

I found the engraving at Oakes They said that they got left out of the trunk. I found the gown & one article of the child's dress at Dan. Jones Patchog & the other article of the child's dress at John Skinners in the same village—they said they were picked up 1½ or 2 miles east of the wreck. There were more things here & elsewhere which were either not worth taking or not worth waiting to see.

² At the top of the manuscript page beginning with "the sea," T wrote an outline of his report:

1st before struck.

2nd till most had got shore

3^d The final breaking up.

1st Selah Woods account.

2nd Oakes' "

3^d account of beach.

Copy-text: AL (MH-H, Autograph File, T)

Published: "E-T Cor" 1892, 750-751; *FL* 1894, 220-222; *FL* 1906, 183-185; *Cor* 1958, 262-263

Editor's Notes

This letter is endorsed "H. D. Thoreau / July 1850 / Fire Island" directly] *PE*; dir{*MS blotted*}tly once] *PE*; {*MS blotted*}nce

Author's Alterations

morn.] *interlined with a caret*

Ossolis] *ossolis*

Its] *preceded by cancelled Mr*

Wife] *wife*

did] *Did*

it] *inserted*

"sort of] *interlined with a caret*

To Charles Sumner

July 29, 1850

Springfield Depot
noon July 29th 1850.

Dear Sir,

I left Fire Island Beach on Saturday between nine & ten o'clock A. M. The same morning I saw on the beach, four

or five miles west of the wreck, a portion of a human skeleton, which was found the day before, probably from the Elizabeth, but I have not knowledge enough of anatomy to decide *confidently*, as many might, whether it was that of a male or a female.¹ I therefore hired Selah Strong, Keeper of the Light,² to bury it simply for the present, and mark the spot, leaving it to future events, or a trustworthy examination, to decide the question.

Yrs in haste

Henry D. Thoreau

P.S. No *more* bodies had then been found.

Correspondent: Charles Sumner (1811-1874), a Boston lawyer, was known for his opposition to the Mexican War. In 1851 he was elected senator from Massachusetts and became the leading abolitionist in Congress.

¹ Apparently Sumner left the scene of the wreck before the last body was found.

² Selah Strong (1816?-1874), son of Silas and Abigail Scudder Strong, married Susan E. Vail (1817?-1897), daughter of Platt and Hannah Smith Vail, in 1837. They lived in Islip. Strong was keeper of the Fire Island lighthouse.

Copy-text: ALS (MH-H, MS Am 1 [6271])

Published: *Cor* 1958, 263

From Charles Sumner

July 31, 1850

Boston July 31st '50

My dear Sir,

I desire to thank you for yr kindness in writing me with regard to the remains of a human body found on the beach last Saturday.

From what you wrote & from what I hear from others, it seems impossible to identify them.

If the body of my brother could be found,¹ it would be a