

THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY



And yet – in fact you need only draw a single thread at any point you choose out of the fabric of life and the run will make a pathway across the whole, and down that wider pathway each of the other threads will become successively visible, one by one.

– Heimito von Doderer, *DIE DÄIMONEN*



**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1830



[George Barrell Emerson](#) helped to organize a [Boston Society of Natural History](#) on the basis of what remained of the Linnaean Society, which had flourished from 1813 to 1823. He would be a very active member, holding several offices, curating one of the collections, and regularly attending meetings. Initially its function would be to offer a series of lectures on natural history to the general public in the hall of the Boston Athenaeum (which at that time was being housed in a mansion donated by James Perkins on Pearl Street). [Doctor Walter Channing](#) would be among those who would join the new society.



Six men interested in natural history established the Boston Society of Natural History, an organization through which they could pursue their common scientific interests. Devoted to collecting and studying natural history specimens, the society displayed its collections in numerous temporary facilities until 1864, when it opened the New England Museum of Natural History at the corner of Berkeley and Boylston Streets in Boston's Back Bay. That Museum is now known world-wide as the Museum of Science. The Museum has remained on the cutting edge of science education by developing innovative and interactive exhibits and programs that both entertain and educate. Two of the Museum's more recent additions, the Hall Wing housing the Roger L. Nichols Gallery for temporary exhibits, and the Mugar Omni Theater, exemplify the Museum of Science's commitment to making science fun and accessible to all. The Mugar Omni Theater, opened in 1987, utilizes state-of-the-art film technology to project larger-than-life images onto a five-story high, domed screen, creating a "you are there" experience for viewers. More than 1.6 million people visit the Museum and its more than 600 interactive exhibits each year.



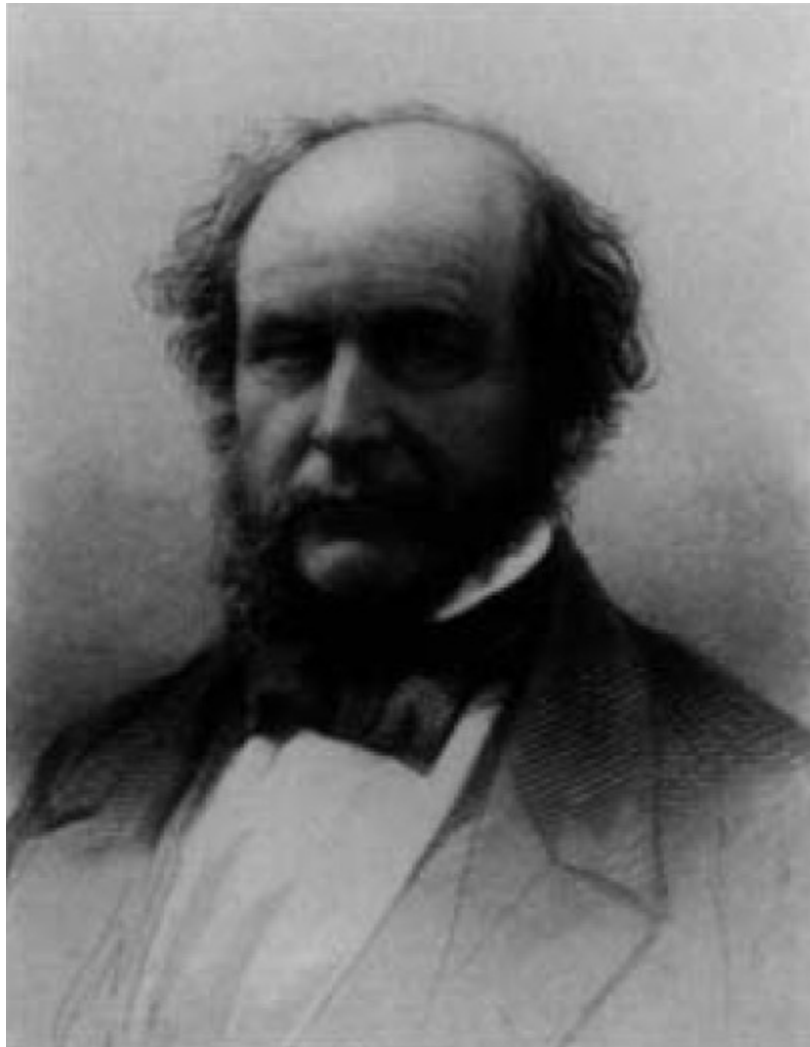
BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1831



The [Boston Society of Natural History](#) received a charter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. [George B. Emerson](#) assisted in the organization of this new society.



NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1833



The [Boston Society of Natural History](#) relocated from the room it had occupied at the [Boston](#) Athenaeum (in a mansion donated by James Perkins on Pearl Street) into a hall on the 3d floor of the new Savings Bank Building on Tremont Street, overlooking Boston Common. The shell collection of Dr. Amos Binney, Jr. and the mineral collection of Dr. Charles Thomas Jackson would be placed on exhibit.

NO-ONE'S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE





BOSTON SOCIETY

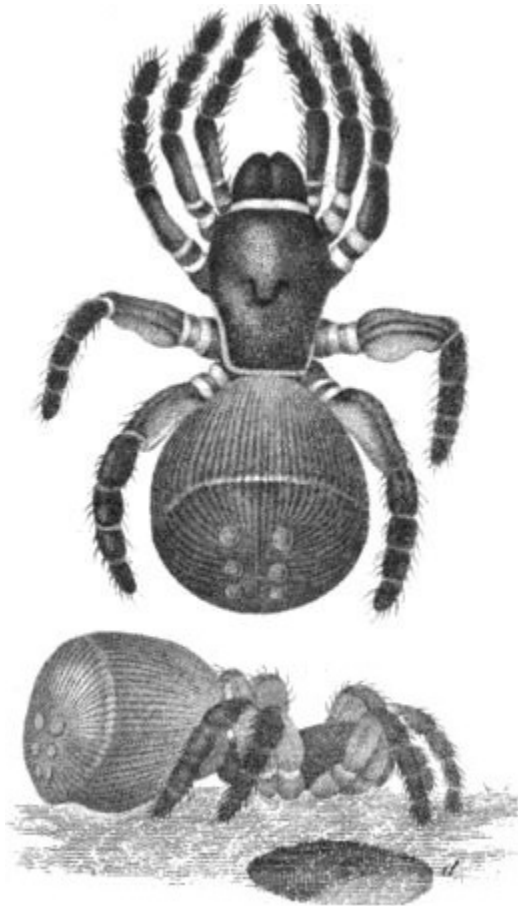
OF NATURAL HISTORY

1834



Beginning of the Boston Journal of Natural History. (Under the leadership of Amos Binney, this would create 7 volumes of papers before being closed out in 1863 in favor of the society's MEMOIRS READ BEFORE THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY.)

Nicholas Marcellus Hentz, who would be contributing a series on spiders to this Boston Journal of Natural History, and his wife the novelist Mrs. Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz, relocated from Cincinnati, Ohio to Florence, Alabama, where they would be conducting the Locust Dell Academy for white young ladies.



**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT'S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN'S STORIES.
LIFE ISN'T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1835

➡ [Doctor Walter Channing](#) had the honor of delivering the annual address to the [Boston Society of Natural History](#). He was made the secretary of the Massachusetts Temperance Society.

At the age of 17 [Ellery Channing](#) published his adolescent poetry in the [Boston Mercantile Journal](#) under the pen name “Hal Menge” — poems of the “my mother died / Before I clasped her” sort, necessarily pseudonymous, “sublimo-slipshod” nevertheless poems,¹ 19 of them in a single year — and we all wish to have such relations with the mercantile press.

➡ Ambrose S. Curtis established an endowment of \$15,000 for the [Boston Society of Natural History](#). The initial \$2,000 payment out of this endowment would be lost in a bank collapse, but subsequent payments would maintain the Society for a quarter-century.

➡ At [Harvard College](#), four of the undergraduates were from [Concord](#) families: in addition to [David Henry Thoreau](#) there were George Moore, son of Captain Abel Moore the sheriff who would become a minister, Hiram Barrett Dennis, son of the farmer Samuel Dennis who would become an editor, and Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar, a son of Squire Samuel Hoar who would become a lawyer and politician.

Undergraduates. — George Moore [of [Concord](#)], son of Captain Abel Moore; Hiram Barrett Dennis [of [Concord](#)], son of Samuel Dennis; Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar, son of the Hon. Samuel Hoar [of [Concord](#)], members of [Harvard University](#); Marshall Merriam [of [Concord](#)], and Gardner Davis [of [Concord](#)], son of Josiah Davis, of Yale College, and Josiah Dudley [of [Concord](#)], of Union College, New York.

[Thomas Mayo Brewer](#) graduated. He would continue into Harvard Medical School. He joined the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).

At [Harvard Divinity School](#), the following gentlemen completed their studies:

Cyrus Augustus Bartol (A.B. Ham. [Hamilton College?])
Asarelah Morse Bridge
Charles Timothy Brooks
Edgar Buckingham
Christopher Pearse Cranch (A.B. Col. [Columbia College?])
Barzillai Frost
Samuel Osgood
John Parkman
Harrison Gray Otis Phipps
George Matthias Rice (A.B. Bowdoin College)
James Thurston

1. This term “sublimo-slipshod” is Thoreau’s. Compare Thomas Carlyle’s “cabalístico-sartorial.”



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1836



The [Reverend Lemuel Capen](#) was elected to be a member of the Massachusetts legislature.

Under the presidency of [George Barrell Emerson](#), the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) began a mammal collection when Dr. Nathaniel Bradstreet Shurtleff, the Society's 1st Curator of Comparative Anatomy assembled the bleached bones of an Asiatic [elephant](#) acquired from James Blake, that had died in a menagerie. Although there is an entry in the records that mentions an elephant named "Columbus," the date on that entry is March 23/24, 1829 indicating that if these two records have to do with the same animal, then those bleached bones must have been in storage for awhile before their eventual assembly and display. On the other hand, a book published by Peck & Wood in 1834, A SYSTEM OF NATURAL HISTORY: CONTAINING SCIENTIFIC AND POPULAR DESCRIPTIONS OF VARIOUS ANIMALS; CHIEFLY COMPILED FROM THE WORKS OF CUVIER; GRIFFITH, RICHARDSON, GEOFFREY [GEOFFREY ST-HILAIRE] LACEPEDE [LACEPÈDE], [BUFFON](#), GOLDSMITH, SHAW, MONTAGUE, WILSON, LEWIS AND CLARKE, AUDUBON, AND OTHER WRITERS ON NATURAL HISTORY ... stated that an elephant on display at the Society had arrived "recently" by ship but had died in [Boston](#) Harbor.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1837



Seeing that there had recently been a state-funded geological survey, the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) propositioned the Massachusetts legislature to fund also a similar botanical and zoological survey. The new president of the society he had helped form in 1831, [George B. Emerson](#), would not only be appointed by Governor Everett as commissioner of the survey but would himself over the following nine summers, in conjunction with the botanist Dr. Dewey, perform its investigation of trees and shrubs. A circular with twenty questions was posted to some fifty landowners in the state. During his summers the schoolmaster would be visiting shipyards in Boston and [New Bedford](#) and elsewhere along the coast, along with sawmills, machine shops, and woodworking shops fashioning furniture, agricultural implements, etc.

Rebecca Stanley Mann, [Horace Mann, Sr.](#)'s sister, died.

The American Institute of Instruction, with which [George B. Emerson](#) was heavily involved, secured the appointment of Massachusetts Representative [Horace Mann, Sr.](#) as Secretary of a newly formed State Board of Education.

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

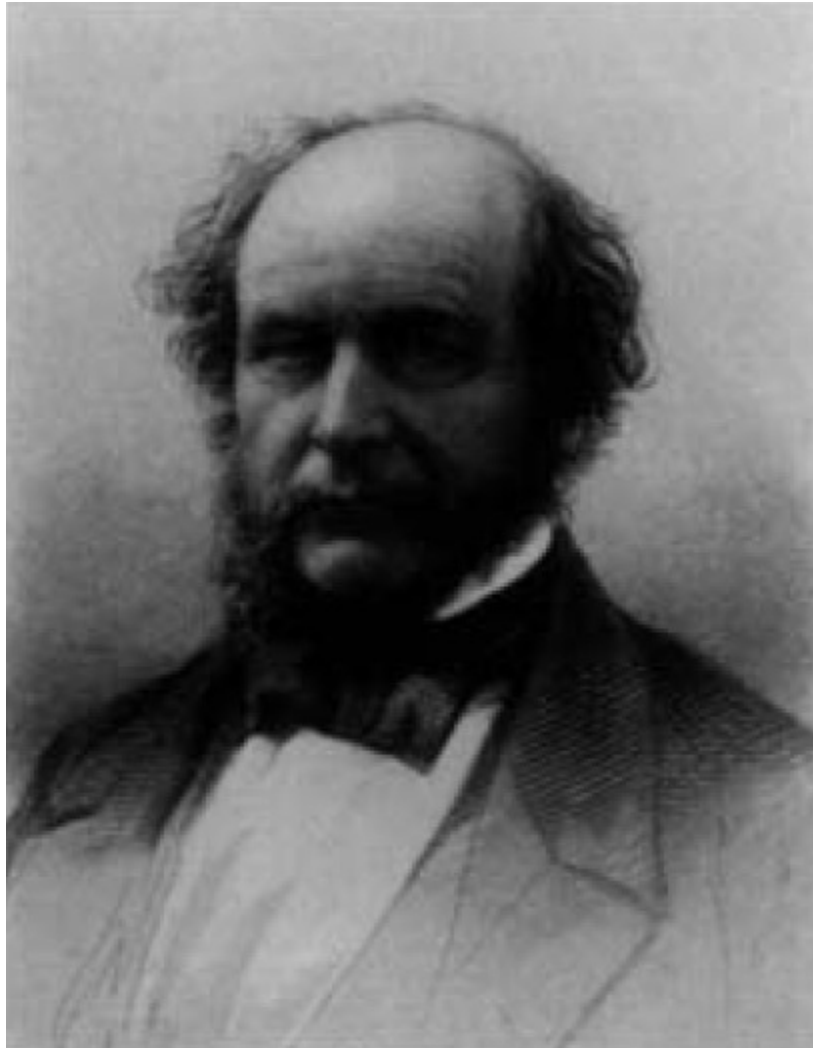


BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1838

The [Boston Society of Natural History](#) elected Curators for its various departments of knowledge.



Schoolmaster [George Barrell Emerson](#) (above) was offered the Fisher Professorship in Natural History at [Harvard College](#), but elected to remain instead with his Boston school for young ladies (a few years later he would support [Asa Gray's](#) appointment to this professorate). When Professor Gray would donate his herbarium to the university, the schoolmaster would be instrumental in raising funds with which to endow it. After the transfer of this herbarium to the college, the schoolmaster would serve on its visiting committee for the herbarium and Professor Gray would turn to him when funds were needed to advance its work.

A 3d edition of the Reverend Professor [Edward Hitchcock's](#) state-subsidized [REPORTS ON THE GEOLOGY, MINERALOGY, BOTANY, AND ZOÖLOGY OF MASSACHUSETTS](#), MADE AND PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THAT STATE (the Concord lyceum like every other town lyceum would possess a freebie copy of this — available for the perusal of [Henry Thoreau](#)).



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1841

Beginning with this year, the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) would be publishing the record of their meetings:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1841

[Dr. William Thomas Green Morton](#) became known for a new technique of soldering false teeth onto gold plates.

This had been the year, [Charles T. Jackson](#) of the [Society](#) later would allege, during which he had discovered the [anesthetic](#) properties of [ether](#). It wasn't merely that he had invented the electric telegraph and then watched as his idea was stolen by that painter scoundrel Samuel F.B. Morse (etc.) — he had benefited mankind and alleviated suffering and he ought to be famous! Not to mention wealthy!



This footnote in Ellen Emerson's biography of her mother Lydian Emerson, Charles Jackson's sister, concerns the claims:

A concise statement of Jackson's case is to be found in the anonymous "Presentation of Facts Relating to the Discovery of the Anaesthetic Effects of Ether Vapor by Charles T. Jackson and Disproving the Claim of W.T.G. Morton." This pamphlet, based mainly on evidence collected by a Congressional committee, holds that Jackson discovered in the winter of 1841-1842 how to produce anaesthesia by means of sulphuric ether, that he communicated his discovery to Morton in 1846, and that Morton first applied ether in a surgical case at the Massachusetts General Hospital in the same year. Jackson and his family were bitter over the failure of Congress to give Jackson proper recognition, and Emerson was convinced that his brother in law had suffered a great injustice.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

This is strange, for ether had been known as a narcotic substance since 1275, and had been in use by physicians since at least 1794, and the first operation using ether as an anaesthetic (of which we are presently aware) would occur in Georgia in March 1842, and the fact was that “ether parties,” in which the anaesthesia effects of ether were recreationally explored, had been a **fixture** of the college scene in that era. This had been going literally on for some time. Even Thoreau seems to have taken part in one such event while at [Harvard College](#) — and he had graduated in 1837. It sounds to me as common then as college students getting together to blow a joint, today. By the winter of 1841/1842 I’m sure that literally **thousands** of college men had learned how to “produce [anesthesia](#) by means of sulphuric [ether](#),” by mutual experimentation at such college parties and events. But, continuing with Ellen Emerson’s biography of Lydian Emerson, concerns the claims:

When S.F.B. Morse secured a telegraph patent in 1840, Charles Jackson claimed to have explained the method of applying electricity to telegraphic use to Morse on board the ship *Sully* in 1832. William T. Davis claims that ship’s mate, Blithen, verified Jackson’s claim to him in 1846.

Nothing could ever be based upon such a claim, either then or now, especially since there were several hundred people who actually were building electric apparatuses and conducting experiments and field trials before Morse won the day (he would win primarily by means of his political connections, which got him institutional support others were unable to obtain, for lengths of wire, rights of way, and quantities of electricity).²

2. It is easier to grasp the nature of this syndrome in retrospect, for we now have a chronological record of the repetitions of this problem in the life of Jackson, and we can see how each of the repetitions was marked with the pattern of 1.) an announcement by someone else, 2.) immediate assertion of a claim to prior discovery, 3.) a markedly bitter struggle, and 4.) denial of Jackson’s claim by all but himself and his small band of sympathizers/relatives. This syndrome occurred in regard to the discovery of guncotton by Christian Friedrich Schönbein, in regard to the invention of the telegraph by Samuel F.B. Morse, in regard to the discovery of the digestive action of the stomach by William Beaumont, and in regard to the discovery that the copper deposits of Lake Superior could be economically mined by Douglass Houghton. In each case —with the marked exception of the mineability of the copper near Lake Superior— the historical record has gone against Jackson (in regard to the copper, Jackson had indeed in 1849 made the initial such assertion — but in such cases we simply do not ever award merit to some individual who merely notes a possibility while neglecting to mount any successful agenda of exploitation).



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

October 6, Wednesday: The President of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) reported that a copy of [Wm. C. Hewitson](#)'s BRITISH OÖLOGY had been donated to the society's library.

[Frederick Douglass](#) addressed the Worcester County North Division Anti-Slavery Society at the Town Hall in Holden, Massachusetts.



CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

November 3, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) lectured at the [Concord Lyceum](#) in [Concord](#) on "Nature and Powers of the Poet."

Dr. Abbot reported to the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) on the set of volumes that had recently been added to their library, [Hewitson](#)'s OÖLOGY.

At about 3AM in the early morning in Cabul, [Afghanistan](#), the 37th native infantry under Major Griffiths had reached the temporary safety of the cantonment. They had been able to bring their wounded and their baggage with them, but were followed almost to the gates by about 3,000 Giljyes. On this day Lieutenants Maule and Wheeler would be murdered at Kahdarrah in Koohdaman while their Kohistan regiment of Affghans offered no resistance to the murderers. On this day, also, Lieutenant Rattray, Major Pottinger's assistant, would be



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

murdered at Lughmanee in the course of a conference to which he had been invited. These murders were followed by general insurrection in Kohistan and Koohdaman, which accomplished the destruction of the Goorkha regiment at Charikar, and the slaughter of all the Europeans in that district except the severely wounded Major Pottinger and Lieutenant Haughton, who, with one sepoy and one or two followers, were able to sneak at night through the bazaars and streets back into the compound. Here is Lieutenant Eyre:³ “Early in the afternoon, a detachment under Major Swayne, consisting of two companies 5th native infantry, one of Her Majesty’s 44th foot regiment, and two H.A. guns under Lieutenant Waller, proceeded out of the western gate towards the city, to effect, if possible, a junction at the Lahore gate with a part of Brigadier Shelton’s force from the Bala Hissar. They drove back and defeated a party of the enemy who occupied the road near the Shah Bagh, but had to encounter a sharp fire from the Kohistan gate of the city, and from the walls of various enclosures, behind which a number of marksmen had concealed themselves, as also from the fort of Mahmood Khan, commanding the road along which they had to pass. Lieutenant Waller and several sepoys were wounded. Major Swayne, observing the whole line of road towards the Lahore gate strongly occupied by some Affghan horse and juzailchees, and fearing that he would be unable to effect the object in view with so small a force unsupported by cavalry, retired into cantonments. Shortly after this, a large body of the rebels having issued from the fort of Mahmood Khan, 900 yards southeast of cantonments, extended themselves in a line along the bank of the river, displaying a flag; an iron nine-pounder was brought to bear on them from our southeast bastion, and a round or two of shrapnell caused them to seek shelter behind some neighbouring banks, whence, after some desultory firing on both sides, they retired. Whatever hopes may have been entertained, up to this period, of a speedy termination to the insurrection, they began now to wax fainter every hour, and an order was dispatched to the officer commanding at Candahar to lose no time in sending to our assistance the 16th and 43d regiments native infantry, (which were under orders for India,) together with a troop of horse-artillery and half a regiment of cavalry; an order was likewise sent off to recall General Sale with his brigade from Gundamuk. Captain John Conolly, political assistant to the Envoy, went into the Bala Hissar early this morning, to remain with the King, and to render every assistance in his power to Brigadier Shelton.”

Over the following few months of the winter what would follow would be the massacre of Sir Alexander Burnes and his associates, the loss of the British commissariat fort in Cabul, the defeat of the troops under Brigadier Shelton at Beymaroo, the assassination of British envoy and minister Sir William Macnaghten, and the utter destruction of a retreating group of 5,000 fighting men with upwards of 12,000 camp-followers, culminating at Gundamuk, [Afghanistan](#) with the extermination of the remnant.

WHAT I’M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

Boston Society of Natural History

3. Lieut. V. Eyre (Sir Vincent Eyre, 1811-1881). THE MILITARY OPERATIONS AT CABUL: WHICH ENDED IN THE RETREAT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE BRITISH ARMY, JANUARY 1842, WITH A JOURNAL OF IMPRISONMENT IN [AFGHANISTAN](#). Philadelphia PA: Carey and Hart, 1843; London: J. Murray, 1843 (three editions); Lieut. V. Eyre (Sir Vincent Eyre, 1811-1881). PRISON SKETCHES: COMPRISING PORTRAITS OF THE CABUL PRISONERS AND OTHER SUBJECTS; ADAPTED FOR BINDING UP WITH THE JOURNALS OF LIEUT. V. EYRE, AND LADY SALE; LITHOGRAPHED BY LOWES DICKINSON. London: Dickinson and Son, [1843?]



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1842

The Reverend Alonzo Potter, D.D., Bishop of Pennsylvania, wrote the initial part and [George Barrell Emerson](#) the final part of THE SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOLMASTER, published in this year in New-York. There would soon, by donation, be a copy of this available in each and every public school in the state of New York, and in the state of Massachusetts.

SCHOOL AND SCHOOLMASTER

[Isaac Sprague](#) illustrated [Professor Asa Gray](#)'s BOTANICAL TEXT-BOOK.

BOTANICAL TEXT-BOOK



[Augustus Addison Gould](#) became a corresponding member of Kongelige Norske Videnskabers Selskab of Copenhagen, Denmark, and of the Imperial Mineralogical Society of St. Petersburg, Russia. He became a



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

regular contributor to the Proceedings of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).

PROC. BOST. SOC. NAT. HIST.

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1842



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1843

[George Barrell Emerson](#)'s and F.W.P. Greenwood's THE CLASSICAL READER.

[Nicholas Marcellus Hentz](#)'s "Descriptions and Figures of the Araneides of the United States," a series, began to appear in the [Boston Journal of Natural History](#). This material on spiders would be accessed by [Henry Thoreau](#). Dr. and Mrs. Hentz relocated from Florence, Alabama to Tuscaloosa, where they would conduct an academy for young white ladies. In this year, [Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz](#)'s DE LARA, OR, THE MOORISH BRIDE.

[Dr. Thaddeus William Harris](#), the [Boston Society of Natural History](#)'s Curator of Entomology, reported that the society's insect collection was being destroyed by an *Anthreni* infestation. To contain this infestation, the mammalian collections would be subjected to steam heat and the bird collection would be baked.

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1843

1844

[Augustus Addison Gould](#) became a member of the Natural History Society of Lynn, Massachusetts and a corresponding member of the Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Description of Hairy-tailed Mole *Parascalops breweri* on the island of [Martha's Vineyard](#) by [Thomas Mayo Brewer](#), an active member since 1837 of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#). This mammal of New England has come to be known as Brewer's Mole.

**PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1844**

[Dr. Brewer](#) was elected to the Boston School Board. He would become the senior member of this board and would be rechosen for another term of three years.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1845

[Nicholas Marcellus Hentz](#) relocated from Tuscaloosa, Alabama to Tuskegee, where he and his wife would conduct a female academy.

The School of Medicine in Paris created a gallery of comparative anatomy.

THE SCIENCE OF 1845

Proceedings of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#):

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1845



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1846

[Caroline Lee Hentz](#)'s AUNT PATTY'S SCRAP-BAG.

Proceedings of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#):

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1846

At [Boston](#)'s Massachusetts General Hospital, the use of [nitrous oxide](#), or "laughing gas," in [dentistry](#) began to be supplemented by the use of ether, over religious protests, and [chloroform](#) (discovered in 1831) would follow in 1848.

When the Monthyon Prize of 5,000 francs was jointly awarded by the French Academy of Medicine to [Charles T. Jackson](#) of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) and [William Thomas Green Morton](#), Dr. Morton refused his share, because, he said, the discovery had been his and his alone and therefore the entire prize belonged to him and him alone!





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

DID DRUG USE AT HARVARD START ANESTHESIOLOGY?

The three main actors in the story of the discovery of [anesthesia](#), [William Thomas Green Morton](#), [Charles T. Jackson](#) and [Horace Wells](#), three [Harvard College](#) dental students who turned on with [nitrous oxide](#) in the 1840s, would fall to fighting over who should get the credit, with disastrous results. Wells started it all by doing experiments with nitrous oxide but failed to follow through. Jackson put Morton onto [ether](#) but it was Morton who thought out and performed the research, took the risks, and developed a safe and reliable method. In support of Morton's claim mention is made of a Boston chemical supplier named Theodore Metcalf, and a maker of surgical instruments named Wightman. Only after the risks had been taken and the discovery accepted by the medical establishment did Jackson try to cash in, claiming that he had been the head and Morton merely the hands:

- [Jackson](#), 1805-1880 — chemistry professor at [Harvard](#) (Simmelweis also died in an insane asylum, of puerperal fever, with Lister performing the 1st operation using antisepsis as well as [anesthesia](#) on the following day)
- [Wells](#), 1817-1848
- [Morton](#), 1819-1868 — this Boston [dentist](#) and former student of [Jackson](#)'s suffered a nervous breakdown and spent the rest of his life battling poverty; four times he was voted a pension by Congress, but four times it reversed itself when Jackson and others pressed their claims.

We have an extant letter from one of Thoreau's [Harvard](#) chums, which talks about students turning on with [nitrous oxide](#) back in the late 1830s. So, in the Kouroo database, we have a link between [Thoreau](#) and [Jackson](#), and then a link between [Emerson](#) and [Jackson](#) in that his 2d wife Lydian was a blood relative of Jackson and in that Emerson was espousing Jackson's claim to have originated anesthesiology. And, in the database, we have a link between Thoreau and painless [dentistry](#) in that he had all his teeth pulled at once under [anesthesia](#) and commented afterward about how his soul had been simply dissolved for a time in a chemical (!) — but up to this point we have not had a link between Thoreau's absolute rejection of all recreational drug use, and the early drug scene at Harvard. What is being pointed at here could be extremely new and relevant, a wonderful tie-in if it might be established.

[Morton](#) and [Jackson](#) together sought to take out a government patent on their "Letheon." When it became clear that in order to secure such a patent they would need not only to perform a surgical operation using the compound but also to reveal to all the secret nature of the compound to prove it wasn't a quack remedy, Morton was willing to do so in full awareness that he was thereby kissing his dreams of wealth good-bye. Jackson however became furious at the thought of such wealth-destroying disclosure and the animosity between these two men dates from that point forward. The Thoreau family faced the same problem in that era in which America essentially was a pirate nation, stealing patents, in regard to its processing of graphite. For them to have attempted to patent the process they were using in the hope of obtaining money for the leasing of this technology would have required them to reveal their processing secrets to the government, which in effect would have been for them to have given their trade secrets away for free. Nowadays we don't think of the USA as a pirate nation, so when Chinese factories copy our music CDs and our computer programs and our medical textbooks and sells them on the world market for ridiculously low prices and pays no royalties, we are exceedingly indignant. We have forgotten that that was precisely the manner in which we ourselves once operated.

The defense in the Webster murder trial relied on expert witnesses who **by the sheerest of coincidences or for some underlying unstated reason** happened to be also supporters of the one side of the [anesthesia](#) controversy, while the prosecution in the trial relied on expert witnesses who **by the sheerest of coincidences or for some underlying unstated reason** happened to be also supporters of the other side of that controversy.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1847

Schoolmaster [George Barrell Emerson](#) purchased 30 nearly barren sandy acres on a promontory that stretched into Boston Bay on the northeastern side of Chelsea harbor, where he would conduct a long-term experiment in the cultivation of pleasant trees. Many European varieties of oak, beech, birch, linden, maple, elm, ash, mountain ash, and pine would be planted, in order to discover whether these imports might prove hardier than the American species that had so far failed to colonize this spot along the coast.

The [Boston Society of Natural History](#) purchased a building on Mason Street known as the Massachusetts Medical College.

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1847

[Dr. Augustus Addison Gould](#) became a member of the Essex County (Massachusetts) Natural History Society. He published a “Description of Shells collected by [Dr. C. T. Jackson](#) on the Shores of Lake Superior,” [Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History](#), ii, pp. 262-264, 1847 (woodcuts). *OTIA CONCHOLOGICA*, pp. 201-202, 1862.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1848

[Nicholas Marcellus Hentz](#) relocated from Tuskegee, Alabama to Columbus, Georgia.

[Gregor Mendel](#), in his 4th year of studies at the Theological College, attended additional lectures on agriculture at the Brünn Philosophical Institute. The teacher was Professor Franz Diebl (1770-1859). In June, Mendel received a certificate of completion from the College, and in early August he became a parish priest in the collegiate church at Altbrunn.

The [Boston Society of Natural History](#), which had been organized in 1830 out of what remained of the Linnaean Society that had flourished from 1813 to 1823, moved into its new quarters on Mason Street in the building known as the Massachusetts Medical College.

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1848

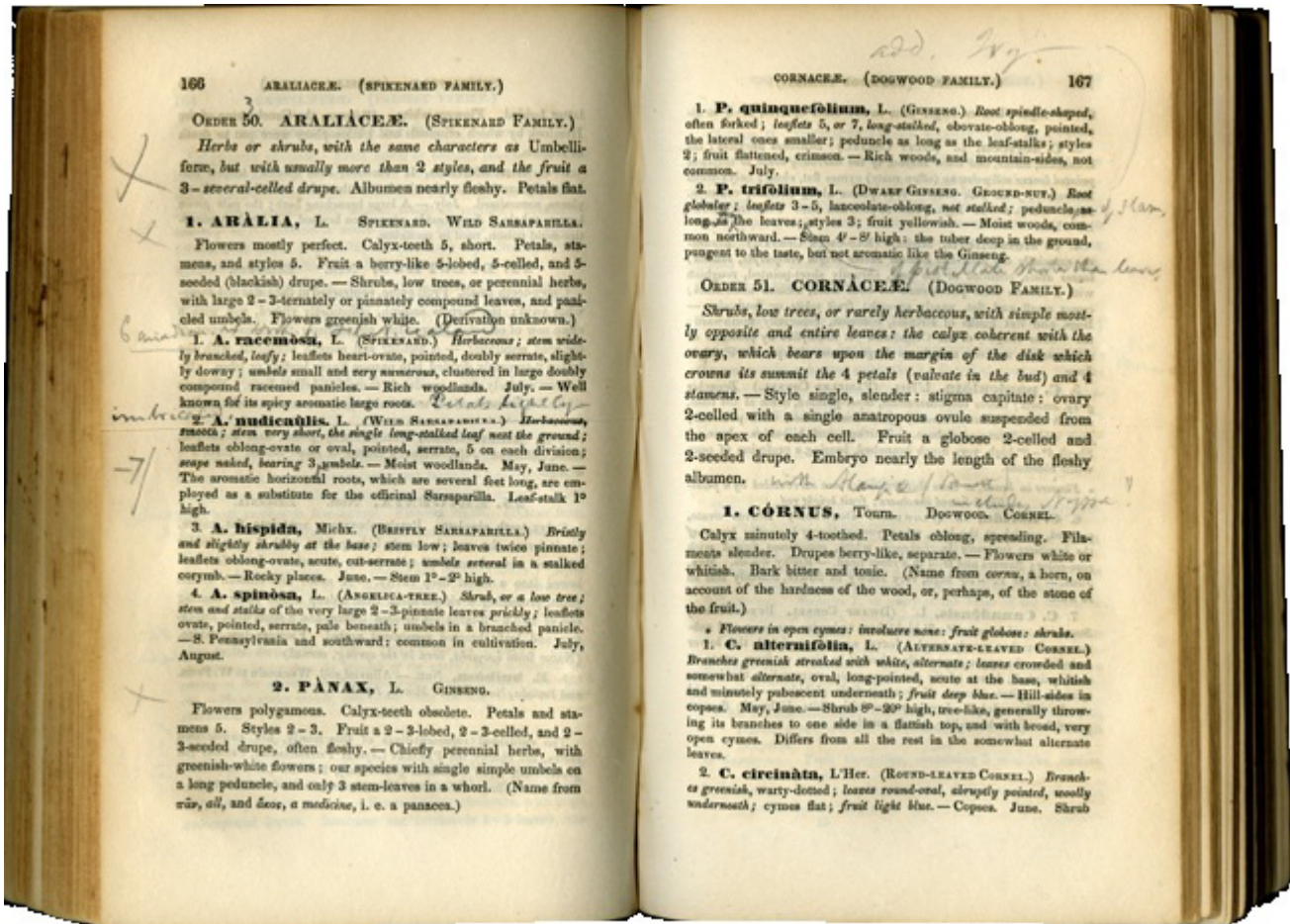
[Dr. Henry Jacob Bigelow](#) got married with Susan Sturgis (1825-1853), a daughter of William Sturgis and Elizabeth Davis Sturgis of Boston.

Up to this point [Professor Jacob Bigelow](#)'s *FLORULA BOSTONIENSIS*, A COLLECTION OF PLANTS OF BOSTON AND ITS VICINITY had been the standard flora for the New England region. With the publication of [Fisher](#) [Professor of Natural History in Harvard College Asa Gray, M.D.](#)'s A MANUAL OF THE [BOTANY](#) OF THE NORTHERN UNITED STATES, FROM NEW ENGLAND TO WISCONSIN AND SOUTH TO OHIO AND PENNSYLVANIA

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

INCLUSIVE, (THE MOSSES AND LIVERWORTS BY WM. S. SULLIVANT,) ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE NATURAL SYSTEM; WITH AN INTRODUCTION, CONTAINING A REDUCTION OF THE GENERA TO THE LINNÆAN ARTIFICIAL CLASSES AND ORDERS, OUTLINES OF THE ELEMENTS OF BOTANY, A GLOSSARY, ETC. (Boston & Cambridge: James Munroe and Company, London: John Chapman),⁴ Professor Bigelow's contribution had been made obsolete.



4. This volume would be owned by [Henry Thoreau](#) and by [Ellery Channing](#), and Channing's copy, with his typical scrawling all over it, is now at the [Concord Free Public Library](#).

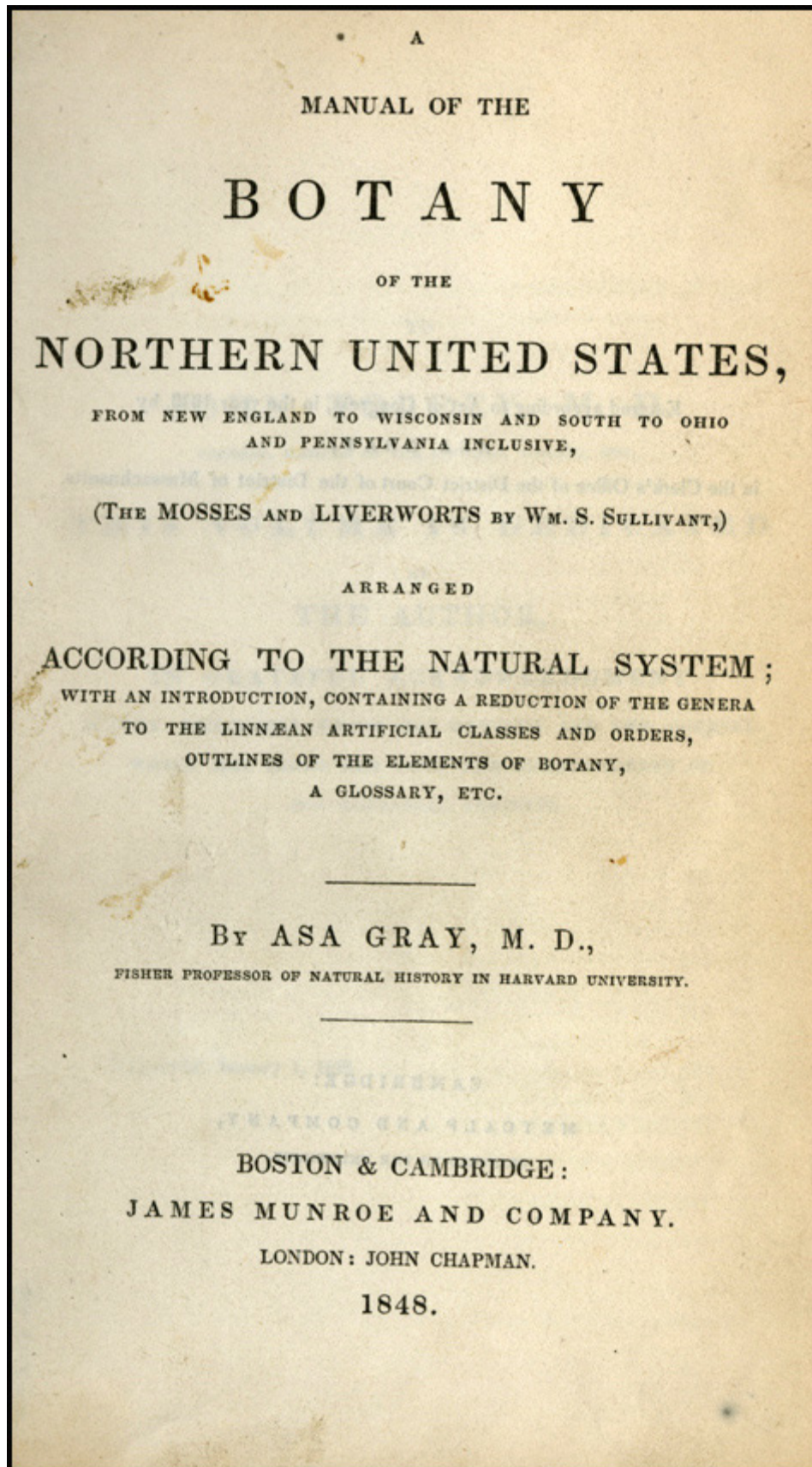
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

BOSTON SOCIETY

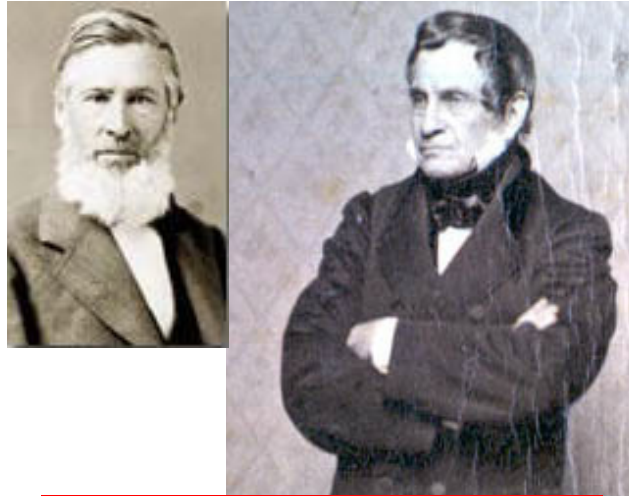
OF NATURAL HISTORY





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY



MANUAL OF THE BOTANY

In this year [Professor Gray](#) also put out the 1st volume of his GENERA OF THE PLANTS OF THE UNITED STATES (you can now purchase a polyester necktie, guaranteed not to eat you alive, printed with [Isaac Sprague](#)'s illustration of the Venus Flytrap *Dionaea muscipula* from this volume).





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

[Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#) left Genève for Paris and [Berlin](#).

[Waldo Emerson](#) returned to London in the company of Joseph Neuberg, a Jewish businessman of Nottingham who desired to be introduced to [Thomas Carlyle](#).⁵ While in London this time Emerson would be introduced to



Professor [Sir Charles Lyell](#) (he having just been knighted), and to Charles Babbage, and to Thomas Babington Macaulay. While visiting the Royal College of Surgeons he would attempt to interest these British physicians in the claims then being made by his chemist brother-in-law Dr. [Charles T. Jackson](#) of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#), to having himself been the uncredited discoverer of the anesthetic use of sulfuric ether — only to be informed that these surgeons had moved on from sulfuric [ether](#) to [chloroform](#) and were uninterested in these elaborate opposing historic allegations in regard to this obsoleted anesthetic substance, which the

5. Later, Neuberg would assist [Thomas Carlyle](#) with FREDERICK.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

visiting American literary layman needed to tell them so much about.

DENTISTRY

WALDEN: The village appeared to me a great news room; and on one side, to support it, as once at Redding & Company's on State Street, they kept nuts and raisins, or salt and meal and other groceries. Some have such a vast appetite for the former commodity, that is, the news, and such sound digestive organs that they can sit forever in public avenues without stirring, and let it simmer and whisper through them like the Etesian winds, or as if inhaling ether, it only producing numbness and insensibility to pain, -otherwise it would often be painful to hear, - without affecting the consciousness. I hardly ever failed, which I rambled through the village, to see a row of such worthies, either sitting on a ladder sunning themselves, with their bodies inclined forward and their eyes glancing along the line this way and that, from time to time, with a voluptuous expression, or else leaning against a barn with their hands in their pockets, like caryatides, as if to prop it up. They, being commonly out of doors, heard whatever was in the wind. These are the coarsest mills, in which all gossip is first rudely digested or cracked up before it is emptied into finer and more delicate hoppers within doors.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1849

May: While spraying his fruit trees for slugs, an appropriate analogy occurred to [Waldo Emerson](#).



His brother-in-law [Charles T. Jackson](#) of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#), who had filed for a US patent on the use of sulfuric [ether](#) as an anesthetic but who could get no credit for this, had “more vicious enemies



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

than any slugs that are on my leaves.”

WALDEN: The village appeared to me a great news room; and on one side, to support it, as once at Redding & Company’s on State Street, they kept nuts and raisins, or salt and meal and other groceries. Some have such a vast appetite for the former commodity, that is, the news, and such sound digestive organs that they can sit forever in public avenues without stirring, and let it simmer and whisper through them like the Etesian winds, or as if inhaling ether, it only producing numbness and insensibility to pain, -otherwise it would often be painful to hear,- without affecting the consciousness. I hardly ever failed, which I rambled through the village, to see a row of such worthies, either sitting on a ladder sunning themselves, with their bodies inclined forward and their eyes glancing along the line this way and that, from time to time, with a voluptuous expression, or else leaning against a barn with their hands in their pockets, like caryatides, as if to prop it up. They, being commonly out of doors, heard whatever was in the wind. These are the coarsest mills, in which all gossip is first rudely digested or cracked up before it is emptied into finer and more delicate hoppers within doors.

December 18, Tuesday: Henry Thoreau was written to by Dr. Samuel Cabot in Boston about the American goshawk that Jacob B. Farmer, one of Thoreau’s Concord friends, had shot, that Thoreau was forwarding to the Boston Society of Natural History.

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1849

{No MS — printed copy FL, 1894}

Thoreau on
Normative Science

[December 18, 1849]

"It was first described by Wilson; lately Audubon has identified it with the European goshawk, thereby committing a very flagrant blunder. It is usually a very rare species with us. The European bird is used in hawking; and doubtless ours would be equally game. If Mr. Farmer skins him now, he will have to take second cut; for his skin is already off and stuffed, -his remains dissected, measured, and deposited in alcohol."

The governor of Massachusetts commuted the sentence of execution by hanging of Milton W. Streeter, to life in prison.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY



The rooms of the BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY are in the brick building adjoining the Boston Theatre, in Mason Street. They are nine in number. One of them is occupied by the librarian, and each of the others by objects of interest in the different departments of natural history. All who desire have *free* access to the cabinet every Wednesday; and strangers in the city, who cannot conveniently visit it on that day, can obtain admission at any time by application to an officer of the society. The main room, which is entered from the first floor, contains skeletons of different animals from all parts of the world, from that of the huge mastodon to slender bones of the sprightly squirrel. In an anteroom cases filled with rare specimens of geology and mineralogy. Around the main room is a light iron balcony, giving access to the glass cases, which are likewise filled with things strange and wonderful from all parts of the known world. Here are skulls and mummies, and serpents, fossil remains and foot marks of those huge animals that walked, or birds that flew, before Adam arose from kindred earth. Ascending to the next story, we enter a room nearly filled with every variety of birds, from the albatross to the minute hummingbird, while in the centre are long cases filled with eggs of the different species, and many kinds of nests. One of the anterooms is filled with shells, seemingly in endless variety, specimens of moss, sponges, corals, and aquatic plants enliven the collection with their singular beauty. Another anteroom is filled with fishes. In yet another room various members of the serpent family are present. Here we may see the enormous boa, the fairy green snake, the agile black snake, the famed hooded snake of India, and the poisonous copper head of our own country. Here, also, is the *fascinating* rattlesnake, and such numbers of the creeping race that a crawling feeling comes over us, and we quit the room with a feeling of relief.

Many strangers leave the city without seeing the splendid cabinet of this society, and many residents are even aware of its existence. But whether resident or stranger, the visitor will be well repaid for the expenditure of time.

The library belonging to the Massachusetts Society of Natural History contains several thousand volumes and a number of valuable manuscripts. The society holds monthly meetings, and several of their proceedings have been published. The institution now owns the building which was formerly occupied by the Massachusetts Medical College; but the building has been remodelled, to adapt it to its present purposes. The whole estate cost about thirty thousand dollars, which was obtained by subscription from the liberal citizens of Boston.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1850

December: [Henry Thoreau](#) became a corresponding member of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).

In the records of the annual proceedings you will notice that we have marked each and every mention of Thoreau in yellow liner:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1850



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1851

July 9, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) visited [Harvard Observatory](#) on Concord Avenue in Cambridge. Perhaps this had been suggested by [John Downes](#), who earlier in the year had been in touch with the observatory about the occultation of stars. It has been presumed that it was the director, [William Cranch Bond](#), age about 62, who showed Thoreau around and answered his questions. I suggest that it would more likely have been his son the assistant observer [George Phillips Bond](#), six years out of [Harvard College](#), who would have been providing



such a public relations service, and that the director would have been reserving himself for occasional visitors who thought they had cachet and who might be more easily offended, such as [Prince Albert](#). My reasons for suspecting this are that I can't believe the astronomers would have taken Thoreau seriously, plus George was more of Henry's own age group, plus George is known to have had an abiding interest in nature and in particular in ornithology.⁶

ASTRONOMY

Thoreau stopped by the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) and checked out Volume I of the MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, new series.

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote to Frederick Douglass while serializing UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, asking him for contacts for information about slave life on cotton plantations. In this letter she took issue with his opposition to colonization and with his criticisms of Christianity:

You may perhaps have noticed in your editorial readings a series of articles that I am furnishing for the Era under the title of "Uncle Tom's Cabin or Life among the Lowly" - In the course of my story, the scene will fall upon a cotton plantation - I am very desirous to gain information from one who has been an actual labourer on one - & it occurs to me that in the circle of your acquaintance there might be one who would be able to communicate to me some such information as I desire - I have before me an able paper written by a southern planter in which the details &



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

modus operandi are given from his point of sight - I am anxious to have some more from another standpoint - I wish to be able to make a picture that shall be graphic & true to nature in its details - Such a person as Henry Bibb, if in this country might give me just the kind of information I desire you may possibly [sic] know of some other person - I will subjoin to this letter a list of questions which in that case, you will do me a favor by enclosing to the individual - with a request that he will at earliest convenience answer them -

- I have noticed with regret, your sentiments on two subjects, - the church - & African Colonization - & with the more regret, because I think you have a considerable share of reason for your feelings on both these subjects - but I would willingly if I could modify your views on both points.

After all my brother, the strength & hope of your oppressed race does lie in the church - In hearts united to Him ... Every thing is against you - but Jesus Christ is for you - & He has not forgotten his church misguided & erring though it be.... This movement must & will become a purely religious one ... christians north & south will give up all connection with [slavery] & later up their testimony against it - & thus the work will be done -



July 9, Wednesday: When I got out of the cars at Porter's Cambridge this morning - I was pleased to see the handsome blue flowers of the Succory or Endive Cichorium intybus - which reminded me that within the hour I had been whirled into a new botanical region. They must be extremely rare, if they occur at all in Concord. This weed is handsomer than most garden flowers. Saw there also the Cucubalus behen or Bladder Campion. also The Autumnal dandelion Apargia Autumnalis.

Visited the Observatory. Bond said they were cataloguing the stars at Washington? or trying to. They do not at Cambridge of no use with their force. Have not force enough now to make mag. obs. When I asked if an observer with the small telescope could find employment - he said "O yes - there was employment enough for

ASTRONOMY

6. A case in point is the treatment awarded by historians of the science of astronomy to Henry Thoreau's visit in the official study on the first four directorships of the Harvard College observatory, by Bessie (Judith) Zaban Jones and Lyle Gifford Boyd, entitled THE HARVARD COLLEGE OBSERVATORY: THE FIRST FOUR DIRECTORSHIPS, 1839-1919 (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1971). This is a meticulous book, quite elaborately documented. Yet I note that in dealing with Thoreau's visit, they have deviated from their standard practice: they have

1.) quoted from his JOURNAL without scholarly apparatus of footnotes and citations,

they have

2.) quoted incorrectly,

and they have

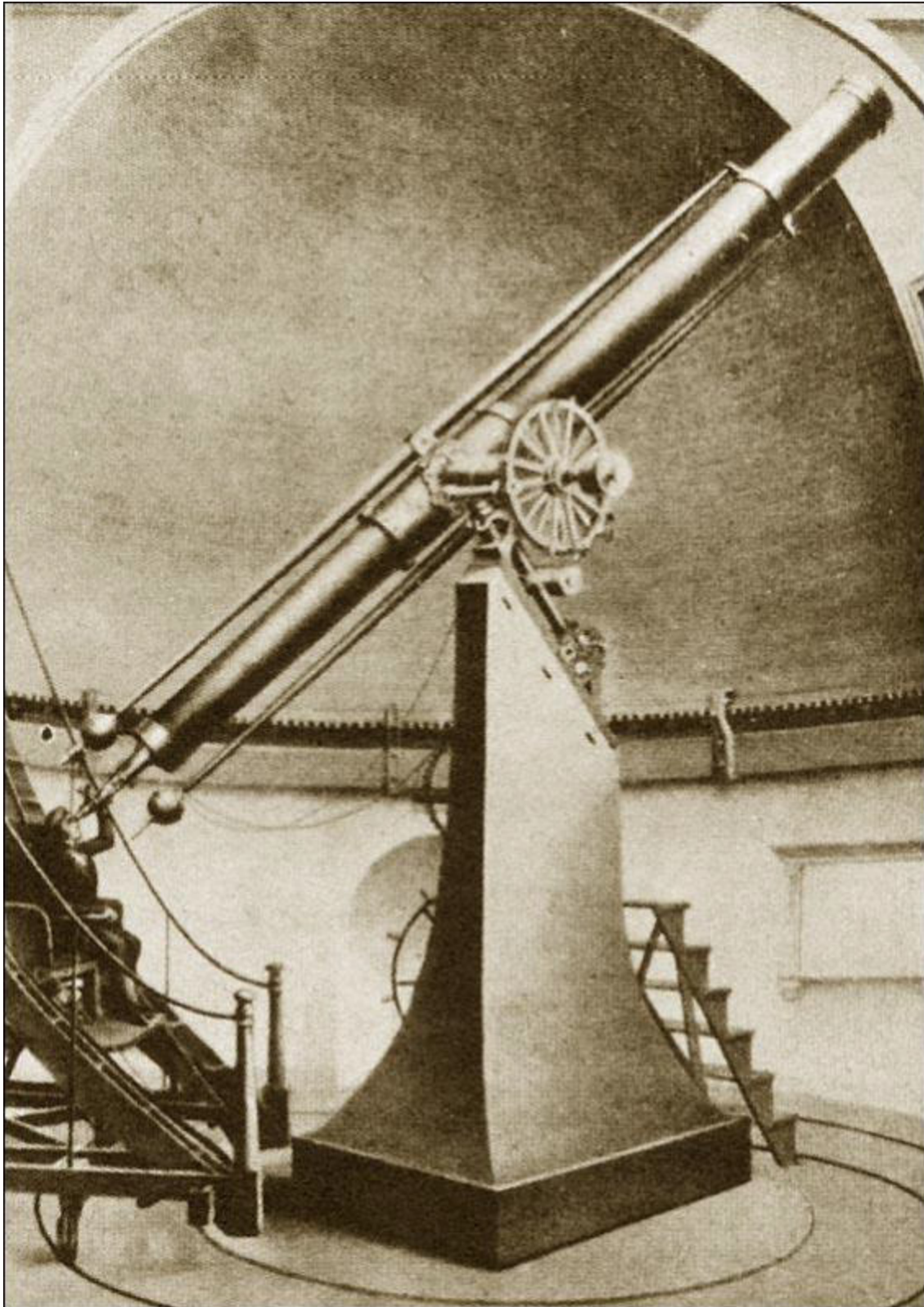
3.) tried to make a mere joke of his visit, by an aside the point of which seems to be that this guy Thoreau was so far out in left field, who else would come up with the sort of comment he could come up with, whatever his comment might mean if anybody ever tried to take such a person seriously.

In fact, Thoreau's visit was quite serious, and bore directly upon the struggle the current director was having as a volunteer "gentleman" researcher with the likes of Professors Louis Agassiz and Benjamin Peirce, and all the other ideologs of scientific bureaucracy whose primary objective then as now was not discovery itself, but rather their seizure of control over all processes of discovery. I suppose I am saying that since we cannot expect serious people to take Thoreau seriously today, we can have no reason to assume that serious people would take Thoreau seriously in his own day - certainly not to the extent of extending VIP treatment to **someone who was not acting in any manner as VIPs should act!**



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

observation with the naked eye –observing the changes in the brilliancy of stars &c &c –if they could only get some good observers.– One is glad to hear that the naked eye still retains some importance in the estimation of astronomers.

Coming out of town –willingly as usual –when I saw that reach of Charles River just above the Depot –the fair still water this cloudy evening suggesting the way to eternal peace & beauty –whence it flows –the placid lake-like fresh water so unlike the salt brine –affected me not a little– I was reminded of the way in which Wordsworth so coldly speaks of some natural visions or scenes “giving him pleasure”. This is perhaps the first vision of elysium on this rout from Boston.

And just then I saw an encampment of Penobscots –their wigwams appearing above the rail road fence –they too looking up the river as they sat on the ground & enjoying the scene. What can be more impressive than to look up a noble river just at evening –one perchance which you have never explored –& behold its placid waters reflecting the woods –& sky lapsing inaudibly toward the ocean –to behold as a lake –but know it as a river –tempting the beholder to explore it –& his own destiny at once. haunt of waterfowl – – this was above the factories –all that I saw That water could never have flowed under a factory –how *then* could it have reflected the sky?



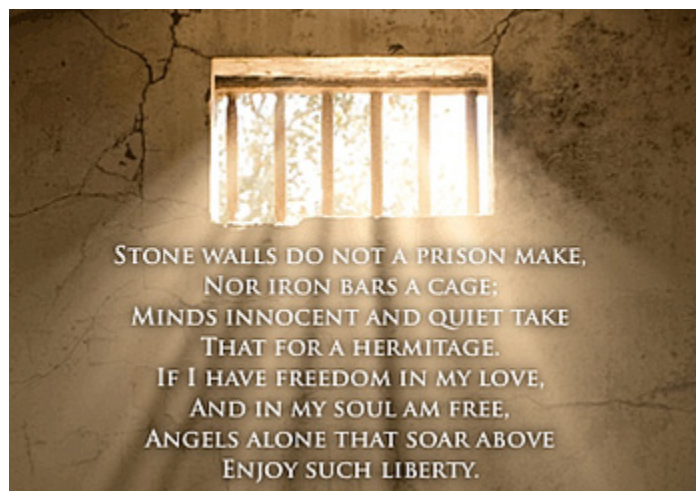
BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

WALDEN: Consider first how slight a shelter is absolutely necessary. I have seen Penobscot Indians, in this town, living in tents of thin cotton cloth, while the snow was nearly a foot deep around them, and I thought that they would be glad to have it deeper to keep out the wind. Formerly, when how to get my living honestly, with freedom left for my proper pursuits, was a question which vexed me even more than it does now, for unfortunately I am become somewhat callous, I used to see a large box by the railroad, six feet long by three wide, in which the laborers locked up their tools at night, and it suggested to me that every man who was hard pushed might get such a one for a dollar, and, having bored a few auger holes in it, to admit the air at least, get into it when it rained and at night, and hook down the lid, and so have freedom in his love, and in his soul be free. This did not appear the worst, nor by any means a despicable alternative. You could sit up as late as you pleased, and, whenever you got up, go abroad without any landlord or house-lord dogging you for rent. Many a man is harassed to death to pay the rent of a larger and more luxurious box who would not have frozen to death in such a box as this. I am far from jesting. Economy is a subject which admits of being treated with levity, but it cannot so be disposed of.

**PEOPLE OF
WALDEN**

RICHARD LOVELACE





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

November 5, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) returned the Agassiz book and the Cuvier book he had been reading to [Harvard Library](#), and checked out Dietrich Johann Heinrich Stöver (1767-1822)'s THE LIFE OF SIR CHARLES LINNÆUS ... TO WHICH IS ADDED, A COPIOUS LIST OF HIS WORKS, AND A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF HIS SON: BY D.H. STOEVER, PH.D. TR. FROM THE ORIGINAL GERMAN BY JOSEPH TRAPP, A.M. (London: B. and J. White, 1794), the three volumes of [Pierre François-Xavier de Charlevoix's](#) HISTOIRE ET DESCRIPTION GÉNÉRALE DE LA NOUVELLE FRANCE; AVEC LE JOURNAL HISTORIQUE D'UN VOYAGE FAIT PAR ORDRE DU ROI DANS L'AMÉRIQUE SEPTENTRIONNALE. / PAR LE P. DE CHARLEVOIX, DE LA COMPAGNIE DE JÉSUS (Paris, Rollin fils, chez la Veuve Ganeau, 1744), and Richard Pulteney (1730-1801)'s A GENERAL VIEW OF THE WRITINGS OF

LA NOUVELLE-FRANCE, I

LA NOUVELLE-FRANCE, II

LA NOUVELLE-FRANCE, III

LINNÆUS (2d edition, London : Printed for J. Mawman ..., 1805). He then went to the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) and checked out John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843)'s ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PLANTS (London: Printed for Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1829).



He spent the afternoon, and evening, with [Bronson Alcott](#) in Boston, and slept there that night. He made no entry in his journal, or, perhaps, the entry was on the $\frac{4}{5}$ page that is missing at this point. Alcott, in his journal, wrote of Thoreau's company as "ice-water in the dog days," and commented further,

A very welcome guest, this country man.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY



These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#):

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1851



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1852

February 2, Monday: Mary Ann Bishop Clark of New Haven, Connecticut, only child and heir-at-law of [Nancy Dexter Bishop](#), inheritor from her grandfather [Timothy Dexter](#), sold the Dexter House and plot on High Street in Newburyport, Massachusetts to Elbridge G. Kelley for \$7,000 (by this point all the statuary was gone, the three presidents having lasted the longest, until about 1850).

Near the Society of Arts in [London](#), at 95 Fleet Street, an initial public toilet was inaugurated.

[Henry Thoreau](#) returned the Loudon volume *ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PLANTS* to the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) and checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), [Carl von Linné](#)'s *CAROLI LINNÆ ... PHILOSOPHIA BOTANICA* (1751).



He also checked out [Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan](#)'s *NOUVEAUX VOYAGES DE MR. LE BARON DE LAHONTAN DANS L'AMÉRIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE, QUI CONTIENNENT UNE RÉLATION DES DIFFÉRENS PEUPLES QUI Y HABITENT; LA NATURE DE LEUR GOUVERNEMENT; LEUR COMMERCE, LEURS COUTUMES, LEUR*



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

RELIGION, & LEUR MANIÈRE DE FAIRE LA GUERRE. L'INTÉRÊT DES FRANÇOIS & DES ANGLOIS DANS LE COMMERCE QU'ILS FONT AVEC SES NATIONS; L'AVANTAGE QUE L'ANGLETERRE PEUT RETIRER DANS CE PAÏS, ÉTANT EN GUERRE AVEC LA FRANCE. LE TOUT ENRICHIE DE CARTES & DE FIGURES. TOME PREMIER (A. La Haye, chez les Frères l'Honoré, Marchands Libraires, 1703)

MEMOIRES ... (VOL. I)

and *MEMOIRES DE L'AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONNALE, OU LA SUITE DES VOYAGES DE MR LE BARON DE LA HONTAN. QUI CONTIENNENT LA DEFCRIPTION D'UNE GRANDE ÉTENDUE DE PAÏS DE CE CONTINENT, L'INTÉRÊT DES FRANÇOIS & DES ANGLOIS, LEURS COMMERCES, LEURS NAVIGATIONS, LEURS MŒURS & LES COÛTUMES DES SAUVAGES, &C. AVEC UN PETIT DICTIONNAIRE DE LA LANGUE DU PAÏS. LE TOUT ENRICHIE DE CARTES & DE FIGURES. TOME SECOND.* (A. La Haye, chez les Frères l'Honoré, Marchands Libraires, 1703), making his notes in his Indian Notebook #5 and his Fact Book.

MEMOIRES ... (VOL. II)

"There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away"
— Emily Dickinson

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**BOSTON SOCIETY****OF NATURAL HISTORY**

On this day, as is clear from entries in his Fact Book, he had perused an article in the Boston Daily Evening Traveller, by [Benjamin Apthorp Gould](#) the son, headlined “The Progress of Astronomy During the Last Half Century.” It is clear also in his journal entry, that he was concurrently reading in the 5th edition of [Sir Francis B. Head, Bart.](#)’s THE EMIGRANT (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1847).

THE EMIGRANT

[Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his JOURNAL INTIME: “Still the Monologues. Critically I defended myself enough against them yesterday; I may abandon myself now, without scruple and without danger, to the admiration and the sympathy with which they inspire me. This life so proudly independent, this sovereign conception of human dignity, this actual possession of the universe and the infinite, this perfect emancipation from all which passes, this calm sense of strength and superiority, this invincible energy of will, this infallible clearness of self-vision, this autocracy of the consciousness which is its own master, all these decisive marks of a royal personality of a nature Olympian, profound, complete, harmonious, penetrate the mind with joy and heart with gratitude. What a life! what a man! These glimpses into the inner regions of a great soul do one good. Contact of this kind strengthens, restores, refreshes. Courage returns as we gaze; when we see what has been, we doubt no more that it can be again. At the sight of a man we too say to ourselves, let us also be men.”



WHAT?



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY



February 2, Monday: [Sir Francis Head](#) says that in America “the moon looks larger” than in Europe Here then more moonshine is to be expected– Perhaps the sun looks larger also. Such are the advantages of the new World.

The same writer says “the heavens of America appear infinitely higher” – – “the stars are brighter”– These too are encouraging facts – symbolical of the height to which the philosophy & poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length perchance the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind – and the intimations that star it will appear as much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man – and that there is something in the Mt air that feeds the spirit – & inspires. We shall be more imaginative– We shall be clearer as our sky – bluer, fresher, broader & more comprehensive in our understanding – like our plains– Our intellect on a grander scale – like our thunder & lightning – our rivers & our lakes – & mts & forests.

Are not these advantages? Will not man grow to greater perfection, intellectually as well as physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life?

[Sir F. Head](#) thinks that the greater cold –equal to 13 degrees of Lat.– in this country is owing to the extensive forests which prevent the sun & wind from melting the snows –which therefore accumulate on the ground– and creates a cold stratum of air which blown to warmer ones by the N W wind condenses the last into snow– But in Concord woods at any rate the snow – (in the winter) – melts faster – & beside is not so deep as in the fields. Not so toward Spring – on the N sides of hills & in hollows– At any rate I think he has not allowed enough for the warmth of the woods.

The moose (& beaver?) will perchance one day become extinct – but how naturally would a future poet imagine or sculptor carve a fabulous animal with such branching & leafy horns – (when this will in fact exist as a fossil relic) His horns a sort of fucus in bone– or a lichen. The Elk (moose) may stand with the Gryphon & Dragon & Dodo &c. &c.

The fire-flies & bright plumaged birds! do not they too indicate the peculiarities of the future American [Head](#) “felt that there was something indescribably awful & appalling in all these bestial, birdal, and piscial precautions” at the approach of winter– Going into winter quarters – migrating &c.

[Head](#) coming to Canada in the winter to a house in the fields covered with snow did not know that he was surrounded by a lawn & garden – with gravelled walks – flowers & shrubbery – till the spring thawed the snow. The race that settles & clears the land has got to deal with every tree in the forest in succession– It must be resolute & industrious – and even the stumps must be got out or are– It is a thorough process – this war with the wilderness – breaking nature taming the soil – feeding it on oats

The civilized man regards the pine tree as his enemy. He will fell it & let in the light – grub it up & raise wheat or rye there. It is no better than a fungus to him.

It is natural that we should be enterprising – for we are descended from the enterprising – who sought to better their fortunes in the new world

The Yankee has no leisure to touch his hat to you even if he were so disposed



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

April 7, Wednesday: Since [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out the [Canadian](#) Geological Survey's REPORT OF PROGRESS FOR 1849-50 (Montreal, Toronto) from the [Boston Society of Natural History](#), my guess is that after his lecture on

PERUSE THIS REPORT

"Reality" during the snowstorm of the previous evening he had not attempted a return trip to [Concord](#), but had instead perhaps stayed over at the Alcott home. Of course, it is possible that he was taken into the parsonage of the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), his sponsor, for this month of April was the month in which the Alcotts were making a large transition. The [Hawthorne](#) family, Nathaniel, Sophia, and their three young children Una, Julian, and Rose, desiring to return to [Concord](#), agreed to purchase the rundown [Hillside](#) property from the Alcotts and [Waldo Emerson](#) for a total of \$1,500.⁰⁰, a down payment of \$250.⁰⁰ of which was to be made to Samuel Eliot Sewall as executor of the Alcott interest and placed in a trust fund for Abba and a payment of \$500.⁰⁰ of which was to be made to the Emersons, who would set it up as a trust fund for [Bronson Alcott](#). (The balance of \$750.⁰⁰ was to be paid into Sam Sewall's trust fund for Abba within one year.) On this basis the Alcotts were in the process of moving from their slum place on High Street into a rundown 4-story brick house in a good neighborhood on Beacon Hill, 20 Pinkney Street, agreeing to pay a rent of \$350.⁰⁰ per year. By this point in her trajectory, [Abba Alcott](#) had had quite had her fill of being a do-gooder and being treated like one,⁷ and was determined to run this home on Beacon Hill as a private boardinghouse.

[THE WAYSIDE](#)

[OLD HOUSES](#)

October 23, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out a volume by or on [Giacomo Costantino Beltrami](#) from the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) (this was long before the Society came to be located in its magnificent building at the intersection of Berkeley and Boylston and Newbury streets in Boston "Open from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. and from 2 P.M. to 5 P.M."). In all probability what Thoreau checked out would have been one or another publication evaluating the work of this author, since he was able to read French about as well as he could read Italian and English — and since presumably he already had purchased the copy of *LA DÉCOUVERTE DES SOURCES DU MISSISSIPPI ET DE LA RIVIÈRE SANGLANTE* that we find, annotated in pencil, in his personal library.

These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#):

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1852

7. "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their consciences." —C.S. Lewis



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1853

[Dr. Samuel Kneeland, Jr.](#) described the skeleton of a Great Chimpanzee *Troglodytes Gorilla* for the benefit of the members of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).

A skeleton noticed in the bank of the Sudbury River directly behind the Isaac Moore house was presumed to be native American.

The [Boston Society of Natural History](#) purchased, at auction, some stone slabs exhibiting fossil footprints of dinosaurs that had roamed the Connecticut Valley during the Triassic Period.

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1853

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**BOSTON SOCIETY****OF NATURAL HISTORY****1854**

March 13, Monday: Documentation of the [international slave trade](#), per W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: "Message from the President ... communicating ... the correspondence between Mr. Schenck, United States Minister to Brazil, and the Secretary of State, in relation to the African slave trade." –SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 33 Cong. 1 sess. VIII. No. 47.



*Thoreau's Flute, Telescope and copy of
Wilson's Ornithology.*

*"I bought me a spy-glass some weeks since. I buy but few things,
and those not till long after I begin to want them, so that when I do get them I
am prepared to make a perfect use of them and extract their whole sweetness."*

Page 3. Early Spring.

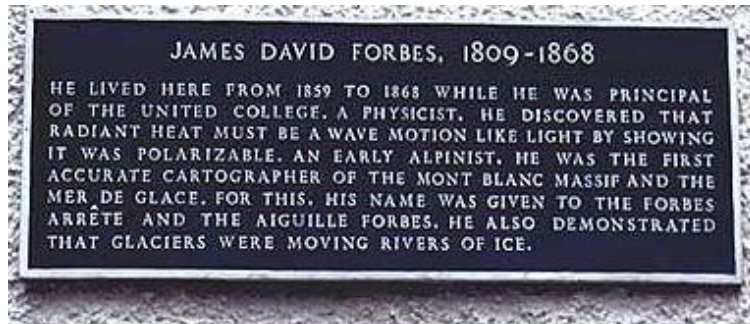


BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Besides purchasing a [telescope](#) (above) for eight dollars (more than a week's total wages, order of magnitude approximately \$800 in today's greenbacks), [Henry Thoreau](#) stopped by the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) and checked out:

- [James David Forbes](#) (1809-1868)'s TRAVELS THROUGH THE ALPS OF SAVOY AND OTHER PARTS OF THE PENNINE CHAIN, WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE PHENOMENA OF GLACIERS (1843)



THE ALPS OF SAVOY, ETC.

and stopped by the [Harvard Library](#) and checked out:

- [Louis Agassiz](#)'s *ÉTUDES SUR LES GLACIERS* (Neuchâtel, aux frais de l'auteur, August 20, 1840, with atlas)
- [Edward Johnson](#)'s A HISTORY OF NEW-ENGLAND. FROM THE ENGLISH PLANTING IN THE YEERE 1628. UNTILL THE YEERE 1652: DECLARING THE FORM OF THEIR GOVERNMENT, CIVILL, MILITARY, AND ECCLESIASTIQUE: THEIR WARS WITH THE INDIANS, THEIR TROUBLES WITH THE GORTONISTS, AND OTHER HERETIQUES: THEIR MANNER OF GATHERING OF CHURCHES, THE COMMODITIES OF THE COUNTRY, AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PRINCIPALL TOWNS AND HAVENS... (London: Printed for Nath. Brooke ..., 1654)⁸



- The Reverend Thomas Shepard's THE CLEAR SUNSHINE OF THE GOSPEL BREAKING OUT ON THE INDIANS OF NEW ENGLAND (1648)⁹

8. The popular title of this work is WONDER-WORKING PROVIDENCE OF SION'S SAVIOR IN NEW ENGLAND. Thoreau would place his notes in his Indian Notebook #8.

9. The Reverend Shepard was a founder of Harvard College.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY



Mar. 13th To Boston— C. says he saw skater insects today. [Harris](#) tells me that those gray insects within the little log forts under the bark of the dead Wht pine — which I found about a week ago — are Rhagium lineatum. Bought a telescope today for 8 dollars — Best military spyglass with 6 slides which shuts up to about same size, 15 dols & very powerful Saw the squares of achromatic glass from Paris which Clark-(e?) uses — 50-odd dols apiece the larger— It takes 2 together — one called the flint— These French glasses all one quality of glass. My glass tried by Clark & approved — only a part of the object glass available. Bring the edge of the diaphragm against middle of the light & your nail on object glass in line with these shows what is cut off— Sometimes may enlarge the hole in diaphragm— But if you do so you may have to enlarge the hole in diaphragm near small end — which must be exactly as large as the pencil of light there. As the diameter of the pencil is to the diameter of the available portion of the object glass so is the power — so many times it magnifies— A good glass because the form of the blurred object is the same on each side of the focus *i.e* shoved in or drawn out. C. was making a glass for Amherst Col.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

May 9, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Cambridge and Boston, and visited the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).¹⁰

He checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), the Reverend [John Gotlieb Ernestus Heckewelder](#)'s A NARRATIVE OF THE MISSIONS OF THE UNITED BRETHREN AMONG THE DELAWARE AND MOHEGAN INDIANS FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT IN THE YEAR 1740 TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR 1808 (Philadelphia: M'Carry & Davis, 1820).



REVEREND HECKEWELDER

He would make entries from this source in his Indian Notebooks #5 and #8, and in his Fact Book. In addition, he would consult an account by the Reverend Heckewelder in Volume I of the [American Philosophical Society Transactions](#), of 1819, and make entries from that source in his Indian Notebook #9¹¹ in about 1855:

Between the Mississippi & the ocean eastward & the Hudson's Bay Company's possessions on the north – "There appears to be but 4 principal languages," some of their dialects "extend even beyond the Mississippi."

- 1st The Karabit – of the Greenlanders & Esquimaux...
- 2d The Iroquois "This language in various dialects is spoken by the ... Six Nations ... Hurons ... and others."
- 3d The Lenape "This is the most widely extended of any of those that are spoken on this side of the Mississippi."
- [4th] The Indians further N.W. Blackfeet &c. of whose language we cannot judge "from the scanty vocabularies which have been given by Mackenzie ... and other travellers."

REVEREND HECKEWELDER

10. These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the Society:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1854

HDT

WHAT?

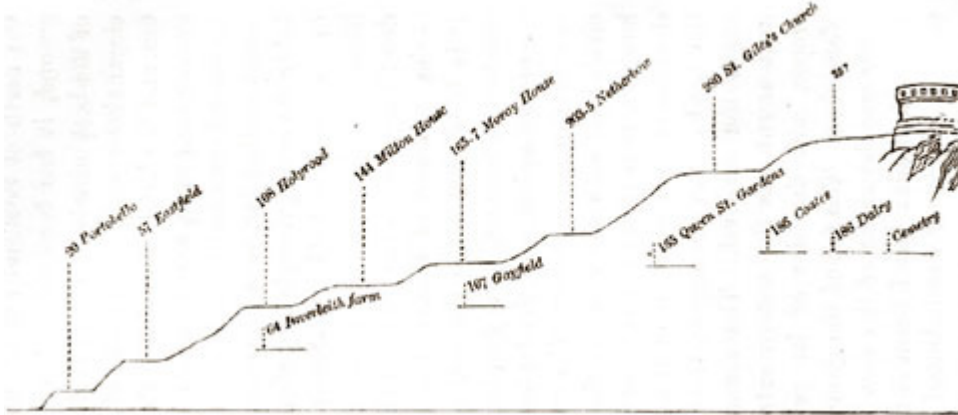
INDEX

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

He also checked out [Robert Chambers](#)'s ANCIENT SEA-MARGINS, AS MEMORIALS OF CHANGES IN THE RELATIVE LEVEL OF SEA AND LAND (W. & R. Chambers, 1848).

ANCIENT SEA-MARGINS



Then, back in Concord, [Thoreau](#) planted watermelons.



Tuesday, May 9th To Boston & Cambridge.

Currant in garden X, but ours may be a late kind. Purple finch still here — Looking at the birds at the Nat Hist Rooms — I find that I have not seen the crow blackbird at all yet — this season — Perhaps I have seen the rusty blackbird — though I am not sure what those slaty black ones are as large as the redwings — nor those pure-black fellows — unless rusty-black birds. I think that my blackbirds of the morning of the 24 may have been cow-birds.

Sat on end of long wharf — Was surprised to observe that so many of the men on board the shipping were pure countrymen in dress & habits, and the sea-port is no more than a country town to which they come atrading — I found about the wharves steering the coasters & unloading the ships men in farmer's dress. As I watched the various craft successively unfurling their sails & getting to sea — I felt more than for many years inclined to let the wind blow me also to other climes.

[Harris](#) showed me a list of plants in [Hovey's Magazine](#) (I think for 42 or 3) not in Big's Botany — 17 or 18 of them — among the rest a pine I have not seen — &c &c q.v. That early narrow curved winged insect on ice & river which I thought an ephemera he says is a *Sialis* — or maybe rather a *Perla* — Thinks it the *Donatia palmata* — I gave him — Says the shad-flies (with streamers & erect wings — are ephemerae — he spoke of *podura nivalis* — I think meaning ours.
Planted melons.

11. The original notebooks are held by the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, as manuscripts #596 through #606. There are photocopies, made by Robert F. Sayre in the 1930s, in four boxes at the University of Iowa Libraries, accession number MsC 795. More recently, Bradley P. Dean, PhD and Paul Maher, Jr. have attempted to work over these materials.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1856

June 23, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went to “Brooklawn” in [New Bedford](#) with [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#). This was Ricketson’s account of it:¹²



Left Concord this A.M. with Henry D. Thoreau at 8 1/2 o'clock, and arrived home at 1 1/2 P.M., stopping one hour in Boston, visiting the Natural History rooms with H.D.T. who is a member of the Society. Thermometer at 73 – P.M. R.W. Emerson’s version of the wood-thrush as repeated to me Sunday P.M. June 22d, on our walk to Walden Pond:

He Willy Willy, Ha Willy, Willy O, Willy O.

THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY

The US House of Representatives considered the possibility of amending the Act of 1818.

Notice given of a bill to amend the Act of April 20, 1818. HOUSE JOURNAL, 34th Congress, 1st session, II. 1101.

12. These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the Society:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1856



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1857

[Caroline Lee Hentz](#)'s THE LOST DAUGHTER.

Proceedings of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#):

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1857

January: Aware that he was dying, [Jacob Whitman Bailey](#) wrote his will. He was acclaimed as the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science although surely, at this point, no-one would have expected him to be able to show up for the annual convention in Montréal. He left his money and life insurance benefits to his brother in trust for his sons and their black caretaker Nancy Lewis, and his scientific specimens, correspondence, and drawings to the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) (the materials are now at the Boston Museum of Science and Charles Hayden Planetarium).

August 17, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to Benjamin Marston Watson about the [glowworm](#).



CONCORD, August 17, 1857.

MR. WATSON, — I am much indebted to you for your glowing communication of July 20th. I had that very day left Concord for the wilds of Maine; but when I returned, August 8th, two out of the six worms remained nearly, if not quite, as bright as at first, I was assured. In their best estate they had excited the admiration of many of the inhabitants of Concord. It

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

was a singular coincidence that I should find these worms awaiting me, for my mind was full of a phosphorescence which I had seen in the woods. I have waited to learn something more about them b[e]fore acknowledging the receipt of them. I have frequently met with glow-worms in my night walks, but am not sure they were the same kind with these. Dr. Harris once described to me a larger kind than I had found, "nearly as big as your little finder;" but he does not name them in his report.

The only authorities on Glow-worms which I chance to have (and I am pretty well provided), are Kirby and Spence (the fullest), Knapp ("Journal of a Naturalist"), "The Library of Entertaining Knowledge" (Rennie), a French work, etc., etc.; but there is no minute, scientific description in any of these. This is apparanetly a female of the genus Lampyris; but Kirby and Spence say that there are nearly two hundred species of this genus alone. The one commonly referred to by English writers is the Lampyris noctiluca; but judging from Kirby and Spence's description, and from the description and plate in the French work, this is not that one, for, besides other differences, both say that the light proceeds from the abdomen. Perhaps the worms exhibited by Durkee (whose statement to the Boston Society of Natural History, second July meeting, in the "Traveller" of August 12, 1857, I send you) were the same with these. I do not see how they could be the L. noctiluca, as he states.

I expect to go to Cambridge before long, and if I get any more light on this subject I will inform you. The two worms are still alive.

I shall be glad to receive the Drosera at any time, if you chance to come across it. I am looking over Loudon's "Arboretum," which we have added to our Library, and it occurs to me that it was written expressly for you, and that you cannot avoid placing it on your own shelves.

I should have been glad to see the whale, and



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

might perhaps have done so, if I had not at that time been seeing “the elephant” (or moose) in the Maine woods. I have been associating for about a month with one Joseph Polis, the chief man of the Penobscot tribe of Indians, and have learned a great deal from him, which I should like to tell you sometime.

He reported that he was reading in [John Claudius Loudon](#)’s *ARBORETUM ET FRUTICETUM BRITANNICUM* (either in the Concord town library set or in a personal set he had acquired):



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

CAPE COD: Our way to the high sand-bank, which I have described as extending all along the coast, led, as usual, through patches of Bayberry bushes, which straggled into the sand. This, next to the Shrub-oak, was perhaps the most common shrub thereabouts. I was much attracted by its odoriferous leaves and small gray berries which are clustered about the short twigs, just below the last year's growth. I know of but two bushes in Concord, and they, being staminate plants, do not bear fruit. The berries gave it a venerable appearance, and they smelled quite spicy, like small confectionery. Robert Beverley, in his "History of Virginia," published in 1705, states that "at the mouth of their rivers, and all along upon the sea and bay, and near many of their creeks and swamps, grows the myrtle, bearing a berry, of which they make a hard brittle wax, of a curious green color, which by refining becomes almost transparent. Of this they make candles, which are never greasy to the touch nor melt with lying in the hottest weather; neither does the snuff of these ever offend the smell, like that of a tallow candle; but, instead of being disagreeable, if an accident puts a candle out, it yields a pleasant fragrancy to all that are in the room; insomuch that nice people often put them out on purpose to have the incense of the expiring snuff. The melting of these berries is said to have been first found out by a surgeon in New England, who performed wonderful things with a salve made of them." From the abundance of berries still hanging on the bushes, we judged that the inhabitants did not generally collect them for tallow, though we had seen a piece in the house we had just left. I have since made some tallow myself. Holding a basket beneath the bare twigs in April, I rubbed them together between my hands and thus gathered about a quart in twenty minutes, to which were added enough to make three pints, and I might have gathered them much faster with a suitable rake and a large shallow basket. They have little prominences like those of an orange all encased in tallow, which also fills the interstices down to the stone. The oily part rose to the top, making it look like a savory black broth, which smelled much like balm or other herb tea. You let it cool, then skim off the tallow from the surface, melt this again and strain it. I got about a quarter of a pound weight from my three pints, and more yet remained within the berries. A small portion cooled in the form of small flattish hemispheres, like crystallizations, the size of a kernel of corn (nuggets I called them as I picked them out from amid the berries). Loudon says, that "cultivated trees are said to yield more wax than those that are found wild." (See Duplessy, *Végétaux Résineux*, Vol. II. p. 60.) If you get any pitch on your hands in the pine-woods you have only to rub some of these berries between your hands to start it off. But the ocean was the grand fact there, which made us forget both bayberries and men.

**PEOPLE OF
CAPE COD**

BEVERLEY

**J.C. LOUDON
DUPLESSY**



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

CAPE COD: In the north part of the town there is no house from shore to shore for several miles, and it is as wild and solitary as the Western Prairies -used to be. Indeed, one who has seen every house in Truro will be surprised to hear of the number of the inhabitants, but perhaps five hundred of the men and boys of this small town were then abroad on their fishing-grounds. Only a few men stay at home to till the sand or watch for blackfish. The farmers are fishermen-farmers and understand better ploughing the sea than the land. They do not disturb their sands much, though there is a plenty of sea-weed in the creeks, to say nothing of blackfish occasionally rotting on the shore. Between the Pond and East Harbor Village there was an interesting plantation of pitch-pines, twenty or thirty acres in extent, like those which we had already seen from the stage. One who lived near said that the land was purchased by two men for a shilling or twenty-five cents an acre. Some is not considered worth writing a deed for. This soil or sand, which was partially covered with poverty and beach grass, sorrel, &c., was furrowed at intervals of about four feet and the seed dropped by a machine. The pines had come up admirably and grown the first year three or four inches, and the second six inches and more. Where the seed had been lately planted the white sand was freshly exposed in an endless furrow winding round and round the sides of the deep hollows, in a vortical spiral manner, which produced a very singular effect, as if you were looking into the reverse side of a vast banded shield. This experiment, so important to the Cape, appeared very successful, and perhaps the time will come when the greater part of this kind of land in Barnstable County will be thus covered with an artificial pine forest, as has been done in some parts of France. In that country 12,500 acres of downs had been thus covered in 1811 near Bayonne. They are called *pignadas*, and according to Loudon "constitute the principal riches of the inhabitants, where there was a drifting desert before." It seemed a nobler kind of grain to raise than corn even.

**PEOPLE OF
CAPE COD**

J.C. LOUDON



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

MR. WATSON,—I am much indebted to you for your glowing communication of July 20th. I had that very day left Concord for the wilds of Maine; but when I returned, August 8th, two out of the six worms remained nearly, if not quite, as bright as at first, I was assured. In their best estate they had excited the admiration of many of the inhabitants of Concord. It was a singular coincidence that I should find these worms awaiting me, for my mind was full of a phosphorescence which I had seen in the woods. I have waited to learn something more about them b[e]fore acknowledging the receipt of them. I have frequently met with glow-worms in my night walks, but am not sure they were the same kind with these. Dr. Harris once described to me a larger kind than I had found, "nearly as big as your little finder;" but he does not name them in his report.

The only authorities on Glow-worms which I chance to have (and I am pretty well provided), are Kirby and Spence (the fullest), Knapp ("Journal of a Naturalist"), "The Library of Entertaining Knowledge" ([Rennie](#)), a French work, etc., etc.; but there is no minute, scientific description in any of these. This is apparently a female of the genus Lampyris; but Kirby and Spence say that there are nearly two hundred species of this genus alone. The one commonly referred to by English writers is the Lampyris noctiluca; but judging from Kirby and Spence's description, and from the description and plate in the French work, this is not that one, for, besides other differences, both say that the light proceeds from the abdomen. Perhaps the worms exhibited by Durkee (whose statement to the [Boston Society of Natural History](#), second July meeting, in the "Traveller" of August 12, 1857, I send you) were the same with these. I do not see how they could be the L. noctiluca, as he states.

I expect to go to Cambridge before long, and if I get any more light on this subject I will inform you. The two worms are still alive.

I shall be glad to receive the Drosera at any time, if you chance to come across it. I am looking over Loudon's "Arboretum," which we have added to our Library, and it occurs to me that it was written expressly for you, and that you cannot avoid placing it on your own shelves.

I should have been glad to see the whale, and might perhaps have done so, if I had not at that time been seeing "the elephant" (or moose) in the Maine woods. I have been associating for about a month with one Joseph Polis, the chief man of the Penobscot tribe of Indians, and have learned a great deal from him, which I should like to tell you sometime.

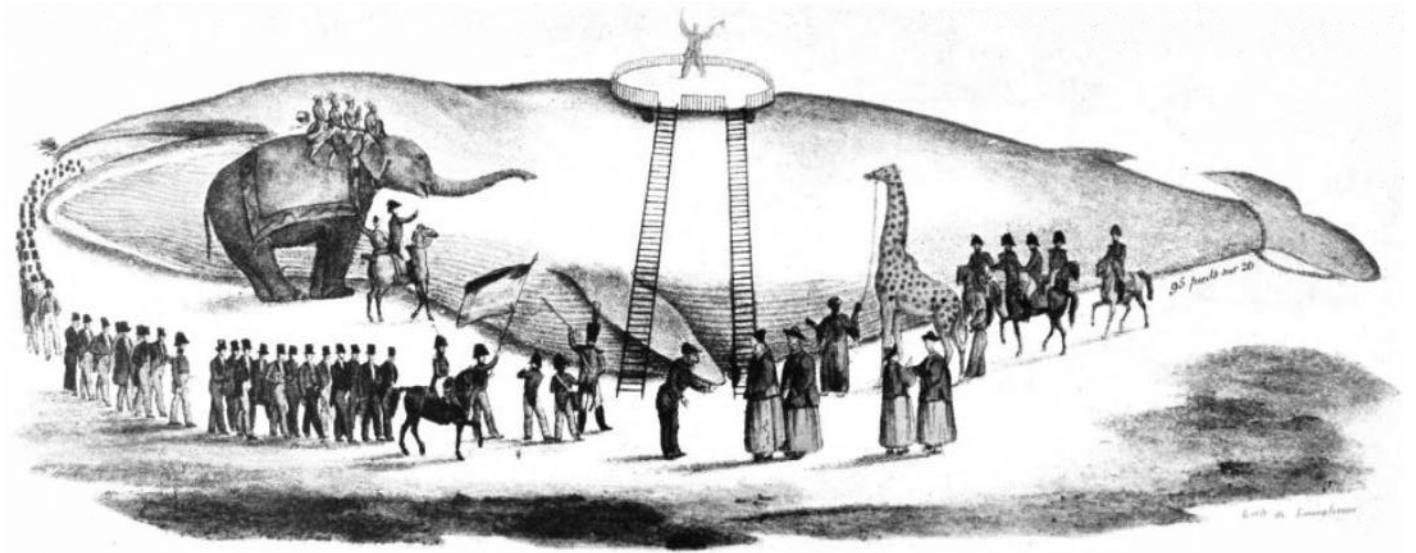
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY



La Baleine d'Ostende

Visitee par l'Elephant, la Giraffe, les Osages et les Chinois.

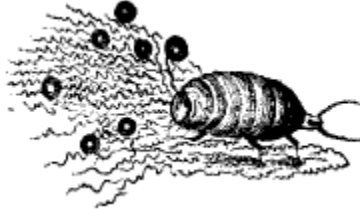


BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

When he went “a-botanizing” (and that was often) [Thoreau](#) made careful and frequent use of:

- [John Leonard Knapp](#)’s THE JOURNAL OF A NATURALIST, issued in London in 1829 and reprinted in Philadelphia in 1831



- [James Rennie](#)’s THE FACULTIES OF BIRDS

THE FACULTIES OF BIRDS

- [James Rennie](#)’s INSECT ARCHITECTURE, of which he owned a copy

INSECT ARCHITECTURE

- [James Rennie](#)’s INSECT TRANSFORMATION, of which he owned a copy

INSECT TRANSFORMATIONS

- [James Rennie](#)’s INSECT MISCELLANIES, of which he owned a copy

INSECT MISCELLANIES

- Various editions of Professor [Jacob Bigelow](#)’s *FLORULA BOSTONIENSIS*. A COLLECTION OF PLANTS OF BOSTON AND ITS VICINITY, WITH THEIR GENERIC AND SPECIFIC CHARACTERS, PRINCIPAL SYNONYMS, DESCRIPTIONS, PLACES OF GROWTH, AND TIME OF FLOWERING, AND OCCASIONAL REMARKS

READ BIGELOW TEXT

- [Loring Dudley Chapin](#)’s THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM; OR, HANDBOOK OF PLANTS AND FRUITS

READ LORING TEXT 1

READ LORING TEXT 2

READ LORING TEXT 3

READ LORING TEXT 4

- Professor [Chester Dewey](#) and [Ebenezer Emmons](#), MD’s REPORT ON THE HERBACEOUS FLOWERING PLANTS OF MASSACHUSETTS, ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE NATURAL ORDERS OF LINDLEY, ILLUSTRATED CHIEFLY BY POPULAR DESCRIPTIONS OF THEIR CHARACTER, PROPERTIES, AND USES,



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

of which he owned a copy

FLOWERING PLANTS

bound with REPORT ON THE QUADRUPEDS OF MASSACHUSETTS

QUADRUPEDS OF MASS.

- Various editions of Professor [Amos Eaton](#)'s A MANUAL OF BOTANY FOR THE NORTHERN AND MIDDLE STATES

AMOS EATON'S BOTANY

- [George B. Emerson](#)'s A REPORT ON THE TREES AND SHRUBS GROWING NATURALLY IN THE FORESTS OF MASSACHUSETTS. PUBLISHED AGREEABLY TO AN ORDER OF THE LEGISLATURE, BY THE COMMISSIONERS ON THE ZOOLOGICAL AND [BOTANICAL](#) SURVEY OF THE STATE

EMERSON'S TREES/SHRUBS

- AGRICULTURAL TRACT, NO. 1. CULTURE OF THE GRASSES. AN EXTRACT FROM THE FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF [CHARLES L. FLINT](#), SECRETARY OF THE STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE. PUBLISHED, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, FOR GENERAL CIRCULATION, of which he owned a copy

FLINT ON THE GRASSES

- Both the 1st and the 2d editions of [Professor Asa Gray](#)'s A MANUAL OF THE [BOTANY](#) OF THE NORTHERN UNITED STATES, FROM NEW ENGLAND TO WISCONSIN AND SOUTH TO OHIO AND PENNSYLVANIA INCLUSIVE, (THE MOSSES AND LIVERWORTS BY WM. S. SULLIVANT,) ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE NATURAL SYSTEM; WITH AN INTRODUCTION, CONTAINING A REDUCTION OF THE GENERA TO THE LINNÆAN ARTIFICIAL CLASSES AND ORDERS, OUTLINES OF THE ELEMENTS OF BOTANY, A GLOSSARY, ETC.

MANUAL OF THE BOTANY

- [Dr. William Lauder Lindsay](#)'s [A POPULAR HISTORY OF BRITISH LICHENS, COMPRISING AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR STRUCTURE, REPRODUCTION, USES, DISTRIBUTION, AND CLASSIFICATION](#)

HIST. OF BRITISH LICHENS

- [Robert Lovell](#)'s ΠΑΜΒΟΤΑΝΟΛΟΓΙΑ. SIVE, ENCHIRIDION BOTANICUM, OR, A COMPLEAT HERBALL, CONTAINING THE SUMME OF ANCIENT AND MODERNE AUTHORS, BOTH GALENICAL AND CHYMICAL, TOUCHING TREES, SHRUBS, PLANTS, FRUITS, FLOWERS, &C. IN AN ALPHABETICAL ORDER; WHEREIN ALL THAT ARE NOT IN THE PHYſICK GARDEN IN OXFORD, ARE NOTED WITH AFTERISKS. SHEWING THEIR PLACE, TIME, NAMES, KINDS, TEMPERATURE, VERTUES, Uſe, Doſe, DANGER AND ANTIDOTES. TOGETHER WITH AN { INTRODUCTION TO HERBARIſME, &C. { APPENDIX OF EXOTICKS. { UNIVERSAL INDEX OF PLANTS: ſHEWING WHAT GROW WILD IN ENGLAND. (Oxford:





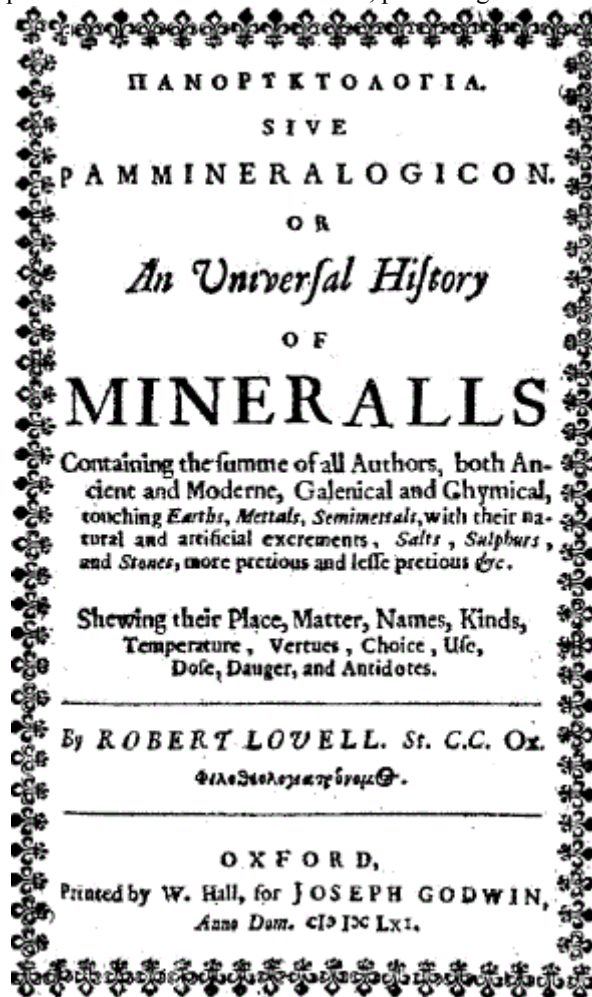
BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Printed by W.H. for Richard Davis, 1659, 1665)

LOVELL'S HERBALL

(This was usually printed with a Volume II bound in, pertaining to minerals:)



- John Edward Sowerby and Charles Johnson's [THE FERNS OF GREAT BRITAIN](#) (London: John E. Sowerby, 3 Mead Place, Lambeth, 1855)
- [Robert Mackenzie Stark](#)'s [A POPULAR HISTORY OF BRITISH MOSSES](#): COMPRISING A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THEIR STRUCTURE, FRUCTIFICATION, ARRANGEMENT, AND GENERAL DISTRIBUTION (London: Lovell Reeve, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, 1854)
- Professor of Chemistry in the West-Point Military Academy [John Torrey, M.D.](#)'s [A COMPENDIUM OF THE FLORA OF THE NORTHERN AND MIDDLE STATES](#): CONTAINING GENERIC AND SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE PLANTS, EXCLUSIVE OF THE CRYPTOGAMIA, HITHERTO FOUND IN THE UNITED STATES NORTH OF THE POTOMAC (New-York: Stacy B. Collins, 65 Fulton-street; J. & J.

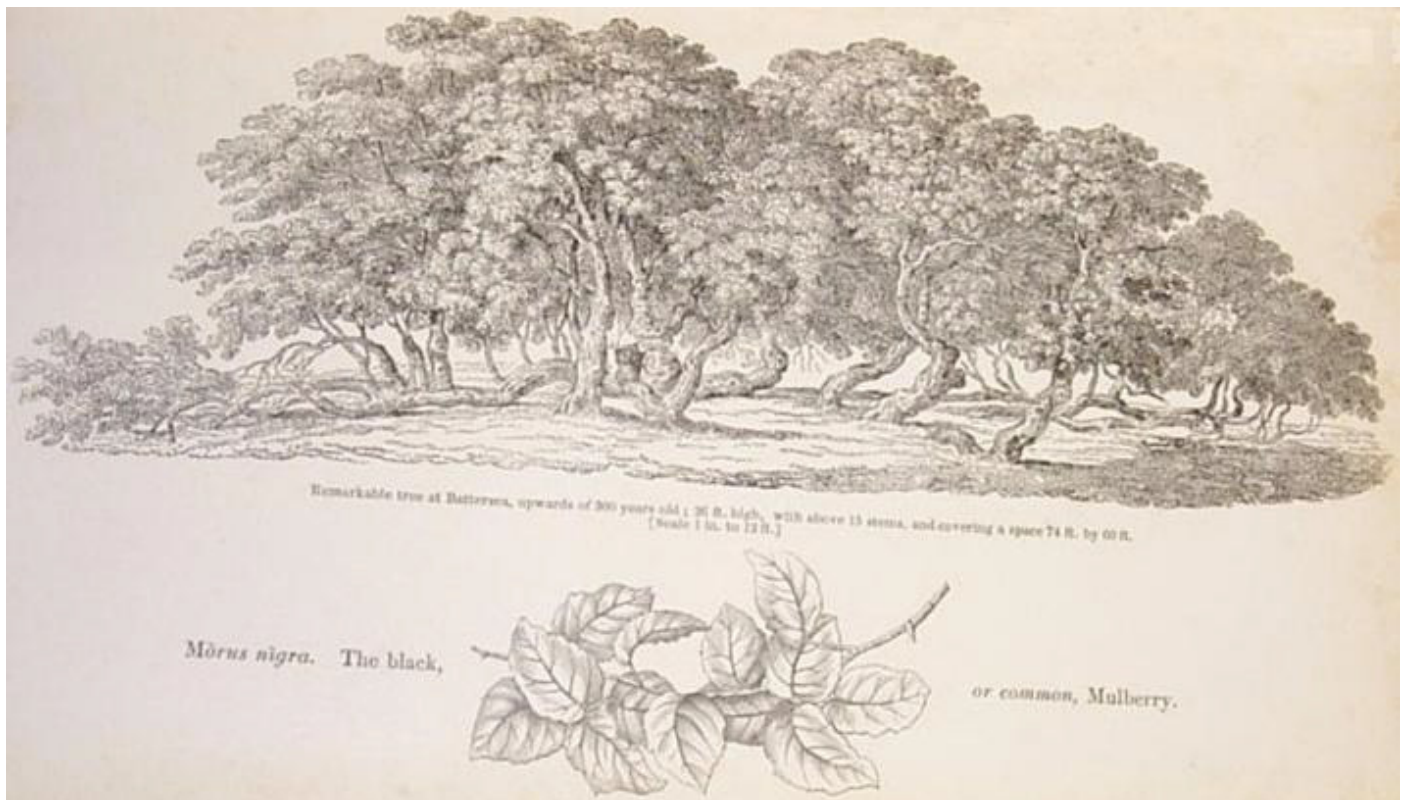


BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Harper, Printers, 1826)

- The multivolume 1838-1843 edition of [Professor John Torrey](#)'s and [Professor Asa Gray](#)'s [A FLORA OF NORTH AMERICA](#): CONTAINING ABRIDGED DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE KNOWN INDIGENOUS AND NATURALIZED PLANTS GROWING NORTH OF MEXICO; ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE NATURAL SYSTEM (New-York: Wiley and Putnam; London: Wiley and Putnam, 35 Paternoster Row; Paris: Bossange & Co. 11 Quai Voltaire)
- [John Claudius Loudon](#)'s *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PLANTS*, and *ARBORETUM ET FRUTICUM BRITANNICUM*





1858

January 15, Friday: Would this have been the occasion on which [Henry Thoreau](#) read, in the PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOSTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Volume 4, a contribution by Dr. W.I. Burnett dating to July 20, 1853?

Dr. Burnett alluded to the fact that it is not uncommon to find toads in such a situation as to make it highly improbable that they could have gone through the usual stages of the tadpole state under the ordinary circumstances. He mentioned, that his attention had been recently called to the fact of their existence in great numbers in a garden in the vicinity of Boston, where there was no water for their tadpole existence, and where it was impossible that they could have entered from without. He referred to the opinions of Naturalists on this subject, as follows :

Lowe (Ann. Nat. Hist. XI., April, 1853, p. 341) notices the improbability of toads having passed through the larval or tadpole state, in cases of their appearance in places where there is no water, and where it is impossible that they should have come from distant brooks.

Jenyns, (Ibid. XI., June, p. 483,) who has observed reptile life, agrees with *Lowe* in his hypothesis, and thinks that gills never existed, or disappeared very shortly after birth.

It would also appear that like facts were noticed by many of the older Naturalists, Shaw, Ray, and others, who regarded them as indicative of the viviparity of these animals.

The anurous Batrachians have, as is well known, no copulatory organs, the fecundation taking place as the eggs escape, by the semen which is spread over them by the male. It is therefore highly improbable that there is viviparity as in the case of some snakes, (Watersnake, Rattlesnake, &c.); the young are probably brought forth as tadpoles, but soon lose the peculiarities of their larval state, and acquire, prematurely, the functional conditions of terrestrial animals.

Dr. Burnett presented specimens of the young toads which he had spoken of, and which were, he said, smaller than any fully developed toads he had ever seen, which had passed through the tadpole state in the ordinary way.

—and a contribution by [Dr. Charles T. Jackson](#) dating to December 1852, and made notes on these in his 2d Commonplace Book?



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Dr. C.T. Jackson said, that he had recently observed in a pond near Plymouth, Mass. The Bream (*Potomis vulgaris*) guarding its eggs. The nest was formed of gravel pasted together with the eggs, and over it the fish kept its watch. On driving it away, it constantly returned when the alarm had passed. It could be approached so as to be easily thrown on shore with the hands. On breaking up the nest, the fish disappeared. Similar facts had been noticed of late years in the habits of many fish, but Dr. Jackson was not aware that they had been noticed with regard to this species.



January 15, 1858. At Natural History Rooms, Boston.

Looked at the little grebe. Its feet are not webbed with lobes on the side like the coot, and it is quite white beneath. Saw the good-sized duck—velvet duck, with white spot on wing—which is commonly called “coot” on salt water. They have a living young bald eagle in the cellar. Talked with [Dr. Kneeland](#). They have a golden eagle from Lexington, which [K.](#) obtained two or three years since, the first Dr. Cabot has heard of in Massachusetts. Speaking to him of my night-warbler, he asked if it uttered such a note, making the note of the myrtle-bird, *ah, te-te-te te-te-te te-te-te*, exactly, and said that that was the note of the white-throated sparrow, which he heard at Lake Superior, at night as well as by day.¹³

Same afternoon, saw Dr. Durkee in Howard Street. He has not seen the common glow-worm, and called his a variety of *Lampyris noctiluca*. Showed to [Agassiz](#), Gould, and [Jackson](#), and it was new to them. They thought it a variety of the above. His were luminous throughout, mine only in part of each segment. Saw some beautiful painted leaves in a shop window,—maple and oak.

THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY

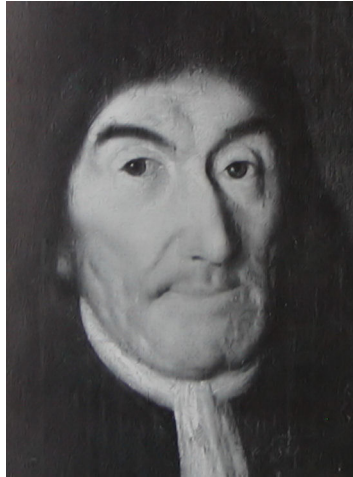
13. *Vide* his report, July 15, 1857.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

May 27, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), [Père Louis Hennepin](#)'s *DESCRIPTION DE LA*



DESCRIPTION DE LA LOUISIANE

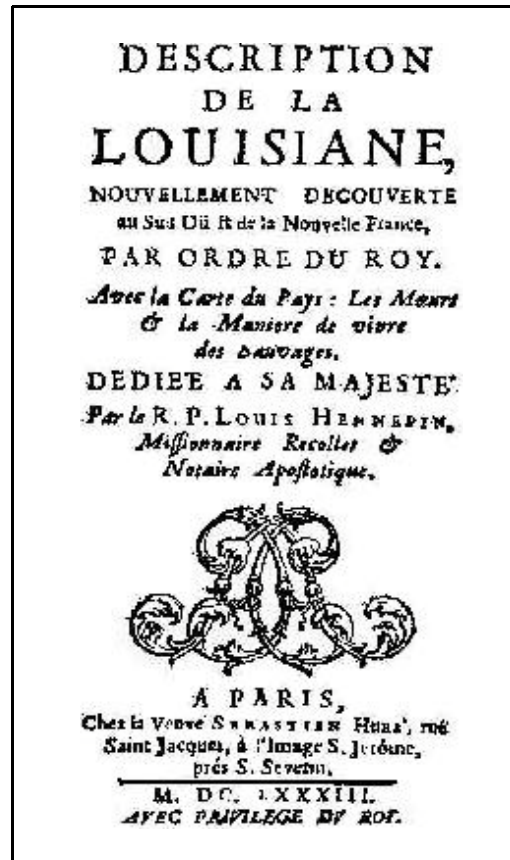
LOUISIANE, NOUVELLEMENT DECOUVERTE AU SUD'OUEST DE LA NOUVELLE FRANCE, PAR ORDRE DU ROY. AVEC LA CARTE DU PAYS: LES MŒURS & LA MANIÈRE DE VIVRE DES SAUVAGES, DEDÉE À SA MAJESTÉ PAR LA R. P. LOUIS HENNEPIN, MISSIONNAIRE RÉCOLLET & NOTAIRE APOSTOLIQUE (Paris: Chez la Veuve Sebastien Huré,

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1683).¹⁴



14. May we presume that Thoreau was never aware that this book has subsequently been exposed as a plagiarization from Abbé Claude Bernou's *RELATION DES DÉCOUVERTES ET DES VOYAGES DU SIEUR DE LA SALLE, SEIGNEUR ET GOUVERNEUR DU FORT DE FRONTENAC, AU-DELÀ DES GREND LACS DE LA NOUVELLE FRANCE, FAITS PAR ORDRE DE MONSEIGNEUR COLBERT, 1679, 1680 ET 1681*, which was itself secondhand information accumulated by a non-traveler?

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**BOSTON SOCIETY****OF NATURAL HISTORY**

(It had been in this volume, in 1684, that the first report had been made, of a gigantic waterfall between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario in New York — [Niagara Falls](#). However, no illustration had been provided, and the illustration below, although the 1st, would not appear until another book at another time.)



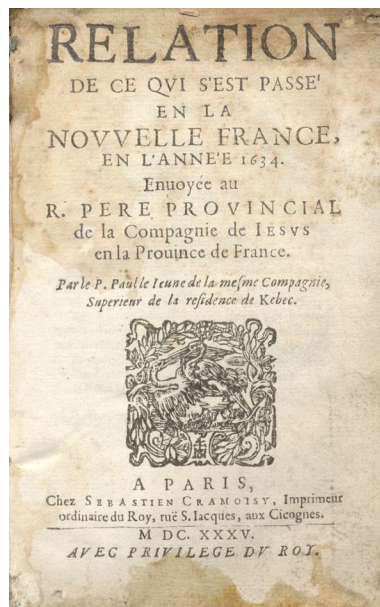


BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Having already perused the JESUIT RELATION volumes for the years 1633-1643, and the volumes numbered 11 through 26, and the volumes for the years 1662-1663 and for 1663-1664, [Thoreau](#) also checked out the volumes for the years 1669-1670, 1670-1671, and 1671-1672.¹⁵

<http://www.canadiana.org>



"There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away"
— Emily Dickinson

15. Cramoisy, Sebastian (ed.). *RELATION DE CE QUI S'EST PASSÉ EN LA NOUVELLE FRANCE IN L'ANNÉE 1636: ENVOYÉE AU R. PERE PROVINCIAL DE LA COMPAGNIE DE JESUS EN LA PROVINCE DE FRANCE, PAR LE P. PAUL LE JEUNE DE LA MESME COMPAGNIE, SUPERIEUR DE LA RESIDENCE DE KÉBEC. A Paris: Chez Sebastian Cramoisy..., 1637*



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

[Thoreau](#) consulted, at the [Boston Society of Natural History](#), [Thomas Bell](#)'s A HISTORY OF BRITISH REPTILES ILLUSTRATED BY MORE THAN 40 WOODCUTS (London: J. Van Voorst). He would copy from this into his 2d Commonplace Book.

THE BRITISH REPTILES



May 27. At Boston, Cambridge, and Concord.

De Kay describes the *Esox fasciatus*, which is apparently mine of May 11th. As I count, the rays are the same in number, viz. "P. 13, V. 9, D. 14, A. 13, C. 20." He says it is from six to eight inches long and abundant in New York; among other things is distinguished by "a muddy tinge of the roundish pectoral, abdominal, and ventral fins; and by a broad concave or lunated tail." I do not observe the peculiarity in the tail in mine, now it is in



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

spirits.

JAMES ELLSWORTH DE KAY

FISHES, VOLUME IV

Ed. Emerson shows me an egg of a bittern (*Ardea minor*) (**Green-backed Heron *Butorides striatus***) from a nest in the midst of the Great Meadows, which four boys found, scaring up the bird, last Monday, the 24th. It was about a foot wide on the top of a tussock, where the water around was about one foot deep. I will measure the egg.



[It is clay-colored, one and seven eighths inches long by one and nine sixteenths, about the same size each end.] They were a little developed. Also an egg of a turtle dove, one of two in a nest in a pitch pine, about six feet from the ground, in Sleepy hollow Cemetery, by the side of a frequented walk, on a fork on a nearly horizontal limb. The egg is milk-white, elliptical, one and three sixteenths inches long by seven eighths wide.

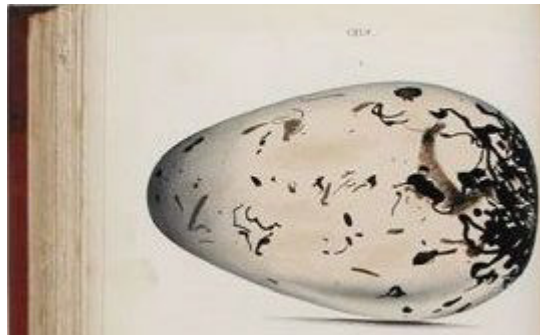
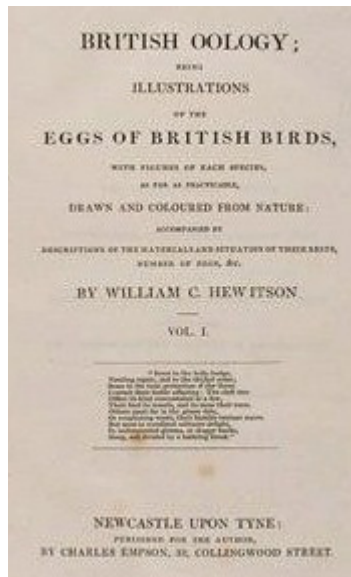




BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

June 21, Monday: At the [Boston Society of Natural History](#), [Henry Thoreau](#) consulted [William Chapman Hewitson](#)'s BRITISH OÖLOGY: BEING ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE EGGS OF BRITISH BIRDS, WITH FIGURES OF EACH SPECIES, AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, DRAWN AND COLOURED FROM NATURE: ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE MATERIALS AND SITUATION OF THEIR NESTS, NUMBER OF EGGS, &C (Charles Empson, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1831-1838).



June 21. *Vide* at Cambridge, apparently in prime, *Silene inflata*; also, in a rich grass-field on Sacramento Street, what may be *Turritis glabra* (?), also in prime, the last three or four feet high. Both pressed. Talked with Mr. Bryant at the Natural History Rooms. He agrees with Kneeland in thinking that what I call the myrtle-bird's is the white-throat sparrow's note. Bryant killed one Down East in summer of '56. He has lived the last fifteen years at Cohasset, and also knows the birds of Cambridge, but talks of several birds as rare which are common in Concord, such as the stake-driver, marsh hawk (have neither of their eggs in the collection), Savannah sparrow, the *passerina* much rarer, and I think purple finch, etc. Never heard the *tea-lee* note of myrtle-bird (?) in this State. Their large hawk is the red-shouldered, not hen-hawk. He thinks that the sheldrake of the Maine lakes is the *merganser*, the *serrator* belonging rather to the seacoast. Of the two little dippers or grebes, he thought the white-breasted one would be the commonest, which has also a slender bill, while the other has a brownish breast and a much thicker bill.

The egg of the *Turdus solitarius* in the collection is longer, but marked very much like the tanager's, only paler-brown. They have also the egg of the *T. brunneus*, the other hermit thrush, not common here.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

December 7, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), Enrico “Iron Hand” de Tonti’s *RELATION DE LA LOUISIANA OU MISSISSIPPI PAR LE CHEVALIER DE TONTI* (1734).¹⁶



16. Henry, Chevalier de Tonti was born in Gaeta, Italy in about 1650, a son of Lorenzo Tonti. He entered the French army as a cadet and served in addition in the French navy. In 1678 he accompanied René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle (1643-1687) to Canada. In 1680, during an exploration of the Mississippi he was left in command of Fort Crevecoeur on the Illinois River near Peoria, Illinois. After making an unsuccessful attempt to found a settlement in Arkansas, in 1685 he took part in an expedition of the Western Indians against the Senecas. He twice went down the Mississippi to its mouth while in search of La Salle, and then needed to go down the river a third time to meet M. D'Iberville. During September 1704 he died at Fort Saint Louis (now Mobile, Alabama). There is a report by him in Margry's *RELATIONS ET MEMOIRES*, and an English translation of this report, "An Account of Monsieur de la Salle's Last Discoveries in North America. Presented to the French King, and Published by the Chevalier Tonti, Governour of Fort St. Louis, in the Province of the Illinois" would be printed in London by J. Tonson, S. Buckley, and R. Knaplock in 1698 and reprinted in New-York in 1814. Refer to Benjamin Franklin French's *HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF LOUISIANA AND FLORIDA* (Volume I, 1846).



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Thoreau also checked out Volume IV of the five volumes of Benjamin Franklin French's HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF LOUISIANA, EMBRACING MANY RARE AND VALUABLE DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE NATURAL, CIVIL AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF THAT STATE. COMPILED WITH HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES, AND AN INTRODUCTION... (New York: Wiley & Putnam). Part I of this, Historical Documents from 1678-1691, contains La Salle's memoir of the discovery of the Mississippi, Joutel's journal, and Hennepin's account of the Mississippi. Part II contains Marquette and Joliet's voyage to discover the Mississippi, De Soto's expedition, and [\[Dr. Daniel\] Coxe's "Carolana."](#) Part III contains La Harpe's journal of the establishment of the French in Louisiana, Charlevoix's journal, etc. Part IV, the volume from which Thoreau was extracting into his Indian Notebook #11, printed in 1852, contains narratives of the voyages, missions, and travels among the Indians, by Marquette, Joliet, Dablon, Allouez, Le Clercq, La Salle, Hennepin, Membre, and Douay, with biographical and bibliographical notices of these missionaries and their works, by John Gilmary Shea, and contains the 1673 Thevenot chart of the "R. Mitchisipi ou grand Riviere" indicating the native tribes along its tributaries, "Carte de la decouverte faite l'an 1673. dans l'Amerique Septentrionale."

THE MITCHISIPI RIVER

Part V contains Dumont's memoir of transactions with the Indians of Louisiana, from 1712 to 1740, and Champégnny's memoirs.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**BOSTON SOCIETY****OF NATURAL HISTORY**

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**BOSTON SOCIETY****OF NATURAL HISTORY**

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

[Thoreau](#) also checked out [Jean-Frédéric Bernard](#)'s *RECUEIL DE VOYAGES AU NORD, CONTENANT DIVERS MÉMOIRES TRÈS UTILES AU COMMERCE & À LA NAVIGATION, 1715-1738* (A Amsterdam, Chez J.F. Bernard), and would make extracts in his Indian Notebook #11. According to the edition statement contained in the 4th volume, this is the 4th edition of the work and Volume 2 had been printed in 1715, Volumes 1 and 3 in 1716, Volume 6 in 1723, Volume 5 in 1724, Volume 7 in 1725, and Volume 8 in 1727 (of the final two of the 10 volumes, Volumes 9 and 10, this 1732 printing says nothing, of course because they had not yet been put through the press).



Unfortunately, Google Books has scanned so far of these ten volumes only Volume 4 — so that is all I am able to provide for you here:

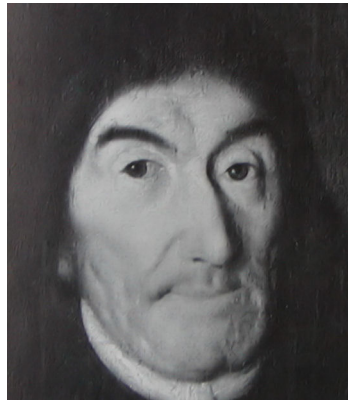
JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC BERNARD



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

[Thoreau](#) also checked out [Father Louis Hennepin](#)'s *VOYAGES | CURIEUX ET NOUVEAUX | DE MESSIEURS | HENNEPIN & DE LA BORDE, | OU L'ON VOIT UNE DESCRIPTION TRÈS PARTICULIERE, D'UN GRAND PAYS DANS L'AMERIQUE, ENTRE LE | NOUVEAU MEXIQUE, & LA MER GLACIALE, AVEC UNE RELATION CURIEUSE DES | CARAIBES SAUVAGES DES ISLES ANTILLES DE L'AMERIQUE, | LEURS MŒURS, COÛTUMES, RELIGION &C. | LE TOUTE ACCOMPAGNÉ DES CARTES & FIGURES NECESSAIRES. | [Emblem.] | A AMSTERDAM, AUX DEPENS DE LA COMPAGNIE. MDCXI* (this was an exact reprint of the edition of 1704, with merely a slight change to the title page).



[Sieur de la Borde](#) is a mysterious figure, for all we know for sure is that he worked, perhaps as a lay brother, for a short period with Jesuit missionaries, especially with Father Simon at the mission on St. Vincent Island in the Antilles.



I am guessing that he was part of the Langlade family that had come over from Castle Sarrasin in Bassee, Guyenne, France (at first known as the family Mouet de Moras) that had settled at Trois-Rivières, Québec in



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1668, and I am guessing that his full name was [Louis Mouet De Moras, Sieur de la Borde](#) and that he was the 4th of the sons of Pierre Mouet, Landlord of Moras, who was an ensign in the Carignan-Salières regiment, with Marie Toupin, Madame de Moras (born on August 19, 1651 at Québec, died on March 13, 1722/1723 at Trois-Rivières),

1. — MOUET, PIERRE, (1) b 1639, fils de Bertrand et de Marthe de Thosin, de Castel-Sarrasin, en Basse Guyenne; s 24 nov. 1693.
TOUPIN, Marie, [TOUSSAINT I.
s 14 mars 1723.
Pierre, b 1^{er} nov. 1669; m 18 avril 1694, à Elizabeth JUTRAS; s 31 oct. 1708. — *Jacques*, b 26 janv. 1672. — *René*, b 1^{er} mars 1674. — *Louis*, (2) b 9 oct. 1676; s 27 mars 1699. — *Michel*, b 20 janv. 1679; m 30 janv. 1725, à Catherine DESJORDIS. — *Marie-Madeleine*, b 2 juillet 1681; s 8 déc. 1703. — *Joseph*, b 21 juillet 1683. — *Thérèse*, b 14 mars 1688; m 27 oct. 1715, à Michel TROTIER.

(1) Sieur de Moras, enseigne dans la compagnie de Loubias, régiment de Carignan.

(2) Sieur de la Borde.

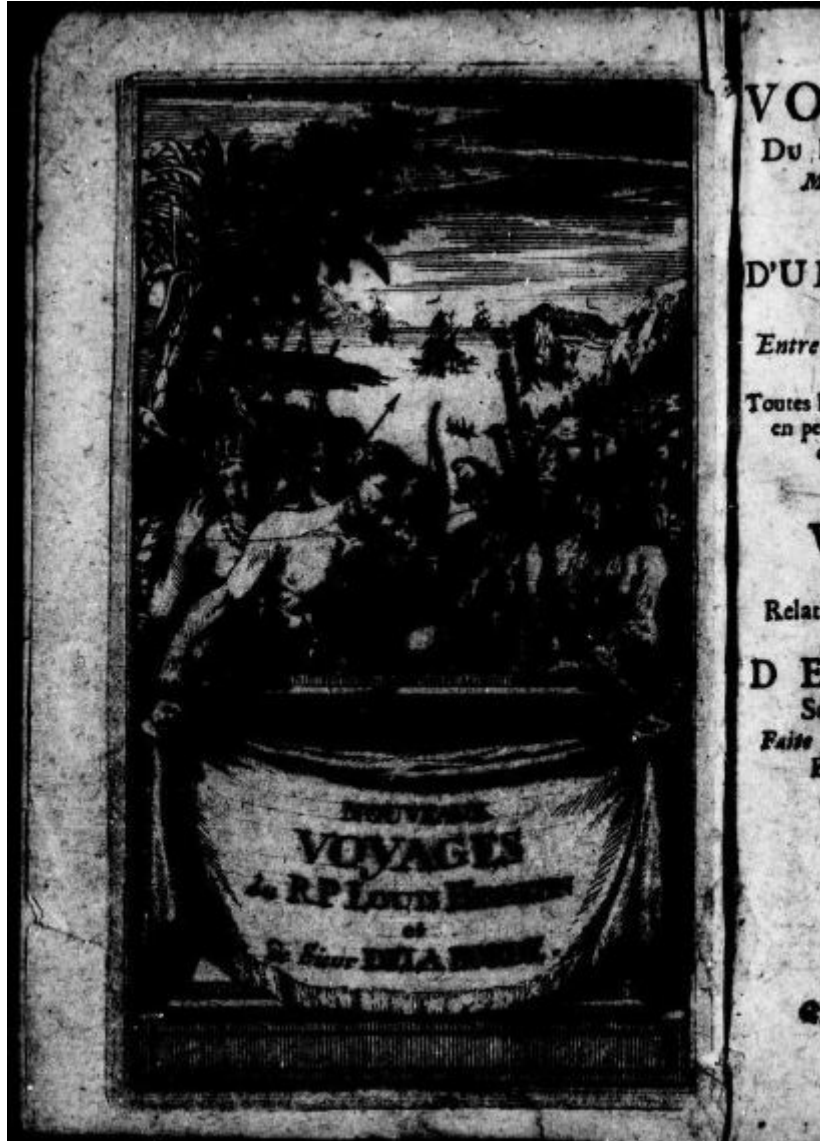
that he had been baptized on October 9, 1676 and would die on March 27, 1699 (but this is guesswork based on family genealogies, and does not at all jibe with an original date of his publication of 1674 at Paris; none of this makes sense if his book was published before he was born, and everything of this makes somewhat more sense if his book actually was published in 1694, when he was perhaps 18 years of age and had perhaps already in his teens as a lay brother assisted Father Simon at his mission in St. Vincent Island, and simply went through the press with a numerical typo on its title page).

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Thoreau would extract something about heavy surf from this source, for use in Chapter 8 “The Highland Light” of [CAPE COD](#).]



CURIEUX ET NOUVEAU

[HDT](#)

[WHAT?](#)

[INDEX](#)

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY



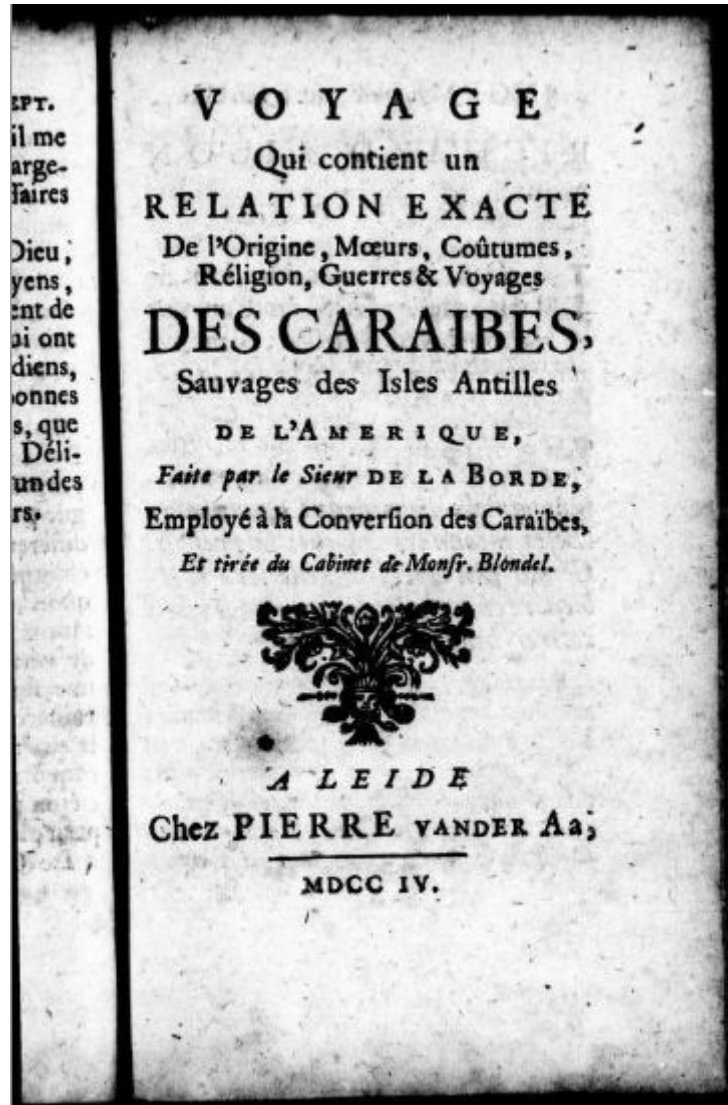
[HDT](#)

[WHAT?](#)

[INDEX](#)

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

CAPE COD: Our host said that you would be surprised if you were on the beach when the wind blew a hurricane directly on to it, to see that none of the drift-wood came ashore, but all was carried directly northward and parallel with the shore as fast as a man can walk, by the inshore current, which sets strongly in that direction at flood tide. The strongest swimmers also are carried along with it, and never gain an inch toward the beach. Even a large rock has been moved half a mile northward along the beach. He assured us that the sea was never still on the back side of the Cape, but ran commonly as high as your head, so that a great part of the time you could not launch a boat there, and even in the calmest weather the waves run six or eight feet up the beach, though then you could get off on a plank. Champlain and Poitrincourt could not land here in 1606, on account of the swell (*la houlle*), yet the savages came off to them in a canoe. In the *Sieur de la Borde's "Relation des Caraibes,"* my edition of which was published at Amsterdam in 1711, at page 530 he says:-

“Couroumon a Caraipe, also a star [*i.e.* a god], makes the great *lames à la mer*, and overturns canoes. *Lames à la mer* are the long *vagues* which are not broken (*entrecoupees*), and such as one sees come to land all in one piece, from one end of a beach to another, so that, however little wind there may be, a shallop or a canoe could hardly land (*aborder terre*) without turning over, or being filled with water.”

But on the Bay side the water even at its edge is often as smooth and still as in a pond. Commonly there are no boats used along this beach. There was a boat belonging to the Highland Light which the next keeper after he had been there a year had not launched, though he said that there was good fishing just off the shore. Generally the Life Boats cannot be used when needed. When the waves run very high it is impossible to get a boat off, however skilfully you steer it, for it will often be completely covered by the curving edge of the approaching breaker as by an arch, and so filled with water, or it will be lifted up by its bows, turned directly over backwards and all the contents spilled out. A spar thirty feet long is served in the same way.

I heard of a party who went off fishing back of Wellfleet some years ago, in two boats, in calm weather, who, when they had laden their boats with fish, and approached the land again, found such a swell breaking on it, though there was no wind, that they were afraid to enter it. At first they thought to pull for Provincetown, but night was coming on, and that was many miles distant. Their case seemed a desperate one. As often as they approached the shore and saw the terrible breakers that intervened, they were deterred. In short, they were thoroughly frightened. Finally, having thrown their fish overboard, those in one boat chose a favorable opportunity, and succeeded, by skill and good luck, in reaching the land, but they were unwilling to take the responsibility of telling the others when to come in, and as the other helmsman was inexperienced, their boat was swamped at once, yet all managed to save themselves.

PEOPLE OF
CAPE COD

CHAMPLAIN
POITRINCOURT

DE LA BORDE





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

The full title of the book to which Thoreau refers in [CAPE COD](#), “the Sieur de la Borde’s ‘Relation des Caraïbes,’ my edition of which was published at Amsterdam in 1711,” is *VOYAGES | CURIEUX ET NOUVEAUX | DE MESSIEURS | HENNEPIN & DE LA BORDE, | OÙ L’ON VOIT UNE DESCRIPTION TRÈS PARTICULIERE, D’UN GRAND PAYS DANS L’AMERIQUE, ENTRE LE | NOUVEAU MEXIQUE, & LA MER GLACIALE, AVEC UNE RELATION CURIEUSE DES | CARAIBES SAUVAGES DES ISLES ANTILLES DE L’AMERIQUE, | LEURS MŒURS, COÛTUMES, RELIGION &C. | LE TOUT ACCOMPAGNÉ DES CARTES & FIGURES NECESSAIRES. | [Emblem.] | A AMSTERDAM, AUX DEPENS DE LA COMPAGNIE. MDCXI* (this is an exceedingly rare volume, but was a mere reprint of the more available edition of 1704, with slight change in the title page). The original date of his publication *RELATION CURIEUSE DES CARAIBES SAUVAGES DES ISLES ANTILLES DE L’AMERIQUE* had been 1674, when it had appeared at Paris under the title *RELATION DE L’ORIGINE, MOEURS, COÛTUMES, RELIGION, GUERRES & VOYAGES DES CARAIBES, SAUVAGES DES ISLES ANTILLES DE L’AMERIQUE. FAITE PAR LE SIEUR DE LA BORDE EMPLOYE A LA CONVERSION DES CARAIBES, ESTANT AVEC LE R.P. SIMON JESUITE; ET TIREE DU CABINET DE MONSIEUR BLOUDEL ... DIVIDÉ EN 12 COMPARTIMENTS, EXHIBANT LES UTENSILES, DWELLINGS, AND MANUFACTURES OF THE CARIBS.*

While he was in Cambridge, [Thoreau](#) also checked out [Père Claude Dablon](#)’s *RELATION OF THE VOYAGES OF FATHER JAMES MARQUETTE, 1673-75 (1677).*



“There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away”
— Emily Dickinson

After leaving the [Harvard Library](#) with his load of books of the history of French [Catholic](#)¹⁷ exploration to study, such as *JESUIT RELATIONS* for 1670-1672, from which he would copy into his Indian Notebook #11, [Thoreau](#) visited the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) to do some ornithology.



December 7. To Boston.
At Natural History Rooms.

17. It never ceases to amaze me how Thoreau, with his Huguenot family history of persecution by French Catholics, and despite the rampant anti-Catholicism that marred the U.S. attitudes of those times, was able so benignly to consider the positive accomplishments of [French Catholics](#)! Clearly he carried with him no grudge at all in regard to what had been in its day the largest mass religious expulsion and genocide (prior, of course, to the Holocaust).



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

The egg of *Turdus solitarius* is light-bluish with pale-brown spots. This is apparently mine which I call hermit thrush, though mine is [sic] redder and distincter brown spots.

The egg of *Turdus brunneus* (called hermit thrush) is a clear blue.

The rail's egg (of Concord, which I have seen) is not the Virginia rail's, which is smaller and nearly pure white, nor the clapper rail's, which is larger. Is it the sora rail's (of which there is no egg in this collection)?

My egg found in R.W.E.'s garden is not the white-throated sparrow's egg.

Dr. Bryant calls my seringo (i.e. the faint-noted bird) Savannah sparrow. He says Cooper's hawk is just like the sharp-shinned, only a little larger commonly. He could not tell them apart. Neither he nor Brewer¹⁸ can identify eggs always. Could match some gulls' eggs out of another basket full of a different species as well as out of the same basket.

On this day his letter arrived in [New Bedford](#), so in the evening [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) was waiting for the train from Boston at the Tarkiln Hill depot at the head of the river, and picked up Thoreau with his load of books, and Thomas Cholmondeley, and took them to his Shanty — where they talked of the English poets [Thomas Gray](#), Alfred, Lord Tennyson, [William Wordsworth](#), etc. until they retired at 10 PM.

On this day [Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Ticknor & Fields](#) in Boston.

Boston Decr 7/58

Henry D. Thoreau Esq

Concord Mass.

Dear Sir

Referring to our file of letters for 1857 we find a note from you of which the enclosed is a copy. As our letter —to which it is a reply— was missent, we doubt not but our answer to yours of a few months since has been subjected to the same, or a similar irregularity.

Respectfully

Yours &c.

Ticknor & Fields

pr Clark

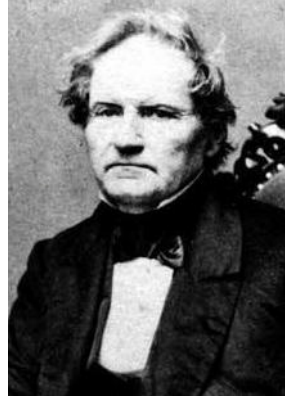
18. [Thomas Mayo Brewer](#) had written in the Proceedings of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) for the years 1851-1854, on page 324 of volume 4, that Thoreau copied into his Commonplace Book #2. [Spencer Fullerton Baird](#), [Thomas Mayo Brewer](#), and Robert Ridgway would create the 3-volume A HISTORY OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS. LAND BIRDS (Boston: Little, Brown, 1874-1884). Brewer's specialty in bird study was nesting and eggs.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

December 10, Friday: At the funeral of Barzillai Frost, the [Reverend Convers Francis](#) “offered a very fervent prayer.”



At 7:30 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) and Thomas Cholmondeley left [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)’s for the Tarkiln Hill train station. Thoreau went to the [Boston Society of Natural History](#)¹⁹ and charged out [Edward Jesse](#)’s GLEANINGS IN NATURAL HISTORY, SECOND SERIES (he would make entries in his 2d Commonplace Book)²⁰

JESSE’S GLEANINGS

and Zadock Thompson’s HISTORY OF VERMONT (1842),²¹

THOMPSON’S HISTORY I

THOMPSON’S HISTORY II

THOMPSON’S HISTORY III

and evidently Cholmondeley stayed in Boston or departed for the Southern states on his way ostensibly to the West Indies (at any rate, Cholmondeley was gone before the end of the year at the outside).

Thoreau made no entry in his journal for this day.

19. These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the Society:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1858

20. [Edward Jesse](#). GLEANINGS IN NATURAL HISTORY, WITH LOCAL RECOLLECTIONS... TO WHICH ARE ADDED MAXIMS AND HINTS FOR AN ANGLER. London, 1832.

[Edward Jesse](#). GLEANINGS IN NATURAL HISTORY, SECOND SERIES. TO WHICH ARE ADDED SOME EXTRACTS FROM THE UNPUBLISHED MSS. OF... MR. WHITE OF SELBORNE. London, 1834.

[Edward Jesse](#). GLEANINGS IN NATURAL HISTORY, THIRD AND LAST SERIES. TO WHICH ARE ADDED NOTICES OF SOME OF THE ROYAL PARKS AND RESIDENCES. London, 1835.

(Since many American publishers consider [Thoreau](#) to fall within their category “nature writer” — some have considered him the creator of this category in America, others derogate him as one of it poorest exemplars because he fails to focus on the pleasantries they vend. It may be useful, therefore, to contrast Thoreau with a well-published “nature writer” of his own period such as this Edward Jesse, Esquire — why don’t you struggle to detect some similarities with the life or writings of HDT?)

21. For the associated 1842 map of Vermont, see:

THOMPSON’S 1842 MAP



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1859

October 6, Thursday: On his way into Boston to testify in court, [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), West's two journals (?) bound as a single volume. He also checked out Dr. Charles David Badham's and illustrator Thomas Hartley Crome's *A TREATISE ON THE ESCULENT FUNGUSES OF ENGLAND: CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR CLASSICAL HISTORY, USES, CHARACTERS, DEVELOPMENT, STRUCTURE, NUTRITIOUS PROPERTIES, MODES OF COOKING AND PRESERVING, ETC.* (London: Reeve Brothers, 1847).



ESCULENT FUNGUSES

[Thoreau](#) also checked out Edward Newman (1801-1876)'s *A HISTORY OF BRITISH FERNS* (London: John Van Voorst, 1854) and [Pierre Boucher](#)'s *HISTOIRE VÉRITABLE ET NATVRELLE DES MŒVRS ET PRODVCTIONS DU PAYS*



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

DE LA NOUVELLE-FRANCE (Paris: Florentin Lambert, 1664):²²



Are winters very cold? Some days are certainly very harsh, but we can still do what we have to; we dress a little more than usual; we put on gloves that we call "mittens"; all the houses have good fires, because wood here costs nothing, all you have to do is chop it and bring it into the house. We use oxen to carry it, on special sleds that slide on the snow, and thus a single ox can pull as much as two oxen pulling a cart in the summer. As I have already said, the weather is quite good most days and it seldom rains in the winter. The greatest inconvenience is that cattle must be fed in the stables for over four months, because the earth is covered with snow during that time. However incommodating the snow, it has a great advantage in that we can easily bring out of the forest, comprised of as much water as land, the timber that we fell and use for building and our other needs. We drag all the timber out of the forest using the sleds I have already mentioned, much more easily and

22. Henry Thoreau would copy from this into his Indian Notebook #12.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

at a much lower cost than by cart in the summer.

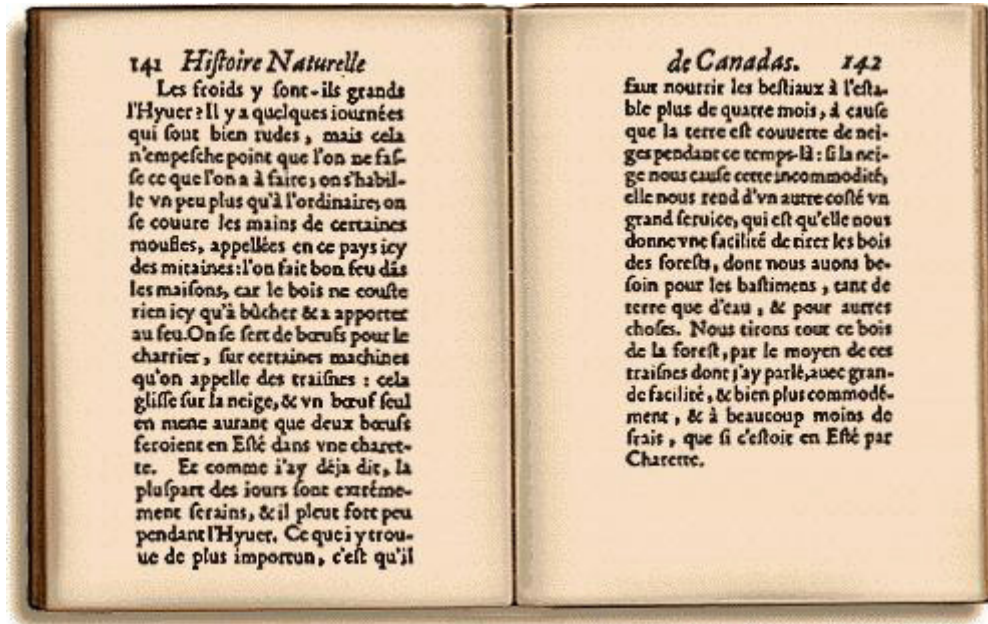


Delphinapterus leucas

"A YANKEE IN CANADA": The early explorers saw many whales and other sea-monsters far up the St. Lawrence. Champlain, in his map, represents a whale spouting in the harbor of Quebec, three hundred and sixty miles from what is called the mouth of the river; and Charlevoix takes his reader to the summit of Cape Diamond to see the "porpoises, white as snow," sporting on the surface of the harbor of Quebec. And Boucher says in 1661, "from there (Tadoussac) to Montreal is found a great quantity of *Marsouins blancs*." Several whales have been taken pretty high up the river since I was there. P.H. Gosse, in his "Canadian Naturalist," p. 171 (London, 1840), speaks of "the white dolphin of the St. Lawrence (*Delphinum Canadensis*)," as considered different from those of the sea. "The Natural History Society of Montreal offered a prize, a few years ago, for an essay on the Cetacea of the St. Lawrence, which was, I believe, handed in." In Champlain's day it was commonly called "the Great River of Canada." More than one nation has claimed it.

PIERRE-FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DE CHARLEVOIX

PHILIP HENRY GOSSE

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**BOSTON SOCIETY****OF NATURAL HISTORY**

"There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away"

— Emily Dickinson



Examine the pigeon and sparrow hawks in the Natural History collection. My wings and tail are apparently the pigeon hawk's. The sparrow hawks are decidedly red-brown with bluish heads and blue or slate sides; also are much more thickly barred with dark on wing-coverts, back, and tail than the pigeon hawk.²³

THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY

23. These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the Society:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1859



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1860

It is remarkable, how differently different rich old men dispose of their excess funds, once they have them and have nothing with which to preoccupy themselves! In this year [Henry Grinnell](#) contributed to the voyage of Isaac Israel Hayes, and he would contribute to the three expeditions that would be made during the decade by Charles Francis Hall. He would regularly correspond with the unsuccessful explorer William Parker Snow.

[THE FROZEN NORTH](#)

Meanwhile, late in the year, having suddenly come to be without a blood heir for his oil wealth upon the deaths of his wife and only child, [Friend James Arnold](#) was revising his will and contemplating the commission of a philanthropy.



"The whaler was a kind of pirate-miner – an excavator of oceanic oil, stoking the furnace of the Industrial Revolution as much as any man digging coal out of the earth."

– Philip Hoare, *THE WHALE: IN SEARCH OF THE GIANTS OF THE SEA* (NY: HarperCollins, March 2010)



MOBY-DICK, THE OIL SPILL

In this matter Friend James turned to three men of repute, his in-law [George Barrell Emerson](#) who was engaged in the growing of trees on the promontory that stretched into Boston Bay on the northeastern side of Chelsea harbor, the family friend John James Dixwell, president of the Massachusetts Bank, who was active in the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) and was engaged in the growing of trees on his Jamaica Plain estate on Moss Hill, and the Boston trust attorney Francis E. Parker.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

May 12, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed the boundary between Moses Prichard's woods skirting the river, which were furnished with winding walks and rustic seats and formed an attractive and cool retreat, and the Joseph Holbrook houselots on Main Street in Concord. Thoreau's charge was \$1.⁵⁰. Holbrook's house was on the site of the house of common entertainment that belonged to William Buss in 1660, almost opposite the site that is now the [Concord Free Public Library](#). This survey shows that the garbage disposal of that day was the pig, for Thoreau included the "piggery." Thoreau's charge was \$0.²⁵. Joseph Holbrook also owned land in Great Meadows and part of Frosty Poplar Hollow near Gowing's Swamp and Copan.



View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/55.htm

A group of 105 white miners were trekking toward Pyramid Lake, seeking retribution against the redskins for their having massacred the five white rapists at Williams Station, when the Payute intercepted the group, managing to kill roughly half of them.

Two days after the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s death, Dr. B. Appleton (a Boston physician who had been in attendance during his last months) and Parker's close friend Professor [Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#) performed an autopsy, removing the brain and the heart. Expecting the corpse to be shipped back to Massachusetts for reburial, they sealed it in a lead casket, packed tightly in hemp and pickled in strong spirits. The brain and heart were put in separate boxes and sent on ahead, perhaps assuming that after the organs were studied they would be interred in the casket with the rest of Parker's corpse. Parker's widow, however, considered that moving his

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

corpse would violate one of his final wishes, and would have the remainder interred in the Protestant cemetery



in Firenze in which Elizabeth Barrett Browning would be being interred in the following year, and Thoreau's friend Thomas Cholmondeley in 1864:

So have I seen a pine tree in the woods, old, dry at its roots, capped with age-resembling snow; it stood there, and seemed to stand; but a little touch of wind drove it headlong, and it fell with a long, resounding crash.

—Theodore Parker

We know that his brain was sent to [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) at the Perkins School for the Blind, for a sailor would show up at the Howes' door unexpectedly with a brain in a box. The cover letter had been lost in transit, so [Julia Ward Howe](#) stuck the box and its grisly contents in a closet on the top floor of the Perkins School (one of the Howe daughters would reminisce about being terrified of that closet as a child). Dr. Howe, meanwhile, would not mention the disgusting matter to anyone; for years, even Mrs. Parker would not know where her husband's brain had gotten to. What happened to the box containing the heart is even more unclear; it may have been sent to Dr. Samuel Cabot, Parker's physician and president of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).

Parker's gravestone in [Italy](#) is of marble, about 4 feet high, and is topped by an "eternal flame" in a lamp that resembles a Unitarian-Universalist chalice. The stone provides a side view of Parker's bust, with laurel wreath. The stone has become tilted and someday may fall and shatter. The cemetery is opened for visitors from 10AM to 1PM, except on Sundays and Mondays.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

**THEODORE PARKER
THE GREAT AMERICAN PREACHER
BORN AT LEXINGTON MASSACHUSETTS
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AUGUST 24 1810
DIED AT FLORENCE ITALY
MAY 10 1860
HIS NAME IS ENGRAVED IN MARBLE
HIS VIRTUES IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE HE
HELPED TO FREE FROM SLAVERY
AND SUPERSTITION**



May 12. Celandine. Very hot.

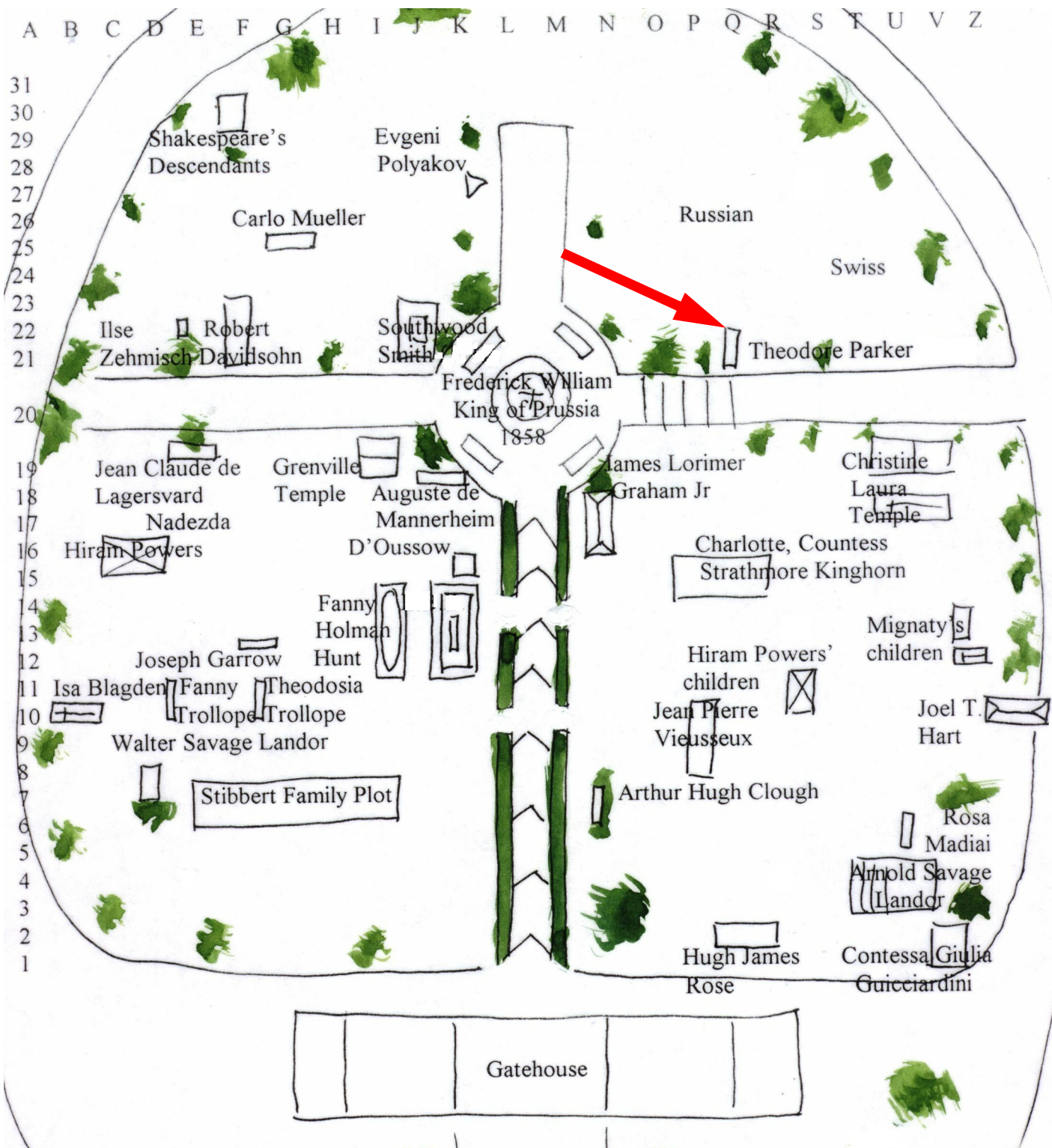
2.30 P. M.—81°.

We seek the shade to sit in for a day or two. The neck-cloth and single coat is too thick; wear a half-thick coat at last [?].

The sugar maple blossoms on the Common resound with bees.

Ostrya flower commonly out on Island, how long? Maybe a day or two.

BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY





BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

First bathe in the river. Quite warm enough.

River five and one half plus inches below summer level.

Very heavy dew and mist this morning; plowed ground black and moist with it. The earth is so dry it drinks like a sponge.

December 31, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) placed a copy of the TRANSACTIONS OF THE MIDDLESEX AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FOR 1860, with "SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES" in it, with the [Boston Society of Natural History](#).²⁴



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR 31 DECEMBER]

24. These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the Society:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1860



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1861

The [Boston Society of Natural History](#) obtained, from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, half a block of the newly filled-in Back Bay, between Berkeley and Clarendon Streets. Its neighbor would be the recently founded Massachusetts Institute of Technology of William Barton Rogers, president of the National Academy of Sciences.

The [Boston Society of Natural History](#) had William White of Boston, “Printer to the State,” bind the TRANSACTIONS OF THE MIDDLESEX AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FOR 1860 (which contained a copy of [Henry Thoreau](#)’s “SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES”) into its 8TH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF AGRICULTURE TOGETHER WITH THE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ... FOR 1860.²⁵

THE SCIENCE OF 1861

25. These would be the proceedings, for this year, of the Society:

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1861



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1862

[Henry Grinnell](#) was one of the founders of the American Geographical and Statistical Society.

MANUAL OF AGRICULTURE: FOR THE SCHOOL, THE FARM, AND THE FIRESIDE BY GEORGE B. EMERSON,
[CHARLES L. FLINT](#) (Boston: Swan, Brewer & Tileston, 131 Washington Street).

Proceedings of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#):

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1862

At some point that Spring: At some point during this spring, shortly before his death, [Henry Thoreau](#) gave to [Edmund Hosmer](#) his personal copy of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), pointing out the lock of John's hair pasted into the front and the poem that accompanied it, and said:

*You know how a pregnant woman has to eat for two.
I have felt that I needed to live for John.*

According to Raymond R. Borst, this happened on May 5th: "At Thoreau's request, his friend Edmund Hosmer spends the night with him" and "In appreciation for this kindness, Thoreau asks his sister to give Hosmer his memorial copy of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) with a lock of his brother John's hair taped in it." Borst's reference is to the [Concord Saunterer](#), 11, Number 4 for Winter 1976, page 16.



Thoreau was then in the process of revising [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) for [Ticknor & Fields](#) to reissue it.

At some point, also, [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) presented Henry with a handwritten list of people to whom, she suggested, he might want to leave some special gift. Her list included in no particular sequence [Bronson Alcott](#), H.G.O. Blake, Theophilus Brown, [Ellery Channing](#), [Aunt Louisa Dunbar](#), [Edith Emerson](#), [Edward Waldo Emerson](#), [Edmund Hosmer](#), Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar, [Elizabeth Sherman Hoar](#), Horace Mann, Jr., [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#), Mrs. Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley, [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), the [Concord Town Library](#), and the [Boston Society of Natural History](#). Thoreau worked at this list, jotting down alongside the names various small gifts (such as his two-volume edition of [Froissart](#)'s CHRONICLES for Ellery),

FROISSART'S CHRONICLES, I

FROISSART'S CHRONICLES, II

until he got down to the entry for [Ellen Emerson](#). Evidently at this point he was unable to proceed, for the bequest to her (of his volume on the mineralogy of Maine and Massachusetts, evidently because it was by her uncle [Charles T. Jackson](#)), and all the remainder, are not in his handwriting but instead in [Sophia](#)'s.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1863

The PROCEEDINGS OF THE [BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY](#) IX carried an article by [Charles T. Jackson](#) entitled "Henry D. Thoreau":



Henry D. Thoreau, of Concord, Mass., died at the age of 44 years, of pulmonary [consumption](#).

His grandfather was a French emigrant from the island of Guernsey [*sic*], and settled in Concord. His father was well known as a manufacturer of black-lead pencils, an art which young Thoreau learned, but never practiced as a business, his tastes leading him wholly into the field of science, while he abhorred trade.

Henry D. Thoreau was distinguished for the great accuracy of his observations, and for the thoroughness with which he executed every research upon which he entered. He was esteemed as an accurate land surveyor, the only business upon which he ever entered for pay. As a botanist he was highly esteemed by those who are the best judges of the subject.

As an observer of the habits of animals he was unrivalled. He would wait all day if it was necessary, for a bird to approach him. He said their curiosity would bring them to examine him if he would remain quiet long enough; and he generally managed to make familiar acquaintance with all living creatures he met with in his rambles through the forest. Thoreau had a genuine love of nature, and pursued natural history for his own gratification, and not with any ambitious views. He was greatly troubled to find that anything had escaped the observation of eminent naturalists, and seemed to be surprised that anything should have been left for him to discover.

Thoreau was a man of original genius, and very peculiar in his views of society and the ways of life. He was conscientiously scrupulous, and was opposed to aiding or abetting, even by a poll-tax, measures which he did not approve of, and therefore got into trouble occasionally with the constituted authorities of the town, who could not indulge him in his opposition to a tax because any part of it might go to support the militia; so they twice [*sic*] shut him up in the jail, from whence his friends took him by paying his tax against his protest.

His published works are full of knowledge of the secrets of nature, and are enlivened by much quaint humor, and warmed with kindness towards all living beings. Those who knew Thoreau best loved and appreciated him most.

PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1863



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Here is the famous scientist and originator posing for his official Daguerreotype at the Boston Society of Natural History attired in all his medals, including just next to his lapel the Gold Medal of Merit which he had been granted perhaps without due consideration by the French Academy:



Last issue of the [Boston Journal of Natural History](#), begun in 1834. The [Boston Society of Natural History](#)'s future publications would be as MEMOIRS READ BEFORE THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY.

With a bequest from Dr. William Johnson Walker, the museum of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#) was completed at the corner of Berkeley Street and Boylston Street in [Boston](#).²⁶

26. This structure is currently used by Bonwit Teller.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1875

THE SPIDERS OF THE UNITED STATES. A COLLECTION OF THE ARACHNOLOGICAL WRITINGS OF [NICHOLAS MARCELLUS HENTZ, M.D.](#) EDITED BY EDWARD [SANDFORD] BURGESS, WITH NOTES AND DESCRIPTIONS BY



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

JAMES H[ENRY] EMERTON (Boston: [Boston Society of Natural History](#)).

THE SPIDERS OF THE UNITED STATES.

A COLLECTION OF

THE ARACHNOLOGICAL WRITINGS

OF

NICHOLAS MARCELLUS HENTZ, M.D.

EDITED BY

EDWARD BURGESS,

WITH NOTES AND DESCRIPTIONS BY JAMES H. EMERTON.

B O S T O N :

BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY.

1875.

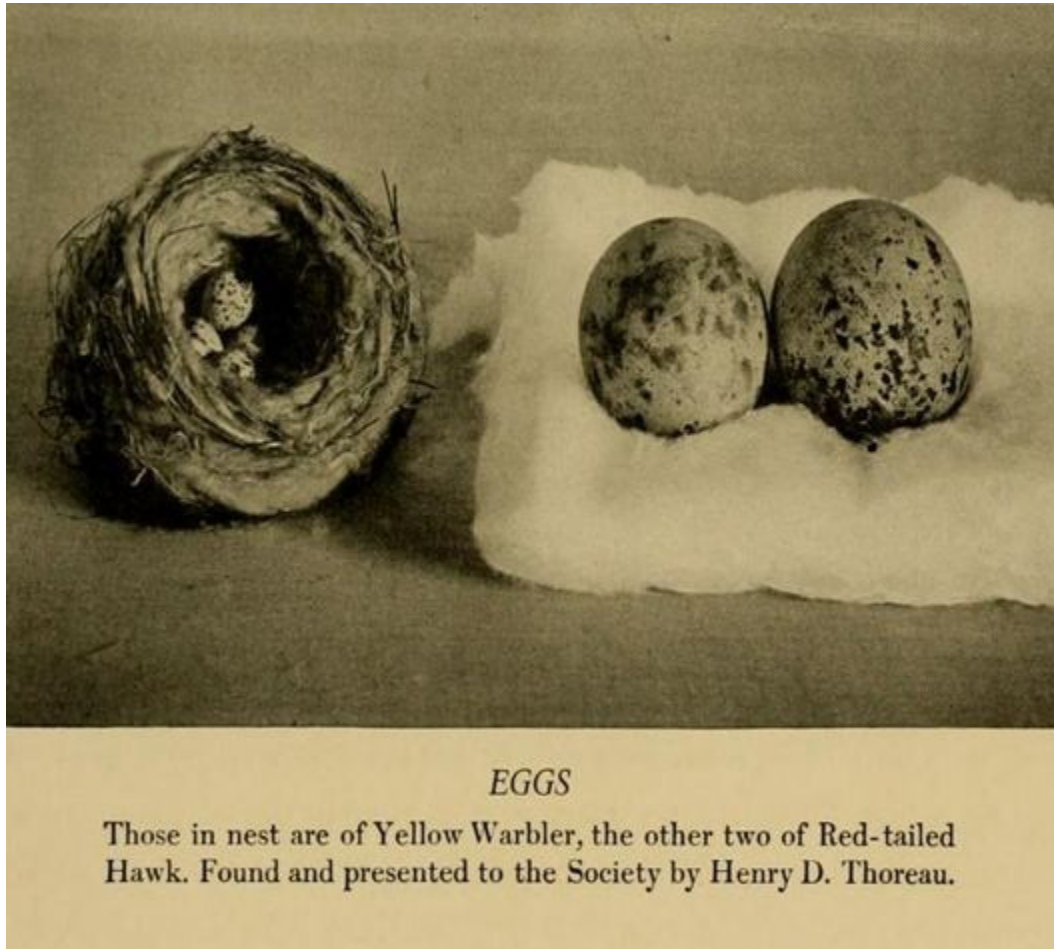


BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

1930

The [Boston Society of Natural History](#) published a volume about its history, 1830-1930, in which it featured an illustration of some bird eggs that had been donated, they proudly indicated, by Henry D. Thoreau:



PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY



COPYRIGHT NOTICE: In addition to the property of others, such as extensive quotations and reproductions of images, this "read-only" computer file contains a great deal of special work product of Austin Meredith, copyright ©2015. Access to these interim materials will eventually be offered for a fee in order to recoup some of the costs of preparation. My hypercontext button invention which, instead of creating a hypertext leap through hyperspace –resulting in navigation problems– allows for an utter alteration of the context within which one is experiencing a specific content already being viewed, is claimed as proprietary to Austin Meredith – and therefore freely available for use by all. Limited permission to copy such files, or any material from such files, must be obtained in advance in writing from the "Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project, 833 Berkeley St., Durham NC 27705. Please contact the project at <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.

"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: April 19, 2015



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



BOSTON SOCIETY

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.