"There ain't anything that is so interesting to look at as a place that a book has talked about."

— Mark Twain, Tom Sawyer Abroad

Marcus Porcius Cato (Cato the Elder, Cato the Censor, author of De Agri Cultura) died.

WALDEN: Cato says that the profits of agriculture are particularly pious or just, (maximeque pius quaestus,) and according to Varro the old Romans “called the same earth Mother and Ceres, and thought that they who cultivated it led a pious and useful life, and that they alone were left of the race of King Saturn.”
The Beantown: Ancient poetry and mythology suggest, at least, that husbandry was once a sacred art; but it is pursued with irreverent haste and heedlessness by us, our object being to have large farms and large crops merely. We have no festival, nor procession, nor ceremony, not excepting our Cattle-shows and so called Thanksgivings, by which the farmer expresses a sense of the sacredness of his calling, or is reminded of its sacred origin. It is the premium and the feast which tempt him. He sacrifices not to Ceres and the Terrestrial Jove, but to the infernal Plutus rather. By avarice and selfishness, and a grovelling habit, from which none of us is free, of regarding the soil as property, or the means of acquiring property chiefly, the landscape is deformed, husbandry is degraded with us, and the farmer leads the meanest of lives.

Walden: We would not deal with a man thus plodding ever, leaning on a hoe or a spade as a staff between his work, not as a mushroom, but partially risen out of the earth, rather we would deal with him as something more than erect, like swallows alighted and walking on the ground.—

“And as he spake, his wings would now and then
Spread, as he meant to fly, then close again,”

so that we should suspect that we might be conversing with an angel. Bread may not always nourish us; but it always does us good, it even takes stiffness out of our joints, and makes us supple and buoyant, when we knew not what ailed us, to recognize any generosity in man or Nature, to share any unmixed and heroic joy.
The Long Parliament ordered Quarles’s home to be searched for subversive writings, and all manuscripts that were found were burned.
John Evelyn’s *A PHILOPHICAL DISCOURSE OF EARTH, RELATING TO THE CULTURE AND IMPROVEMENT OF IT FOR VEGETATION, AND THE PROPAGATION OF PLANTS, &c. AS IT WAS PRESENTED TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY, APRIL 29, 1675. BY J. EVELYN EQ; FELLOW OF THE FAID SOCIETY* was printed in London by instruction of the Royal Society. Henry Thoreau would use material from pages 14-16 of a 1778 edition of this (and a remark about Sir Kenelm Digby):

**WALDEN**: Though I gave them no manure, and did not hoe them all once, I hoed them unusually well as far as I went, and was paid for it in the end, “there being in truth,” as Evelyn says, “no compost or laitation whatsoever comparable to this continual motion, repastination, and turning of the mould with the spade.” “The earth,” he adds elsewhere, “especially if fresh, has a certain magnetism in it, by which it attracts the salt, power, or virtue (call it either) which gives it life, and is the logic of all the labor and stir we keep about it, to sustain us; all dungings and other sordid temperings being but the vicars succedaneous to this improvement.” Moreover, this being one of those “worn-out and exhausted lay fields which enjoy their sabbath,” had perchance, as Sir Kenelm Digby thinks likely, attracted “vital spirits” from the air. I harvested twelve bushels of beans.
August 3, Monday: The overture to Gioacchino Rossini’s 39th and final opera, WILLIAM TELL (GUILLAUME TELL) to words of Jouy, Bis and others after Schiller began with a ranz des vaches, a Swiss melody used to call the cows back to the barn, played on a cowherd’s horn:

WALDEN: They were beans cheerfully returning to their wild and primitive state that I cultivated, and my hoe played the Ranz des Vaches for them.
This happened at the Paris Opera — the audience awarded respectful and restrained applause, although critics would be effusive in their praise (Rossini will live another 39 years but would never again offer an opera).

(Hey, remember the theme music of “The Lone Ranger” on the radio? In the opera, that dah, dah dah dah, dah dah dah dum dum dah dum dah dee dee had symbolized the approach of the mighty Swiss army.)

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

2nd day 3 of 8 M / Troubles & difficulty increase. we have heard of several new failures today, & where it will all end is very difficult to foresee. – Moses Brown has been here today & seems with the rest of us much tried & not a little distressed at the prospect of things. – & what more particularly affects us at present is that so large a number of failures should occur among the Members of our Society. –

1. Rossini’s full opera required six hours to sing. There’s a story that on a repeat performance, a director of the Opéra informed the author that what was being staged that night was merely Act 2, to which Rossini responded “Indeed, all of it?” – The guy could care less, he had given up writing operas and gotten married.
Henry Root Colman made his initial annual report of agricultural conditions and resources in Massachusetts.

**WALDEN:** Fellow-travellers as they rattled by compared it aloud with the fields which they had passed, so that I came to know how I stood in the agricultural world. This was one field not in Mr. Colman’s report. And, by the way, who estimates the value of the crop which Nature yields in the still wilder fields unimproved by man? The crop of English hay is carefully weighed, the moisture calculated, the silicates and the potash; but in all dells and pond holes in the woods and pastures and swamps grows a rich and various crop only unreaped by man. Mine was, as it were, the connecting link between wild and cultivated fields; as some states are civilized, and others half-civilized, and others savage or barbarous, so my field was, though not in a bad sense, a half-cultivated field. They were beans cheerfully returning to their wild and primitive state that I cultivated, and my hoe played the Ranz des Vaches for them.

According to this report, by this point fully 85% of Massachusetts had been devoted to farming and livestock. Few farmers owned more than six cows and few owned any horses at all. Oxen, fed in stalls, were usually turned over to drovers in the spring when they were 3 to 5 years old to be driven to the markets at Brighton. Trying to keep the animals from losing more than 100 pounds each, the drovers would pasture them in fields of grass that would be paid for as they made their journey toward Boston. Where there were sheep, they were owned more often in upland towns. The major crops were grasses, corn, oats, rye, wheat, broom corn (which had been introduced *circa* 1815), hops, barley, buckwheat, teasle, peppermint, and potatoes.
Henry Root Colman, whom Henry Thoreau would characterize in WALDEN as “the ministerial husbandman,” issued a follow-on report of the agricultural condition and resources of Massachusetts.

WALDEN: A very agricola laboriosus was I to travellers bound westward through Lincoln and Wayland to nobody knows where; they sitting at their ease in gigs, with elbows on knees, and reins loosely hanging in festoons; I the home-staying, laborious native of the soil. But soon my homestead was out of their sight and thought. It was the only open and cultivated field for a great distance on either side of the road; so they made the most of it; and sometimes the man in the field heard more of travellers' gossip and comment than was meant for his ear: “Beans so late! peas so late!” –for I continued to plant when others had begun to hoe,—the ministerial husbandman had not suspected it.

The US Congress appropriated money out of Patent Office fees for the distribution of free seed to American farmers. (Although this was the first time the federal Congress has subsidized such a distribution, seed had been being distributed since at least 1836.)
By this year state legislatures had formed agricultural boards and allocated funds to agricultural societies — which in turn would allow for larger, more regular fall exhibitions.

Henry Root Colman made his 3d annual report in regard to agriculture in Massachusetts.

**WALDEN:** Fellow-travellers as they rattled by compared it aloud with the fields which they had passed, so that I came to know how I stood in the agricultural world. This was one field not in Mr. Colman’s report. And, by the way, who estimates the value of the crop which Nature yields in the still wilder fields unimproved by man? The crop of *English* hay is carefully weighed, the moisture calculated, the silicates and the potash; but in all dells and pond holes in the woods and pastures and swamps grows a rich and various crop only unreaped by man. Mine was, as it were, the connecting link between wild and cultivated fields; as some states are civilized, and others half-civilized, and others savage or barbarous, so my field was, though not in a bad sense, a half-cultivated field. They were beans cheerfully returning to their wild and primitive state that I cultivated, and my hoe played the *Ranz des Vaches* for them.

(The Reverend also issued a REPORT ON SILK CULTURE.)

Following a short stay in Genoa Nicolò Paganini relocated to Nice, but there he completely lost his voice, having for some time suffered from “laryngeal consumption of syphilitic origin.” He became able to communicated with his son only by way of notes. Finally he died.

**WALDEN:** Near at hand, upon the topmost spray of a birch, sings the brown-thrasher—or red mavis, as some love to call him—all the morning, glad of your society, that would find out another farmer’s field if yours were not here. While you are planting the seed, he cries,—“Drop it, drop it,—cover it up, cover it up,—pull it up, pull it up, pull it up.” But this was not corn, and so it was safe from such enemies as he. You may wonder what his rigmarole, his amateur Paganini performances on one string or on twenty, have to do with your planting, and yet prefer it to leached ashes or plaster. It was a cheap sort of top dressing in which I had entire faith.
The New York State Fair was held for the 1st time, at Syracuse. (Sponsored by the New York Agricultural Society, the 3-day event attracted more than 15,000 people. This fair was the 1st in the tradition of US state fairs with agricultural and domestic themes.)

Henry Root Colman made his 4th and final annual agricultural survey of Massachusetts.

As you can see, the reason why Henry Thoreau’s bean crop was not in these annual reports of the ministerial husbandman was not that Thoreau was an inconsiderable farmer, but instead that — such reports had already been discontinued while the beanfield in question had been still full of stumps and brush!
September 21, Saturday: In Philadelphia, Frederick Douglass lectured in Gardiner’s Church, and at the Friends’ Meetinghouse.

According to the New Orleans newspaper Daily Picayune, Frances Roupell Pie Williams, the wife of Edward Pinkney Williams, died.

Waldo Emerson was out for a walk on this day, and “met two or three men who told [him] they had come thither to sell and buy a field, on which they wished [him] to bid as a purchaser.” Emerson would record this in his journal:

As it was on the shore of the pond, and now for years I had a sort of daily occupancy of it, I bid on it and bought it, eleven acres, for $8.10 per acre. The next day I carried some of my well-beloved gossips to the place, and they decided that the field was not worth anything if Heartwell Bigelow should cut down his pine grove, I bought, for $125 more, his pretty wood-lot of three or four acres, and am now landlord and water-lord of fourteen acres, more or less, on the shore of Walden, and can raise my own blackberries.
Late September: Late in the month, Waldo Emerson paid $8.10 per acre for Thomas Wyman’s farmed-out pasture of “eleven acres more or less” behind the poorfarm on the road to Walden Pond. The pasture, which had been logged over but had not been farmed for sixteen years, was overgrown but was more or less level. There wasn’t, of course, a whole lot of shade — the area was relatively open. According to a letter written by Waldo to his brother William on October 4th, he had paid $8.10 an acre for this 11-acre plot near Walden Pond when he had met some men walking in the woods (I suppose the similarity between the name “Waldo” and the name “Walden” cannot have been overlooked by Waldo, however little he knew about the history of religious dissent on the European subcontinent). The next day he had gone back, he told his brother, with some “well beloved gossips” and they persuaded him to pay $125.00 for about 3 more acres of pine grove from Heartwell Bigelow to protect his investment by preventing these nearby trees from being logged. This became, of course, the land on which Henry Thoreau built his shanty when he made his agreement to clear the pasture of brambles and turn it into a beanfield, but at the time its owner had other plans for it:

Brad Dean indicated that “Sometime later that month Thoreau apparently negotiated with Emerson for the right to squat on the Wyman lot and there conduct his ‘experiment of living.’ Emerson’s permission was apparently attended with two provisos: that the small house Thoreau planned to build would become Emerson’s after Thoreau’s tenancy, and that Thoreau would clear and plant the cultivatable portion of the lot.”

2. This land is now near the intersection of Route 2 and Route 126.
3. Later, when Emerson wrote a will, he had willed this woodlot to Thoreau, but since Thoreau was already twenty years dead by the time Emerson died, the property was retained in the family. Eventually, in 1922, the family would sign the lot on the pond over to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
Early May: [Henry Thoreau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_David_Thoreau) hired a horse and pulled stumps in [Waldo Emerson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waldo_Emerson)'s 11-acre plot, for firewood as well as to clear it, and then plowed 2½ acres to plant in *Phaseolus vulgaris* var. *humilis* common small navy pea bush white beans. This clearing of the exhausted farmland beyond the Concord Alms House and Poor Farm, which had been timbered some time before and had lain fallow for some seventeen years partly restoring its fertility, was Thoreau’s deal with Emerson by which he would be allowed to build a cabin for his occupancy in Emerson’s woodlot where it touched on Walden Pond. Thoreau then bought the shanty of a departing family of impoverished Irish immigrants, the James Collinses who were moving on at the completion of work on the railway, standing near the new tracks, for its materials, tore it apart, and hauled the recovered boards some rods away.4

These are beans that ripen prior to harvest and are threshed dry from the pods. Only the ripe seeds reach market. Four main types are grown as follows: (1) the Pea or Navy which Henry was growing; (2) Medium type, which includes Pinto, Great Northern, Sutter, Pink Bayo, and Small Red or Mexican Red; (3) Kidney; and (4) Marrow. Seeds vary in size from about 1/3-inch long in Thoreau’s pea or navy bean to 3/4-inch in the Kidney. All these plants are of bush type. They are usually cut or pulled when most pods are ripe, and then vines and pods are allowed to dry before threshing. This is a bean thought to have originated in Central America from southern Mexico to Guatemala and Honduras. Evidence of the common bean has been found in two widely separated places. Large seeded common beans were found at Callejon de Huaylas in Peru, and small seeded common beans were found in the Tehuacan Valley in Mexico, with both finds carbon-dating as earlier than 5,000 BCE. This crop is associated with the maize and squash culture which predominated in pre-Columbian tropical America. In our post-Columbian era this bean has come to be grown in all areas of the world.

However, that’s only the literal bean, not the metaphorical or literary bean, and once upon a time in Europe, there had been a form of commercial counting in use very much like the abacus of the East, in which beans were used. In those days to “know how many beans make up five” was to be commercially numerate. –Sort of like today knowing how to count one’s change. It might be suggested therefore that Thoreau’s determination to know beans was a play upon this archaic usage in which not knowing one’s beans amounted to innumeracy, and in addition a play upon the common accusation “You don’t know beans about xxxxx!” It might also be suggested that this is scatological humor similar to Shakespeare’s — the following is from his “Comedy of Errors”:

> A man may break a word with you sir; and words are but wind;
> Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind.

4. [Brad Dean](https://www.braddean.org) has calculated that to plant seven miles of rows, each row fifteen rods in length, spaced three feet apart, the dimensions of the beanfield would have been 247.5 by 447 feet or 110,632.5 square feet, and that this amounts to 2.534 acres or slightly over one hectare.
among the hilltop and down to Walden Pond on a hand-cart of some sort, to dry in the sun:

A 19th-Century Irish shanty in the Merrimack Valley

The “acquaintances” who participated in this rustic “raising” ceremony on the Walden Pond shore were:

- Bronson Alcott
- Ellery Channing
TRAVELING MUCH IN CONCORD MA

- Waldo Emerson
- Edmund Hosmer
- Edmund Hosmer’s three sons Edmund Hosmer, Jr., John Hosmer, and Andrew Hosmer
- the brothers George William Curtis and James Burritt Curtis

Emerson of course resided in the Coolidge mansion just on the other side of the poorhouse farm (Gleason F7) and was the owner of the woodlot in which this shanty was being erected, and would be the owner of that shanty, and the Curtis brothers, having come from Brook Farm to Ponkawtasset Hill (Gleason D7) a year earlier, and the Alcotts, having only recently returned to Concord from their Fruitlands near Harvard, Massachusetts to reside near the Edmund Hosmer home on a road leading toward Lincoln (Gleason G9/66), were of course quite conveniently situated to come over to the pond for this neighborly little ceremony.

5. “No man was ever more honored in the character of his raisers than I.” I would maintain that WALDEN is chock-full of references to the gallows, references that nowadays we don’t “get” simply because we no longer live in the sort of culture, in which public execution is an unchallenged holiday convention. For instance, I would maintain that this particular paragraph, apparently so innocent, includes an implicit reference to being hanged. While the raisers of a house frame are the friends and neighbors who push with poles and pull with ropes as a frame is being lifted from its temporary horizontal position to its permanent vertical position, the raisers of a person may by extension be the outraged citizens who are pulling on the rope that elevates a criminal by the neck toward the extending horizontal branch of a tree. This is not the sort of gallows humor which would have gone unnoticed in the first half of the 19th Century, not in America it wouldn’t. This is an implicit reference to Thoreau’s Huguenot ancestors of honored memory, who rather than tugging together upon the indecent public end of that hanging rope, in la belle France, had sometimes found themselves tugging alone upon the noose at the decent end. But there is more on this topic at:...
June 24, Tuesday: Early in the month, out in Walden Woods, Henry Thoreau had planted *Phaseolus vulgaris* var. *humilis* common small navy pea bush white beans\(^6\) for a cash crop, plus some peas and corn and potatoes for himself.

The problem begins with the transcendentalists, who believed that the American landscape was sacred — nature, Emerson held, was the symbol of Spirit. Once you have come to regard the landscape as a moral or spiritual space, altering it in any way — even gardening it — becomes problematic. This is what Thoreau discovered very soon after he planted his bean field at Walden. He was actually racked with guilt about pulling weeds, of all things....

— "Afterword" by Michael Pollan
on page 262 of a coffee-table book
KEEPING EDEN: A HISTORY OF GARDENING
IN AMERICA, put out in 1992 by the
Massachusetts Horticultural Society

It seems strange to hear someone allege that Thoreau “was actually racked with guilt about pulling weeds,” when a more careful analysis of the text and its context would indicate that Thoreau not only pulled weeds, but also, he experimented with eating such weeds as the purslane he had hoed from his corn rows, and then,

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TRAVELING MUCH IN CONCORD MA

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project
TRAVELING MUCH IN CONCORD MA
WALDEN: It was a singular experience that long acquaintance which I cultivated with beans, what with planting, and hoeing, and harvesting, and threshing, and picking over, and selling them, -the last was the hardest of all,- I might add eating, for I did taste. I was determined to know beans. When they were growing, I used to hoe from five o’clock in the morning till noon, and commonly spent the rest of the day about other affairs. Consider the intimate and curious acquaintance one makes with various kinds of weeds, -it will bear some iteration in the account, for there was no little iteration in the labor,- disturbing their delicate organizations so ruthlessly, and making such invidious distinctions with his hoe, levelling whole ranks of one species, and sedulously cultivating another. That’s Roman wormwood, -that’s pigweed, -that’s sorrel, -that’s piper-grass, -have at him, chop him up, turn his roots upward to the sun, don’t let him have a fibre in the shade, if you do he’ll turn himself t’other side up and be as green as a leek in two days. A long war, not with cranes, but with weeds, those Trojans who had sun and rain and dews on their side. Daily the beans saw me come to their rescue armed with a hoe, and thin the ranks of their enemies, filling up the trenches with weedy dead.

Many a lusty crest-waving Hector, that towered a whole foot above his crowding comrades, fell before my weapon and rolled in the dust.

Those summer days which some of my contemporaries devoted to the fine arts in Boston or Rome, and others to contemplation in India, and others to trade in London or New York, I thus, with the other farmers of New England, devoted to husbandry. Not that I wanted beans to eat, for I am by nature a Pythagorean, so as far as beans are concerned, whether they mean porridge or voting, and exchanged them for rice; but, perchance, as some must work in fields if only for the sake of tropes and expression, to serve a parable-maker one day. It was on the whole a rare amusement, which, continued too long, might have become a dissipation. Though I gave them no manure, and did not hoe them all once, I hoed them unusually well as far as I went, and was paid for it in the end, “there being in truth,” as Evelyn says, “no compost or latation whatsoever comparable to this continual motion, repastination, and turning of the mould with the spade.” “The earth,” he adds elsewhere, “especially if fresh, has a certain magnetism in it, by which it attracts the salt, power, or virtue (call it either) which gives it life, and is the logic of all the labor and stir we keep about it, to sustain us; all dungings and other sordid temperings being but the vicars succedaneous to this improvement.” Moreover, this being one of those “worn-out and exhausted lay fields which enjoy their sabbath,” had perchance, as Sir Kenelm Digby thinks likely, attracted “vital spirits” from the air. I harvested twelve bushels of beans.

But to be more particular; for it is complained that Mr. Colman has reported chiefly the expensive experiments of gentlemen farmers; my outgoes were,-

For a hoe, ........................................$0.54
Ploughing, harrowing, and furrowing, ...7.50,Too much.
Beans for seed, ..............................3 12½
Potatoes “ ....................................1 33
Peas “ ........................................0 40
Turnip seed, .................................0 06
White line for crow fence, ..........0 02
of all things, he wrote favorably about them after eating them:

**WALDEN:** I learned from my two years’ experience that it would cost incredibly little trouble to obtain one’s necessary food, even in this latitude; that a man may use as simple a diet as the animals, and yet retain health and strength. I have made a satisfactory dinner, satisfactory on several accounts, simply off a dish of purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) which I gathered in my cornfield, boiled, and salted. I give the Latin on account of the savoriness of the trivial name. And pray what more can a reasonable man desire, in peaceful times, in ordinary noons, than a sufficient number of ears of green sweet-corn boiled, with the addition of salt? Even the little variety which I used was a yielding to the demands of appetite, and not of health. Yet men have come to such a pass that they frequently starve, not for want of necessaries, but for want of luxuries; and I know a good woman who thinks that her son lost his life because he took to drinking water only.
Horse cultivator and boy three hours, ..........1 00
Horse and cart to get crop, ............0 75

In all, ..............................................$14 72 1/2

My income was, (patrem familias vendacem, non emacem esse oportet,) from
Nine bushels and twelve quarts of beans sold,$16 94
Five “ large potatoes, .............2 50
Nine “ small “ .....................2 25
Grass, ..............................................1 00
Stalks, .............................................0 75

In all, ........................................$23 44

Leaving a pecuniary profit, as I have elsewhere said, of $8 71 1/2.

This is the result of my experience in raising beans. Plant the common
small white bush bean about the first of June, in rows three feet by
eighteen inches apart, being careful to select fresh round and unmixed
seed. First look out for worms, and supply vacancies by planting anew.
Then look out for woodchucks, if it is an exposed place, for they will
nibble off the earliest tender leaves almost clean as they go; and again,
when the young tendrils make their appearance, they have notice of it,
and will shear them off with both buds and young pods, sitting erect like
a squirrel. but above all harvest as early as possible, if you would
escape frosts and have a fair and saleable crop; you may save much loss
by this means.

This further experience also I gained. I said to myself, I will not plant
beans and corn with so much industry another summer, but such seeds, if
the seed is not lost, as sincerity, truth, simplicity, faith, innocence,
and the like, and see if they will not grow in this soil, even with less
toil and manurance, and sustain me, for surely it has not been exhausted
for these crops. Alas! I said this to myself; but now another summer is
gone, and another, and another, and I am obliged to say to you, Reader,
that the seeds which I planted, if indeed they were the seeds of those
virtues, were wormeaten or had lost their vitality, and so did not come
up. Commonly men will only be brave as their fathers were brave, or timid.
This generation is very sure to plant corn and beans each new year
precisely as the Indians did centuries ago and taught the first settlers
to do, as if there were a fate in it. I saw an old man the other day, to
my astonishment, making the holes with a hoe for the seventieth time at
least, and not for himself to lie down in! But why should not the New
Englander try new adventures, and not lay so much stress on his grain,
his potato and grass crop, and his orchards? -raise other crops than
these? Why concern ourselves so much about our beans for seed, and not be
concerned at all about a new generation of men? We should really be fed
and cheered if when we met a man we were sure to see that some of the
qualities which I have named, which we all prize more than those other
productions, but which are for the most part broadcast and floating in
the air, had taken root and grown in him. Here comes such a subtle and
ineffable quality, for instance, as truth or justice, though the slightest
amount or new variety of it, along the road. Our ambassadors should be
instructed to send home such seeds as these, and Congress help to
distribute them over all the land. We should never stand upon ceremony
with sincerity.
We should never cheat and insult and banish one another by our meanness, if there were present the kernel of worth and friendliness. We should not meet thus in haste. Most men I do not meet at all, for they seem not to have time; they are busy about their beans. We would not deal with a man thus plodding ever, leaning on a hoe or a spade as a staff between his work, not as a mushroom, but partially risen out of the earth, something more than erect, like swallows alighted and walking on the ground.—

“And as he spake, his wings would now and then
Spread, as he meant to fly, then close again,”

so that we should suspect that we might be conversing with an angel. Bread may not always nourish us; but it always does us good, it even takes stiffness out of our joints, and makes us supple and buoyant, when we knew not what ailed us, to recognize any generosity in man or Nature, to share any unmixed and heroic joy.

Ancient poetry and mythology suggest, at least, that husbandry was once a sacred art; but it is pursued with irreverent haste and heedlessness by us, our object being to have large farms and large crops merely. We have no festival, nor procession, nor ceremony, not excepting our Cattle-shows and so called Thanksgivings, by which the farmer expresses a sense of the sacredness of his calling, or is reminded of its sacred origin. It is the premium and the feast which tempt him. He sacrifices not to Ceres and the Terrestrial Jove, but to the infernal Plutus rather. By avarice and selfishness, and a grovelling habit, from which none of us is free, of regarding the soil as property, or the means of acquiring property chiefly, the landscape is deformed, husbandry is degraded with us, and the farmer leads the meanest of lives.

He knows Nature but as a robber. Cato says that the profits of agriculture are particularly pious or just, (maximeque pius quaestus,) and according to Varro the old Romans “called the same earth Mother and Ceres, and thought that they who cultivated it led a pious and useful life, and that they alone were left of the race of King Saturn.”

We are wont to forget that the sun looks on our cultivated fields and on the prairies and forests without distinction. They all reflect and absorb his rays alike, and the former make but a small part of the glorious picture which he beholds in his daily course. In his view the earth is all equally cultivated like a garden. Therefore we should receive the benefit of his light and heat with a corresponding trust and magnanimity. What though I value the seed of these beans, and harvest that in the fall of the year? This broad field which I have looked at so long looks not to me as the principal cultivator, but away from me to influences more genial to it, which water and make it green. These beans have results which are not harvested by me. Do they not grow for woodchucks partly? The ear of wheat, (in Latin spica," obsoletely speca, from spe, hope,) should not be the only hope of the husbandman; its kernel or grain (granum, from gerendo, bearing,) is not all that it bears. How, then, can our harvest fail? Shall I not rejoice also at the abundance of the weeds whose seeds are the granary of the birds? It matters little comparatively whether the fields fill the farmer’s barns. The true husbandman will cease from anxiety, as the squirrels manifest no concern whether the woods will bear chestnuts this year or not, and finish his labor with every day, relinquishing all claim to the produce of his fields, and sacrificing in his mind not only his first but his last fruits also.
TRAVELING MUCH IN CONCORD MA

It takes a rather poor reader to miss this sort of reference!

Incidentally, since purslane is a late germinator in New England’s cool soils, the leaves beginning to appear only in July, we know that Thoreau would not have been making this experiment with using the plant as a vegetable until his rows of Indian maize were already well on their way, in July or August of 1845.

However this all may be, the late blight fungus that infected potato plants had by this point spread throughout northeastern North America. The discolored outside of the tuber indicated that when cut open, it would be seen to be full of a dark, corky rot. Potato crops were being destroyed — but then, neither Thoreau in particular nor America in general was solely relying upon the potato plant for human nutrition. In the Courtrai region of Belgium, the black smut of the late blight was seen upon the leaves of the plants.

July 7, Monday: Frederick Douglass lectured in Princeton MA.

In the Hunt family home near the Concord River, Miss Martha Emmeline Hunt rose at 5AM and, taking with her some little articles that she would need during the day, began her trudge toward her District No. 4 one-room schoolhouse in the West Quarter of Concord. However, she was seen, for some two hours, to be remaining along the riverbank. Then she was not any longer noticed. One must speculate at the impact of this on the scholars in that little building waiting for their teacher’s arrival.

July 7th I am glad to remember to-night, as I sit by my door, that I too am at least a remote descendant of that heroic race of men of whom there is tradition. I too sit here on the shore of my Ithaca, a fellow-wanderer and survivor of Ulysses. How symbolical, significant of I know not what, the pitch pine stands here before my door! Unlike any glyph I have seen sculptured or painted yet, one of Nature’s later designs, yet perfect as her Grecian art. There it is, a done tree. Who can mend it? And now where is the generation of heroes whose lives are to pass amid these our northern pines, whose exploits shall appear to posterity pictured amid these strong and shaggy forms?
Shall there be only arrows and bows to go with these pines on some pipe-stone quarry at length?
There is something more respectable than railroads in these simple relics of the Indian race. What hieroglyphs shall we add to the pipe-stone quarry? If we can forget we have done somewhat, if we can remember we have done somewhat. Let us remember this. The Great spirit of course makes indifferent all times & places. The place where he is seen is always the same, and indescribably pleasant to all our senses. We had allowed only near-lying and transient circumstances to make our occasions. But nearest to all things is that which fashions its being. Next to us the grandest laws are being enacted and administered. Bread may not always nourish us, but it always does us good—it even takes stiffness out of our joints and makes us supple and boyant when we knew not what ailed us—to share any heroic joy—to recognise any largeness in man or nature, to see and to know—This is all cure and prevention. Verily a good house is a temple—A clean house—pure and undefiled, as the saying is. I have seen such made of white pine. Seasoned and seasoning still to eternity. Where a Goddess might trail her garment. The less dust we bring in to nature, the less we shall have to pick up. It was a place where one would go in, expecting to find something agreeable; as to a shade—or to a shelter—a more natural place. I hear the far off lowing of a cow and it seems to heave the firmament. I at first thought it was the voice of a minstrel whom I know, who might be straying over hill and dale this eve—but soon I was not disappointed when it was prolonged into the sweet and natural and withal cheap tone of the cow. This youth's brave music is indeed of kin with the music of the cow. They are but one articulation of nature. Sound was made not so much for convenience, that we might hear when called, as to regale the sense—and fill one of the avenues of life. A healthy organization will never need what are commonly called the sensual gratifications, but will enjoy the daintiest feasts at those tables where there is nothing to tempt the appetite of the sensual. There are strange affinities in this universe—strange ties, stranger harmonies and relationships, what kin am I to some wildest pond among the mountains—high up ones shaggy side—in the gray morning twilight draped with mist—suspended in low wreathes from the dead willows and bare firs that stand here and there in the water, as if here were the evidence of those old contests between the land and water which we read of. But why should I find anything to welcome me in such a nook as this—This faint reflection this dim watery eye—where in some angle of the hills the woods meet the waters edge and a grey tarn lies sleeping. My beans—whose continuous length of row is 7 miles, already planted and now so impatient to be hewed—not easily to be put off. What is the meaning of this service this small Hercules labor—of this small warfare—I know not. I come to love my rows—they attach me to the earth—and so I get new strength and health like Antaeus—My beans, so many more than I want. This has been my curious labor—Why only heaven knows—to make this surface of the earth, which yielded only blackberries & Johnsworth—and cinquefoil—sweet wild fruits & pleasant flowers produce instead this pulse—What shall I learn of beans or beans of me—I cherish them—I hoe them early & late I have an eye to them.—And this is my days work. It is a fine broad leaf to look upon. My auxiliaries are the dews and rains—to water this dry soil—and genial fitness in the soil itself, which for the most part is lean and effete. My enemies are worms cool days—and most of all woodchucks. They have nibbled for me an eigth of an acre clean. I plant in faith—and they reap—this is the tax I pay—for ousting Jonswort & the rest. But soon the surviving beans will be too tough for woodchucks and then—they will go forward to meet new foes.

September 18, Saturday: Waldo Emerson entered into an agreement with his gardener, Hugh Whelan, who intended to move, enlarge, and occupy Thoreau’s (Emerson’s) shanty; Whelan was to rent what had been the beanfield from Emerson, its owner, with its stumps all pulled by Thoreau’s labor, for $10.00 a year.
TRAVELING MUCH IN CONCORD MA
November 14, Sunday: Henry Thoreau, living in the Emerson home in Emerson’s absence, wrote to Waldo Emerson terming himself a transplanted hermit:

It is a little like joining a community—this life—to such a hermit as I am—and as I don’t keep the accounts I don’t know whether this experiment will succeed or fail finally. At any rate, it is good for society—and I do not regret my transient—nor my permanent share in it.

Thoreau included news of the beanfield and Emerson’s shanty, and of Hugh Whelan:

Hugh still has his eyes on the Walden agellum, and orchards are waving there in the windy future for him. That’s-the-where—I’ll-go-next thinks he—but no important steps are yet taken. He reminds me occasionally of this open secret of his with which the very season seems to labor, and affirms sincerely that as to his wants, wood, stone, or timber—I know better than he. That is a clincher which I shall have to consider how to avoid to some extent, but I fear [see MS page for drawing] that it is a wrought nail and will not break. Unfortunately the day after Cattle-show—the day after small beer, he was among the missing, but not long this time. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots—nor indeed Hugh his—Hugh.

(Eventually, after the shanty would tip backward into the cellar hole that Hugh had dug, cracking its plaster, this man would be seen on the road out of town—and he would be crying.)

Thoreau described an encounter with Sophia Foord which would be suppressed by Franklin Benjamin Sanborn
when it was initially printed in *The Atlantic Monthly*:

> I have had a tragic correspondence, for the most part all on one side, with Miss Ford. She did really wish to—I hesitate to write—marry me—that is the way they spell it. Of course I did not write a deliberate answer—how could I deliberate upon it? I sent back as distinct a No, as I have learned to pronounce after considerable practice, and I trust that this No has succeeded. Indeed I wished that it might burst like hollow shot after it had struck and buried itself, and make itself felt there. *There was no other way.* I really had anticipated no such foe as this in my career.

We note that this letter, which is often quoted simply because it reveals a titillating love incident, more importantly reveals also a positive interest by Thoreau in abstract science, and in particular with the astronomical discoveries that were being made with the assistance of the powerful new telescope at the Harvard Observatory:
Concord Nov 14th 1847.

Dear Friend,

I am but a poor neighbor to you here — a very poor companion am I — I understand that very well — but that need not prevent my writing to you now. I have almost never written letters in my life, yet I think I can write as good ones as I frequently see, so I shall not hesitate to write this such as it may be, knowing that you will welcome anything that reminds you of Concord.

I have banked up the young trees against the winter and the mice, and I will look out in my careless way to see when a pale is loose, or

[Perez Blood] and his company have at length seen the stars through the great telescope, and he told me that he thought it was worth the while. [Professor Benjamin Peirce] made them wait till the crowd had dispersed (it was a Saturday evening) & then was quite polite. He conversed with him & showed him the Micrometer &c— He said that Mr [Blood]’s glass was large enough for all ordinary astronomical work. [The Reverend Barzillai Frost] & [Dr. Josiah Bartlett] seemed disappointed that there was no greater difference between the Cambridge glass and the Concord one. They used only a power of four hundred. Mr [Blood] tells me that he is too old to study the Calculus or higher mathematics. They think that they have discovered traces of another satellite to Neptune— They have been obliged to exclude the public altogether at last — the very dust which they raised “which is filled with minute crystals &c &c” as professors declare, having to be wiped off the glasses, would ere long wear them away. It is true enough. Cambridge college is really beginning to wake up and redeem its character & overtake the age. I see by the new catalogue that they are about establishing a Scientific school in connexion with the University — at which any one above eighteen, on paying one hundred dollars annually — (Mr Lawrence’s 50000 will probably diminish this sum) may be instructed in the highest branches of Science — in Astronomy theoretical and practical, with the use of the instruments — so the great Yankee Astronomer may be born without delay — in Mechanics and Engineering to the last degree — [Professor Louis Agassiz] will ere long commence his lectures in the zoological department — a Chemistry Class has already been formed, and is under the direction of [Professor Eben N. Horsford] — A new and adequate building for these purposes is already being erected.
a nail drops out of its place. The broad gaps at least I will occupy. I heartily wish that I could be of good service to this household — but I who have used only these ten digits so long to solve the problem of a living — how can I? This world is a cow that is hard to milk—

Life does not come so easy — and ah! how thinly it is watered ere we get it— But the young bunting calf — he will get at it. There is no way so direct. This is to earn one’s living by the sweat of his brow. It is a little like joining a community —this life— to such a hermit as I am — and as I dont keep the accounts I dont know whether this experiment will succeed or fail finally. At any rate, it is good for society —& I do not regret my transient— nor my permanent share in it.

Lidian and I make very good housekeepers — she is a very dear sister to me— Ellen & Edith & Eddy & Aunty Brown keep up the tragedy & comedy & tragi-comedy of life as usual. The two former have not forgotten their old acquaintance — even Edith carries a young memory in her head, I find. Eddie can teach us all how to pronounce. If you should discover any new and rare breed of wooden or pewter horses I have no doubt he will know how to appreciate it. He occasionally surveys mankind from my shoulders as widely & wisely as ever Johnson did. I respect him not a little, though it is I that lift him up there so unceremoniously— And sometimes I have to set him down again in a hurry, according to his “mere will & good pleasure.” He very seriously asked me the other day— “Mr Thoreau — will you be my father?” I am occasionally Mr Rough-and-Tumble with him — that I may not miss him, and lest he should miss you too much — so you must come back soon, or you will be superseded.

Alcott has heard that I laughed & so set the people a laughing at his arbor, though I never laughed louder than when on the ridge pole. But now I have not laughed for a long time, it is so serious. He is very grave to look at. But not knowing all this I strove innocently enough the other day to engage his attention to my mathematics. “Did you ever study geometry?”— “The relation of straight lines to curves — the transition from the finite to the infinite?”— “Fine things about it in Newton & Leibnitz.”— But he would hear none of it.—

Men of taste preferred the natural curve— Ah! he is a crooked stick himself. He is getting on now so many knots an hour— There is one knot at present occupying the point of highest elevation —the present highest point—and as many knots as are not handsome, I presume, are thrown down & cast into the pines. Pray show him this if you meet him anywhere in London, for I cannot make him hear much plainer words here. He forgets that I am neither old, nor young, nor anything in particular, and behaves as if I had still some of the animal heat in me. As for the building I feel a little oppressed when I come near it, it has so great a disposition to be beautiful. It is certainly a wonderful structure on the whole, and the fame of the architect will endure as long— —as it shall stand. I should not show
TRAVELING MUCH IN CONCORD MA

you this side alone if I did not suspect that Lidian had done ample justice to the other.
Mr Hosmer has been working at a tannery in Stow for a fortnight, though he has just now come home sick— It seems that he was a tanner in his youth—& So he has made up his mind a little at last. This comes of reading the New Testament. Was n't one of the apostles a tanner? Mrs Hosmer remains here, and John looks stout enough to fill his own shoes and his father's too.
Mr. Blood and his company have at length seen the stars through the great telescope, and he told me that he thought it was worth the while. Mr Peirce made them wait till the crowd had dispersed (it was a Saturday evening) & then was quite polite. He conversed with him & showed him the Micrometer &c— He said that Mr B's glass was large enough for all ordinary astronomical work. Mr Frost & Dr Bartlett seemed disappointed that there was no greater difference between the Cambridge glass and the Concord one. They used only a power of four hundred. Mr B tells me that he is too old to study the Calculus or higher mathematics
They think that they have discovered traces of another satellite to Neptune— They have been obliged to exclude the public altogether at last — the very dust which they raised "which is filled with minute crystals &c &c" as professors declare, having to be wiped off the glasses, would ere long wear them away. It is true enough. Cambridge college is really beginning to wake up and redeem its character & overtake the age. I see by the new catalogue that they are about establishing a Scientific school in connexion with the University — at which any one above eighteen, on paying one hundred dollars annually — (Mr Lawrence's 50000 will probably diminish this sum) may be instructed in the highest branches of Science — in Astronomy theoretical and practical, with the use of the instruments — so the great Yankee Astronomer may be born without delay — in Mechanics and Engineering to the last degree— Agassiz will ere long commence his lectures in the zoological department — a Chemistry Class has already been formed, and is under the direction of Prof. Horsford— A new and adequate building for these purposes is already being erected. They have been foolish enough to put at the end of all this earnest the old joke of a diploma. Let every sheep keep but his own skin, I say.
I have had a tragic correspondence, for the most part all on one side, with Miss Ford. She did really wish to — I hesitate to write — marry me — that is the way they spell it. Of course I did not write a deliberate answer — how could I deliberate upon it? I sent back as distinct a No, as I have learned to pronounce after considerable practice, and I trust that this No has succeeded. Indeed I wished that it might burst like hollow shot after it had struck and buried itself, and make itself felt there. There was no other way. I really had anticipated no such foe as this in my career.
I suppose you will like to hear of my book — though I have nothing worth writing about it — indeed for the last month or two I have forgotten it — but shall certainly remember it again. Wiley & Putnam — Munroe — The Harpers — & Crosby & Nichols — have all declined printing it with the least risk to themselves — but Wiley & Putnam will print it in their series — and any any of them anywhere at my risk. If I liked the book well enough I should not delay, but for the present I am indifferent. I believe this is after all the course you advised — to let it lie.

I do not know what to say of myself. I sit before my green desk in the chamber at the head of the stairs — and attend to my thinking, sometimes more, sometimes less distinctly. I am not unwilling to think great thoughts if there are any in the wind, but what they are I am not sure. They suffice to keep me awake while the day lasts, at any rate. Perhaps they will redeem some portion of the night ere long. —I can imagine you astonishing — bewildering — confounding and sometimes delighting John Bull with your Yankee notions — and that he begins to take a pride in the relationship at last — introduced to all the stars of England in succession after the lectures, until you pine to thrust your head once more into a genuine & unquestionable nebula — if there be any left. I trust a common man will be the most uncommon to you before you return to these parts. I have thought there was some advantage even in death, by which we “mingle with the herd of common men.”

Hugh still has his eyes on the Walden agellum, and orchards are waving there in the windy future for him. That’s-the-place-I’ll-got-next thinks he — but no important steps are yet taken. He reminds me occasionally of this open secret of his with which the very season seems to labor, and affirms sincerely that as to his wants, wood, stone, or timber — I know better than he. That is a clincher which I shall have to consider how to avoid to some extent, but I fear [see MS page for drawing] that it is a wrought nail and will not break. Unfortunately the day after Cattle-show — the day after small beer, he was among the missing, but not long this time. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots — nor indeed Hugh his — Hugh.

As I walked over Conantum the other afternoon I saw a fair column of smoke rising from the woods directly over my house that was, as I judged, and already began to conjecture if my deed of sale would not be made invalid by this. But it turned out to be John Richardson’s young wood on the S E of your field— It was burnt nearly all over & up to the rails and the road. It was set on fire no doubt by the same Lucifer that lighted Brooks’ lot before. So you see that your small lot is comparatively safe for this season, the back fires having been already set for you.

They have been choosing between John Keyes & Sam Staples if the world wants to know it as representatives of this town — and Staples
is chosen. The candidates for Governor—think of my writing this to you—were Gov. Briggs & Gen Cushing—& Briggs is elected, though the Democrats have gained. Aint I a brave boy to know so much of politics for the nonce? but I should'nt have known it if Coombs7 had'nt told me. They have had a Peace meeting here—

I should'nt think of telling you of it if I did'nt know that anything would do for the English market, and some men—Dea Brown at the head—have signed a long pledge swearing that they will “treat all mankind as brothers” henceforth. I think I shall wait and see how they treat me first. I think that nature meant kindly when she made our brothers few. However, my voice is still for peace.

So Good-bye and a truce to all joking — My Dear Friend — from H.D.T.

December 15, Wednesday: Henry Thoreau wrote to Waldo Emerson, indicating that Hugh Whelan was having problems in moving Emerson’s shanty from its old site near the bank of Walden Pond to its new site next to the road at the front of what had been the beanfield.

Eventually, this man would be seen on the road out of town, and he would be crying.

7. This was probably not Eseek Coombs, but perhaps was his father or some other relative.
April 15, Saturday: According to the journal of Bronson Alcott, Waldo Emerson’s shanty that Henry Thoreau had built on the land on which he had squatted at Walden Pond had already at this point in time been relocated from its position on “Bay Henry” to a new spot in the former beanfield “nearer to the highway.”

(According to the journal of Daniel Brooks Clark, he and James Clark had been the ones who had moved what remained of the not-yet-famous shanty up to the top of the hill on behalf of Emerson’s drunken Scotch-Irish gardener Hugh Whelan.8

8. First the shanty was pulled up to the top of the slope in an unsuccessful attempt to enlarge it and turn it into a suitable home for Emerson’s gardener Hugh Whelan’s family, and then, when the man had dug the cellar hole too deep and the hole had collapsed into itself, and when this man had become-dispirited and the spirit of the bottle had gotten to be too much for him, and he had run away eventually to turn up in Sterling, the structure would be sold in 1849 to James Clark, one of the sons at the Brooks Clark Farm on the Old Carlisle Road (now Estabrook Road), who considered himself to be a second Thoreau and on September 3, 1849 with the help of his brother Daniel moved it out to their family farm. In the process, the plaster cracked. “Finally, the poor fellow became insane and was placed in an asylum,” Edward Bacon would note in 1897 in his WALKS AND RIDES AROUND BOSTON. James died five years after moving the shanty. Eventually what remained of the structure would be in use as a corncrib or something on that Concord farm. Eventually parts of the corncrib would wind up patching the side of somebody’s barn, and so there’s now a piece of the original wood and some of the nails at the Jacob Baker Farm media center in Lincoln. It’s not exactly as impressive as a piece of the True Cross on display in a quartz and gold jar in a cathedral in Europe, although presumably somewhat more reliably provenanced.
September 3, Monday: On this day Emerson’s (Thoreau’s) shanty was being carted from its position next to the road leading to Walden Pond, where Waldo Emerson’s gardener Hugh Whelan had abandoned it tipped back into its new cellar hole after his unsuccessful attempt to turn it into a suitable front vestibule for a home next to the beanfield for his family. The structure had been purchased by James Clark, one of the sons at the Brooks Clark Farm on the Old Carlisle Road (now Estabrook Road) — who was considering himself to be a second Thoreau. With the help of his brother Daniel he was moving it out to their family farm. In the process, the plaster was cracking. “Finally, the poor fellow became insane and was placed in an asylum,” Edward Bacon would note in 1897 in his WALKS AND RIDES AROUND BOSTON. (James would die five years after moving the shanty.)

June 3, Tuesday: The 1st mention of Theophilus Brown, whom Henry Thoreau had met in April 1849 in Worcester, in Thoreau’s journal:

June 3, Tuesday: Lectured in Worcester last Saturday –& walked to As or Hasnebumskit Hill in Paxton the next day. Said to be the highest land in Worcester County except Wachusett. Met Mr. Blake –Brown –Chamberlin –Hinsdale –Miss Butman? Wyman –Conant. Returned to Boston yesterday –conversed with John Downes –who is connected with the Coast Survey –is printing tables for Astronomical Geodesic & other uses. He tells me that he once saw the common sucker in numbers piling up stones as big as his fist. (like the piles which I have seen) taking them up or moving them with their mouths.

Dr. Harris suggests that the Mt Cranberry which I saw at Ktaadn was the Vaccinium Vitis-idea cowberry because it was edible & not the Uva Ursi –or bear berry – which we have in Concord.

Saw the Uvularia perfoliata perfoliate bellwort in Worcester near the hill –an abundance of Mt Laurel on the hills now budded to blossom & the fresh lighter growth contrasting with the dark green. An abundance of very large chequer berries or partridge berries as Bigelow calls them on Hasnebumskit –sugar maples about there. A very extensive view but the western view not so much wilder as I expected. See Barre about 15 miles off & Rutland &c &c

Not so much forest as in our neighborhood –high swelling hills –but less shade for the walker–

The hills are green –the soil springer & it is written that water is more easily obtained on the hills than in the valleys.– Saw a Scotch fir the pine so valued for tar & naval uses in the North of Europe.

9. Eventually what remained of the structure would be in use as a corncrib or something on that Concord farm. Eventually parts of the corncrib would wind up patching the side of somebody’s barn, and so there’s now a piece of the original wood and some of the nails at the Jacob Baker Farm media center in Lincoln. It’s not exactly as impressive as a piece of the True Cross on display in a quartz and gold jar in a cathedral in Europe, although presumably somewhat more reliably provenanced.
TRAVELING MUCH IN CONCORD MA

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project
Mr Chamberlin told me that there was no corporation in Worcester except the banks (which I suspect may not be literally true) & hence their freedom & independence. I think it likely there is a gas company to light the streets at least.

John Mactaggart finds the ice thickest not in the largest lakes in Canada nor in the smallest where the surrounding forests melt it.

He says that the surveyor of the Boundary line between England & US on the Columbia River saw pine trees which would require 16 feet in the blade to a cross cut saw to do anything with them.

I examined today a large swamp white oak in Hubbard’s Meadow which was blown down by the same storm which destroyed the Light House.

At 5 feet from the ground it was 9 3/4 feet in circumference. The first branch at 11 1/2 feet from ground—and it held the first diameter up to 23 feet from the ground. Its whole height measured on the ground was 80 feet. & its breadth about 66 ft. The roots on one side were turned up with the soil on them –making an object very conspicuous a great distance off, the highest part being 18 feet from the ground—and 14 ft above centre of trunk. The roots which were small and thickly interlaced were from 3 to 9 inches beneath the surface (in other trees I saw them level with the surface) and thence extended 15 to 18 inches in depth (i.e. to this depth they occupied the ground) They were broken off at about 11 feet from the centre of the trunk—and were there on an average one inch in diameter, the largest being 3 inches in diam. The longest root was broken off at 20 feet from the centre, and was there 3/4 of an inch in diameter The tree was rotten within. The lower side of the soil (what was originally the lower) which clothed the roots for 9 feet from the centre of the tree, was white & clayey to appearance—and a sparrow was sitting on 3 eggs within the mass. Directly under where the massive trunk had stood and within a foot of the surface you could apparently strike in a spade & meet with no obstruction.

— to a free cultivation. There was no tap root to be seen. The roots were encircled with dark nubby rings. The tree which still had a portion of its roots in the ground & held to them by a sliver on the leeward side was alive and had leaved out though on many branches the leaves were shrivelled again.

*Quercus bicolor* of Big. *Q. Prinus discolor* MX.f.

I observed the grass waving to day for the first time—the swift Camilla on it— It might have been noticed before— You might have seen it now for a week past on grain fields.

Clover has blossomed.

I noticed the Indigo weed a week or two ago pushing up like asparagus. Methinks it must be the small Andromeda? that the dull red mass of leaves in the swamp mixed perchance with the Rhodora—with its dry fruit like appendages as well as the *Andromeda paniculata* else called *ligustrina* & the clethra— It was the Golden Senecio *Senecio aureus* which I plucked a week a go in a meadow in Wayland The earliest methinks of the aster and autumnal looking yellow flowers. Its bruised stems enchanted me with their indescribable sweet odor—like I cannot think what

The *Phaseolus vulgaris* includes several kinds of bush beans of which those I raised were one.
[Image 249x717 to 393x765]

**1857**

Waldo Emerson’s *English Traits*, again.

This was the year in which Henry Thoreau and Waldo the landowner walked in the area from which Thoreau had cleared stumps and brush in order to plant it to beans in 1845, as part of his deal with Emerson that had allowed him to squat on his woodlot property near Walden Pond.

At this time Thoreau offered to reforest the barren area and thus return it to the highest use which would match the poverty of its sandy soil, but it would be 1859 before his 400 white pines, as well as oaks, birches, and larches, would be planted and a picnic grove begun. This was the area of Concord which would be partly burned over in 1872, in which most of the remaining isolated mature trees standing in the sandy soil would be upset by the winds of a great hurricane in 1938.

**Walden**: I planted about two acres and a half of upland; and as it was only about fifteen years since the land was cleared, and I myself had got out two or three cords of stumps, I did not give it any manure; but in the course of the summer it appeared by the arrowheads which I turned up in hoeing, that an extinct nation had anciently dwelt here and planted corn and beans ere white men came to clear the land, and so, to some extent, had exhausted the soil for this very crop.

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“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project
February: Henry Thoreau, a lifelong “singleton,” lectured in Fitchburg.\(^{10}\)

A month before his inauguration, President-Elect James Buchanan, like Thoreau, a lifelong “singleton,”\(^{11}\) called upon Justice John Catron, from Tennessee, to keep him advised, covertly, whether the Supreme Court might be able to decide the Scott v. Stanford case (the “Dred Scott” decision) before the inauguration, thus altering the Missouri Compromise of 1820. He wanted the court to act, so that it would be the judicial branch that would take the heat, rather than him.

At this point the idiom “don’t care beans” was in play as meaning “don’t care at all,” as witness this comment in Knickerbocker Magazine:

“Well, then,” said the General, “I don’t care beans for the railroad, not a single old red-eyed bean, not a string-bean.”

This, we observe, is a different idiom than the one employed by our guy in the chapter “The Bean-Field” in WALDEN, an idiom which had been instead about “knowing” beans.\(^{12}\)

\begin{quote}
**WALDEN:** It was a singular experience that long acquaintance which I cultivated with beans, what with planting, and hoeing, and harvesting, and threshing, and picking over, and selling them, -the last was the hardest of all,- I might add eating, for I did taste. I was determined to know beans.
\end{quote}

\(^{10}\) Presumably he took the train.
\(^{11}\) To my awareness, nobody has ever been interested to inquire into the nature of his sexuality.
It is clear therefore that President-Elect Buchanan wanted to “know beans” about the decision in regard to the

12. To know beans completely would be to sow them, tend them, harvest them, store them, cook them, eat them, digest them, and in the end (!) to excrete them. The idea of knowing beans completely would therefore lead toward Mark Twain’s essay of a much later timeframe — the one on farting with pride.

Over and above this, Thoreau’s eponymous ancestors since they were Huguenot religious refugees from the area of Lyon in France, came to the New World only by way of the Isle of Jersey in the English Channel to which they had first fled — and residents of that island happen to be known humorously as “beans.” So, knowing beans in Thoreau’s case might have included knowing who his relations were. (Is Dred Scott my brother?)

The British humor character “Bean” exemplifies behaviors associated with the personality type said to characterize the island of Jersey.
Scott family of slaves, despite the fact that he did not “care beans” about the fate of that family!

(That’s a singular attitude.)
The large mansion on the Lee farm, on the site of the Simon Willard house, that had been occupied by Harvard College in 1776, was burnt (it would seem that this must have been an intentional removal of a valueless structure, since there would be no mention of any such conflagration in the annual report of the Concord Fire Department).

This was the year in which Henry Thoreau began his effort to reforest the sandy and barren and exhausted area from which he had cleared stumps and brush for its owner Waldo Emerson in order to plant *Phaseolus vulgaris* var. *humilis* common small navy pea bush white beans in 1845 during his residency on Walden Pond. He would plant a total of 400 eastern white pines *Pinus strobus*, *L.*, as well as oaks, birches, and larches, and begin a picnic grove. This is the area which would be partly burned over in 1872, in which most of the remaining isolated mature trees standing in the sandy soil would be upset by the winds of a great hurricane in 1938.

**WALDEN**: I planted about two acres and a half of upland; and as it was only about fifteen years since the land was cleared, and I myself had got out two or three cords of stumps, I did not give it any manure; but in the course of the summer it appeared by the arrowheads which I turned up in hoeing, that an extinct nation had anciently dwelt here and planted corn and beans ere white men came to clear the land, and so, to some extent, had exhausted the soil for this very crop.
As you walk out to the pond from Concord center, on the road that leads past the pond, this is a nondescript area grown up into trees that is to your right after you cross the turnpike (to your left is the old town landfill):

The area near Walden Pond from which Henry Thoreau had cleared stumps and brush in order to experiment with a beanfield, and had later reforested as a picnic grove for its owner Waldo Emerson with some 400 white pines, plus oaks, birches, and larches, was in this year partly burned over. Most of the remaining isolated mature trees standing in the sandy soil would be upset by the winds of a great hurricane in 1938.

WALDEN: I planted about two acres and a half of upland; and as it was only about fifteen years since the land was cleared, and I myself had got out two or three cords of stumps, I did not give it any manure; but in the course of the summer it appeared by the arrowheads which I turned up in hoeing, that an extinct nation had anciently dwelt here and planted corn and beans ere white men came to clear the land, and so, to some extent, had exhausted the soil for this very crop.
August 31, Monday: Calvin H. Greene noted that the grove of trees that Henry Thoreau had planted in his beanfield “looked quite sorry from a heartless fire that had run through them a short time ago.” Ellery Channing presented him with something Friend Daniel Ricketson had presented to him, a paper-folder made from one of the shingles to Thoreau’s (Emerson’s) shanty.

September 21, Wednesday: British mediator Lord Runciman recommended to Prime Minister Chamberlain that the Sudetenland be transferred to Germany without a referendum.

Czechoslovakia agreed to an Anglo-French plan which included the cession of the Sudetenland to Germany. President Benes announced the agreement in a communiqué critical of Czechoslovakia’s “friends” Great Britain and France.

Spanish leader Juan Negrín advised the League of Nations that all International Brigades were to be withdrawn from the fighting.

Poland demanded that Czechoslovakia hand over the Teschen (Cieszyn) district.

In the worst weather disaster for New England in its history, the 4th most fatal in all US history, the Category Four hurricane to be known as the “Long Island Express” struck seven states in seven hours and 682 died, 433 of whom were Rhode Islanders. Drifting dead, typically wearing heavy boots, were initially estimated from the air by counting the tops of heads that could be seen bobbing along the surfline. The downtown of Providence flooded 17 feet above its street surfaces. All the enormous mature elm-trees surrounding the Newport “cottage” named “The Elms” were blown down. In Arlington, the steeple of the Pleasant Street Congregational Church was toppled. Most of the remaining isolated mature white pines that had been planted in the sandy loam by Henry Thoreau in what had been his beanfield in Walden Woods during his residency on Walden Pond, those that had not burned in that railroad fire in the 1890s, isolated as they had become by fire and standing only in sandy soil, were upset by the winds, which were measured to occasionally gust up to 183 miles per hour — with the exception of one grand old tree which could still be seen from a distance.

13. Some 4-foot-long metal tubes jammed into the marshy soil and sediment layers at Succotash Marsh in East Matunuck, Rhode Island (at the west side of the ocean entrance of the Narragansett Bay) by Tom Webb of the Geological Sciences Department of Brown University, have revealed that there has been a series of overwash fans created by storm tidal surges, indicating that seven category-three hurricanes have struck Narragansett lowlands in about the past millennium. The 1st such overwash fan that has been revealed dated to the period 1295-1407CE, the 2nd to the period of roughly the first half of the 15th Century, the 3rd to approximately 1520CE (give or take a few decades), the 4th to the historic storm of the 14th and 15th of August, 1635, the 5th to the historic storm of September 23, 1815, and the 6th to the historic storm of October 4/5, 1869. The 7th such overwash fan obviously dates specifically to this historic storm of September 21, 1938.

14. 15% of the mature trees in New England were destroyed.

15. Professor Walter Roy Harding was said to be able to lead walkers through the woods to the base of this remaining tree.
WALDEN: I planted about two acres and a half of upland; and as it was only about fifteen years since the land was cleared, and I myself had got out two or three cords of stumps, I did not give it any manure; but in the course of the summer it appeared by the arrowheads which I turned up in hoeing, that an extinct nation had anciently dwelt here and planted corn and beans ere white men came to clear the land, and so, to some extent, had exhausted the soil for this very crop.
TRAVELING MUCH IN CONCORD MA

LANDELLING HURRICANES
in SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND
1900 - 1996
Securely held in the root system of one of the white pines which had been blown over—although no-one would recognize this until Roland Wells Robbins, an archeologist who lived on the old Cambridge turnpike, would inspect this eroded root system on November 11, 1945—were some of the stones from the foundation of the chimney of Emerson’s (Thoreau’s) shanty:

A tree snapped and fell over the roof of the Concord bank, and one of the Doric pillars was knocked off its front portico.
The “Texas” House, already damaged by fire, was destroyed during this hurricane.

The Great Elm on Monument Square, the one known about town as the “Whipping Post Elm” despite the fact that it had never been used in such a manner, was severely damaged.

In New Bedford, there was a storm surge of between 12 and 16 feet, and damage amounting to what today would be at least $3.5 billion.

Summer: In an essay “The Great Bean Field Hoax” Robert A. Gross referred to an article in the March 1855 issue of the Knickerbocker, an article in which an anonymous author had compared H.D. Thoreau with P. T. Barnum. How, we may wonder, was such a connection attempted? Here is a review of Gross’s essay, by Peter L. Borst:

Gross states that the Connecticut showman profited by exploiting the illusions of the public, whereas Henry tries to expose them and urges us to seek out reality rather than be duped. However, central to the book Walden is the Bean Field Experiment. Evidently Emerson got an agreement from Henry to cultivate part of the property in exchange for having use of it. Circulating at the time were various pamphlets on the modern way to “improve” farmland. Gross states that Henry was “appalled at the improver’s vision of a tame, polite landscape of apple orchards and market gardens.” “A model farm!” he writes in Walden, “where the house stands like a fungus in a muck heap, chambers for men, horses, oxen, swine, cleansed and uncleaned, all contiguous to one another! A great grease-spot, redolent of manures and butter-milk! Such is a model farm.” So Henry grew beans. In the 1840s, everyone else was planting corn and oats. They made money from hay, cut wood, raised cows. Gross states: “They did NOT grow beans. Passersby could not resist the urge to offer: Corn, my boy, for fodder.” However, the Yankee was known by his beans. Artemus Ward in 1861 observed: “This is the happy land of baked beans and pure religion”. Henry had another reason to grow beans: beans were originally an Indian crop, along with corn. While he hoed, he could turn up arrow heads and muse that “an extinct nation had anciently dwelt here.” He even “farmed” in his own way. While the typical yield was 20 bushels per acre, and could reach 36, Henry got 7 or 8. Granted, he shared a bit with the woodchucks. When he asked an old woodsman how to get rid of woodchucks without trapping them without trapping, the
expert replied: "Yes, shoot ‘em, you damn fool." Henry ignored all advice on the correct methods of cultivation: he added no fertilizers, not even manure. His rows were three feet apart and plants half that, where the "New England Farmer" suggested rows two feet apart and plants every six inches. He claimed to spend much time hoeing but never got through the whole two and a half acres. The point of all this, according to Robert Gross, was to "turn the sober literature of agricultural improvement with its spiritually deadening obsession with crop rotations, manure, turnips and tools, upside down." But Henry didn’t go to Walden to succeed at farming. He went there to succeed at living. He may not have raised a hill of beans but he came up with a hell of a book.16

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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: July 24, 2013
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.
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.