.
- 27. North / South split in the Methodist Church – FACT:** The church split over the issue of slavery in 1844, foreshadowing the split of the nation itself some 16 years later. The issue came to a head at the national General Conference of the church when Georgia native Bishop James Andrew was asked to resign due to his inheriting a slave through his wife. This triggered the forming of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.
- 28. Fields slaves’ resentment of house slaves – FACT:** House slaves generally enjoyed better living conditions (hand-me-down clothing, leftover food from the master’s dinner, living quarters within the manor house.) Because of this, house slaves were considered a privileged class by the field slaves. The pluses for house slaves, however, were offset by longer work hours (up before the white masters, awake until after they went to bed) and being under the constant watch of the white family, including deferring to the white children as if they were adults. Female house slaves were subject to frequent rape by their male masters, followed by retribution from wives who resented their presence and the reminder of marital infidelity it represented. White masters purposely encouraged animosity and separation between field and house slaves in an attempt to prevent spying (house slaves could theoretically provide invaluable information to field slaves contemplating a revolt or escape.)

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

Give yourself 1 point for each correct answer, then rate yourself below:

- 0 – 24: Better dust off the old history books.
- 25 – 49: Are you *that* person who always corrects the tour guide at historical sites?
- 50 – 73: You cheated, you’re clearly a college history professor!