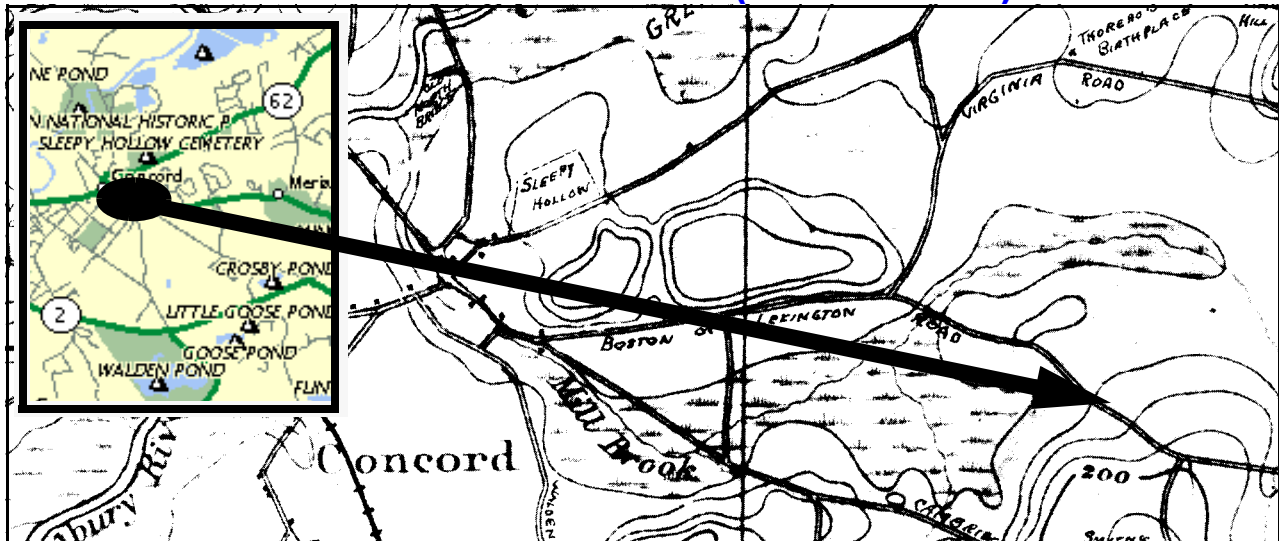


School of Philosophy

CONCORD SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY (GLEASON F8)



1879

July 15: In [Concord](#), Massachusetts, with the financial support of William Torrey Harris and of [Louisa May Alcott](#), Bronson Alcott opened his [School of Philosophy](#), with its initial meetings held in the study of Orchard House. This amounted to a series of summer lectures and discussions, somewhat like an alternate lyceum. The school's secretary was Franklin Benjamin Sanborn. Many of the programs would celebrate the Transcendentalists. In addition there would be a whole lot of the Hegelianism favored by Harris, and of the Neoplatonism favored by Alcott. [Waldo Emerson](#), in his late 70s and decidedly in decline, would "lecture" there (surely with his daughter [Ellen](#) making sure he didn't lose his place in his notes), and after his death would be commemorated. There would be readings from [Henry Thoreau](#)'s as-yet-unpublished journals.

1880

Bronson Alcott, who had been [Concord](#)'s School Superintendent from 1859 to 1865, had described the various schoolhouses that were situated away from the town center as "little hives of industry and mischief." Teaching in these outlying schools was mostly done by local young women, except that during the winter term, when there was an upsurge of male students occasioned by the slack labor season on the farms during the winter, often a male teacher would be sent out in order to ensure discipline.

In this year, to create greater centralization of the school system, Emerson School, an 8-classroom edifice, was constructed on the corner of Stow and Hubbard Streets in Concord center. Soon, School Committee discussion arose over the issue of closing the district schools. Were these boys and girls to be transported to and from the town center? The outlying districts would initially resist centralization, but until the process would go to completion in 1887, there would be a series of individual petitions that pupils from an outlying school be absorbed into Emerson School.

In this year the [Concord School of Philosophy](#) also achieved its own building, designed by Bronson Alcott and erected in his back yard with funds donated by a generous woman from New York.





TRAVELING MUCH

IN CONCORD MA

1881

September 17: Walt Whitman, age 62, visited [Concord](#), staying at Franklin Benjamin Sanborn's home, and among other things visited Walden Pond and the grave of his friend [Henry Thoreau](#) in Sleepy Hollow cemetery. According to W. Barksdale Maynard's *WALDEN POND, A HISTORY*, "An illustrious group gathered for tea — those two plus Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott, and [Emerson](#). Bronson was struck by Whitman's 'ruff of beard and open-bosom collar, folded shirt-cuffs — he standing full six feet in his skirtless blue coat, supporting himself with his staff and stooping a little.' They talked of Margaret Fuller and Thoreau, the conversation ranging back to heady days of 1840s transcendentalism. Whitman studied Emerson intently, concluding that the great man's mind was slipping."



“Specimen Days”

Next Day. – Several hours at E.’s house, and dinner there. An old familiar house, (he has been in it thirty-five years,) with surroundings, furnishment, roominess, and plain elegance and fullness, signifying democratic ease, sufficient opulence, and an admirable old-fashioned simplicity – modern luxury, with its mere sumptuousness and affection, either touch’d lightly upon or ignored altogether. Dinner the same. Of course the best of the occasion (Sunday, September 18, ’81) was the sight of E. himself. As just said, a healthy color in the cheeks, and good light in the eyes, cheery expression, and just the amount of talking that best suited, namely, a word or short phrase only where needed, and almost always with a smile. Besides Emerson himself, Mrs. E., with their daughter Ellen, the son Edward and his wife, with my friend F.S. and Mrs. S., and others, relatives and intimates. Mrs. Emerson, resuming the subject of the evening before, (I sat next to her,) gave me further and fuller information about Thoreau, who, years ago, during Mr. E.’s absence in Europe, had lived for some time in the family, by invitation.

OTHER CONCORD NOTATIONS

Though the evening at Mr. and Mrs. Sanborn’s, and the memorable family dinner at Mr. and Mrs. Emerson’s, have [Page 914] most pleasantly and permanently fill’d my memory, I must not slight other notations of Concord. I went to the old Manse, walk’d through the ancient garden, enter’d the rooms, noted the quaintness, the unkempt grass and bushes, the little panes in the windows, the low ceilings, the spicy smell, the creepers embowering the light. Went to the Concord battle ground, which is close by, scann’d French’s statue, “the Minute Man,” read Emerson’s poetic inscription on the base, linger’d a long while on the bridge, and stopp’d by the grave of the unnamed British soldiers buried there the day after the fight in April ’75. Then riding on, (thanks to my friend Miss M. and her spirited white ponies, she driving them,) a half hour at Hawthorne’s and Thoreau’s graves. I got out and went up of course on foot, and stood a long while and ponder’d. They lie close together in a pleasant wooded spot well up the cemetery hill, “Sleepy Hollow.” The flat surface of the first was densely cover’d by myrtle, with a border of arborvitae, and the other had a brown headstone, moderately elaborate, with inscriptions. By Henry’s side lies his brother John, of whom much was expected, but he died young. Then to Walden Pond, that beautifully embower’d sheet of water, and spent over an hour there. On the spot in the woods where Thoreau had his solitary house is now quite a cairn of stones, to mark the place; I too carried one and deposited on the heap. As we drove back, saw the “[School of Philosophy](#),” but it was shut up, and I would not have it open’d for me. Near by stopp’d at the house of W.T. Harris, the Hegelian, who came out, and we had a pleasant chat while I sat in the wagon. I shall not soon forget those Concord drives, and especially that charming Sunday forenoon one with my friend Miss M. [Horace Mann, Sr.’s daughter], and the white ponies.



1882

July 22: The [Concord School of Philosophy](#) honored the day declared as Emerson Day by offering speakers such as [Julia Ward Howe](#), William Torrey Harris, Bronson Alcott, and Franklin Benjamin Sanborn. Alcott read his poem in honor of Thoreau “Ion: A Monody.”¹

I.

Why, oh, ye willows, and ye pastures bare,
Why will ye thus your bloom so late delay,
Wrap in chill weeds the sere and sullen day,
And cheerless greet me wandering in despair?
Tell me, ah, tell me!—ye of old could tell,—
Whither my vanished Ion now doth fare.
Say, have ye seen him lately pass this way,
Ye who his wonted haunts did know full well?
Heard ye his voice forth from the thicket swell,
Where midst the drooping ferns he loved to stray?
Caught ye no glimpses of my truant there?
Tell me, oh, tell me, whither he hath flown—
Beloved Ion flown, and left ye sad and lone,
Whilst I through wood and field his loss bemoan.

II.

Early through field and wood each Spring we sped,
Young Ion leading o’er the reedy pass;
How fleet his footsteps and how sure his tread!
His converse deep and weighty;—where, alas!
Like force of thought with subtlest beauty wed?
The bee and bird and flower, the pile of grass,
The lore of stars, the azure sky o’erhead,
The eye’s warm glance, the Fates of love and dread,—
All mirrored were in his prismatic glass;
For endless Being’s myriad-minded race
Had in his thought their registry and place,—
Bright with intelligence, or drugged with sleep,
Hid in dark cave, aloft on mountain steep,
In seas immersed, ensouled in starry keep.

III.

Now Echo answers lone from cliff and brake,
Where we in springtime sauntering loved to go,—
Or at the mossy bank beyond the lake,
On its green plushes oft ourselves did throw:
There from the sparkling wave our thirst to slake,
Dipped in the spring that bubbled up below,
Our hands for cups, and did with glee partake.
Next to the Hermit’s cell our way we make,
Where sprightly talk doth hold the morning late;
Deserted now: ah, Hylas, too, is gone!
Hylas, dear Ion’s friend and mine,—I all alone,
Alone am left by unrelenting fate,—
Vanished my loved ones all,—the good, the great,—
Why am I spared? why left disconsolate?

IV.

Slow winds our Indian stream through meadows green,
By bending willows, tangled fen and brake,
Smooth field and farmstead doth its flow forsake;
‘Twas in far woodpaths Ion, too, was seen,
But oftenest found at Walden’s emerald lake,
(The murmuring pines inverted in its sheen;)
There in his skiff he rippling rhymes did make,

1. For another “monody,” see December 2, 1829.



Its answering shores echoing the verse between:
Full-voiced the meaning of the wizard song,
Far wood and wave and shore, with kindred will,
Strophe, antistrophe, in turn prolong:—
Now wave and shore and wood are mute and chill,
Ion, melodious bard, hath dropt his quill,
His harp is silent, and his voice is still.

V.

Blameless was Ion, beautiful to see,
With native genius, with rich gifts endowed;
He might of his descent be nobly proud,
Yet meekly tempered was, spake modestly,
Nor sought the plaudits of the noisy crowd,
When Duty called him in the thick to be.
His life flowed calmly clear, not hoarse nor loud;
He wearied not of immortality,
Nor like Tithonus begged a time-spun shroud;
But life-long drank at fountains of pure truth,
The seer unsated of eternal youth.
'T is not for Ion's sake these tears I shed,
'T is for the Age he nursed, his genius fed,—
Ion immortal is,—he is not dead.

VI.

Did e'en the Ionian bard, Mæonides,
Blind minstrel wandering out of Asia's night,
The Iliad of Troy's loves and rivalries,
In strains forever tuneful to recite,
His raptured listeners the more delight?
Or dropt learned Plato 'neath his olive trees,
More star-bright wisdom in the world's full sight,
Well garnered in familiar colloquies,
Than did our harvester in fields of light?
Nor spoke more charmingly young Charmides,
Than our glad rhapsodist in his far flight
Across the continents, both new and old;
His tale to studious thousands thus he told
In summer's solstice and midwinter's cold.

VII.

Shall from the shades another Orpheus rise
Sweeping with venturous hand the vocal string,
Kindle glad raptures, visions of surprise,
And wake to ecstasy each slumberous thing;
Flash life and thought anew in wondering eyes,
As when our seer transcendent, sweet, and wise,
World-wide his native melodies did sing,
Flushed with fair hopes and ancient memories?
Ah, no! his matchless lyre must silent lie,
None hath the vanished minstrel's wondrous skill
To touch that instrument with art and will;
With him winged Poesy doth droop and die,
While our dull age, left voiceless, with sad eye
Follows his flight to groves of song on high.

VIII.

Come, then, Mnemosyne! and on me wait,
As if for Ion's harp thou gav'st thine own;
Recall the memories of man's ancient state,
Ere to this low orb had his form dropt down,
Clothed in the cerements of his chosen fate;
Oblivious here of heavenly glories flown,
Lapsed from the high, the fair, the blest estate,



Unknowing these, and by himself unknown:
Lo! Ion, unfallen from his lordly prime,
Paused in his passing flight, and, giving ear
To heedless sojourners in weary time,
Sang his full song of hope and lofty cheer;
Aroused them from dull sleep, from grisly fear,
And toward the stars their faces did uprear.

IX.

Why didst thou haste away, ere yet the green
Enameled meadow, the sequestered dell,
The blossoming orchard, leafy grove were seen
In the sweet season thou hadst sung so well?
Why cast this shadow o'er the vernal scene?
No more its rustic charms of thee may tell
And so content us with their simple mien.
Was it that memory's unrelinquished spell
(Ere man had stumbled here amid the tombs,)
Revived for thee that Spring's perennial blooms,
Those cloud-capped alcoves where we once did dwell?
Translated wast thou in some rapturous dream?
Our once familiar faces strange must seem,
Whilst from thine own celestial smiles did stream!

X.

I tread the marble leading to his door,
(Allowed the freedom of a chosen friend;)
He greets me not as was his wont before,
The Fates within frown on me as of yore,—
Could ye not once your offices suspend?
Had Atropos her severing shears forbore!
Or Clotho stooped the sundered thread to mend!
Yet why dear Ion's destiny deplore?
What more had envious Time himself to give?
His fame had reached the ocean's farthest shore,—
Why prisoned here should Ion longer live?
The questioning Sphinx declared him void of blame;
For wiser answer none could ever frame;
Beyond all time survives his mighty name.

XI.

Now pillowed near loved Hylas' lowly bed,
Beneath our aged oaks and sighing pines,
Pale Ion rests awhile his laureled head;
(How sweet his slumber as he there reclines!)
Why weep for Ion here? He is not dead,
Nought of him Personal that mound confines;
The hues ethereal of the morning red
This clod embraces never, nor enshrines.
Away the mourning multitude hath sped,
And round us closes fast the gathering night,
As from the drowsy dell the sun declines,
Ion hath vanished from our clouded sight,—
But on the morrow, with the budding May,
A-field goes Ion, at first flush of day,
Across the pastures on his dewy way.



1885

Yet another revision to [George Bradford Bartlett's](#) guidebook, [CONCORD](#): HISTORIC, LITERARY AND PICTURESQUE.

VIEW THE PAGE IMAGES

This [the "[School of Philosophy](#)"] is the newest institution of Concord, and is now in short session from year to year. It was opened in 1879, at the Orchard House of Mr. [Amos Bronson] Alcott, where the sessions were held in Mr. Alcott's library, and in the room adjoining, which had been the studio of May Alcott, before she went abroad in 1877, on that pilgrimage of art from which she was never to return.

In the coming summer, and in future years, the sessions will be held in the new hall, standing on the hillside west of the Orchard House, under the pine trees that crown the slope. It is a plain little structure, called "The Chapel," arranged for the convenience of the school, but without luxury or ornament. Over its porch is trained Mr. Alcott's largest grape vine, and on either side of its shady paths lead by arbors to the hill-top.

The history of the Concord School of Philosophy, though brief, is interesting, and dates back further than the year of its opening. So long ago as 1842, when Mr. Alcott, (then living at the Hosmer Cottage, where his daughter May was born), visited England, he began to collect books for the library of a school of the First Philosophy, to be established in some part of New England. For this purpose, Mr. James Pierrpont Greaves, the English friend and disciple of Pestalozzi, who died in March, 1842, bequeathed a collection of curious volumes, which Mr. Alcott and an English friend, Charles Lane, brought over from London and deposited in Concord. For many years, they have stood on the shelves in the Orchard House, and they are now destined to form a part of the library of the Concord School.

In pursuance of his long cherished plan, Mr. Alcott in 1878 arranged with his neighbor, Mr. F.B. Sanborn, to make a beginning, and early in the year 1879 a Faculty of Philosophy was organized informally at Concord, with members residing, some in that town, some in the vicinity of Boston, and others at the West. In course of the spring, the Dean of this Faculty, Mr. A. Bronson Alcott, and the Secretary, Mr. Sanborn, issued a circular calling the School together for a session for five weeks in July and August....

[T]he persons named below gave Lectures or Conversations on the following topics – occupying for each exercise a period of above two hours on the average: –

- Mr. Alcott...
 - The Powers of the Person in the descending scale...
 - The same in the ascending scale...
 - Incarnation...
 - The Powers of Personality in detail...
 - The Origin of Evil...



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The Lapse into Evil...
The Return from the Lapse...
Eternal Life...

- Prof. W.T. Harris...
How Philosophical Knowing differs from all other forms of Knowing...
The Five Intentions of the mind...
The Discovery of the First Principle and its relation to the Universe...
Fate and Freedom...
The conscious and unconscious First Principal in relation to human life...
The Personality of God...
the Immortality of the Soul...
Physiological Psychology...
- Mrs. E.D. Cheney...
The general subject of Art...
Greek Art...
Early Italian Art...
Italian Art...
Michael Angelo...
Spanish Art...
German Art...
Contemporaneous Art...
- Dr. H.K. Jones...
General content of the Platonic Philosophy...
The Apology of Socrates...
The Platonic idea of Church and State...
the Immortality of the Soul...
Reminiscence as related to the Pre-existence of the Soul...
The Human Body...
The Republic...
Education.
- Mr. D.A. Wasson...
Social Genesis and Texture...
The Nation...
Individualism as a Political Principle...
Public Obligation...
Absolutism crowned and uncrowned...
The Making of Freedom...
The Political Spirit of '76.
- Prof. Benjamin Peirce...
Ideality in Science...
Cosmogony.



TRAVELING MUCH

IN CONCORD MA

- Mr. T.W. Higginson...
The Birth of American Literature...
Literature in a Republic...
- Mr. Emerson...
Memory.
- Mr. Sanborn...
Social Science...
Philanthropy and Public Charities.
- Rev. Dr. C.A. Bartol...
Education.
- Mr. H.G.O. Blake...
Selections from Thoreau's Manuscripts.

...

The courses of lectures ... were distinctly philosophical, while the single lectures and pairs were either literary or general in their character. The conversations accompanying or following the lectures took a wide range, and were carried on by the students, the Faculty, and by invited guests....The whole number of persons, (students, invited guests and visitors,) who attended one or more sessions of the School, was nearly four hundred, of whom about one-fourth were residents of Concord. Others came from [22 states are named]. The average attendance of students was about 40; of the students and Faculty about 45; but at Mr. Emerson's lecture 160 were present and at several of the others sessions more than 70. The receipts from fees and single tickets paid all the expenses of the School, without leaving a surplus; thus showing that the scale of tuition and expense adopted was a reasonable one. This will therefore be continued in the coming years.

...

This School is the last enterprise of a general character in which Mr. Emerson engaged, and derived a portion of its interest from his connection with it. This connection was not very close, however, since its opening was delayed until those later years of his life when he withdrew from an active part even in conversation; but he was fully cognizant of its aims, and in the most friendly relation to its founders, the chief of whom was Mr. Alcott....

1888

March 4: [Amos Bronson Alcott](#) died in [Boston](#).



March 6: [Louisa May Alcott](#) died two days after her father but unaware of his death, in Roxbury.



ALCOTT FAMILY

July: After holding a memorial service for [Amos Bronson Alcott](#) the Concord [School of Philosophy](#) closed its doors.

ALCOTT FAMILY

1913

William Turner wrote in the CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA on [Transcendentalism](#):

The terms transcendent and transcendental are used in various senses, all of which, as a rule, have antithetical reference in some way to experience or the empirical order.

- For the Scholastics, the categories are the highest classes of “things that are and are spoken of”. The transcendentals are notions, such as unity, truth, goodness, being, which are wider than the categories, and, going beyond them, are said to transcend them. In a metaphysical sense transcendent is opposed by the Scholastics and others to immanent; thus, the doctrine of Divine Transcendence is opposed to the doctrine of Divine Immanence in the Pantheistic sense., Here, however, there is no reference to experience. (See IMMANENCE.)
- In the loosest sense of the word any philosophy or theology which lays stress on the intuitive, the mystical, the ultra-empirical, is said to be transcendentalism. Thus, it is common to refer to the New England School of Transcendentalism, of which mention is made further on.



- In a stricter sense transcendentalism refers to a celebrated distinction made by Kant. Though he is not consistent in the use of the terms transcendent and transcendental, Kant understands by transcendent what lies beyond the limits of experience, and by transcendental he understands the non-empirical or a priori elements in our knowledge, which do not come from experience but are nevertheless, legitimately applied to the data or contents of knowledge furnished by experience. The distinction is somewhat subtle, Yet, it may be made clear by an example. Within the limits of experience we learn the uniform sequence of acorn and oak, heat and expansion, cold and contraction, etc., and we give the antecedent as the cause of the consequent. If, now, we go beyond the total of our experience and give God as the cause of all things, we are using the category “cause in a transcendent sense, and that use is not legitimate. If, however, to the data of sequence furnished by experience we apply the a priori form causation, we are introducing a transcendental element which elevates our knowledge to the rank of universal and necessary truth: “Every effect has its cause.” Kant, as has been said, does not always adhere to this distinction. We may, then, understand transcendent and transcendental to refer to those elements or factors in our knowledge which do not come from experience, but are known a priori. Empirical philosophy is, therefore, a philosophy based on experience alone and adhering to the realm of experience in obedience to Hume's maxim, “‘Tis impossible to go beyond experience.” Transcendental philosophy, on the contrary, goes beyond experience, and considers that philosophical speculation is concerned chiefly, if not solely, with those things which lie beyond experience.
- Kant himself was convinced that, for the theoretical reason, the transcendental reality, the thing-in-itself, is unknown and unknowable. Therefore, he defined the task of philosophy to consist in the examination of knowledge for the purpose of determining the a priori elements, in the systematic enumeration of those elements, for forms, and the determination of the rules for their legitimate application to the data of experience. Ultra-empirical reality, he taught, is to be known only by the practical reason. Thus, his philosophy is critical transcendentalism. Thus, too he left to his successors the task of bridging over the chasm between the theoretical and the practical reason. This task they accomplished in various ways, eliminating, transforming, or adapting the transcendent reality outside us. the thing-in-itself, and establishing in this way different transcendentalisms in place of the critical transcendentalism of Kant.
- Fichte introduced Egoistic Transcendentalism. The subject, he taught, or the Ego, has a practical as well as a theoretical side. to develop its practical side along the line of duty, obligation, and right, it is obliged to posit the non-Ego. In this way, the thing-in-itself as opposed to the subject, is eliminated, because it is a creation of the Ego, and, therefore all transcendental reality is contained in self. I am I, the original identity of self with itself, is the expression of the highest metaphysical truth.
- Schelling, addressing himself to the same task, developed Transcendental Absolutism. He brought to the problems of philosophy a highly spiritual imaginativeness and a scientific insight into nature which were lacking in Kant, the critic of knowledge, and Fichte, the exponent of romantic personalize. He taught that the transcendental reality is neither subject or object, but an Absolute which is so indeterminate that it may be said to be neither nature nor spirit. Yet the Absolute is, in a sense, potentially both the one and the other. For, from it, by gravity, light and organization, is derived spirit, which slumbers in nature, but reaches consciousness of self in the highest natural organization, man. There is here a hint of development which was brought out explicitly by Hegel.
- Hegel introduced Idealistic Transcendentalism. He taught that reality is not an unknowable thing in itself, nor the subject merely, nor an absolute of indifference, but an absolute Idea, Spirit, or Concept (*Begriff*), whose essence is development (*das Werden*), and which becomes in succession object and subject, nature and spirit, being and essence, the soul, law, the state, art, science, religion, and philosophy.



In all these various meanings there is preserved a generic resemblance to the original signification of the term transcendentalism. The transcendentalists one and all, dwell in the regions beyond experience, and, if they do not condemn experience as untrustworthy, at least they value experience only in so far as it is elevated, sublimated, and transformed by the application to it of transcendental principles. The fundamental epistemological error of Kant, that whatever is universal and necessary cannot come from experience, runs all through the transcendentalist philosophy, and it is on epistemological grounds that the transcendentalists are to be met. This was the stand taken in Catholic circles, and there, with few exceptions, the doctrines of the transcendentalists met with a hostile reception. The exceptions were Franz Baader (1765-1841), Johann Frohschammer (1821-1893), and Anton Günther (1785-1863), who in their attempt to “reconcile” Catholic dogma with modern philosophical opinion, were influenced by the transcendentalists and overstepped the boundaries of orthodoxy. It may without unfairness be laid to the charge of the German transcendentalists that their disregard for experience and common sense is largely accountable for the discredit into which metaphysics has fallen in recent years.

New England transcendentalism, sometimes called the Concord [School of Philosophy](#), looks to William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) as its founder. Its principal representatives are Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1888), Ralph [Waldo Emerson](#) (1803-1882), Theodore Parker (1810-1860), Frederick Henry Hedge (1805-890), George Ripley (1802-1880), and Margaret Fuller (1810-1850). It had its inception in the foundation of the Transcendental Club in 1836. The chief influences discernible in its literary output are German philosophy, French sociology, and the reaction against the formalism of Its sociological and economic theories were tested in the famous Brook Farm (1841), with which the names just mentioned and those of several other distinguished Americans were associated.

For the history of German transcendentalism see Ueberweg, HIST. OF PHILOSOPHY, tr. Morris (NY, 1892); Falckenberg, HIST. OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY, tr. Armstrong (NY, 1893); Turner, HIST. OF PHILOSOPHY (Boston, 1903); Stöckl, *GESCH. DER PHIL.* (Mainz, 1888). For New England transcendentalism see Frothingham, TRANSCENDENTALISM IN NEW ENGLAND (NY, 1876); Codman, BROOK FARM (Boston, 1894).

1929

April: Austin Warren’s “The Concord [School of Philosophy](#)” in the New England Quarterly 2:2: 199-233.

1994

May 15: DESTINATION: CONCORD, MASS.; Louisa May Alcott Slept Here; As Did Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Other American Literary Lights; Home Edition., Los Angeles Times, 05-15-1994, pages L-14. [by JOCELYN McCLURG of the Hartford Courant, Copyright, The Times Mirror Company; Los Angeles Times, 1994]

CONCORD, Mass. – For literature lovers, this lovely historic town about 20 miles northwest of Boston offers an embarrassment of riches. Louisa May Alcott; her father, Amos Bronson Alcott; Henry David Thoreau; Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Nathaniel Hawthorne all lived and wrote and exchanged ideas in Concord, that hotbed of 19th-Century Transcendentalism. Preserved as museums and open to the public are Orchard House,



TRAVELING MUCH

IN CONCORD MA

the family home of the Alcotts and the setting for Louisa May's children's classic, "Little Women"; the Wayside, a rambling house next door that was also home to the Alcotts and, later, Hawthorne; Emerson House, the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Old Manse, a magnificent 18th-Century structure where both Emerson and Hawthorne lived for a time.

And, of course, there is Walden Pond, the inspiration for Thoreau's seminal work "Walden," which lures thousands of visitors every year to the site where the writer lived simply in a cabin from 1845 to 1847.

Concord has been rocked by the efforts of Don Henley and his musician pals to save Walden Woods –the woodlands surrounding Walden Pond– from development. But for the most part, Concord is remarkably intact as a historic site, succumbing neither to touristy kitsch nor to numbing 20th-Century overdevelopment and commercialism.

Among Concord's many unspoiled sites is Author's Ridge in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, where the town's literary lights –Louisa May Alcott, Emerson, Thoreau and Hawthorne– are buried.

Of course, a century before Thoreau went to the woods "to live deliberately," Concord and nearby Lexington earned estimable places in American history. It was at the [Old North Bridge](#) in Concord (today a historic site) where the "shot heard 'round the world" signaled the start of the American Revolution on April 19, 1775.

If the visitor plans carefully, all four literary houses can be toured in a day. (Days and hours vary for each. Only Orchard House is open year-round, but all of the houses can be visited through the end of October.)

Louisa May Alcott, who could be less than reverential about Concord, nicknamed Orchard House "Apple Slump." Alcott was a grown woman of 26 in 1858, when her family moved into the property, two 18th-Century houses her father had joined together.

Orchard House served as the setting for Louisa May's most famous and enduring work, "Little Women," an idealization of her own family, published in two volumes (1868-69). (The four adolescent March daughters were modeled on the four Alcott girls, and fiercely independent tomboy Jo –every little girl's favorite March daughter– was Louisa's fictional rendition of herself.)

The Alcotts struggled with poverty. Bronson Alcott, a philosopher, writer and educator who was considered brilliant by some, a flake by others, was unable to support his family. The burden fell on Louisa, and with the great success of "Little Women" (which she was reluctant to write) and subsequent volumes such as "Little Men," the second-oldest Alcott daughter –who never married– became famous and financially comfortable.

One of the pleasant surprises at Orchard House, furnished with Alcott family pieces, is the wealth of artwork by May Alcott, the youngest daughter. Take note of the owl she painted on the wall in Louisa's room right above the fireplace (also don't miss the writing desk Bronson built for his writer daughter). And May's room is charming, decorated as it is by sketches of classical scenes the young artist drew right on her bedroom walls.



TRAVELING MUCH

IN CONCORD MA

In 1879, two years after the Alcotts moved out of Orchard House, Bronson Alcott founded the Concord [School of Philosophy](#) on the hillside behind the house. It still stands.

More than a decade before Bronson Alcott bought Orchard House, he moved his then-young family into a small, circa-1700 farmhouse in Concord that he dubbed "Hillside." Alcott enlarged the house, which his family lived in from 1845 to 1848.

Today the house is known as the "home of authors," and the informative tour leads visitors through several centuries of Concord literary and architectural history.

Nathaniel Hawthorne bought the house—which he renamed "the Wayside," a name that stuck—from Bronson Alcott in 1852. The Hawthornes' chief contribution to the house is a bizarre tower study built for the author of "The Scarlet Letter."

The next of the authors to live at the Wayside was Harriet Lothrop, who wrote the Five Little Peppers books under the pen name Margaret Sidney. The Lothrop family lived in the Wayside from 1883 to 1965, and the house was left to the National Park Service with its original furnishings, including some Alcott and Hawthorne family pieces.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, essayist and poet (including "The Concord Hymn"), was the leading spokesman of the Transcendental movement, which believed in the mystical unity of nature and emphasized individualism, self-reliance and rejection of traditional authority. One of Emerson's disciples was Thoreau, who lived in Emerson's home from 1841 to 1843, before spiriting himself away to Walden Pond.

The Alcotts were admirers and friends of Emerson (Bronson being a fellow Transcendentalist), and Louisa May idolized him.

Emerson lived in this sturdy white house with his second wife and children from 1835 until his death in 1882; it is furnished with Emerson family pieces and preserved very much as it was at the time of Emerson's death. (The contents and furnishings of Emerson's study are now housed in the Concord Museum across the street, but the study in the house has been re-created to look as it did when Emerson was alive.)

Many of Emerson's personal effects are on display, including his walking sticks and gowns he wore on his famous lecture tours.

The handsome, stately Old Manse is a monument to Concord's dual historical legacy—both Revolutionary and literary. It was built in 1770 by the Rev. William Emerson, Ralph Waldo's grandfather. No doubt the inhabitants of the house heard the famous shots fired in 1775 at [Old North Bridge](#), just across a field.

Emerson lived in the house with his mother from 1834 to 1835, until he married Lydia Jackson and moved into a home on the Cambridge Turnpike. (Emerson wrote his Transcendentalist essay "Nature" in the Old Manse's study during this period.)

But a much stronger literary association belongs to Nathaniel Hawthorne, who rented the Old Manse from then-owner Samuel Ripley for the first three blissful years (1842-45) of his marriage to Sophia Peabody. Here Hawthorne wrote "Mosses From an Old Manse," and here the happy newlyweds scratched inscriptions (using Sophia's diamond) into the windowpanes. Hawthorne enjoyed friendships with Emerson and Thoreau while



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living in Concord. After returning for a time to Hawthorne's native Salem, Mass., the Hawthornes moved back to Concord in 1852 and lived in the Wayside. Hawthorne died in 1864.

GUIDEBOOK

Authors' Abodes

- Getting there: Fly nonstop from LAX to Boston on American, United and Northwest and direct (with at least one stop but no change of planes) on Delta. Lowest round-trip fares start at about \$450. Rent a car in Boston and drive about 30 minutes northwest to Concord.
- Literary houses: Call for hours and admission fees.
- Concord Museum, 200 Lexington Road, Concord, Mass. 01742; telephone (508) 369-9609.
- Emerson House, 28 Cambridge Turnpike, Concord, Mass. 01742; tel. (508) 369-2236.
- Old Manse, Monument Street, Concord, Mass. 01742; tel. (508) 369-3909.
- Orchard House, 399 Lexington Road, Concord, Mass. 01742; tel. (508) 369-4118.
- Wayside, 455 Lexington Road, Concord, Mass. 01742; tel. (508) 369-6975.
- For more information: Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, 100 Cambridge St., Boston 02202; tel. (617) 727-3201

2012

Rick Anthony Furtak, Jonathan Ellsworth, and James D. Reid's THOREAU'S IMPORTANCE FOR PHILOSOPHY (Fordham UP). What follows is Jonathan Ellsworth's essay in this volume, "How Walden Works" — in which he discovers that [Socrates](#) is peeking out from behind a shrub in Walden Woods and winking at us.

[text to be added]



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"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: May 19, 2013

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, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



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Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which 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 your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.