

Annie Knew it All

Black and Brown men were ships' officers, even Captains, the most skilled sailors and hunters, genius' of the terrible industry that lighted much of the world. I do not know enough about them, but know a bit, and know of others who know much more. I know they unfailingly cared for Annie, for she said so. Fountain's next phase will not occur without these men – and their loved ones – represented far more than they are here.



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Old salts were impossible to fool. Yet, of conscription, forced labor, bondage, disproportionately low or nonexistent wages, brutality, vile conditions, cheating, kidnapping – my Great Great-grandfather and Great Great-grandmother – the Master, and the Master’s wife – were guilty of them all. Long after slavery was outlawed in his country, Chase continued to hold men over far past their agreed time, at his own doing, for the company, and without any apparent conscience. It was plenty rotten, but the worst treated were the most vulnerable: new hands, other-language speakers, mostly Black and Brown. He would meet each new hand on the gangplank and direct him where to put his X on that crisp contract, promising a year or so at sea. All the better that he was right there to cover up the fine print, declaring them bound for three or four or even another whole go round again should “circumstances” require it. For many men, escape was a constant hope and a rare happening – they anchored off islands too far away to swim – and the sea could kill them far faster than the land.

The family spoke of him in the proverbial “bastard on the sea, nicest man on land” easy way out. Annie at Sea Suffering, too, the easy way out. Annie knew it all, as her thousand fathom stare makes clear.

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Yes, the Chase's retired broke – not undeserved – but broke in farmer's terms, still able to set up a sawmill and mow down a few forest patches, having not destroyed enough. I sit here weirdly calm that I am culpable for the privilege even its having happened provides me. Should we be sued for pain and suffering, should we be asked for reparations, I like to think I would not contest. (I like to think I may be making a start.)

And for all this fancy talk of opals, they were mined by forced laborers – [Australia Has a History of Aboriginal Slavery](#) – as many are now: Modern slavery has millions of faces — and Moe Turaga is one of them. One billionaire of a hundred-thousand has had his 'come to Jesus' moment: "We had slavery in our supply chains," says Australia's Andrew Forrest, Fortescue Metals chairman. He knows his

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efforts are puny compared to the 40 million people in bondage now: [A Mining Billionaire Takes His War on Slavery to the UN.](#)

Where this will go I am not sure, so long has it been nascent. One possibility will be a next phase of development (MOOSK, big data, user interface, apps, permissions, partnerships, and so on) in which I will be glad partner with under-resourced urban and rural schools, their neuroatypical and neurotypical young scholars, with military veterans and military-connected families, and with the successors of the sailors and their families, should any or all be interested.