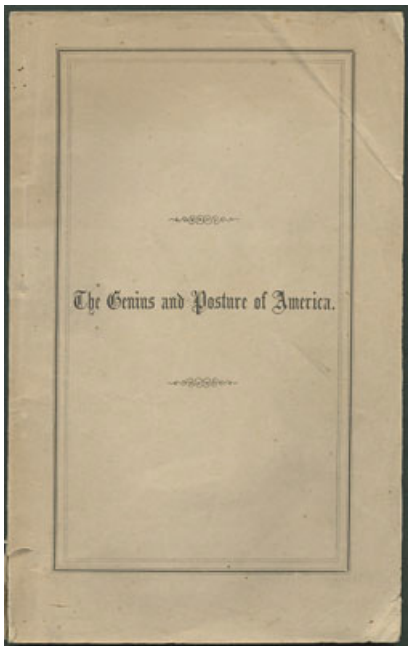
“Fate is the friend of the good, the guide of the wise,

the tyrant of the foolish, the enemy of the bad.”[1]



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

1. The Reverend William Rounseville Alger’s papers are available for inspection at the Andover-Harvard Theological Library of Harvard University (.35 c.f., 1840-1960) by appointment only.

1775

April 19, Wednesday: Upon receiving the alarm, Captain Levi Rounseville mustered his company of minute men and marched them from Freetown to Lexington. He would become an officer of the 9th regiment of General Washington's Continental army. (Captain Levi Rounseville's son William Rounseville of Freetown was a Justice of the Peace, and for ten consecutive years was a Representative to the General Court of Massachusetts. He was Freetown's Baptist minister.)

Captain Isaac Davis, the gunsmith in Acton, mustered his company by announcing that "I have a right to go to Concord on the King's highway — and I will go to Concord."

Acton's route of march took it along Strawberry Hill Road, and near Barrett's farm they turned east, passing the Widow Brown's tavern. There, 13-year-old Charles Handley watched them disappear up the back road (the upper or east road) toward Buttrick's farm and the Concord bridge. Upon reaching high ground, Captain Davis noted that the troops were aligning themselves as they had fallen in during the regimental muster of March 13th, with the minute companies on the right and the militia on the left facing the Bridge, and thus led his men toward their assigned position on the appropriate left of the line. He then left them and moved toward a clump of other officers who were discussing the situation. The discussion was about what should be done about the stores at Barrett's farm, and about whether the army was going to attack them. If the army did attack them, would they fire a volley before they fixed their bayonets? When smoke was seen to be rising above the trees from the direction of Concord, Colonel Barrett ordered Major Buttrick to march the men into town. Buttrick may have offered the lead to a Concord captain and this man may have been less than enthusiastic. Captain Smith volunteered to lead his Lincoln minute company to dislodge the British from the Concord bridge, but his men had no bayonets. It was noted that the Acton minute company did have bayonets, and were well trained. They therefore took the lead. Normally, in military formations, the most senior company forms up at the right, with the more junior companies falling in to its left, and the Acton company was a junior company. The Reverend Ezra Ripley noted, however, that upon arriving at the muster field, the Acton company had

"passing by the other companies, took the right of the whole, which placed him nearest the Bridge, and in front, when they marched toward the enemy." We do not know whether the company had itself intended to thus place itself in the lead. What happened may have been more the result of the manner in which the roads of the time meandered toward the bridge, than of anyone's conscious intention. Lemuel Shattuck noted that the colonial formations were already marching at the point at which the Acton men arrived on the west road, and that they passed in front of the column and moved toward the bridge before they halted. Captain Brown's Concord minute company then positioned itself two abreast, up the north side of the road, alongside the Acton men. The Acton and Concord units seem to have advanced to the bridge alongside each other. When that company's captain, Davis, was asked whether he was afraid to have his men who had bayonets take the lead in marching "into the middle of the town for its defense or die in the attempt," his response is recorded as having been "No, I am not — and I haven't a man that is!" Captain Davis drew his sword and wheeled his company out of the line toward the right, downhill to the causeway leading to North Bridge. The British officer had ordered "Street Firing," a tactic in which four men abreast fired a volley, and then ducked down and moved to the side and back so that the four men behind them could fire a volley. Captain Isaac Davis would be gunned down in the 1st British volley before his men opened fire.

Also, David Hosmer took a bullet through the head.

WALDEN: I was myself excited somewhat even as if they [the warring red and black ants] had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America, that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism displayed. For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden. Concord Fight! Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why here every ant was a Buttrick, –"Fire! for God's sake fire!"– and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer. There was not one hireling there. I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a three-penny tax on their tea; and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill, at least.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

LUTHER BLANCHARD
JOHN BUTTRICK
ISAAC DAVIS
DAVID HOSMER

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

1822

December 30, Monday: Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

> *2nd day 30 of 12 M / This is my Birth day, I am now 41 Years of age. - Thus the great Wheel of time goes on. — I feel it, sensibly feel it. —*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

William Rounseville Alger was born in Freetown, Massachusetts, the child of Nahum Alger and Catherine Sampson Rounseville Alger (possibly the birth was on the 28th rather than the 30th). This baby eventually would make itself the author of utterly unforgettable aphorisms, to be found now being quoted all over the internet:[2]

> A crowd always thinks with its sympathy, never with its reason.
> — William Rounseville Alger

> We give advice by the bucket but take it by the grain.
> — William Rounseville Alger

> Fate is the friend of the good, the guide of the wise, the tyrant of the foolish, the enemy of the bad.
> — William Rounseville Alger

> The wealth of a soul is measured by how much it can feel; its poverty by how little.
> — William Rounseville Alger

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT

2. Horatio Alger, Jr. is his more talented but much less widely known minister cousin.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1832

 At the age of ten, William Rounseville Alger was apprenticed to a cotton mill in Hookset, New Hampshire.

REV. W.R. ALGER

REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1837

At the age of fifteen, William Rounseville Alger left work in the cotton mills to further his education. He would attend an academy in Pembroke, New Hampshire for two years, and then an academy in Lebanon, New Hampshire for another year.

REV. W.R. ALGER

REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1843

The idea for the creation of an "American Oriental Society" had probably originated with William Jenks (1778-1866), a Congregationalist minister in Boston, and his name does appear, among others, on the society's act of incorporation in this year. The Reverend Moses Stuart (1780-1852), the Congregationalist minister and professor of Bible at Andover Theological Seminary, acted as one of the original Vice Presidents. Rufus Anderson (1796-1880), secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the most influential American mission theorist and administrator of his day, would be one of the society's original directors. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Reverend James Freeman Clarke, and the Reverend William Rounseville Alger would be members. Edward Everett, a Unitarian, would serve for a time as one its Vice Presidents, and the Reverend Theodore Parker would be one of one its directors.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1844

September: Thomas Wentworth Higginson, William Rounseville Alger, and Grindall Reynolds entered the Harvard Divinity School.

NEW "HARVARD MEN"

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1847

William Rounseville Alger graduated at Harvard Divinity School, and immediately was ordained and became a pastor at a Unitarian Church in Roxbury MA.

NEW "HARVARD MEN"

Thomas Wentworth Higginson: "Another tonic in the way of cultured companionship was that of James Elliot Cabot, fresh from a German university, –then a rare experience,– he being, however, most un-German in clearness and terseness. I remember that when I complained to him of not understanding Immanuel Kant's 'Critique of pure reason,' in English, he answered tranquilly that he could not; that having read it twice in German he had thought he comprehended it, but that Meiklejohn's translation was beyond making out. These men were not in the Harvard Divinity School, but I met their equals there. The leading men of a college class gravitated then as naturally to the Divinity School as now to the Law School; even though, like myself, they passed to other pursuits afterward. I met there such men as Thomas Hill, afterward President of Harvard College; Octavius B. Frothingham; William Rounseville Alger; Samuel Longfellow and Samuel Johnson, who compiled at Divinity Hall their collection of hymns, — a volume called modestly "A book of hymns," and more profanely named from its editors' familiar names "The Sam book." Longfellow was one of the born saints, but with a breadth and manliness not always to be found in that class; he was also a genuine poet, like his elder brother, whose biographer he afterward became. Johnson, a man of brilliant gifts and much personal charm, is now best known by his later work on 'Oriental Religions.' It is a curious fact that many of their youthful hymns as well as some of my own, appearing originally in this heterodox work, have long since found their way into the most orthodox and respectable collections."

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

September: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger got married in Roxbury to Anne Langdon Lodge, daughter of Giles Langdon Lodge and Abigail Harris Langdon Lodge. The couple would produce Henry Lodge Alger, Abby Langdon Alger, Caroline Rounseville Alger, Arthur Martineau Alger, William Ellerton Alger, Philip Rounseville Alger, and an infant daughter who soon died.

1848

June 16, Friday: Henry Lodge Alger was born at Roxbury.

1849

August 3, Friday: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger preached on the subject of "Inferences from the pestilence and the fast" at the Mount Pleasant Congregational Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts. (This sermon would be printed in Boston in this year by the firm of Wm. Crosby and H.P. Nichols.)

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

October: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger offered an extraordinarily hostile review of Henry Thoreau's A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS, under the heading "Literary Notices" in the Universalist Quarterly, 6, 422-23:

> Few books need expurgation more than this one, and few deserve it better. All sorts of subjects, foreign to the general drift of purpose implied in the title and running through the work, are treated in it, — the Christian religion, the church and its usages, poetry, history, great names of the past, philosophy, character, friendship, and many other topics connected with the various experiences of life. These portions of the volume should be separated from the rest, and, if it be thought that the world needs them, published by themselves. They would form a book, full alike of merits and of faults; interesting from its freshness and variety; worthy of perusal for being unusually packed with the fruits of observation, reading and meditation; composed in a rich, oracular style, showing, too evidently, both in substance of idea and in form of statement, imitative traces of the author's great neighbor; abounding in beautiful images happily caught at first hand from nature, in striking aphorisms, in really valuable original thoughts, and in suggestive hints but, on the other side, interspersed with inexcusable crudities, with proofs of carelessness and lack of healthy moral discrimination, with contempt for things commonly esteemed holy, with reflections that must shock every pious Christian, with the transcendental doctrines of the new-light school, with obscurities of incomprehensible mysticism, with ridiculous speculations, moon-struck reveries and flat nonsense, — without moral purpose in the writing, and without practical results in the reading.

Looking back on this from today's vantage point, one is struck by the similarity of it to the feedback Charles Darwin would receive through his publisher John Murray in 1859, in regard to the manuscript of ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION, OR THE PRESERVATION OF FAVOURED RACES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE, that he should have confined himself to the subject of pigeons accompanied only by "a brief statement of his general principles" — the prepublication reviewer, Vicar Whitwell Elwin, would point out that by way of radical contrast such a volume confining itself to the subject of pigeons would "be reviewed in every journal in the kingdom & would soon be on every table."

Ah, what a different would this would be today, if only the opinions of the Reverend Alger and Vicar Elwin had been allowed to prevail!

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

Of that part of the work which would remain after this selection was made from it, which would constitute about one half of the original bulk, we find it difficult to speak in terms of sufficient praise. In wondrous beauty the minute facts of that memorable voyage glide along a stream transparent as crystal before our mind's eye, as we read; and they cling to our thoughts with a tenacity singularly close and pleasant. The boat by day, the tent by night, the toiling or reposing twain, the shifting hues of the clouds and the air as the circling hours roll on, every flower, fish, frog, tree, lowland, hill, nightly bay of watch-dog and distant tone of Sabbath-bell, pass before us, distinctly defined, in a clear, objective existence. The unexaggerated simplicity of description, the uncolored fidelity to fact, the perfect freedom from cant, the childlike earnestness of sympathy for outward things, the poetic eye for interior meaning, pathetic analogy and external beauty, the felicitous phraseology which calmly paints the exact objects themselves, — these traits are beyond commendation. They have combined to make a modern week on two New England rivers, as romantic and new as ever a week in by-gone ages on the Simöis and Xanthus and antique climes could have been.

We have read this history with unmingled delight. We wish the book contained nothing else. Then to travel by its means from the meadows of Concord to the summit of Agiocochook would be a great joy to any man. It is invested with a strange, long-lingering charm, an indescribably fascination for which we can hardly account, except by saying that it springs from its pure, naked truth. For with that the soul of all nature is in unison; to that the core of every heart is loyal, and responds, even when unconscious of it, with an instinctive pleasure.

We are glad to learn that the author intends soon to publish another volume, called, — Walden, or Life in the Woods. On such a theme, owing to his singular familiarity with nature and love for her, he is able to write a work that will not die. For the satisfaction and advantage of his readers, for his own fame, and for the wide distribution and long existence of his book, we beg him to let it be, simply, what its title imports, and not crowd it with heterogeneous thoughts upon a thousand other subjects. That is not his forte. If he persists in thinking that it is, then let him pursue it, by itself, with a set purpose. Great works are not achieved accidentally, by the wayside, our author's authority to the contrary notwithstanding.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

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

1850

August 3, Sunday: Abbie Langdon Alger was born at Roxbury.

1851

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's HISTORY OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST was printed in Cambridge by the firm of J. Munroe.

HISTORY OF THE CROSS

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

1852

Horatio Alger, Jr. graduated from Harvard College with Phi Beta Kappa honors.

NEW "HARVARD MEN"

His cousin, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger, who had attended the Harvard Divinity School without first attending Harvard College, belatedly was awarded the degree of AM. His 30-page THE NATURE, GROUNDS, AND USES OF FAITH was printed for the American Unitarian Association in Boston by W. Crosby and H.P. Nichols. His 37-page THE FACTS OF INTEMPERANCE, AND THEIR CLAIMS ON THE PUBLIC ACTION OF THE PEOPLE was printed in Boston by Crosby, Nichols, and Company.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

October 5, Tuesday: Henry Thoreau checked out, from Harvard Library, the Reverend William Gilpin's OBSERVATIONS ON THE WESTERN PARTS OF ENGLAND, RELATING CHIEFLY TO PICTURESQUE BEAUTY; TO WHICH ARE ADDED, A FEW REMARKS ON THE PICTURESQUE BEAUTIES OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1798; London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strant, 1808).

(Some material from this would wind up in THE MAINE WOODS.)

THE MAINE WOODS: Those Maine woods differ essentially from ours. There you are never reminded that the wilderness which you are threading is, after all, some villager's familiar wood-lot, some widow's thirds, from which her ancestors have sledded fuel for generations, minutely described in some old deed which is recorded, of which the owner has got a plan too, and old bound-marks may be found every forty rods, if you will search. 'T is true, the map may inform you that you stand on land granted by the State to some academy, or on Bingham's purchase; but these names do not impose on you, for you see nothing to remind you of the academy or of Bingham. What were the "forests" of England to these? One writer relates of the Isle of Wight, that in Charles the Second's time "there were woods in the island so complete and extensive, that it is said a squirrel might have travelled in several parts many leagues together on the top of the trees." If it were not for the rivers, (and he might go round their heads,) a squirrel could here travel thus the whole breadth of the country.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

WESTERN PARTS OF ENGLAND,

RELATIVE CHIEFLY TO

PICTURESQUE BEAUTY;

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A FEW REMARKS

ON THE

PICTURESQUE BEAUTIES OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

By WILLIAM GILPIN, A.M.

PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY; AND VICAR OF BOLDRE IN NEW-FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

THE SECOND EDITION.

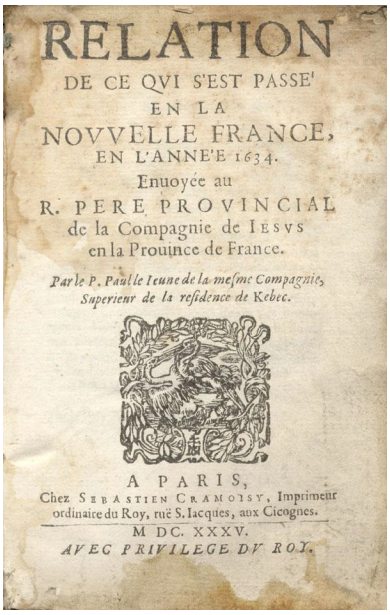
LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1808.

He also checked out the JESUIT RELATION volumes for the years 1633 and 1634.[3]

http://www.canadiana.org



RELATION
DE CE QVI S'EST PASSE'
EN LA
NOVVELLE FRANCE,
EN L'ANNE'E 1634.
Enuoyée au
R. PERE PROVINCIAL
de la Compagnie de IESVS
en la Prouince de France.
Par le P. Paul le Ieune de la meſme Compagnie,
Superieur de la reſidence de Kebec.

A PARIS,
Chez SEBASTIEN CRAMOISY, Imprimeur
ordinaire du Roy, ruë S. Iacques, aux Cicognes.
M DC. XXXV.
AVEC PRIVILEGE DV ROY.

Caroline Rounseville Alger was born at Roxbury.

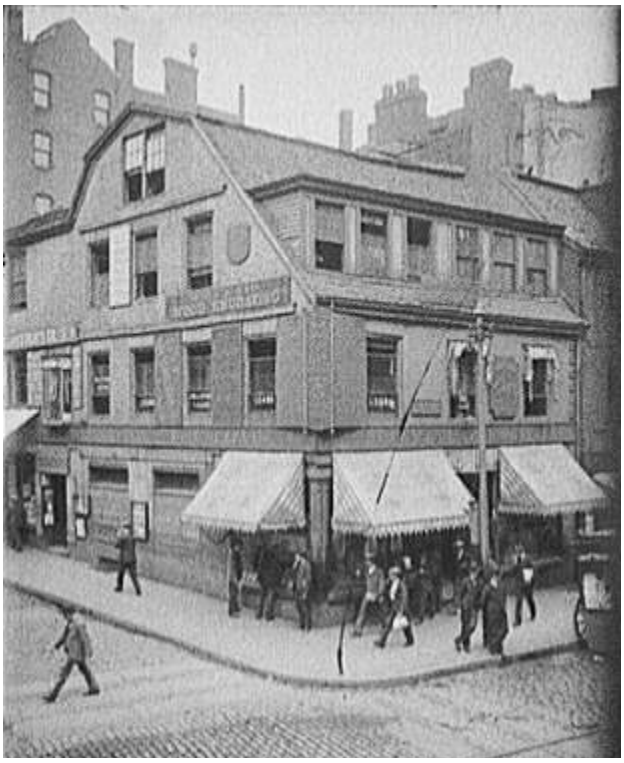
Oct. 5. Was told at Bunker Hill Monument to-day that Mr. Savage saw the White Mountains several times while working on the monument. It required very clear weather in the northwest and a storm clearing up here.

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

1854

August 1, Tuesday: At 6 AM Henry Thoreau went on the river. In the afternoon he went to Peter's (Peter's Path, Gleason E7-E9?).

In a letter to his friend the Reverend William Rounseville Alger, a Unitarian clergyman, T. Starr King commented on WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS: "The latter half is wonderful ... I envy you your approaching rapture."[4] The Reverend Alger had been awaiting Thoreau's 2nd book ever since, in 1849, he had read A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS (he had condemned it for failing to be a simple story of a vacation sailboat adventure by two brothers, saying "[f]ew books need expurgation more than this one") and thus it was that, in Boston on this day when the very 1st copy of WALDEN was sold for one dollar at the Old Corner Bookstore, the Boston retail outlet of Ticknor & Fields, it was sold to the Reverend Alger.



4. Charles W. Wendte. THOMAS STARR KING: PATRIOT AND PREACHER (Boston: Beacon Press, 1921, pages 45-46). Walter Harding, "The First Year's Sales of Thoreau's Walden," Thoreau Society Bulletin, number 117 (Fall 1971): 1; Gary Scharnhorst, "'He Is Able to Write a Work That Will Not Die': W. R. Alger and T. Starr King on Thoreau," Thoreau Journal Quarterly, 13, numbers 1-2 (January-April 1981): 5-17.

RELATION

DE CE QVI S'EST PASSE'

EN LA

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M DC. XXXV.

AVEC PRIVILEGE DV ROY.

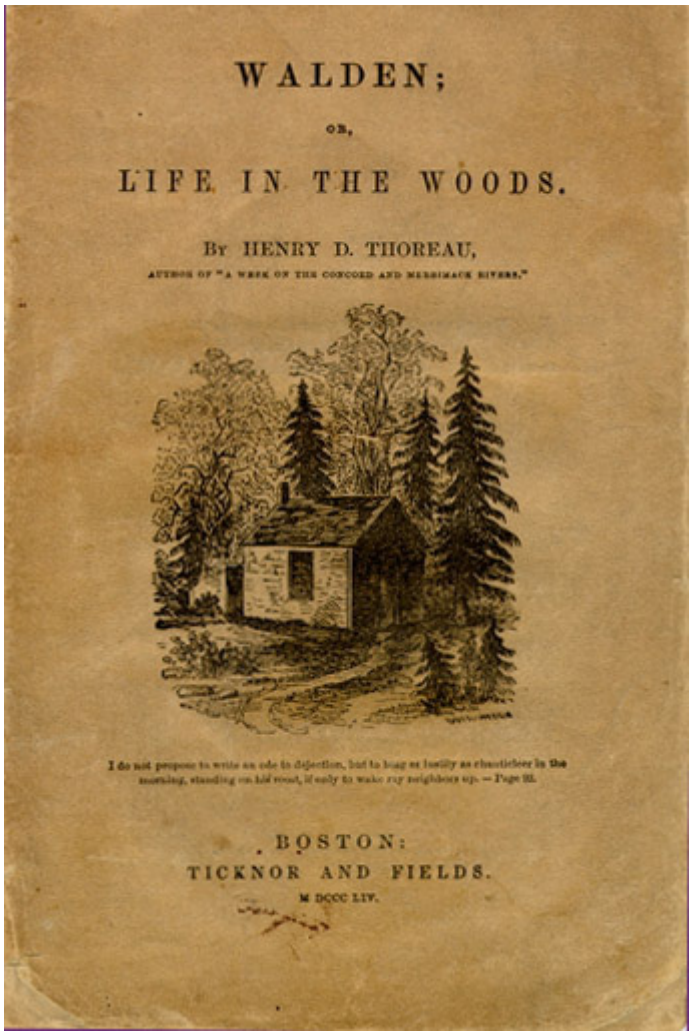
REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

A review of WALDEN titled "A Massachusetts Philosopher" in the organ of the Oneida, New York utopian community, the Circular, on pages 410-11. On this day Henry James, Sr. had a Daguerreotype made of him

> A very curious book is in press, entitled 'Life in the Woods,' by H. D. Thoreau; from which the [New-York] Tribune prints a few extracts in advance. It is a narrative of the author's experience and mode of life during a two years' solitary hermitage in the woods, by the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass. The writer, being of a philosophical turn, and much given to Homer, and similar antique models, seems to have proposed to himself to reduce his mode of life to the standard nearest to primitive nature. So he took an axe, and went into the woods, to a pleasant hill-side overlooking the pond, and built himself a cabin. Of his furniture, and his views on the subject of furniture in general, he gives the following account:
>
> **[Reprints "Economy," pages 65.14-67.10.]**
>
> There is evident spice of truth in this. We like **Communism** particularly for its effect in relieving folks from the great mass of furniture—useless *exuviæ* as Thoreau says,—that accumulates about them and seems necessary, in isolation. The Communist moves freely without being tied to any such trap. He goes from one home to another, without care for what he leaves or carrying anything with him and finds all needed furnishing in the Commune where he sits down. This is better we think than our hermit's method of getting rid of incumbrance. Here follows his agricultural experience:
>
> **[Reprints "Economy," pages 54.16-56.13.]**
>
> Bating the solitude, we think Thoreau's plan of agriculture is worth consideration. There is a simplicity and independence about it, that is rather fascinating, and if practicable in single solitude it would be certainly no less so in Association. In fact our method at Oneida and the other agricultural Associations in confining ourselves mostly to thorough garden-tillage, is substantially carrying things out to a similar result.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER



WALDEN;

OR,

LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,

AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."

I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. — Page 88.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LIV.

and his son Henry James, Jr. This is now at the Houghton Library of Harvard University:

The material about WALDEN from the July 29th edition of the New-York Daily Tribune was repeated on pages 6 and 7 of this day's issue of the Semi-Weekly Tribune.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT

REV. W.R. ALGER

REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

September 23, Saturday: In the afternoon Henry Thoreau went to Gowing's Swamp (Gleason F9) and then Great Meadows (Gleason D8).

WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS was reviewed in the Daily Alta California, 5:264.

> *Walden; or Life in the Wood. By Henry D. Thoreau. Boston: Ticknor & Fields.*
> *This is a very strange book, the history of a philosopher living in the woods, a sort of Robinson Crusoe life. It shows the simplicity with which life can be conducted, stripped of some of its conventionalities, and the whole narrative is imbued with a deep philosophic spirit. All together besides being beautifully written, it has an air of originality which is quite taking. We commend it to our reader.*

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

Father Isaac Hecker, CSSR, wrote to Orestes Augustus Brownson.

Arthur Martineau Alger was born at Roxbury. (He would study for the law at Boston University, and then in the office of the Honorable N.B. Bryant.)

1855

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger moved from Roxbury into Boston, to become pastor of the Bullfinch Street Church.

January: Review of Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS by the Reverend William Rounseville Alger, titled "The Transmigration of Souls," in the North American Review, 80:71.

> [Thoreau is] a remarkable writer of our own day.
>
> **[Reprints "Sounds," page 126.7-36.]**

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT

1856

At the age of 16 Bertie was required to attend Faraday's Christmas Lectures at the Royal Institute, on Attraction, and produce a report of what he was learning about chemistry. His father Prince Albert would examine these notes and complain of their inadequacy.

A collection of sentimental stories by Horatio Alger, Jr.'s BERTHA'S CHRISTMAS VISION.

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE POETRY OF THE ORIENT, OR METRICAL SPECIMENS OF THE THOUGHT, SENTIMENT, AND FANCY OF THE EAST, PREFACED BY AN ELABORATE DISSERTATION was published in Boston by the firm of Whittemore, Niles and Hall. (This editions of poems translated from the Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit languages would be republished in an enlarged 2d edition in Boston by the firm of Roberts Brothers in 1865, and in an further enlarged 4th edition in 1874, and in a further enlarged 5th edition in 1883.)

POETRY OF THE ORIENT

The Reverend's AMERICAN VOICE ON THE LATE WAR IN THE EAST was published in Boston by the firm of John P. Jewett & Co.

The Reverend's THE CHARITIES OF BOSTON, OR, TWENTY YEARS AT THE WARREN-STREET CHAPEL: AN ADDRESS / DELIVERED AT THE CHAPEL BY WILLIAM R. ALGER, SUNDAY EVENING, JAN. 27, 1856 was published in Boston by the firm of J. Wilson.

January 27, Sunday: At the chapel on Warren Street in Boston, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered an address entitled "The charities of Boston, or, Twenty years at the Warren-street Chapel." (This address would be printed in this year by the firm of J. Wilson in Boston.)

When the Reverend Moncure Daniel Conway came to the Unitarian pulpit in our nation's puzzle palace on this Sabbath day, straightaway he informed his audience –which included Senator Charles Sumner and Horace Greeley– that yes, his sermon was going to break his long silence on the issue of slavery. Slavery, the issue which by long agreement could not be subjected to any debate on the floor of the US Congress. People had been asking him to keep politics out of his pulpit here in Washington DC, but, he offered, slavery was morality rather than politics since it was a "question affecting humanity." And of course the place for moralizing was

the pulpit. “If moral questions should not enter here, what should?” He announced that although he did not agree that the North should leave the Union, he also did not believe that the North should be paying any attention to the South’s threats to leave the Union: “Let us, with Montaigne, fear nothing so much as fear.”

1580: *“The thing I fear most is fear.”*

In this sermon “The One Path” the Reverend suggested that it would be wrong to attempt “a right thing,” such as the eradication of slavery, in “a wrong way,” that is, other than through moral argument and good example. How dare he suggest there to be something immoral about human enslavement? The Washington Evening Star reported that “this city was thrown into a state of unusual excitement.” The sermon would be promptly printed in full in The National Era, The National Anti-Slavery Standard, and The Liberator. Greeley reported, in the Tribune, that the Reverend Conway “expects to lose his pastorate on account of it.”

September 1, Monday: William Ellerton Alger was born at Boston.

Henry Thoreau wrote to Bronson Alcott in Walpole, New Hampshire.

Concord Sep 1st ’56
Mr Alcott,
I remember that in the spring you invited me to visit you. I feel inclined to spend a day or two with you and on your hills at this season, returning perhaps by way of Brattleboro. What if I should take the cars for Walpole next Friday morning? Are you at home?— and will it be convenient and agreeable to you to see me then?— I will await an answer.
I am but poor company, and it will not be worth the while for you to put yourself out on my account; yet from time to time I have some thoughts which would be the better for an airing. I also wish to get some hints from September on the Connecticut to help me understand that season on the Concord;– to snuff the musty fragrance of the decaying year in the primitive woods. There is considerable cellar room in my nature for such stores, a whole row of bins waiting to be filled before I can celebrate my Thanksgiving. Mould is the richest of soils, yet I am not mould. It will always be found that one flourishing institution exists & battens on another mouldering one. The Present itself is parasitic to this extent.
Your fellow traveller
Henry D. Thoreau

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

Lemuel Shaw, Herman Melville's father-in-law, wrote to his son Samuel that:

> *I suppose you have been informed by some of the family, how very ill, Herman has been. It is manifest to me from Elizabeth's letters, that she has felt great anxiety about him. When he is deeply engaged in one of his literary works, he confines him*[self] *to hard study many hours in the day, with little or no exercise, & this specially in winter for a great many days together. He probably thus overworks himself & brings on severe nervous affections. He has been advised strongly to break off this labor for some time, & take a voyage or a journey, & endeavor to recruit....*

1857

Dr. Elisha Kent Kane died.

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's A BRIEF TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF DR. KANE was printed in Boston by the firm of Williams.

Dr. E.K. Elder's LIFE OF KANE.

Reported Death of Dr. E. K. Kane
(Telegraphic)
Philadelphia, Monday, February 23 (1857).

It is reported that a special dispatch has been received from New-Orleans announcing the death of Dr. Kane, and the arrival of his body there en route for Philadelphia.

It is a painful duty that we are called to perform in chronicling the decease of Dr. Kane, which we announce on the somewhat dubious authority of the above dispatch. It is but a few weeks since intelligence was received of his departure from England in search of health in Havana, and strong hopes were entertained that his change of scene and climate would serve the purpose of recruiting the physical energies which had become prostrate through a long course of unremitting toil and exposure. The hope proved fallacious, and Dr. Kane is gathered to his fathers, while yet at the threshold of his life, and at the commencement of a career whose early promise was already abundantly fulfilled. He died at Havana, at the age of 35 years (sic). His mind remained clear, and his disease, though making rapid headway, left him moments for calm reflection, and gave him a peaceful end.

Dr. Elisha Kent Kane was a native of Pennsylvania, born in Philadelphia, on the 3rd of February, 1822 (sic). His early years were notable chiefly for the rapid development of that spirit of adventure and love of investigation which afterwards carried him over the world and led him into places where no man but he had ever trod. While yet a student, he joined one of the brothers Rogers in a geological exploration of the Blue Mountains of Virginia, and when this task had been accomplished, devoted himself with renewed assiduity to the study of the Natural Sciences. In the interim, he pursued the necessary course of culture to qualify himself to enter college, and, having entered, studied diligently. In the year 1843, he

graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, and immediately after that event, undertook a course in the Medical Department of the same institution. During his prosecution of scientific investigations, the Doctor had made himself thoroughly familiar with chemistry, geology, mineralogy, astronomy and surgery, and, besides, was a good classical scholar. He was one of that rare class that have the faculty of acquiring knowledge almost without effort, and when once acquired, of keeping it ready for use on all occasions. The natural consequence of the close application he was compelled to bestow upon his studies, however, undermined the physical system, which rebelled against the stagnation it had undergone, so the young Doctor, now scarcely of age, came out from his closet far from robust. He made application for an appointment in the Navy, and having received it, demanded active service. His request was complied with, and he was appointed on the Diplomatic staff of the first American Embassy to China, as Assistant Surgeon. This position gave him abundant opportunities for the gratification of his passion for witnessing new scenes and visiting queer places. He went successively through the accessible portions of China, Ceylon and the Philippines, and explored India quite thoroughly. In the island of Luzon,-the northernmost and largest of the Philippine group, he created a remarkable excitement by making a descent into the crater of Tael, suspended by a bamboo rope from a crag which projected two hundred feet above the interior scoriae. The natives looked upon this as a daring feat, and declared that the Doctor was the first white man who had ever attempted it. Their Doctor suffered by his exposure to the gases of the crater, but was plucky enough to remain below until he had made a sketch of the interior and collected specimens, all of which he brought up with him. His remaining adventures during this first foreign experience were things to be remembered. He ascended the Himalayas, visited Egypt and went to the upper Nile, where he made the acquaintance of Leprius, who was at the time, prosecuting his archeological researches;- and, obtaining his discharge from the Embassy, returned home by way of Greece, which country he traversed on foot. He reached the United States, after a brief sojourn in Europe, in the year 1846.

The Mexican War now broke out, and Dr. Kane requested active service in the campaign; but the War department preferred sending him to the coast of Africa, whither he presently sailed. While engaged in service on that coast he made an effort to visit the slave marts of Wydah, but was frustrated by the coast-fever, and was sent home in 1847 invalided. From the effects of that attack he never fully recovered. The war had not closed when he again set foot on American soil and he had scarcely regained strength to walk, when he applied to President Polk for permission to enter the service. The request was complied with, and the Doctor was sent to Mexico, charged with dispatches of great importance to General Scott. He did not make his way unscathed through the enemy's country; but was wounded and had his horse killed under him in a sharp skirmish. The kind nursing

of a family in Puebla, who received him into their house, caused his restoration to health, so that he resumed active service, and remained in Mexico until the close of the campaign. Returning to his own country, he was detailed for service on the Coast Survey, and continued in that employment for a considerable time. His varied acquirements made him a most useful member of that important corps.

But it is upon Dr. Kane's remarkable explorations in the Arctic regions while making his search for traces of Sir John Franklin's Expedition, that his fame chiefly rests. The early series of adventures in which the Doctor was engaged served only as a preparation and foundation for the greater that followed. In his modest narrative of the first expedition, the Doctor gives an account of the orders he received to join the Arctic Expedition. He says: "On the 19th of May, while bathing in the tepid waters of the Gulf of Mexico, I received one of those curious little epistles from Washington, which the electric telegraph. It detached me from the Coast Survey, and ordered me to 'proceed forthwith to New-York for duty up on the Arctic Expedition.' Seven and a half days later (he adds) I had accomplished my overland journey of thirteen hundred miles, and in forty hours more was beyond the limits of the United States. The Department had calculated my traveling-time to a nicety." The Expedition consisted of "two little hermaphrodite brigs," the Advance and the Rescue. They were under the command of Lieut. Edwin J. De Haven. Dr. Kane was appointed to the Advance, as surgeon. The vessel was towed out of this port by "an asthmatic old steam-tug" on the 22nd of May, 1850, and was followed by the Rescue. They pushed for the Arctic Sea direct, and on the first day of the following December, entered Lancaster Sound, where the discovery of the graves of three of Franklin's men was made, while the British Searching Expedition, under Commander Penney, and the American were lying together. After the expeditions separated, Lieutenant De Haven's party proceeded further to the northward, and were soon nipped by the ice, which imprisoned the Advance for nine months. While thus blocked in, the vessel drifted with the fields of ice for a distance of 1,060 miles. The opening of the mild season enabled the party to extricate themselves, and the expedition returned to this port on Tuesday, September 20, 1851, having been absent one year and four months. Both vessels suffered but little from their encounter with the ice, and the crew maintained excellent health and discipline. Dr. Kane prosecuted diligently his scientific researches during the time the expedition remained in the Arctic Sea, and on his return, embodied in a "Personal Narrative" the results of the cruise; Lieut. De Haven, his superior officer, having declined to make any other than an official report. This narrative was published by the Harpers (sic) in 1853.

The results of this first expedition encouraged hopes that definite tidings would ultimately be received from Franklin's expedition. Early in the year 1852, a letter was addressed by Lady Franklin to the President of the United States in which the

highest commendation was bestowed upon the American Expedition, and the aid of our Government again solicited. The appeal was not permitted to pass unheeded. The Government detailed Naval officers for the duty of a second exploration, and the Advance was now placed at the disposal of Dr. Kane himself. In December, 1852, he received orders to conduct the new Expedition, and sailed from this port on the 31st of May 1853. Through the munificent liberality of Mr. Henry Grinnell, aided largely by Mr. George Peabody, the brig received a perfect outfit. Her equipment was deficient in nothing that could qualify her to undergo the dangers of the cruise, and the behavior of the craft in the trying situations in which she was afterwards placed, showed the excellence of the preparations. The Expedition sailed out of the port, followed by the good wishes of all; but after the first tidings were received that it was spoken at sea, there was no intelligence of its movements. Dr. Kane, as it afterwards appeared, had pushed northward with great rapidity, and before he could extricate himself, was frozen up and compelled to Winter in the ice-peaks. On the 24th of May 1855, finding that it was impossible to clear the brig, the party came to the determination to forsake her; and did so, first taking out the necessary provisions, document, provisions &c., and placing them on sledges and in boats, which were dragged by the men over the ice, with incredible difficulty, for a distance of three hundred miles. Then, having reached the sea, the party took to the open boats and made the best of their way, for a distance of 1800 miles, to the Danish settlement of Upernavik, in Greenland, where they were hospitably received.

Meanwhile, Dr. Kane had been given up for lost. Representations were made to Congress, urging the duty of instituting a search for the missing, the result of which was an appropriation of $150,000 and the detail of the Arctic and Release, under the command of Lieutenant Hartstene, for the prosecution of a search. This expedition sailed from New-York in April 1855, and on the thirteenth of the following September fell in with Dr. Kane's party at Disko Island, 250 miles south of Upernavik. They had taken refuge on board a Danish trading-vessel, for the arrival of which they had waited at the port for several weeks. With a touching simplicity, Dr. Kane describes this meeting in the last volume of his Second Narrative-just published: "Presently we were alongside. An officer, whom I shall ever remember as a cherished friend, Capt. Hartstene, hailed a little man in a ragged flannel shirt, 'Is that Dr. Kane?'- and with the 'Yes' that followed, the rigging was manned by our countrymen, and cheers welcomed us back to the social world of love which they represented." This is the same Capt. Hartstene whose commission to restore the Resolute has brought him lately into notice in a new field.

The return of Dr. Kane to New-York was the occasion of a wonderful excitement. On the evening of Thursday, Oct. 11, 1855, it was announced that the Searching Expedition had returned with Dr. Kane and his party. An eager throng assembled to greet them,

and the familiar face of the Doctor, bronzed by exposure and adorned with a heavy beard, was looked upon like that of an old friend. The Doctor made his report of the results of the cruise; the principal part of importance announced among his discoveries being that which established the existence of an open Polar Sea. Dr. Kane immediately commenced the preparation of his narrative-published a few weeks since under the title of Arctic Explorations. In November last, having completed this task, he sailed for Europe, and on arriving in England was at once received with a cordial British welcome. He, however, declined all public honors, and appeared but little in public. His health continuing to decline, he determined to try the effect of a change of climate, and in a very short time, sailed for Havana, where he ended his days, far too early.

In character, Dr. Kane was peculiarly retiring and unostentatious; not distrustful of his abilities, but slow to obtrude them into notice; ambitious, yet prudent; energetic, amiable and upright. In person, he was scarcely of the average height, but his muscles were firmly knit; he had a finely developed head, remarkably full in the faculties which give artistic power and taste. His constitution, never strong, had succumbed beneath the burdens that his energetic nature imposed upon it.

The Doctor's published works are few. His two Arctic Narratives are comprised in three volumes, and he has issued some scientific treatises, besides preparing lectures on subjects connected with the Arctic Explorations. His labors, as a navigator and geographer, have been rewarded by a gold medal, presented by the Royal Geographic Society, and by other testimonials; but his best and most enduring record is found in the remarkable acts of a crowded life.

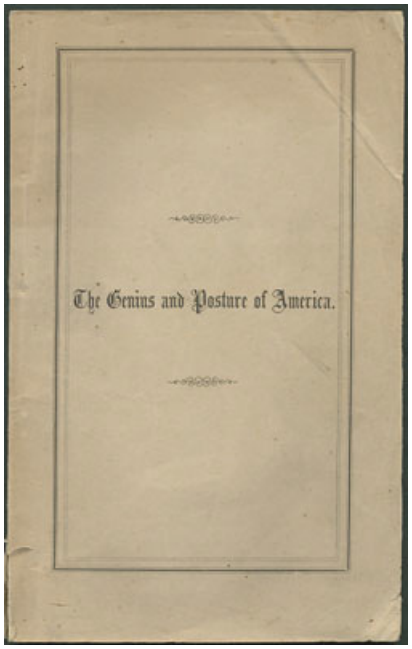
July 4, Tuesday: Former governor of New York William Learned Marcy died in Ballston Spa at the age of 70.

As depicted in the 2002 Martin Scorsese movie "Gangs of New York," federal troops ended a New-York gang brawl in lower Manhattan after 8 of the 1,000 participants were lying dead.

Stepping to the beat of a different drummer, big city style.

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered an oration before the citizens of Boston on the topic of "The genius and posture of America," which met with disfavor in the Legislature because of its bold treatment of the slavery issue. (This oration would soon be published by the office of the Daily Bee, but the Legislature would not issue its customary vote of thanks and would withhold funds for its normal publication until, in 1864 in the midst of civil war, it would become obvious even to legislators that the Reverend's remarks had been appropriate — then in 1864 it would be issued in the normal way, by the firm of J.E. Farwell and Company, Printers to the City, as THE GENIUS AND POSTURE OF AMERICA: AN ORATION DELIVERED BEFORE THE CITIZENS

OF BOSTON, JULY 4, 1857 / BY WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER; WITH PREFACE AND APPENDIX.)



At the Navy Yard in Boston, the frigate *Vermont* was somewhat damaged by fire when a flying flaming wad hit its hull. (This flying flaming wad come from a cannon salute — it had **not** been fired from the mouth of the above reverend orator.)

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY

1858

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger provided an introduction for the Reverend James Martineau's STUDIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

STUDIES OF CHRISTIANITY

The Reverend's HISTORY OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST was printed in Boston for the American Unitarian Association.

HISTORY OF THE CROSS

September 29: Philip Rounseville Alger was born at Boston.

September 29, Wednesday: Fine weather. P. M.–To White Pond.
One or two myrtle-birds in their fall dress, with brown head and shoulders, two whitish bars on wings, and bright-yellow rump. Sit on Clamshell, looking up the smooth stream. Two blue herons, or "herns," as Goodwin calls them, fly sluggishly up the stream. Interesting even is a stake, with its reflection, left standing in the still river by some fisherman.
Again we have smooth waters, yellow foliage, and faint warbling birds, etc., as in spring. The year thus repeats itself. Catch some of those little fuzzy gnats dancing in the air there over the shelly bank, and these are black, with black plumes, unlike those last seen over the Cassandra Pond.
Brushed a spectrum, ghost-horse, off my face in a birch wood, by the J.P. Brown cold Heart-Leaf Pond. Head somewhat like a striped snake.

That pond is drier than I ever saw it, perhaps.[5]–all but a couple of square rods in the middle, – and now covered with cyperus, etc. The mud is cracked into large polygonal figures of four to six sides and six to twelve inches across, with cracks a half to three quarters of an inch wide.
No, have seen it so before. See what must be a solitary tattler feeding by the water's edge, and it has tracked the mud all about. It cannot be the Tringa pectoralis, for it has no conspicuous white chin, nor black dashes on the throat, nor brown on the back and wings, and I think I see the round white spots on its wings. It has not the white on wing of the peetweet, yet utters the peetweet note! – short and faint, not protracted, and not the "sharp whistle" that Wilson speaks of.
The lespedeza leaves are all withered and ready to fall in the frosty hollows near Nut Meadow, and [in] the swamps the ground is already strewn with the first maple leaves, concealing the springiness of the soil, and many plants are prostrate there, November-like. High up in Nut Meadow, the very brook–push aside the half-withered grass which (the farmer disdaining to cut it) conceals it–is as cool as a spring, being near its sources.
Take perhaps our last bath in White Pond for the year. Half a dozen F. hyemalis about. Looking toward the sun, some fields reflect a light sheen from low webs of gossamer which thickly cover the stubble and grass.
On our way, near the Hosmer moraine, let off some pasture thistle-down. One steadily rose from my hand, freighted with its seed, till it was several hundred feet high, and then passed out of sight eastward. Its down was particularly spreading or open. Is not here a hint to balloonists? Astronomers can calculate the orbit of that thistle-down called the comet, now in the northwest sky, conveying its nucleus, which may not be so solid as a thistle's seed, somewhither, but what astronomer can calculate the orbit of my thistle-down and tell where it will deposit its precious freight at last? It may still be travelling when I am sleeping.
Some Lobelia inflata leaves peculiar hoary-white.

October 3, Sunday: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered an address at the funeral of the Reverend Stephen Lovell. (This would soon be printed in Boston as ADDRESS AT THE FUNERAL OF REV. STEPHEN LOVELL, OCT. 3, 1858 ... WITH AN OBITUARY NOTICE OF THE SAME BY WINSLOW LEWIS, by the firm of John Wilson and Son.)

October 3: One brings me this morning a Carolina rail alive, this year's bird evidently from its marks. He saved it from a cat in the road near the Battle-Ground. On being taken up, it pecked a little at first, but was soon quiet. It staggers about as if weak on my windowsill and pecks at the glass, or stands with its eyes shut, half asleep, and its back feathers hunched up. Possibly it is wounded. I suspect it may have been hatched here. Its feet are large and spreading, qualifying it to run on mud or pads. Its crown is black, but chin white, and its back feathers are distinctly edged with white in streaks. I compare my hazelnuts gathered some time ago. The beaked are pointed nuts, while the common are blunt; and the former are a much paler brown, also have a yellower and much sweeter meat.

CAT

A fringed gentian, plucked day before yesterday, at length, this forenoon, untwists and turns its petals partially, in my chamber.
Have noticed a very brilliant scarlet blackberry patch within a week.
The red maples which changed first, along the river, are now faded and partly fallen. They look more pink. But others are lit, and so there is more color than before. Some particular maple among a hundred will be of a peculiarly bright and pure scarlet, and, by its difference of tint and intenser color, attract our eyes even at a distance in the midst of the crowd. Looking all around Fair Haven Pond yesterday, where the maples were glowing amid the evergreens, my eyes invariably rested on a particular small maple of the purest and intensest scarlet.
P. M.–Paddle about Walden.
As I go through the Cut, I discover a new locality for the crotalaria, being attracted by the pretty blue-black pods, now ripe and dangling in profusion from these low plants, on the bare sandy and gravelly slope of the Cut. The vines or plants are but half a dozen times longer (or higher) than the pods. It was the contrast of these black pods with the yellowish sand which betrayed them.
How many men have a fatal excess of manner! There was one came to our house the other evening, and behaved very simply and well till the moment he was passing out the door. He then suddenly put on the airs of a well-bred man, and consciously described some arc of beauty or other with his head or hand. It was but a slight flourish, but it has put me on the alert.
It is interesting to consider how that crotalaria spreads itself, sure to find out the suitable soil. One year I find it

5.I The black oak acorns also slightly marked thus.

on the Great Fields and think it rare; the next I find it in a new and unexpected place. It flits about like a flock of sparrows, from field to field.

The maples about Walden are quite handsome now. Standing on the railroad, I look across the pond to Pine Hill, where the outside trees and the shrubs scattered generally through the wood glow through the green, yellow, and scarlet, like fires just kindled at the base of the trees, – a general conflagration just fairly under way, soon to envelop every tree. The hillside forest is all aglow along its edge and in all its cracks and fissures, and soon the flames will leap upward to the tops of the tallest trees. About the pond I see maples of all their tints, and black birches (on the southwest side) clear pale yellow; and on the peak young chestnut clumps and walnuts are considerably yellowed.

I hear, out toward the middle, or a dozen rods from me, the plashing made apparently by the shiners, – for they look and shine like them, – leaping in schools on the surface. Many lift themselves quite out for a foot or two, but most rise only part way out, – twenty black points at once. There are several schools indulging in this sport from time to time as they swim slowly along. This I ascertain by paddling out to them. Perhaps they leap and dance in the water just as gnats dance in the air at present. I have seen it before in the falL Is it peculiar to this season?

Hear a hylodes peeping on shore.

A general reddening now of young and scrub oaks. Some chinquapin bright-red. White pines fairly begin to change. The large leaves of some black oak sprouts are dark-purple, almost blackish, above, but greenish beneath. See locust leaves all crisped by frost in Laurel Glen Hollow, but only part way up the bank, as on the shore of a lake.

1859

At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: "Viasa; Mahabharata, *apud* William Rounseville Alger's Oriental Poetry. Plotinus; Apuleius."

POETRY OF THE ORIENT

June 5, Sunday: Waldo Emerson subscribed $5.00 to a fund for Harriet Tubman the slave stealer, and why not? In her peculiarly guiltfree way, **she was getting rid of our black people**, and didn't all Americans want to rid themselves of the black people?

On this day and the following one, John Brown would be in New-York.

In Boston, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered an discourse entitled "Lessons for mankind, from the life and death of Humboldt" at the Bulfinch Street Church. (This would soon be published in Cambridge by Welch, Bigelow, and Company as Pamphlet #7 in a series on Louis Agassiz, entitled LESSONS FOR MANKIND, FROM THE LIFE AND DEATH OF HUMBOLDT, A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED IN THE BULFINCH STREET CHURCH, JUNE 5, 1859. BY WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER.)


June 5, Sunday: P.M.–To Ball's Hill.
Cat-briar in flower, how long? Allium not out.
See several ducks, I think both summer and black.
A yellowbird's nest; four eggs, developed. Pigeon woodpecker's nest in a hollow black willow over river; six eggs, almost hatched.
The new white maple leaves look reddish, and at a distance brown, as if they had not put out yet.

December 22,Thursday: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered an oration before the Reverend Theodore Parker's Fraternity in the Boston Music Hall, entitled "The historic purchase of freedom." (This would soon be published in Boston by the firm of Walker, Wise & Company as THE HISTORIC PURCHASE OF FREEDOM: AN ORATION DELIVERED BEFORE THE FRATERNITY, IN THE MUSIC HALL, BOSTON, DEC. 22, 1859, THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS AT PLYMOUTH.)

A country doctor and astronomy buff named Lescarbault of the village of Orgeres in France notified astronomical authorities that he had seen a round black spot, a planet, cross the upper one-fourth of the diameter of the face of the sun, on an upward-slanting path, for over an hour and a quarter. (The doctor would be awarded the French Legion of Honor and the new planet would be given the name Vulcan. There is, however, no such planet.)

SKY EVENT


December 22: Another fine winter day.
P.M.–To Flint's Pond.
C. is inclined to walk in the road, it being better walking there, and says: "You don't wish to see anything but the sky to-day and breathe this air. You could walk in the city to-day, just as well as in the country. You only wish to be out." This was because I inclined to walk in the woods or by the river.

As we passed under the elm beyond George Heywood's, I looked up and saw a fiery hangbird's nest dangling over the road. What a reminiscence of summer, a fiery hangbird's nest dangling from an elm over the road when perhaps the thermometer is down to -20 (?), and the traveller goes beating his arms beneath it! It is hard to recall the strain of that bird then.

We pause and gaze into the Mill Brook on the Turnpike bridge. C. says that in Persia they call the ripple-marks on sandy bottoms "chains" or "chain-work." I see a good deal of cress there, on the bottom, for a rod or two, the only green thing to be seen. No more slimy than it usually is beneath the water in summer. Is not this the plant which most, or most conspicuously, preserves its greenness in the winter? Is it not now most completely in its summer state of any plant? So far as the water and the mud and the cress go, it is a summer scene. It is green as ever, and waving in the stream as in summer.

How nicely is Nature adjusted! The least disturbance of her equilibrium is betrayed and corrects itself. As I looked down on the surface of the brook, I was surprised to see a leaf floating, as I thought, up the stream, but I was mistaken. The motion of a particle of dust on the surface of any brook far inland shows which way the earth declines toward the sea, which way lies the constantly descending route, and the only one.

I see in the chestnut woods near Flint's Pond where squirrels have collected the small chestnut burs left on the trees and opened them, generally at the base of the trunks on the snow. These are, I think, all small and imperfect burs, which do not so much as open in the fall and are rejected then, but, hanging on the tree, they have this use at least, as the squirrels' winter food.

Three men are fishing on Flint's Pond, where the ice is seven or eight inches thick. I look back to the wharf rock shore and see that rush (cladium I have called it), the warmest object in the landscape, – a narrow line of warm yellow rushes – for they reflect the western light, – along the edge of the somewhat snowy pond and next the snow-clad and wooded shore. This rush, which is comparatively inconspicuous in the summer, becomes thus in the winter afternoons a conspicuous and interesting object, lit up by the westering sun.

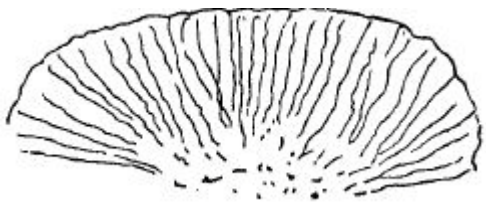
The fisherman stands erect and still on the ice, awaiting our approach, as usual forward to say that he has had no luck. He has been here since early morning, and for some reason or other the fishes won't bite. You won't catch him here again in a hurry. They all tell the same story. The amount of it is he has had "fisherman's luck," and if you walk that way you may find him at his old post to-morrow. It is hard, to be sure, – four little fishes to be divided between three men, and two and a half miles to walk; and you have only got a more ravenous appetite for the supper which you have not earned. However, the pond floor is not a bad place to spend a winter day.

On what I will call Sassafras Island, in this pond, I notice the largest and handsomest high blueberry bush that I ever saw, about ten feet high. It divides at the ground into four stems, all very large and the largest three inches in diameter (one way) at three feet high, and at the ground, where they *seem* to form one trunk (at least *grown* together), nine inches in diameter. These stems rise upward, spreading a little in their usual somewhat zigzag manner, and are very handsomely clothed with large gray and yellow lichens with intervals of the (*smoothish*? and) finely divided bark. The bark is quite reddish near the ground. The top, which is spreading and somewhat flattish or corymbose, consists of a great many fine twigs, which give it a thick and dark appearance against the sky compared with the more open portion beneath. It was perfectly sound and vigorous.

In a (apparently kingbird's?) nest on this island I saw three cherry-stones, as if it had carried home this fruit to its young. It was, outside, of gnaphalium and saddled on a low limb. Could it have been a cherry-bird?

The cladium (?) retains its seeds over the ice, little conical, sharp-pointed, flat-based, dark-brown, shining seeds. I notice some seeds left on a large dock, but see none of parsnips or other umbelliferous plants.

The furrows in the snow on the hillsides look somewhat like this:–



REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1860

June 3, Sunday: At the church on Bullfinch Street in Boston, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered a commemorative discourse on the Reverend Theodore Parker. (The Reverend Parker had just died in Italy, and his brain and heart had been removed and were on its way back to the USA in two boxes entrusted to a sailor. The box containing the brain would soon arrive on the doorstep of Julia Ward Howe without anything to indicate what the hell it was that was in the box — and for lack of anything better to do with it she would shove the grisly object into the back of a closet. This commemorative discourse by the Reverend Alger, however, would fare better: it would soon be published in Boston by the firm of Walker, Wise and Company as A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY AND SERVICES OF THE REV. THEODORE PARKER: FROM A DISCOURSE PRONOUNCED IN THE BULLFINCH-STREET CHURCH, BOSTON, JUNE 3, 1860.) Henry Thoreau did not make an appearance.

June 3. 6 A.M.—River three and three sixteenth inches above summer level; i.e., the river has begun to fall within twenty-four hours and less after the rain ceased.
2 P. M.—To bayberry.
These are the clear breezy days of early June, when the leaves are young and few and the sorrel not yet in its prime. Perceive the meadow fragrance.
Am surprised to [see] some twenty or more crows in a flock still, cawing about us.
The roads now strewn with red maple seed. The pines' shoots have grown generally from three to six inches, and begin to make a distinct impression, even at some distance, of white and brown above their dark green. The foliage of deciduous trees is still rather yellow-green than green.
There are in the Boulder Field several of the creeping juniper which grow quite flat on the ground, somewhat like the empetrum, most elevated in the middle.
Not only brakes, many of them tall, and branching two feet at least from the ground, have their branches nibbled off, but the carrion-flower has very commonly lost its leaves, either by rabbits or woodchucks.
Tree-toads heard. See a common toad three quarters of an inch long.
There are various sweet scents in the air now. Especially, as I go along an arbor-vitæ hedge, I perceive a very distinct fragrance like strawberries from it.

1861

The Unitarian Reverend Henry Whitney Bellows planned the United States Sanitary Commission, the major source of spiritual and physical aid for wounded Union soldiers during and after the American Civil War. He would become the Commission's only president.

A new edition of the Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE POETRY OF THE ORIENT, OR METRICAL SPECIMENS OF THE THOUGHT, SENTIMENT, AND FANCY OF THE EAST, PREFACED BY AN ELABORATE DISSERTATION (originally published in Boston in 1856). –Also, his A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE, with a bibliography by Ezra Abbot comprising some 5,000 titles. –Also, his THE GENIUS OF SOLITUDE; OR THE LONELINESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

Since his shortness (he was 5 foot 2) and poor eyesight were keeping him from being accepted into the military, in this year or the following one the Reverend Horatio Alger, Jr. would accept a position as the Unitarian pastor of the 1st Parish Church in Brewster. The ordination sermon would be delivered by the Reverend Edward Everett Hale.

April 21, Sunday: On the Sunday after the surrender of Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor,[6] the Reverend Moncure Daniel Conway led his congregation in the singing of the Star Spangled Banner.[7]

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered "A historic sketch of the Bulfinch Street society." (This would be published in this year in Boston as A HISTORIC SKETCH OF THE BULFINCH STREET SOCIETY: A DISCOURSE DELIVERED APRIL 21, 1861.)

 April 21, Sunday. Pratt collects very handsome tufts of Hepatica triloba in flower at Melrose, and the bloodroot out also there.

April 28, Sunday: At the church on Bulfinch Street in Boston, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered a sermon on "Our civil war, as seen from the pulpit." (This would soon be published in Boston as OUR CIVIL WAR, AS SEEN FROM THE PULPIT: A SERMON, PREACHED IN THE BULFINCH-STREET CHURCH, APRIL 28, 1861).

[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR APRIL 28TH]

July 12, Friday: Annie Langdon Alger was born at Swampscott.

6. Since the guns at Fort Sumter pointed out to sea, it was of marginal value as a military asset in any attack upon the South. Fundamentally, the two military presences in Charleston harbor were playing a mere game of "King of the Hill" with each other. This was an object lesson in how military commanders can utilize provocations and maneuvers to preempt national political policy.
7. This was an object lesson in how Protestant churches can flip-flop from religious peace in times of national peace to religious war in times of national war, an object lesson which is of incalculable assistance to us in comprehending what happened in Protestant churches in Germany under the Third Reich.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

September 4, Wednesday: The infant Annie Langdon Alger died. Friend Daniel Ricketson's journal:

HENRY THOREAU
WALDO EMERSON
EDMUND HOSMER
ELLERY CHANNING

Clear and fine, walked to Walden Pond with mr. Thoreau, bathed; on our way called on Mr. Emerson; walked this P.M. with T. to Mr. Edmund Hosmer's farm, Mr. H. with us from the post-office. Saw Channing in the street, but no word between us, I not knowing how he would meet me if I addressed him. Took tea at Mrs. Brooke's, returned to Mr. T.'s at 7 $^{1}/_{2}$, walked alone on the hill beyond the bridge by the Wheeler farm, talked with T. till 9 1/2. Clear, fine evening.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1862

January 1, Wednesday, Election Day: Waldo Emerson lectured on war at Concord. Sophia Peabody Hawthorne was in the audience and unsympathetically reported a "Furious wind."

In Boston on this Election Day the Reverend William Rounseville Alger had the honor of delivering the day's official sermon and chose the topic "Public morals, or, The true glory of a state." (This would be printed in this year by the firm of W. White, printer to the state, as PUBLIC MORALS, OR, THE TRUE GLORY OF A STATE. A DISCOURSE DELIVERED BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS, AT THE ANNUAL ELECTION, WEDNESDAY, JAN. 1, 1862. BY REV. WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER.)

Bronson Alcott wrote about Henry Thoreau in his journal (JOURNALS. Boston MA: Little, Brown, 1938, page 343):

> *To Thoreau, and spend the evening, sat to find him failing and feeble. He is talkative, however; is interested in books and men, in our civil troubles especially, and speaks impatiently of what he calls the temporizing policy of our rulers; blames the people too for their indifferency to the true issues of national honor and justice. Even Seward's letter to Earl Grey respecting Mason's and Liddell's case, comforting as it is to the country and serving as a foil to any hostile designs of England for the time at least, excites his displeasure as seeming to be humiliating to us, and dishonorable. We talk of Pliny, whose books he is reading with delight. Also of Evelyn and the rural authors. If not a writer of verse, Thoreau is a poet in spirit, and has come as near to the writing of pastorals as any poet of his time. Were his days not numbered, and his adventures in the wild world once off his hands, then he might come to orchards and gardens, perhaps treat these in manner as masterly, uniting the spirit of naturalist and poet in his page. But the most he may hope for is to prepare his manuscripts for others' editing, and take his leave of them and us.*
> *I fear he has not many months to abide here, and the spring's summons must come for him soon to partake of "Syrian peace,*

PLINY

immortal leisure."

Edward P. Brownson and Elizabeth Brownson wrote to James M. Stone suggesting a lecture date.[8]

George Barrell Cheever (1807-1890) wrote from New-York to _____, expressing a desire to arrange a lecture in Boston.

William Lloyd Garrison wrote from Boston to Charles Wesley Slack, agreeing to speak on the subject suggested.

James Henry Lane (1814-1866) sent a telegram from Washington DC to James M. Stone, declining invitation to speak in Boston.

James Henry Lane (1814-1866) wrote from Washington DC to James M. Stone, giving details of why he would be unable to speak in Boston as requested.

Benjamin Franklin Wade (1800-1878) wrote from Washington DC to James M. Stone, informing that he would be unable to lecture to the Emancipation League.

January 26, Sunday: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered a tribute to Moses Grant, a Boston Unitarian. (This would be published in this year in Boston as GOOD SAMARITAN IN BOSTON; A TRIBUTE TO MOSES GRANT, DELIVERED JAN. 26, 1862).

April 19, Saturday: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger wrote Charles Wesley Slack to decline his invitation, because of a speaking engagement in East Boston.

8. Stimpert, James. A GUIDE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CHARLES WESLEY SLACK MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION: 1848-1885. Kent State University, Library, Special Collections

May 9, Friday: In preparing the body, they had placed a wreath of the local Andromeda on its rib cage.

They had missed a fine opportunity: they should also have placed in the body's hand that sprig of wild American crab-apple *Malus angustifolia*, that our guy had just traveled so far to recover.
Against the better judgment of surviving members of the family, Waldo Emerson had insisted that the 3PM

funeral service be staged at the 1st Parish Church of Concord from which Henry David Thoreau had resigned. (The Unitarians got him at last.) H.G.O. Blake and Theophilus Brown came from Worcester. The Unitarian reverend who had been the 1st person to plunk down one dollar and purchase a copy of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger, came out to Concord from Boston specifically to attend (this reverend would demean him as "constantly feeling himself, reflecting himself, fondling himself, reverberating himself, exalting himself, incapable of escaping or forgetting himself"). Nathaniel Hawthorne attended. The Emersons had invited James T. and Annie Fields to their home for dinner. At the funeral, at which the Reverend Grindall Reynolds officiated, Waldo, being the sort of person who can find a way to turn a profit even in the death of a friend, used the opportunity to deliver himself of a judgmental lecture singularly unsuitable as a remembrance upon such an occasion, and, on the church steps after the funeral, he cut a deal with his publisher guest James Thomas Fields for its distribution by Ticknor & Fields as "Thoreau."

Ross/Adams commentary

Emerson's charge of Stoicism

What Emerson should have said:

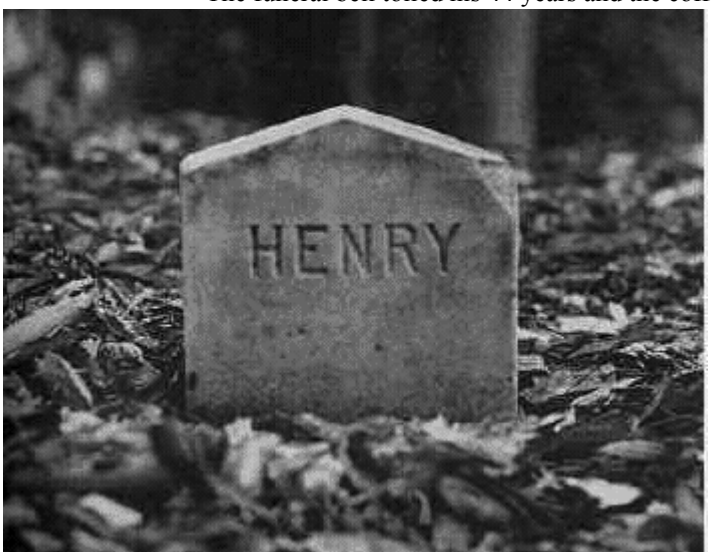
> ***Son of John Thoreau and Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau.***
> ***He helped us to gain our independence,***
> ***instructed us in economy,***
> ***and drew down lightning from the clouds.***

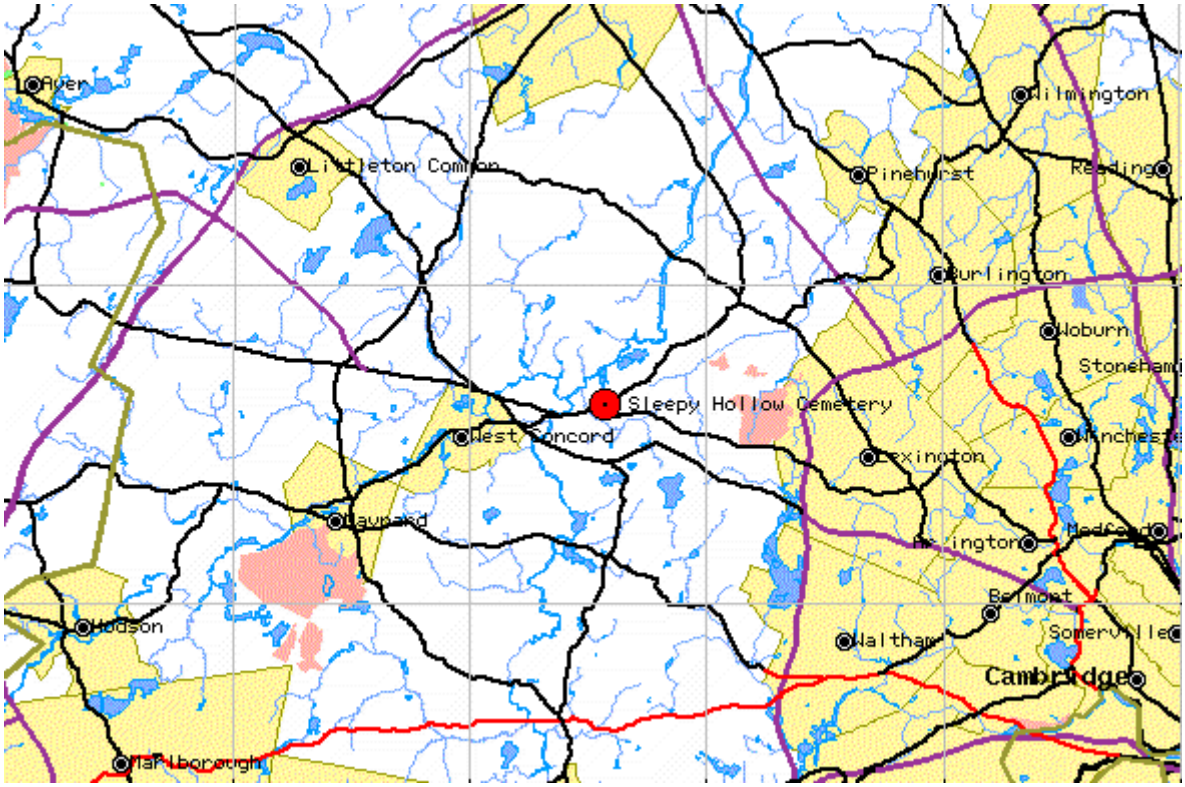
Bronson Alcott, more appropriately, read a few passages from A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS, one of America's first treatises on comparative religion: "Does not that which is within

make that which is without also? May we not **see** God?"

A WEEK: We need pray for no higher heaven than the pure senses can furnish, a **purely** sensuous life. Our present senses are but the rudiments of what they are destined to become. We are comparatively deaf and dumb and blind, and without smell or taste or feeling. Every generation makes the discovery, that its divine vigor has been dissipated, and each sense and faculty misapplied and debauched. The ears were made, not for such trivial uses as men are wont to suppose, but to hear celestial sounds. The eyes were not made for such grovelling uses as they are now put to and worn out by, but to behold beauty now invisible. May we not **see** God? Are we to be put off and amused in this life, as it were with a mere allegory? Is not Nature, rightly read, that of which she is commonly taken to be the symbol merely? When the common man looks into the sky, which he has not so much profaned, he thinks it less gross than the earth, and with reverence speaks of "the Heavens," but the seer will in the same sense speak of "the Earths," and his Father who is in them. "Did not he that made that which is **within**, make that which is **without** also?" What is it, then, to educate but to develop these divine germs called the senses? for individuals and states to deal magnanimously with the rising generation, leading it not into temptation, — not teach the eye to squint, nor attune the ear to profanity. But where is the instructed teacher? Where are the **normal** schools?

The funeral bell tolled his 44 years and the coffin was lowered into a hole in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.[9]





9. Not in the current family plot on Authors Ridge, as in the photo, nor with the current stone. The original stone was red and bore his name and his date of death. When the body was later moved to Authors Ridge, the stone was put with many another stone to be recycled, and used to cover over one or another drainage gutter in the cemetery. It is probably still there somewhere alongside one of the cemetery paths, with its inscription facing downward: “HENRY / MAY 6, 1862.”

Here is how Professor Scott A. Sandage, in BORN LOSERS: A HISTORY OF FAILURE IN AMERICA, would describe the scene of this day:

> The American Dream died young and was laid to rest on a splendid afternoon in May 1862, when blooming apple trees heralded the arrival of spring. At three o'clock, a bell tolled forty-four times, once for each year of a life cut short. Dismissed from school, three hundred children marched to the funeral under the bright sun. Those with luck and pluck would grow up to transform American capitalism during the Gilded Age. But on this day the scent in the air was not wealth, but wildflowers. Violets dotted the grass outside the First Parish Church. The casket in the vestibule bore a wreath of andromeda and a blanket of flowers that perfumed the sanctuary with the sweetness of spring.
>
> Townsfolk and visiting notables crowded in to hear the eulogist admit what many had thought all along: the dearly departed had wasted his gifts. Neither a deadbeat nor a drunkard, he was the worst kind of failure: a dreamer. "He seemed born for greatness ... and I cannot help counting it a fault in him that he had no ambition," the speaker grieved. Rather than an engineer or a great general, "he was the captain of a huckleberry-party." When not picking berries, the deceased had tried his hand at a variety of occupations: teacher, surveyor, pencilmaker, housepainter, mason, farmer, gardener, and writer. Some who congregated that day in Concord, Massachusetts thought it tactless to say such things of Henry Thoreau at his own funeral, however true Mr. Emerson's sermon about his dear friend was: Henry's quirky ambitions hardly amounted to a hill of beans.
>
> Perhaps no one present fully understood what Ralph Waldo Emerson was saying about ambition, least of all the children fidgeting and daydreaming in the pews. Someday they would rise and fall in the world the sermon presaged, where berry picking was a higher crime than bankruptcy. If a man could fail simply by not succeeding or not striving, then ambition was not an opportunity but an obligation. Following the casket to the grave, stooping here and there to collect petals that wafted from it, the children buried more than the odd little man they had seen in the woods or on the street. Part of the American Dream of success went asunder: the part that gave them any choice in the matter.
>
> We live daily with Emerson's disappointment in Thoreau. The promise of America is that nobody is a born loser, but who has never wondered, "Am I wasting my life?" We imagine escaping the mad scramble, yet kick ourselves for lacking drive. Low ambition offends Americans even more than low achievement. How we play the game is the important thing, or so we say. Win or lose, Thoreau taunts us from the dog-eared pages and dogwooded shores of WALDEN: "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." We sprint as much to outrun failure as to catch success. Failure conjures such vivid pictures of lost souls that it is hard to imagine a time, before the Civil War, when the word commonly meant "breaking in business" — going broke. How did it become a name for a deficient self, an identity in the red? Why do we manage identity the way we run a business — by investment, risk,

> profit, and loss? Why do we calculate failure in lost dreams as much as in lost dollars?

In the summation paragraphs to a general derogation of the author and all his works in 1866 (considering Henry, for example, to have led a life that consisted primarily of "fondling himself"), the Reverend William Rounseville Alger would describe this day's procession, bells, funeral, and interment:

> While we walked in procession up to the church, though the bell tolled the forty-four years he had numbered, we could not deem that *he* was dead whose ideas and sentiments were so vivid in our souls. As the fading image of pathetic clay lay before us, strewn with wild flowers and forest sprigs, thoughts of its former occupant seemed blent with all the local landscapes. We still recall with emotion the tributary words so fitly spoken by friendly and illustrious lips. The hands of friends reverently lowered the body of the lonely poet into the bosom of the earth, on the pleasant hillside of his native village, whose prospects will long wait to unfurl themselves to another observer so competent to discriminate their features and so attuned to their moods. And now that it is too late for any further boon amidst his darling haunts below,
>
> There will yet his mother yield
> A pillow in her greenest field,
> Nor the June flowers scorn to cover
> The clay of their departed lover.

Shortly after Henry David Thoreau had been buried, the Emerson family would feel that an adventure in California would assist their son in the slow recovery of his health, and Edward Waldo Emerson would set off on the overland route.

1863

January 1, Thursday: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered the annual election sermon before the Massachusetts Legislature.

Major General John B. Magruder, who had become the Confederate commander of military forces in Texas on November 29, 1862, gave the recapture of Galveston top priority. At 3AM four Confederate gunboats appeared, coming down the bay toward Galveston. Soon afterward, the Rebels commenced a land attack. The Union forces in Galveston were three companies of the 42d Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment under the command of Colonel Isaac S. Burrell. The Confederates captured or killed all of them except for the regiment's adjutant. They also took the *Harriet Lane*, by boarding her, and two barks and a schooner. Commander W.B. Renshaw's flagship, the USS *Westfield*, ran aground when trying to help the *Harriet Lane* and, at 10AM, she was blown up to prevent her capture. Galveston was in Confederate hands again although the Union blockade would limit commerce in and out of the harbor. Soon afterward, the Rebels would be commencing a land attack upon the port city.

Congress had enacted in 1861 that all slaves employed against the Union were to be considered free, and in 1862 that all slaves of men who supported the Confederacy were to be considered free. At this point President Abraham Lincoln, who had been dragging his feet, more or less got on board this onrushing train. Having made a preliminary proclamation on September 22, 1862 that emancipation from slavery would become effective, at the turn of the year, in those states which had not renounced their rebelliousness, at this point he made good on his threat by issuing a proclamation of emancipation that had been drafted by a bunch of Washington lawyers.

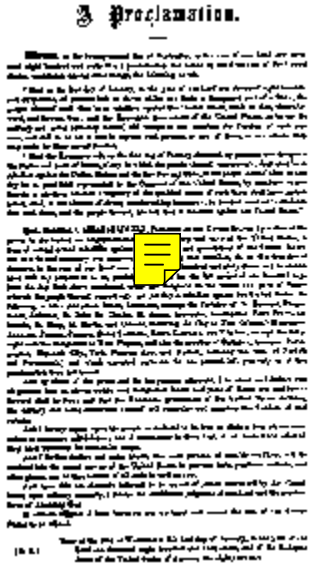
READ THE FULL TEXT

A devout man, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Portland Chase read the BIBLE daily and sought comfort in God for the loss of so many of his wives and so many of his children. When Chase had called to the President's attention that there was no mention of the Deity in the draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln had allowed as a new last line "And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of all mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

At the clock tick which began this year he, as a martial law measure, offered to "emancipate" all those slaves he did not have the power physically to touch, without offering anything at all to any slave whom he did have the power physically to touch. It was a neat trick, especially since we have no reason to suspect that he would have been willing to touch any black person whom he did have the power physically to touch. Although to all appearances he grandly was declaring to be free all slaves residing in territories in rebellion against the federal government, his "Emancipation Proclamation," so called, would turn out to be actually only a temporary martial-law proclamation, which in accordance with the deliberate intention of its careful drafters would free precious few. (I don't know that a head count has ever been conducted, and here suggest that such a count would prove to be alarming if not nauseating.) The proclamation explicitly stated that it did not apply at all to any of the slaves in border states fighting on the Union side; nor would it be of any applicability to slaves in

southern areas already under Union control; nor would it be of any use to any other slaves, since, naturally, the states in rebellion would take no action on Lincoln's order.[10] To avail themselves of this opportunity, slaves would have to vote with their feet. At great risk they would need to make their way across the battle lines into the Northern-controlled territories, where they would need to volunteer for war labor and get their names registered in the emancipation program. Pacifists and noneffectives need not apply.


A Proclamation.

Abraham Lincoln had been quite reluctant to see affairs come even to such a straited pass as this. A believer in white supremacy, he never viewed the war in any other manner than in terms of preserving the Union and his own control as President over the entirety of it. The simple fact was that, as pressure for abolition mounted in Congress and the country, as a practical politician similar to President Richard Milhouse Nixon (who would espouse and finance the Head Start program because of its political popularity although he believed the money was being wasted on children who, because they were black, would be incapable of profiting from the attention and the expenditure), Lincoln was willing to cave in and make himself more responsive. Thus it had come about that:

10. The hypocrisy of this was being well commented on in French newspapers at that time. For a review of this French commentary on the American white hypocrisy, refer to Blackburn, George M. FRENCH NEWSPAPER OPINION ON THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR. Contributions in American History No. 171. Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1997.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS on the 22nd day of September, A.D. 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

> That on the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.
>
> That the executive will on the 1st day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such States shall have participated shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States.

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-In-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for supressing [*sic*??] said rebellion, do, on this 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the first day above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States the following, to wit:

> Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Palquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebone, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Morthhampton [*sic*??], Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all case when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

The federal government's temporary instrument of war allowed that, while human slavery would continue to be tolerated everywhere within its sphere of influence, it would no longer tolerate this practice in any area **not** within said sphere of influence.

Nevertheless, before a black audience in Tremont Temple in Boston, this governmental declaration was read aloud and Frederick Douglass led in the singing of the hymn "Blow ye the trumpet, blow!" William Cooper Nell, President of the sponsoring Union Progressive Association, addressed the group. For this occasion Waldo Emerson composed "Boston Hymn," a poem in which he neatly cut the Gordian Knot of compensation:

> **Pay ransom to the owner**
> **And fill the bag to the brim.**
> **Who is the owner? The slave is the owner,**
> **And ever was. Pay him.**

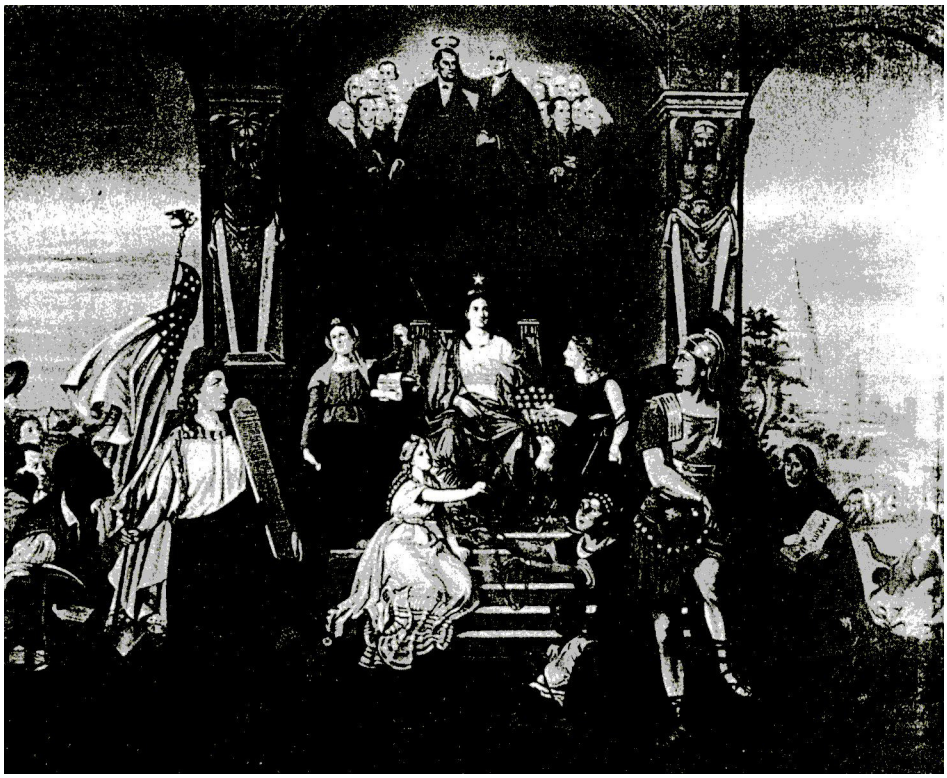
We may imagine that on this occasion hands were shaken all around, with no distinction of color. Imagine then, if you will, the author of this Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln, during one of his many electoral campaigns, reaching down from the stump and grasping the hand of a black man. Do you fancy that this ever happened?

The word "emancipation," after all, comes to us from the Latin *manus*, meaning "hand," and *capio*, meaning "take." When a Roman purchased something, it was considered that the act of purchasing was not complete, either conventionally or legally, until he had grasped it with his hand. If he was purchasing land, he picked up a handful of soil and thereby took title. If he was purchasing a slave, he took hold of the slave and thereby took title.

The power of this *paterfamilias* over his son was, in fact, the same as the power of this man over his slave –

he could execute either one– but there was a legal ceremony by which, when his son became of age, his son could be set free to form his own *familias*. In that ceremony the father took the son by the hand, as if he were taking possession of a slave, but then dropped his son's hand. After he had done this three times in succession, his son was *emancipio*. Emancipation, therefore, had a lot to do with shaking hands. Except during the US Civil War.

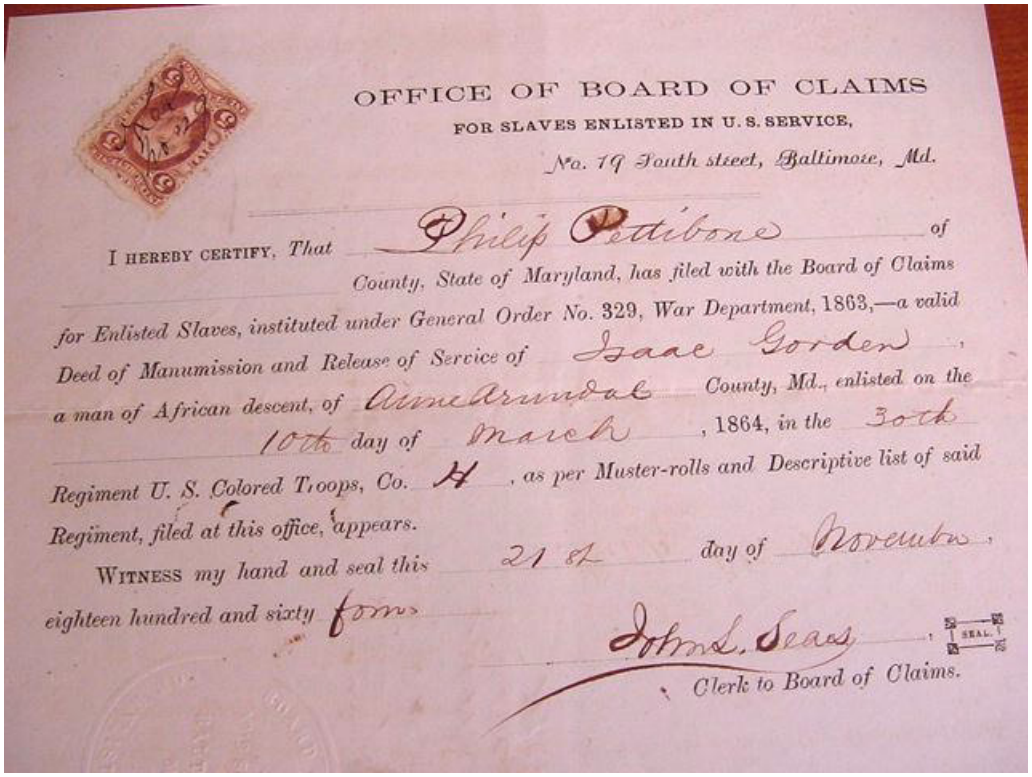
I am leading up to saying that Abraham Lincoln "emancipated" all those slaves he did not have the power physically to touch, but did not emancipate any slave he did have the power physically to touch. It was a neat trick. Here, in this painting, we can see how it was done:



The Emancipation Proclamation was an offer to place names on a list, which persons, should they fulfil the preconditions, would, at the end of the period of hostilities, be granted papers of manumission by the Federal Government. This was a very formal matter. It required prior registration. Whose names were actually so registered? Who actually received such papers of manumission? There should be such a list somewhere, if anyone did initiate or complete this process and if anyone did actually get freedom through this vehicle. Where is that list? How long is it? Does it exist? No, my friend, you've been conned. After a long and bloody civil war which was fought over whether we were going to be one nation state or two rather than over racial issues, we got ourselves out of this holiday from the Commandments in part by a carefully worded temporary martial law measure denominated the Emancipation Proclamation, which had been created by a team of white Washington DC lawyers. Under the terms of that martial law measure, which lapsed as soon as martial law lapsed, if a Southern slave could make it across the battle lines intact, and then perform labor for the Northern armies, and if that Southern slave could arrange to have his or her name recorded as part of the indicated program, as one of its beneficiaries, **then**, and **only** then, could he or she hope that at the successful conclusion

of the war he or she would receive freebie manumission papers from the federal government. Read the fine print, and weep. I don't know how few people managed to avail themselves of this very restricted opportunity, but I do know it must have been very few, and I suspect in fact that it was zero. Perhaps one reason why we don't have a list of the names of people who obtained freedom in this way is embarrassment, at how short or null such a list would prove to be. We don't want to know about such things.

I have come across one such actual named military emancipation from this period. This emancipation did not, however, relate in any way to the Emancipation Proclamation. It related, instead, to a military Board of Claims for Enlisted Slaves which was instituted under General Order No. 329 of the War Department during 1863. Here is the original certification of manumission document, from this Office of the Board of Claims, and it seems to be based on military service that had been rendered by the slave Isaac Gorden as a member of H Company, 30th Regiment. of the U.S. Colored Troops. It includes an order to reimburse the owner of this soldier Isaac Gordon, a man named N. Hammond Esgless. The document reads as follows: "OFFICE OF



OFFICE OF BOARD OF CLAIMS

FOR SLAVES ENLISTED IN U. S. SERVICE,

No. 19 South street, Baltimore, Md.

I HEREBY CERTIFY, That Philip Pettibone of

County, State of Maryland, has filed with the Board of Claims for Enlisted Slaves, instituted under General Order No. 329, War Department, 1863,—a valid Deed of Manumission and Release of Service of Isaac Gorden, a man of African descent, of Anne Arundel County, Md., enlisted on the 10th day of March, 1864, in the 30th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Co. H, as per Muster-rolls and Descriptive list of said Regiment, filed at this office, appears.

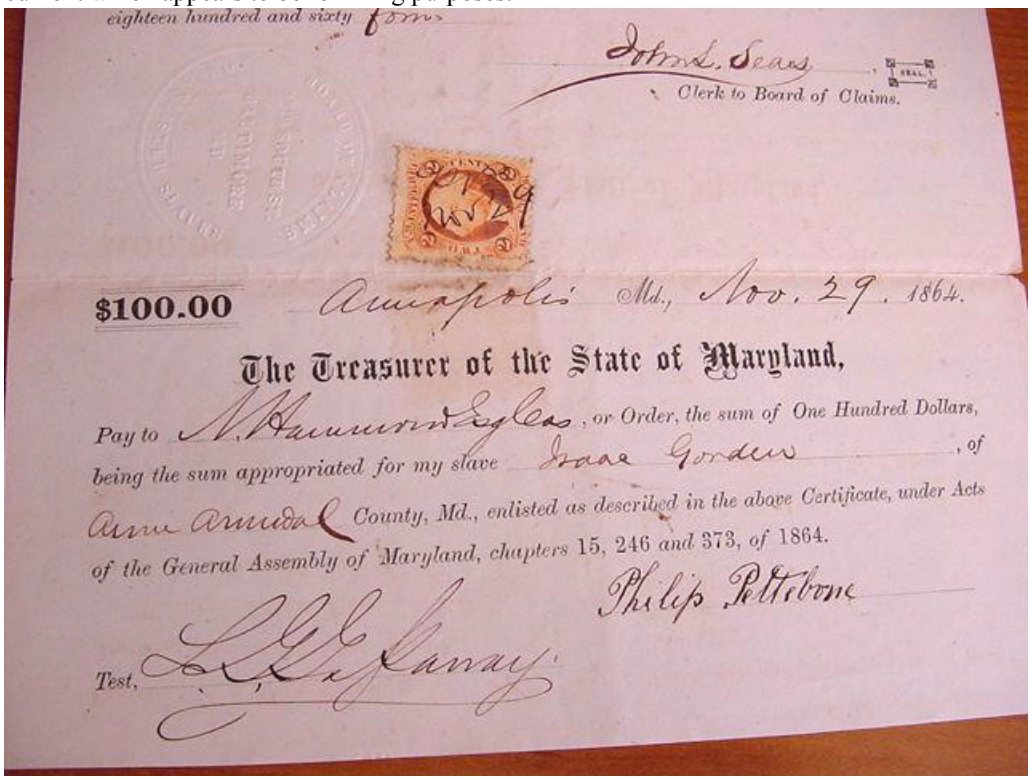
WITNESS my hand and seal this 21st day of November, eighteen hundred and sixty four.

John S. Sears, SEAL.

Clerk to Board of Claims.

BOARD OF CLAIMS for slaves enlisted in U.S. Service, No. 19 South Street, Baltimore, Maryland. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That Philip Pettibone of [blank] county, State of Maryland, has filed with the Board of Claims for Enlisted Slaves, instituted under General Order No. 329, War Department, 1863, - a valid Deed of Manumission and Release of service of Isaac Gorden a man of African decent, of Anne Arundel county, Md., enlisted on the 10th day of March, 1864, in the 30th Regiment U.S. Colored Troops, Co. H, as per Muster-rolls and descriptive list of said Regiment, filed at this office, appears. Witness my hand and seal this 21st. day of November, eighteen hundred and sixty four [signed] John S. Sears, Clerk to Board of Claims." There is an impress seal that says: Board of Claims for Enlisted Slaves No. 19 South St. Baltimore, Md. At the bottom of the document the following appears: "$100.00 Annapolis Md. Nov. 29, 1864. The Treasurer of the State of Maryland, Pay to N. Hammond Esgless, or Order, the sum of One Hundred Dollars, being the sum appropriated for my slave Isaac Gorden, of Anne arundel County, Md. enlisted as described in the above

Certificate, under Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland, chapter 15, 246 and 373, of 1864. [signed] Philip Pettibone Test, [signature illegible]" There are two Revenue stamps, a 5-cent and 2-cent, attached to the document and they are dated "Nov 29." The document has two folds. There is writing on the back of the document which appears to be for filing purposes.



eighteen hundred and sixty four.

Clerk to Board of Claims.

$100.00 Annapolis Md., Nov. 29. 1864.

The Treasurer of the State of Maryland,

Pay to N. Hammond Douglas, or Order, the sum of One Hundred Dollars, being the sum appropriated for my slave Isaac Gordon, of Anne Arundel County, Md., enlisted as described in the above Certificate, under Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland, chapters 15, 246 and 373, of 1864.

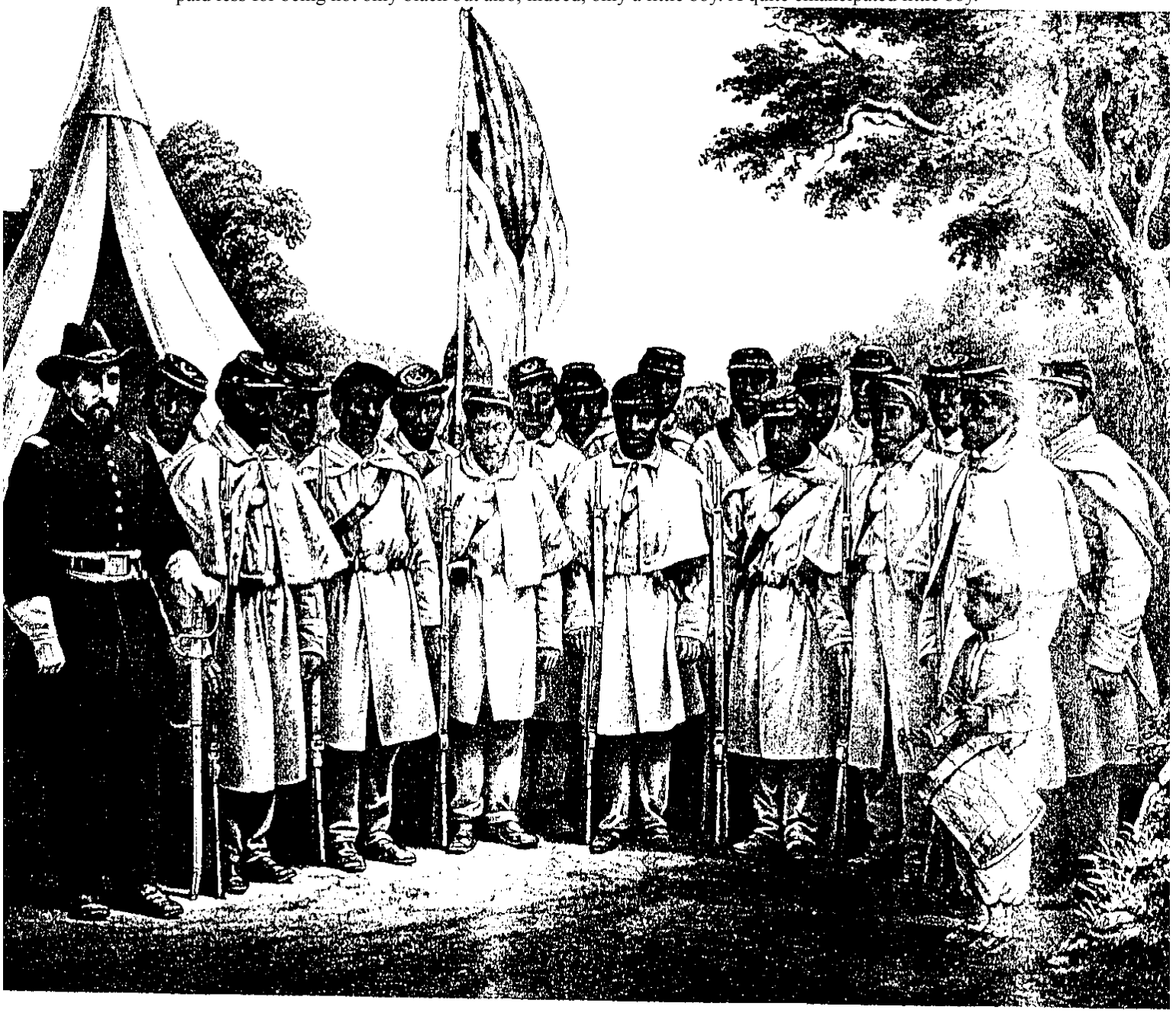
Philip Pettibone

Test, L. L. Lafay

After the Emancipation Proclamation, however, Headman Seattle (See-Ahth of the Susquamish) of the Susquamish, the same "Chief Seattle" who is famous for an environmentalist speech in the manner in which we all should be famous for our environmental speeches, that is, famous for an environmental speech which in fact wasn't made (his actual speech seems to have been about the deep spiritual differences between peoples of widely differing cultures), **did** free his eight Native American slaves.

In this year, the Union army would begin to enlist black soldiers, to serve of course under white officers, of course at a lower rate of pay than white soldiers. Notice this unit's drummer, who was paid at a lower rate still,

paid less for being not only black but also, indeed, only a little boy. A quite emancipated little boy.



The lithograph which pictured this little drummer was based on a daguerreotype made indoors, next door to

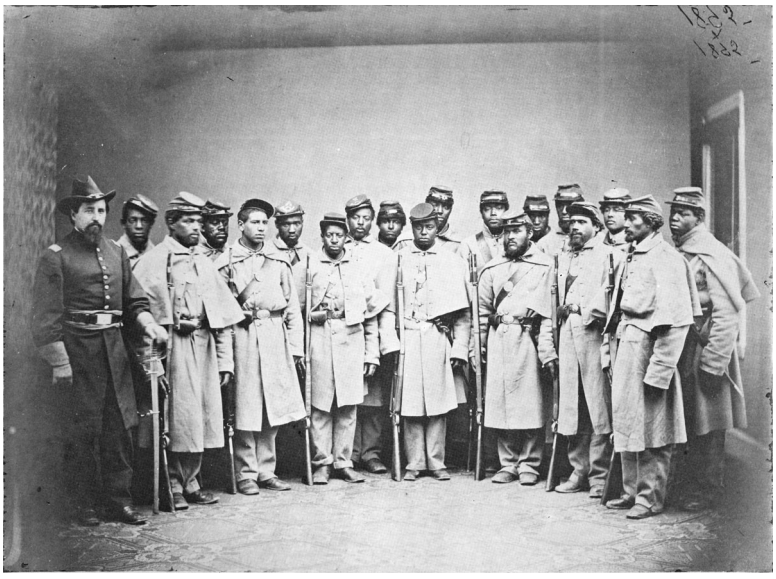
“Roadside”, the country home of Friends James and Lucretia Mott near Philadelphia.

This was a military training camp, on which people were preparing for the task of killing other people, and it was named “Camp William Penn,” after a Quaker pacifist who was being alleged to have given up the wearing

of the sword of nobility, whose favorite punch line went:

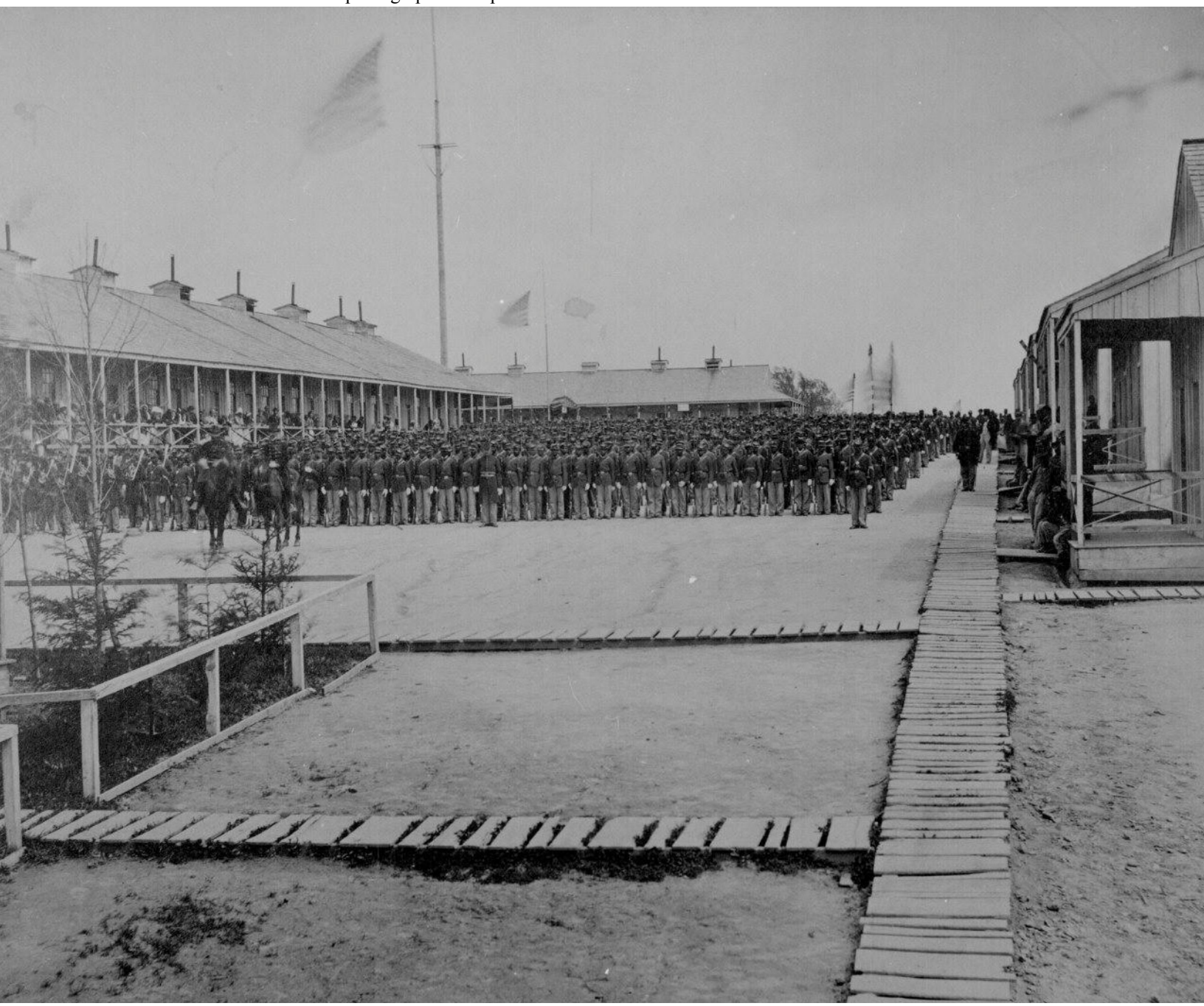
> It is not our ends that justify our means.

The image is a fraud. In the original, there is no flag waving bravely in the background. There is no tent. There is no greenery. There is no little drummer boy flanking to the right. Looking carefully at the fraud, we can see that the countenances of the black men have been sketched on, exaggerating their negroid features in such manner as to emphasize, that the important thing which we are to grasp about these Union soldiers, is their ethnicity.



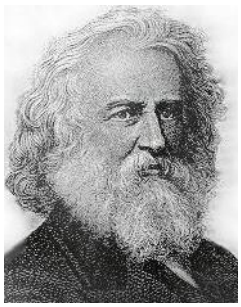
Here is a real photograph of Camp William Penn. As you can clearly see, a waving flag looks quite a bit

different in a real photograph of the period!



The irony of this seems rather heavy. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, as his contribution to the recruitment campaign for the war (what if they gave a war and nobody came?), the immortal patriotic doggerel

"one if by day, and two if by night."[11]



Frederick Douglass traveled through the cities of the North, recruiting black men to serve the Union Army. His son Lewis, age 22, and his son Charles Remond, age 19, were among the first to enlist. But the Union armies were routinely returning runaways to their owners. General McClellan ordered that slave rebellions were to be put down "with an iron hand." But there were **so many** runaways. Finally, in Virginia, a Union general who believed in slavery, Benjamin Butler, began to declare them "contraband of war" and put them to work. Although Abraham Lincoln had twice disciplined Union generals who had freed slaves, putting slaves to work was something the President could accept, and the result was the Confiscation Act.

Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson described a celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation at Camp Saxton on one of the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina, that had been occupied by Northern black

11. Well, at least that was the way Gerald Ford's teleprompter had it, when he gave the keynote address at the Concord Bicentennial Celebration of April 19, 1975 at the Old North Bridge. And perhaps no poet has been parodied more: it's all because, while he was at Bowdoin College in 1822 with author-to-be Nathaniel Hawthorne (still Hathorne) and president-to-be Franklin Pierce, he was accustomed to play whist without a helmet.

[Acting on a news story about ex-Presidents selling their autographs, I have sent a copy of this page to ex-President Gerald Rudolph Ford, along with a $1.$\underline{00}$ bill and a reminder that in the era in question a dollar bill was worth almost precisely what a C-note is worth today, and asked if he could in good humor initial below:

X _____]

Longfellow's thing about "one if by land, and two if by sea" was of course inaccurate in that the Atlantic Ocean didn't ever get involved. The militia's concern was whether the regular troops stabled in Boston were going to march down the Neck and through Roxbury, or first row themselves across the Charles River so they could march through Cambridge. In quoting Longfellow before the Concordians on April 19, 1975 as having said "one if by day, and two if by night," Former President Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr., seems to me to have been saying something very Thoreauvian to these people, he was almost saying:

> Look, this history stuff you have been passing off is drivel, and besides, you aren't at all like your ancestors. For one thing your ancestors didn't worship themselves, the way you worship yourselves through your ancestors. For another thing, it's way past time you people got busy and did something for others, rather than wanting other people to come around and make your bacon for you. Would you look at this dump, you're turning Concord into a damned tourist trap! By creatively "misquoting" this poem, I'm going to show you how little it, and you, are worth in the great scheme of things.

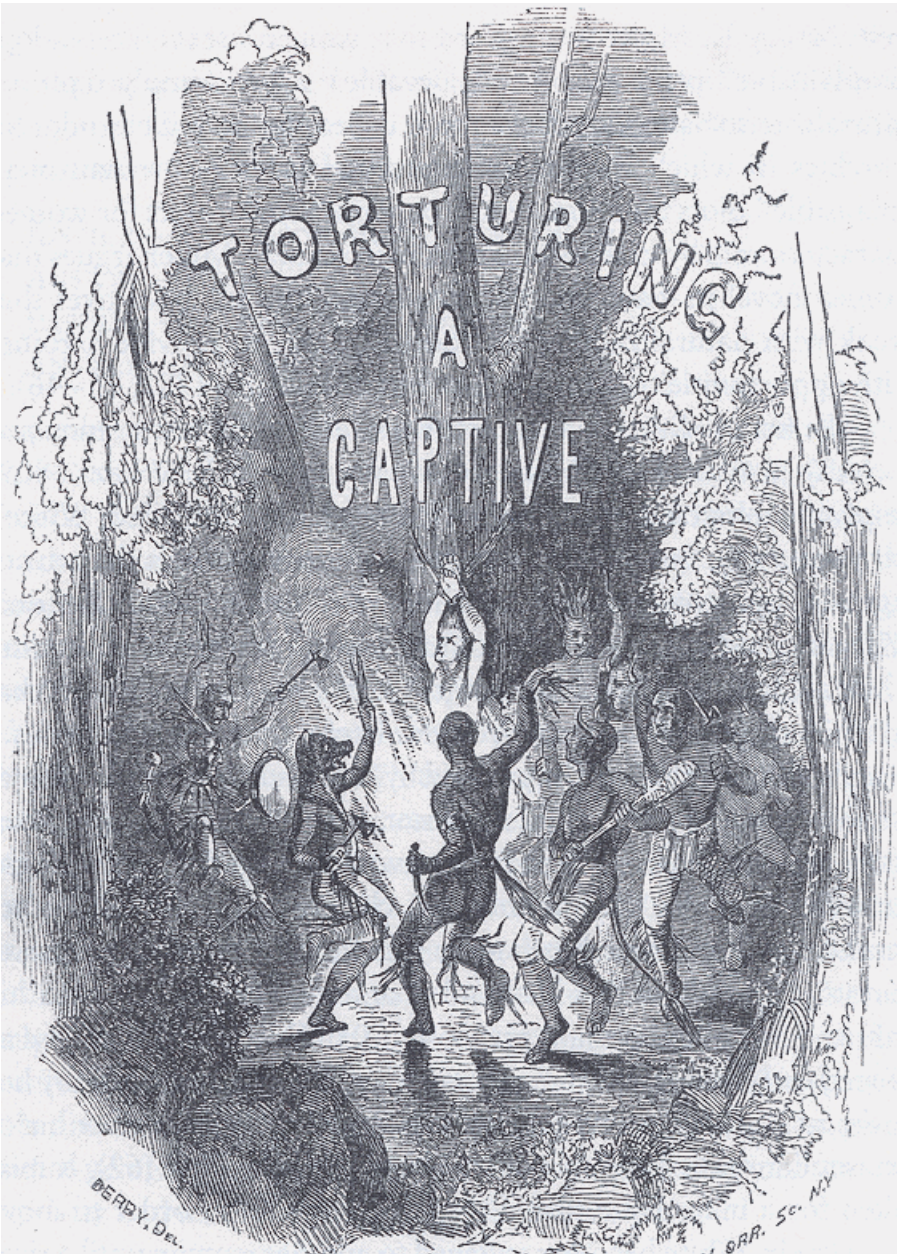
troops and were being protected by the ships of the US Navy.

> The services began at half past eleven o'clock, with a prayer.... Then the President's Proclamation was read.... Then the colors were presented.... Then followed an incident so touching, so utterly unexpected and startling, that I can scarcely believe it on recalling, though it gave the keynote to the whole day. The very moment the speaker had ceased, and just as I took and waved the flag, which now for the first time meant anything to these poor people, there suddenly arose, close beside the platform, a strong male voice (but rather cracked and elderly), into which two women's voices instantly blended, singing as if by an impulse that could no more be repressed than the morning note of the song-sparrow. —
>
> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

After the ceremony the white officers visited a nearby plantation and viewed the instruments of torture still lying in the local slave-jail.

REV. W.R. ALGER

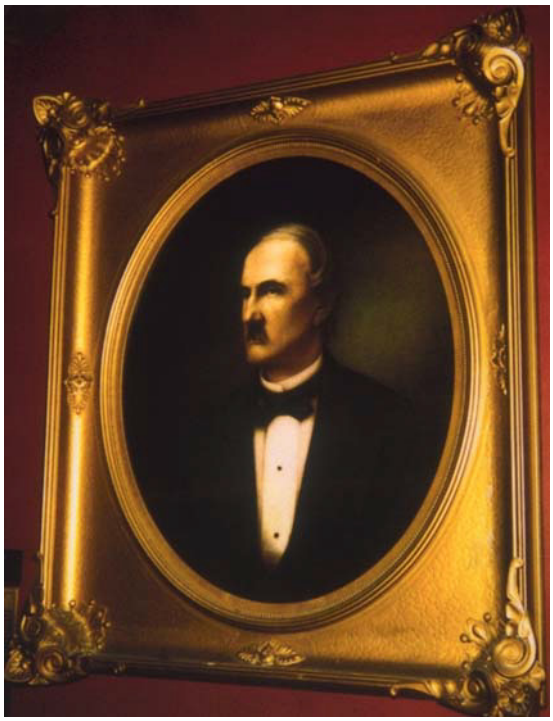
REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER



In Beaufort, South Carolina, the Reverend Dr. William Henry Brisbane, the Union officer in charge of auctioning off the lands and structures of the former slave plantations of the district, read the Emancipation Proclamation aloud to thousands of freedmen.

General John Pope sent General Henry Hastings Sibley and General Alfred Sully onto the Dakota reservation in Minnesota, to hunt down the remaining tribespeople and get them off their land so it could be divided into

farm acreage for white people.



(Early in this year, Stephen Grover Cleveland, a future president, was 26 years of age and it was time to serve his country — so he hired a man to serve in his stead. He was just as much a draft dodger, in his era, as William J. Clinton and George W. Bush, in our own era!)

1864

I have a reference to the Reverend William Rounseville Alger's A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE: WITH A COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE SUBJECT as being issued in Philadelphia in this year by the publishing firm of George W. Childs. Elsewhere I have a reference to this book as an 1861 publication. (Would one or the other data entry be in error, or could this year's simply be a follow-on edition of this crowdpleasing literature?)

ALGER'S FUTURE LIFE

During this year the Massachusetts Legislature belatedly issued its vote of thanks (unanimous) to the Reverend for his 1857 4th-of-July oration that had dealt presciently with the issue of human slavery, and the firm of J. E. Farwell and Company, Printers to the City of Boston, was authorized finally to issue the Reverend's THE GENIUS AND POSTURE OF AMERICA. AN ORATION DELIVERED BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON, JULY 4, 1857, BY WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER.

September 12, Monday: Henry Lodge Alger, when nearly fitted for college, died. (The record is silent as to the manner of this young man's death. In the following year his father William Rounseville Alger would put out an enlarged 2d edition of his 1856 THE POETRY OF THE ORIENT, OR METRICAL SPECIMENS OF THE THOUGHT, SENTIMENT, AND FANCY OF THE EAST, PREFACED BY AN ELABORATE DISSERTATION, dedicated "To the dear and pure memory of my dead boy, Henry Lodge Alger, who loved many things in this book.")

POETRY OF THE ORIENT

REV. W.R. ALGER

REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1866

The Reverend Horatio Alger, Jr. came to be suspected of being engaged in "questionable relations" with a choirboy or two and was ousted from the Unitarian church of Brewster on Cape Cod, at which he had been the pastor. He agreed never again to accept a position as a minister, and returned to the home of his father and mother. He then relocated to the New-York metropolis, where, over the following three decades, he would "adopt," live with, and nurture a series of teen-age boys.

His cousin, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger, who on August 1, 1854 had been the first to purchase a copy of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS –hot off the press eight days before its official publication date– during this year prepared a treatise THE SOLITUDES OF NATURE AND OF MAN; OR, THE LONELINESS OF HUMAN LIFE which immediately went through a number of printings, a treatise in which in no uncertain terms he denounced Henry Thoreau.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

On page vii of the Introduction we learn that the objective of this treatise is to learn "how at the same time to win the benefits and shun the evils of being alone." ... "The subject –the conditions and influences of solitude in its various forms– is so largely concerned with disturbed feelings that it is difficult, in treating it, to keep free from everything unhealthy, excessive, or eccentric." On page viii we learn that: "The warm effusion of Christianity is better adapted to human nature than the dry chill of Stoicism."

It was obviously a very low blow, hitting below the belt, to describe Thoreau as he did (see below), in terms that suggested that this author had been not only a solitary but also had been "feeling himself," had been "fondling himself," which is to suggest, going one better on the previously published derogations of James Russell Lowell, that Henry had been a masturbator. Nowadays, however, it requires some special explanation of the context for us to grasp just what an utterly low blow it was, because nowadays we have a more accurate theory, an infection theory, of the origins of the tuberculosis from which Thoreau died. This was, however, the period before, during which the contagious nature of the ailment was not yet generally understood. One of the pervasive theories of "phthisis" of that era was that it was a debility brought about through excessive and unrestrained masturbation. The reverend was therefore in effect suggesting to his appreciative audience that the Concord author had, **through his lack of self-restraint** as persistently exhibited in the text of his manual for life, been **responsible for his own early death!**

The second half of the volume bears this title page:

SKETCHES OF LONELY CHARACTERS:

or,

PERSONAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE GOOD AND EVIL OF SOLITUDE.

REV. W.R. ALGER — REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

In this second half the reverend author deals serially, in sub-chapters, with Gautama Buddha, Confucius, Demosthenes, Tacitus, Lucretius, Cicero, Boethius, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Bruno, Vico, Descartes, Hobbes, Leibnitz, Milton, Pascal, Rousseau, Zimmermann, Beethoven, Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Blanco White, Leopardi, Foster, Channing, Robertson, Chopin, Thoreau (pages 329-338), Maurice de Guérin, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Eugenie de Guérin, Comte, and then with Jesus.

Pages 329-338: If any American deserves to stand as a representative of the experience of reclusiveness, Thoreau is the man. His fellow-feelings and alliances with men were few and feeble; his disgusts and aversions many, as well as strongly pronounced. All his life he was distinguished for his aloofness, austere self-communion, long and lonely walks. He was separated from ordinary persons in grain and habits, by the poetic sincerity of his passion for natural objects and phenomena. As a student and lover of the material world he is a genuine apostle of solitude, despite the taints of affectation, inconsistency, and morbidity which his writings betray. At twenty-eight, on the shore of a lonely pond, he built a hut in which he lived entirely by himself for over two years. And, after he returned to his father's house in the village, he was for the chief part of the time nearly as much alone as he had been in his hermitage by Walden water. The closeness of his cleaving to the landscape cannot be questioned: "I dream of looking abroad, summer and winter, with free gaze, from some mountain side, nature looking into nature, with such easy sympathy as the blue-eyed grass in the meadow looks in the face of the sky." When he describes natural scenes, his heart lends a sweet charm to the pages he pens: "Paddling up the river to Fair-Haven Pond, as the sun went down, I saw a solitary boatman disporting on the smooth lake. The falling dews seemed to strain and purify the air, and I was soothed with an infinite stillness. I got the world, as it were, by the name of the neck, and held it under, in the tide of its own events, till it was drowned; and then I let it go down stream like a dead dog. Vast, hollow chambers of silence stretched away on every side; and my being expanded in proportion, and filled them."

In his little forest-house, Thoreau had three chairs, "one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society." "My nearest neighbor is a mile distant. It is as solitary where I live as on the prairies. It is as much Asia or Africa as New England. I have, as it were, my own sun and moon and stars; and a little world all to myself." "At night, there was never a traveler passed my door, more than if I were the first or last man." "We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, — behind the constellation of Cassiopea's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe." "I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so compatible as solitude." In this last sentence we catch a tone from the diseased or disproportioned side of the writer.

He was unhealthy and unjust in all his thoughts on society; underrating the value, overrating the dangers, of intercourse with men. But his thoughts on retirement, the still study and love of nature, though frequently exaggerated, are uniformly sound. He has a most catholic toleration, a wholesome and triumphant enjoyment, of every natural object, from star to skunk-cabbage. He says, with tonic eloquence, "Nothing can rightly compel a simple and brave man to a vulgar sadness: while I enjoy the friendship of the seasons, I trust that nothing can make life a burden to me." But the moment he turns to contemplate his fellow-men, all his geniality leaves him, — he grows bigoted, contemptuous, almost inhuman: "The names of men are of course as cheap and meaningless as Bose and Tray, the names of dogs. I will not allow mere names to make distinctions for me, but still see men in herds." The cynicism and the sophistry are equal. His scorn constantly exhales: "The Irishman erects his sty, and gets drunk, and jabbers more and more under my eaves; and I am responsible for all that filth and folly. I find it very unprofitable to have much to do with men. Emerson says that his life is so unprofitable and shabby for the most part, that he is driven to all sorts of resources, and, among the rest, to men. I have seen more men than usual, lately; and, well as I was acquainted with one, I am surprised to find what vulgar fellows they are. They do a little business each day, to pay their board; then they congregate in sitting-rooms, and feebly fabulate and paddle in the social slush; and, when I think they have sufficiently relaxed, and am prepared to see them steal away to their shrines, they go unashamed to their beds, and take on a new layer of sloth." Once in a while he gives a saner voice out of a fonder mood: "It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, the company grows thinner and thinner, till there is none at all." But the conceited and misanthropic fit quickly comes back: "Would I not rather be a cedar post, which lasts twenty-five years, than the farmer that set it; or he that preaches to that farmer?" "The whole enterprise of this nation is totally devoid of interest to me. There is nothing in it which one should lay down his life for, — nor even his gloves. What aims more lofty have they than the prairie-dogs?"

This poisonous sleet of scorn, blowing manward, is partly an exaggerated rhetoric; partly, the revenge he takes on men for not being what he wants them to be; partly, an expression of his unappreciated soul reacting in defensive contempt, to keep him from sinking below his own estimation of his deserts. It is curious to note the contradictions his inner uneasiness begets. Now he says, "In what concerns you much, do not think you have companions; know that you are alone in the world." Then he writes to one of his correspondents, "I wish I could have the benefit of your criticism; it would be a rare help to me." The following sentence has a cheerful surface, but a sad bottom: "I have lately got back to that glorious society, called solitude, where we meet our friends continually, and can imagine the outside world also to be peopled." At one moment, he says, "I have never felt

lonesome, or the least oppressed by a sense of solitude, but once; and then I was conscious of a slight insanity in my mood." At another moment he says, "Ah! what foreign countries there are, stretching away on every side from every human being with whom you have no sympathy! Their humanity affects one as simply monstrous. When I sit in the parlors and kitchens of some with whom my business brings me — I was going to say — in contact, I feel a sort of awe, and am as forlorn as if I were cast away on a desolate shore. I think of Riley's narrative, and his sufferings." That his alienation from society was more bitter than sweet, less the result of constitutional superiority than of dissatisfied experience, is significantly indicated, when we find him saying, at twenty-five, "I seem to have dodged all my days with one or two persons, and lived upon expectation"; at thirty-five, "I thank you again and again for attending to me"; and at forty-five, "I was particularly gratified when one of my friends said, 'I wish you would write another book, — write it for me.' He is actually more familiar with what I have written than I am myself."

The truth is, his self-estimate and ambition were inordinate; his willingness to pay the price of their outward gratification, a negative quantity. Their exorbitant demands absorbed him; but he had not those powerful charms and signs which would draw from others a correspondent valuation of him and attention to him. Accordingly, he shut his real self in a cell of secrecy, and retreated from men whose discordant returns repelled, to natural objects whose accordant repose seemed acceptingly to confirm and return, the required estimate imposed on them. The key of his life is the fact that it was devoted to the art of an interior aggrandizement of himself. The three chief tricks in this art are, first, a direct self-enhancement, by a boundless pampering of egotism; secondly, an indirect self-enhancement, by a scornful deprecation of others; thirdly, an imaginative magnifying of every trifle related to self, by associating with it a colossal idea of the self. It is difficult to open many pages in the written record of Thoreau without being confronted with examples of these three tricks. He is constantly, with all his boastful stoicism, feeling himself, reflecting himself, fondling himself, reverberating himself, exalting himself, incapable of escaping or forgetting himself. He is never contented with things until they are wound through, and made to echo himself; and this is the very mark of spiritual disturbance. "When I detect," he says, "a beauty in any of the recesses of nature, I am reminded, by the serene and retired spirit in which it requires to be contemplated, of the inexpressible privacy of a life." In the holiest and silentest nook his fancy conjures the spectre of himself, and an ideal din from society for contrast. He says of his own pursuits, "The unchallenged bravery which these studies imply is far more impressive than the trumpeted valor of the warrior." When he sees a mountain he sings: —

Wachuset, who, like me,

Standest alone without society,
Upholding heaven, holding down earth, —
Thy pastime from thy birth, —
Not steadied by the one, nor leaning on the other,
May I approve myself thy worthy brother!

This self-exaggeration peers out even through the disguise of humor and of satire: "I am not afraid of praise, for I have practised it on myself. The stars and I belong to a mutual-admiration society." "I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost." "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." But he, — he is victorious, sufficing, royal. At all events he will be unlike other people. "I am a mere arena for thoughts and feelings, a slight film, or dash of vapor, so faint an entity, and make so slight an impression, that nobody can find the traces of me." "I am something to him that made me, undoubtedly, but not much to any other that he has made." "Many are concerned to know who built the monuments of the East and West. For my part, I should like to know who, in those days, did not build them, — who were above such trifling." "For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper." This refrain of opposition between the general thoughts and feelings of mankind and his own, recurs until it becomes comical, and we look for it. He refused invitations to dine out, saying, "They make their pride in making their dinner cost much; I make my pride in making my dinner cost little." One is irresistibly reminded of Plato's retort, when Diogenes said, "See how I tread on the pride of Plato." — "Yes, with greater pride."

But he more than asserts his difference; he explicitly proclaims his superiority: "Sometimes when I compare myself with other men, it seems as if I were more favored by the gods than they." "When I realize the greatness of the part I am unconsciously acting, it seems as if there were none in history to match it." Speaking of the scarlet oaks, he adds with Italics, "These are *my* china-asters, *my* late garden-flowers; it costs *me* nothing for a gardener." The unlikeness of genius to mediocrity is a fact, but not a fact of that relative momentousness entitling it to monopolize attention. He makes a great ado about his absorbing occupation; his sacred engagements with himself; his consequent inability to do anything for others, or to meet those who wished to see him. In the light of this obtrusive trait the egotistic character of many passages like the following become emphatic: "Only think, for a moment, of a man about his affairs! How we should respect him! How glorious he would appear! A man about *his business* would be the cynosure of all eyes." He evidently had the jaundice of desiring men to think as well of him as he thought of himself; and, when they would not, he ran into the woods. But he could not escape thus, since he carried them still in his mind.

His quotations are not often beautiful or valuable, but appear to be made as bids for curiosity or admiration, or to produce

some other sharp effect; as they are almost invariably strange, bizarre, or absurd: culled from obscure corners, Damodara, Iamblichus, the Vishnu Purana, or some such out-of-the-way source. He seems to take oddity for originality, extravagant singularity for depth and force. His pages are profusely peppered with pungent paradoxes and exaggerations, — a straining for sensation, not in keeping with his pretence of sufficing repose and greatness: "Why should I feel lonely? is not our planet in the Milky Way?" "All that men have said or are, is a very faint rumor; and it is not worth their while to remember or refer to that." He exemplifies, to an extent truly astonishing, the great vice of the spiritual hermit; the belittling, because he dislikes them, of things ordinarily considered important; and the aggrandizing, because he likes them, of things usually regarded as insignificant. His eccentricities are uncorrected by collision with the eccentricities of others, and his petted idiosyncrasies spurn at the average standards of sanity and usage. Grandeur, dissociated from him, dwindles into pettiness; pettiness, linked with his immense ego, dilates into grandeur. In his conceited separation he mistakes a crochet for a consecration. If a worm crosses his path, and he stops to watch its crawl, it is greater than an interview with the Duke of Wellington.

It is the wise observation of Lavater, that whoever makes too much or to little of himself has a false measure for everything. Few persons have cherished a more preposterous idea of self than Thoreau, or been more persistently ridden by the enormity. This false standard of valuation vitiates every moral measurement he makes. He describes a battle of red and black ants before his wood-pile at Walden, as if it were more important than Marathon or Gettysburg. His faculties were vast, and his time inexpressibly precious: this struggle of the pismires occupied his faculties and time; therefore this struggle of the pismires must be an inexpressibly great matter. A trifle, plus his ego, was immense; an immensity, minus his ego, was a trifle. Is it a haughty conceit or a noble loftiness that makes him say, "When you knock at the Celestial City, ask to see God, — none of the servants"? He says, "Mine is a sugar to sweeten sugar with: if you will listen to me, I will sweeten your whole life." Again, "I would put forth sublime thoughts daily, as the plant puts forth leaves." And yet again, "I shall be a benefactor if I conquer some realms from the night, — if I add to the domains of poetry." After such manifestos, we expect much. We do not find so much as we naturally expect.

He was rather an independent and obstinate thinker than a powerful or rich one. His works, taken in their whole range, instead of being fertile in ideas, are marked by speculative sterility. "He was one of those men," a friendly but honest critic says, "who, from conceit or disappointment, inflict upon themselves a seclusion which reduces them at last, after nibbling everything within reach of their tether, to simple rumination and incessant returns of the same cud to the tongue."

This unsympathetic temper is betrayed in a multitude of such sentences as this: "O ye that would have the cocoanut wrong side outwards! when next I weep I will let you know." Thoreau is not the true type of a great man, a genuine master of life, because he does not reflect greatness and joy over men and life, but upholds his idea of his own greatness and mastership by making the characters and lives of others mean and little. Those who, like Wordsworth and Channing, reverse this process, are the true masters and models. A feeling of superiority to others, with love and honor for them, is the ground of complacency and a condition of chronic happiness. A feeling of superiority to others, with alienation from them and hate for them, is the sure condition of perturbations and unhappiness.

Many a humble and loving author who has nestled amongst his fellow-men and not boasted, has contributed far more to brace and enrich the characters and sweeten the lives of his readers than the ill-balanced and unsatisfied hermit of Concord, part cynic, part stoic, who strove to compensate himself with nature and solitude for what he could not wring from men and society. The extravagant estimate he put on solitude may serve as a corrective of the extravagant estimate put on society by our hives of citizens. His monstrous preference of savagedom to civilization may usefully influence us to appreciate natural unsophisticatedness more highly, and conventionality more lowly. As a teacher, this is nearly the extent of his narrow mission. Lowell [James Russell Lowell], in a careful article, written after reading all the published works of Thoreau, says of him: "He seems to us to have been a man with so high a conceit of himself, that he accepted without questioning, and insisted on our accepting, his defects and weaknesses of character, as virtues and powers peculiar to himself. Was he indolent, — he finds none of the activities which attract or employ the rest of mankind worthy of him. Was he wanting in the qualities that make success, — it is success that is contemptible, and not himself that lacks persistency and purpose. Was he poor, — money was an unmixed evil. Did his life seem a selfish one, — he condemns doing good, as one of the weakest of superstitions."

In relation to the intellectual and moral influence of solitude, the example of Thoreau, with all the alleviating wisdom, courage, and tenderness confessedly in it, is chiefly valuable as an illustration of the evils of a want of sympathy with the community. Yet there is often a deep justice, a grandly tonic breath of self-reliance, in his exhortations. How sound and admirable the following passage: "If you seek the warmth of affection from a similar motive to that from which cats and dogs and slothful persons hug the fire, because your temperature is low through sloth, you are on the downward road. Better the cold affection of the sun, reflected from fields of ice and snow, or his warmth in some still wintry dell. Warm your body by healthful exercise, not by cowering over a stove. Warm your spirit by performing independently noble deeds, not by ignobly seeking the sympathy of your fellows who are no better than yourself."

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

> Though convinced of the justice of this sketch, the writer feels rebuked, as if it were not kind enough, when he remembers the pleasure he has had in many of the pages of Thoreau, and the affecting scene of his funeral on that beautiful summer day in the dreamy town of Concord. There was uncommon love in him, but it felt itself repulsed, and too proud to beg or moan, it put on stoicism and wore it until the mask became the face. His opinionative stiffness and contempt were his hurt self-respect protecting itself against the conventionalities and scorns of those who despised what he revered and revered what he despised. His interior life, with the relations of thoughts and things, was intensely tender and true, however sorely ajar he may have been with persons and with the ideas of persons. If he was sour, it was on a store of sweetness; if sad, on a fund of gladness. While we walked in procession up to the church, though the bell tolled the forty-four years he had numbered, we could not deem that *he* was dead whose ideas and sentiments were so vivid in our souls. As the fading image of pathetic clay lay before us, strewn with wild flowers and forest sprigs, thoughts of its former occupant seemed blent with all the local landscapes. We still recall with emotion the tributary words so fitly spoken by friendly and illustrious lips. The hands of friends reverently lowered the body of the lonely poet into the bosom of the earth, on the pleasant hillside of his native village, whose prospects will long wait to unfurl themselves to another observer so competent to discriminate their features and so attuned to their moods. And now that it is too late for any further boon amidst his darling haunts below,
>
> There will yet his mother yield
> A pillow in her greenest field,
> Nor the June flowers scorn to cover
> The clay of their departed lover.

June: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger had become the pastor of the Bullfinch Street Society in Boston. His article "The Hermit of Concord" appeared in the Monthly Religious Magazine. In this article he accused he attacked Thoreau for his venting of scorn on humankind, for having hidden his true self behind a facade of boastful stoicism, and for having engaged, big time, in the art of self-enhancement by scornfully deprecating others.

(This third accusation –that Thoreau's trick was a trick of enhancing himself through the scornful deprecation of others– would seem to be a plain description of the standard mode of operation of the Reverend Alger himself. By leveling such an accusation against Thoreau, would the good Reverend have been attempting to deflect attention away from his own reprehensible mode of conduct?)

1867

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE FRIENDSHIPS OF WOMEN was published in Boston by Roberts Brothers.

ALGER'S FRIENDSHIPS

This firm also printed his THE SOLITUDES OF NATURE AND OF MAN; OR, THE LONELINESS OF HUMAN LIFE, with its amazingly rancid denunciations of Thoreau, a number of times during this year.

ALGER'S SOLITUDES

Meanwhile, his A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE was being reprinted in its 4th edition in New-York by W.J. Widdleton.

ALGER'S FUTURE LIFE

It is in the above work that it becomes apparent why the Reverend Alger must so derogate Thoreau. He has chosen Thoreau as the type case of The Isolate, the enemy of life who is living a life of resistance to the laws of life. Now, the laws of life were discovered by the Reverend Alger, and therefore, someone who seems to be resisting the laws of life must be resisting something that was discovered by the Reverend Alger, and of course anyone who resists the Reverend Alger must be maligned because the Reverend Alger is not merely right but well beyond that — the Reverend Alger is **right about righteousness itself**. (*Ceterum autem censeo, Carthaginem esse delendam*.)

In this year the Reverend James Martineau's STUDIES OF CHRISTIANITY, OR, TIMELY THOUGHTS FOR RELIGIOUS THINKERS: A SERIES OF PAPERS was edited by the Reverend Alger and published in Boston by the

REV. W.R. ALGER

REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

American Unitarian Association.

STUDIES OF CHRISTIANITY

(I notice that the task of editing the papers of such an important Unitarian theologian would never have been assigned to ant marginal flake of a reverend, any personage of the stamp in which I tend to think of the Alger cousins Horatio and William, sheer mendacious opportunists. No, William was not regarded by his colleagues as a marginal figure in the Unitarian movement, a pickup minister eking out his existence on the edges and chewing on the crumbs underneath the table. Regardless of how mistaken they were in this judgment, they were regarding this William as one of their mainline guys. Here, then, is a speculation that occurs to me, in my attempt to cope with the outrageous all-outness of this Unitarian reverend William Rounseville Alger's sexual derogation of Thoreau and everything he stood for. What Thoreau stood for, in these people's minds, above all else, was that he was a mere disciple of and imitator of Emerson — we here them offer as much, again and again, in mere "of course" asides. Thoreau's life could therefore serve as an object lesson –if his life could be twisted into the necessary self-masturbatory pretzel– of how wrong it would be for Emerson to be allowed to perpetuate such a grip over the public mind of America. My thought has become that maybe **they weren't really after the low-rent Thoreau at all**, but were merely attempting to bounce a ricochet bullet off of Thoreau's rock that would strike their true enemy, a colleague whom they could not so readily derogate in such a low manner since he was himself a reverend, since he was very much alive, since he was in his dotage, since he had family, and since he had produced offspring.)

May 2, Thursday: The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE SOLITUDES OF NATURE AND OF MAN; OR, THE LONELINESS OF HUMAN LIFE was reviewed in the New-York Times:

THE BOOK IN FULL

THE BOOK REVIEW

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1868

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger became the pastor of the Reverend Theodore Parker's "fraternity" (congregation) worshiping in the Boston Music Hall. His MAN FROM THE MEDICAL POINT OF VIEW, and his THE ABUSES AND USES OF CHURCH-GOING: A DISCOURSE SPOKEN AT THE FIRST SERVICE OF THE MUSIC-HALL SOCIETY IN BOSTON, OCT. 18, 1868, were published in Boston.

His disgraced cousin Horatio Alger, Jr. offered his photograph as a bonus to subscribers to Student and Schoolmate:

Horatio Alger, Jr. began basically to write the same formula story 130 times. He would be putting out what would amount to RAGGED DICK; OR, STREET LIFE IN NEW YORK WITH THE BOOT-BLACKS, using 130 different hero names and 130 different titles. This was a story America needed to believe because it was so far in every particular from the truth. Even today it would seem we have a need to believe in this story, still as false as ever it was.

October 18, Sunday: In Cuba, rebel forces captured the town of Bayamo.

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered a discourse on "The abuses and uses of church-going" at the 1st service of the Music-Hall Society in Boston.

Walt Whitman wrote again from Providence, Rhode Island to Peter Doyle, who had written him on the 15th:

> Dear boy & comrade,
> I sent off a letter to you yesterday noon, but towards evening Mr. Davis brought me up from the p.o. yours of the 15th, which I was so glad to get that you shall have an answer right off. After the flurry of snow I told you of yesterday morning, we had a pleasant clear afternoon. I took a long walk, partly through the woods, and enjoyed it much. The weather was pretty cold & sharp, & remains so yet. As I left my overcoat in Washington, I have been compelled to get something here —so I have bought me a great iron-grey shawl, which I find very acceptable. I always had doubts about a shawl, but have already got used to

mine, & like it first rate. In the evening, I went by invitation to a party of ladies & gentlemen — mostly ladies. We had a warm, animated talk, among other things about Spiritualism. I talked too, indeed went in like a house afire. It was good exercise — for the fun of the thing. I also made love to the women, & flatter myself that I created at least one impression — wretch & gay deceiver that I am. Then away late —lost my way —wandered over the city, & got home after one o'clock.

The truth is, Peter, that I am here at present times mainly in the midst of female women, some of them young & jolly — & meet them most every evening in company — & the way in which this aged party comes up to the scratch & cuts out the youthful parties & fills their hearts with envy is absolutely a caution. You would be astonished, my son, to see the brass & coolness, & the capacity of flirtation & carrying on with the girls — I would never have believed it of myself. Brought here by destiny, surrounded in this way — & as I in self defence would modestly state — sought for, seized upon & ravingly devoured by these creatures — & so nice & smart some of them are, & handsome too — there is nothing left for me —is there— but to go in. Of course, young man, you understand, it is all on the square. My going in amounts to just talking & joking & having a devil of a jolly time, carrying on — that's all. They are all as good girls as ever lived. I have already had three or four such parties here — which, you will certainly admit, considering my age & heft, to say nothing of my reputation, is doing pretty well.

I go about quite a good deal — this is as handsome a city, as I ever saw. Some of the streets run up steep hills. Except in a few of the business streets, where the buildings are compact — in nine-tenths of the city, every house stands separate, & has a little or quite a deal of ground about it, for flowers, & for shade or fruit trees, or a garden. I never saw such a prosperous looking city — but of course no grand public buildings like Washington.

This forenoon I have been out away down along the banks of the river & cove, & making explorations generally. All is new to me, & I returned quite tired. I have eat a hearty dinner. Then I thought I would come up & sit a while in my room. But as I did not feel like reading, I concluded to write this precious screed. Fortunate young man, to keep getting such instructive letters — aint you? It is now four o'clock & bright & cool, & I have staid in long enough. I will sally forth, on a walk, & drop this in the P.O. before supper. So long, dear Pete — & my love to you as always, always.

W

October 19, Monday: Walt Whitman wrote from Providence, Rhode Island to Ellen M. O'Connor at the Treasury Department in Washington DC:

Dear Nelly,

I will just write you a line or two, anyhow. I am stopping the last three days here with Doctor and Jeannie & having a very

pleasant time indeed — only Jeannie has had something of a bad spell — but is quite bright & comfortable this morning, & presided at breakfast. William is here — which adds much indeed to the pleasure of my visit — William has not recovered from an annoying cold, yet does pretty well — I have seen Mrs. Whitman, & like her — have seen her & talked &c. three times — have seen Miss Nora Perry — am going this afternoon to Thomas Davis's to stay two or three days, & then return to New York — whence in two or three days more, to Washington.
Mother is quite well for an old woman of 74 — speaks of you — is now in her new quarters — much roomier & pleasanter. Sister Martha & her two little girls have come on from St. Louis, and are now living with mother. George & Eddy are well. Mrs. Price & her girls are well & in good spirits — I am enjoying my vacation agreeably, but moderately — as becomes a gentleman of my size & age.
Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. Ashton —also to Charley —also to dear little Jeannie— It will not be long, Nelly, before I shall be with you all again. Best love to you, dearest friend.
Walt
My last letter to William was also to you — though I suppose you did not see it yet.

October 20, Tuesday: Professor Joseph Norman Lockyer of the Royal College of Science in London, observing the spectra of the luminous gasses surrounding the sun, had inferred the existence of a gas there that is not present in the atmosphere of the planet Earth. On this day he reported his findings to the Royal Society. However, the astronomer Pierre Jules César Janssen of the Astrophysical Observatory at Meudon in France had also arrived at this conclusion, on the basis of his observation of a solar eclipse on August 18th in India, and on this day was writing to inform the French Academy of his discovery (these two scientists would therefore share the honors of primacy in the discovery of the element named "Helium" after the sun, *Helios*).

Walt Whitman wrote from Providence, Rhode Island to Charles W. Eldridge:

Dear Charley,
If the next Sunday Morning Chronicle contains a "personal" about me, would you do me the favor to get half a dozen copies, & keep for me? I shall doubtless return about the 26th — as my leave expires that day. (I wished to stay to vote, but have paired off with a vehement Seymourite, an old friend of mine.) I suppose Nelly received a letter I sent her yesterday, to your care.
I am writing this in my room at Mr. & Mrs. Davis's. I came here yesterday, after three most agreeable days with Dr. Channing & Jeannie. As I write, we are expecting a call from William O'C. as he promised yesterday to come over & see Mrs. D. and myself, & spend an hour or two. This afternoon, after dinner, Mr. Davis whom I like, & get along with first rate, is going to take me out to ride, down to the Point, as I wish to see more of the harbor & bay. I am treated on all sides with the greatest hospitality & courtesy — & yet left just as free as I wish to be. It is beautiful fall weather to-day. I go back to New York & Brooklyn on Thursday next.
I am profoundly impressed with Providence, not only for its

charming locality & features, but for its proof & expression of fine relations, as a city, to average human comfort, life, & family & individual independence & thrift — After all, New England for ever! — (with perhaps just one or two little reservations)— With love to you, Charley — & repeated again to dear Nelly.

Yours truly

Walt

P.S. — Later -2 o'clock- William & Dr. Channing have been over here — staid to dinner — We had quite a gay time — indeed quite a little dinner party — William & Doctor, Mr & Mrs. Davis, Nora Perry, George Davis, Katy Hinds, & illustrious self — We are just through — Doctor has gone home, not wishing to leave Jeannie too long — William still remaining — I go presently on the drive with Mr. D. — and also to deposit this letter in P.O.

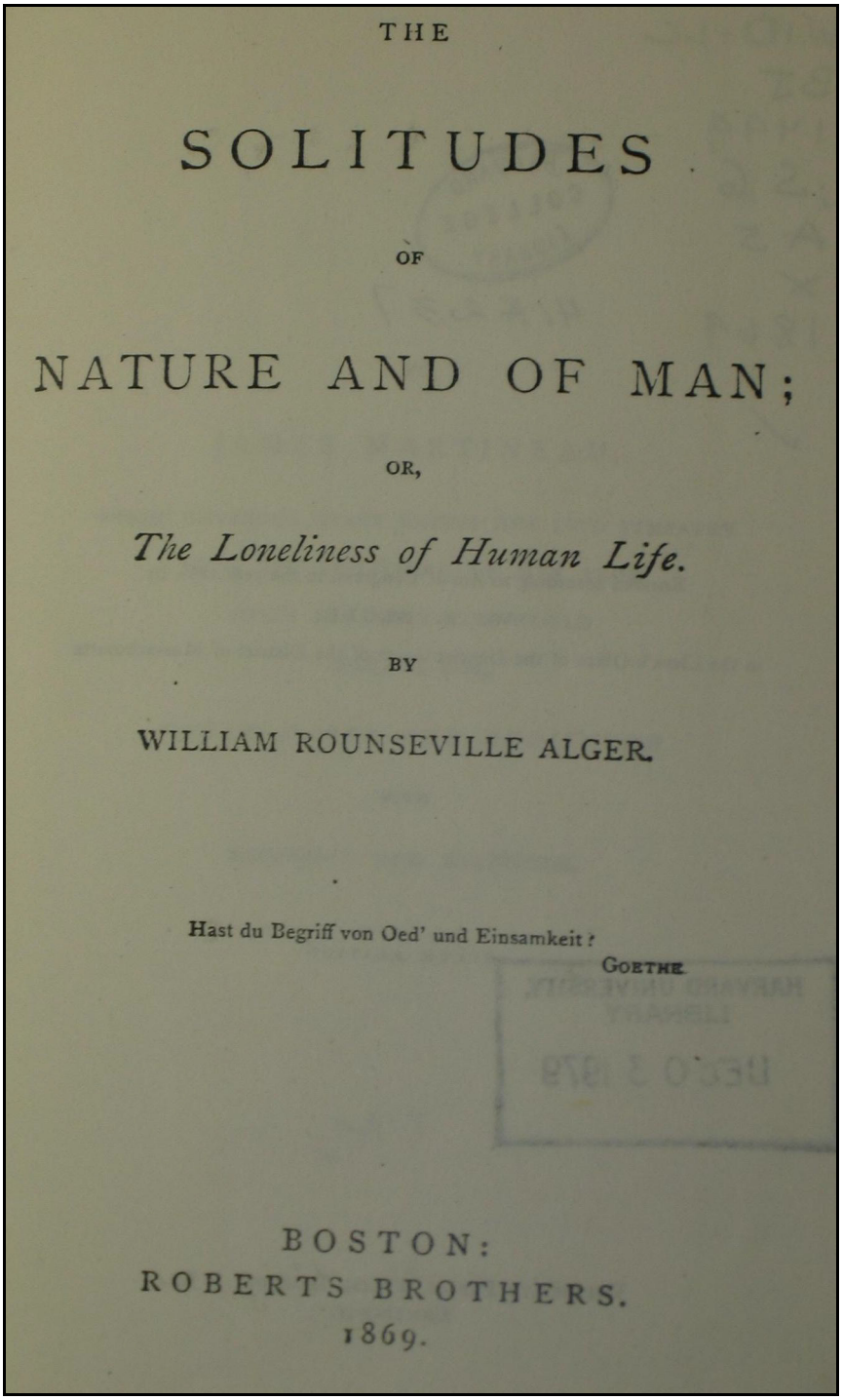
W.

1869

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's PRAYERS OFFERED IN THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DURING THE SESSION OF 1868 was printed in Boston. In Boston, the firm of Roberts Brothers printed his THE SOLITUDES OF NATURE AND OF MAN; OR THE LONELINESS OF HUMAN LIFE. In Cambridge, the firm of John Wilson printed his THE AMERICAN POETS: A REVIEW OF THE WORKS OF THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS. In New-York, his edition of A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE / BY EZRA ABBOT. 6TH THOUSAND was printed by the firm of W. J. Widdleton.

June 27, Sunday: At the Boston Music Hall, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered a discourse on the topic of "The lessons of the jubilee." (This would be published during this year in Boston by the firm of A. Williams & Co. as THE LESSONS OF THE JUBILEE: A DISCOURSE / BY WILLIAM R. ALGER, IN THE BOSTON MUSIC HALL, SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 1869.)

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER



THE

SOLITUDES

OF

NATURE AND OF MAN;

OR,

The Loneliness of Human Life.

BY

WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER.

Hast du Begriff von Oed' und Einsamkeit?

GOETHE.

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1869.

1870

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger, never one to miss a trick, created a 75-page pamphlet which was printed by the firm of Roberts Brothers in Boston, THE END OF THE WORLD, AND THE DAY OF JUDGMENT: TWO DISCOURSES PREACHED TO THE MUSIC-HALL SOCIETY.

HERE COME DA JUDGE!

(From the ridiculous anticipation to the sublime reconstruction: also prepared in this year in Boston by Roberts Brothers was the Reverend Frederic Henry Hedge's THE PRIMEVAL WORLD OF HEBREW TRADITION.)

HEDGE'S HEBREW TRADITION

June 9, Thursday: Charles Dickens, who had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage on June 8th at Gads Hill near Rochester, Kent after a full day's work, died. THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD would not be completed. His remains would be interred at Westminster Abbey on June 14th. The Reverend William Rounseville Alger, never one to miss an opportunity, would create a celebratory pamphlet entitled THE SWORD, THE PEN, AND THE PULPIT: WITH A TRIBUTE TO THE CHRISTIAN GENIUS AND MEMORY OF CHARLES DICKENS: A DISCOURSE DELIVERED IN BOSTON MUSIC HALL, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 1870.

ATTITUDES ON DICKENS

June 19, Sunday: At the Boston Music Hall, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger delivered a commemorative discourse entitled "The sword, the pen, and the pulpit: with a tribute to the Christian genius and memory of Charles Dickens." This would soon, it goes without saying, be available for purchase in pamphlet form.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1871

By this point your average Boston Unitarian was 13 times richer and 20 times more likely to be a businessman (or a lawyer) than was a member of any other religious grouping.

The Reverend James Freeman Clarke, minister of the Church of the Disciples in Boston, issued TEN GREAT RELIGIONS (this must really have been a crowdpleaser –a book of typology doesn't always sell well– for it would go through an eventual total of 19 editions). Hinduism and Buddhism were presented by this Unitarian as tropes for dramatically opposite types of religious experience, Hinduism as a transcendental, spiritual religion of the emphasizing of spirit over the material, the infinite over the finite, and in general other-worldliness over this-worldliness, and Buddhism as quite its opposite, a practical this-worldly religion of morality and conduct.

I AM NOT ASLEEP, I AM PRAYING

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

In this year the Reverend Horatio Alger, Jr.'s A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE,

ALGER'S FUTURE LIFE

copyrighted in 1860, was printed in New-York by the firm of W.J. Widdleton. That firm also issued Ezra Abbot (1819-1884)'s THE LITERATURE OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE, OR, A CATALOGUE OF WORKS RELATING TO THE NATURE, ORIGIN, AND DESTINY OF THE SOUL.

ABBOT'S FUTURE LIFE

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1874

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger relocated his operation from Boston to New-York. He put out an enlarged 4th edition of his THE POETRY OF THE ORIENT, OR METRICAL SPECIMENS OF THE THOUGHT, SENTIMENT, AND FANCY OF THE EAST, PREFACED BY AN ELABORATE DISSERTATION.

POETRY OF THE ORIENT

Horatio Alger, Sr., the minister father of William's cousin Horatio Alger, Jr., retired from his Unitarian ministry in South Natick, Massachusetts.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1875

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger became pastor of the Unitarian Church of the Messiah in New-York.

1876

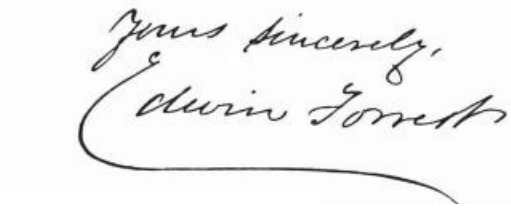
Philip Rounseville Alger graduated from the Boston Latin School at the age of 17 or 18. There doesn't seem to be a record that he was going on to any more advanced education. (Most boys during this timeframe were making the transition from Boston Latin to matriculation at a college at about the age of 13 or 14.)

William Allen was hired as a clerk in the Boston Custom House, where he would continue in that capacity until 1883.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1877

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's, and his cousin Horatio Alger, Jr.'s, LIFE OF EDWIN FORREST, THE AMERICAN TRAGEDIAN, WITH A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DRAMATIC ART was published in 2 volumes in Philadelphia by the firm of J.B. Lippincott & Company.



Cousin Horatio had done most of the research and writing in regard to the career of Forrest, while Cousin William had supplied the materials dealing in general with the history of the American theater.

LIFE OF EDWIN FORREST

I don't know the year in which this happened, and am therefore inserting the material quite randomly: at some point Horatio Alger, Jr. discussed his sexual preferences with the psychologist William James.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1878

Everyone wants eternal life, and so the Reverend William Rounseville Alger and Ezra Abbot put out a 10th edition of the crowdpleasing LITERATURE OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE. VOLUME II: THE DESTINY OF THE SOUL; A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE. The reverend author departed from New-York to live his future life in Denver.

ALGER'S FUTURE LIFE

ABBOT'S FUTURE LIFE

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1880

The 10th edition of the Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE DESTINY OF THE SOUL: A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE, a book that told people exactly what they wanted to hear, needed in this year to be reprinted. The reverend author departed from Denver to live his future life in Chicago.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1881

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger moved from Chicago to Portland. He would not remain there, but would return to Boston. His THE SCHOOL OF LIFE would be published in this year in Boston. His A SYMBOLIC HISTORY OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST also would be published in this year.

HISTORY OF THE CROSS

Horatio Alger, Sr., the minister father of his cousin Horatio Alger, Jr., died in Natick, Massachusetts.

1882

Martineau, James (1805-1900). STUDIES OF CHRISTIANITY: OR, TIMELY THOUGHTS FOR RELIGIOUS THINKERS. A SERIES OF PAPERS, BY JAMES MARTINEAU. ED. BY WILLIAM R. ALGER. 7th edition, Boston, American Unitarian Association.

WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1883

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE POETRY OF THE ORIENT, OR METRICAL SPECIMENS OF THE THOUGHT, SENTIMENT, AND FANCY OF THE EAST, PREFACED BY AN ELABORATE DISSERTATION was reissued in a further enlarged 5th edition.

POETRY OF THE ORIENT

1885

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE FRIENDSHIPS OF WOMEN / BY WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER was republished in its 11th edition in Boston by Roberts Brothers.

ALGER'S FRIENDSHIPS

REV. W.R. ALGER

REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1887

Julia Ward Howe, upon hearing the Reverend William Rounseville Alger's sermon on "Blessed Life," wrote: "Very spiritual and in a way edifying; but marred by what I should call 'mixed metaphysics.' One goes beyond his paper to feel a deep sympathy with him, a man of intense intellectual impulse, in following which he undergoes a sort of martyrdom; while yet he does not seem to me to hit the plain, practical truth so much as one might wish. He is estray [*sic*] between Western and Eastern thought, inclining a good deal, though not exclusively, to the latter."

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1888

Summer: Julia Ward Howe wrote: "Mr. Alger seized upon my left ear metaphorically and emptied it into all the five-syllable words that he knew, and the result was a mingling of active and passive lunacy, for I almost went mad and he had not far to go in that direction."

WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

September 23, Sunday: Julia Ward Howe wrote: "To church in town. A suggestive sermon from Mr. Alger on 'Watching,' i.e., upon all the agencies that watch us: children; foes; friends; critics; authorities; spirits; God Himself. As we drove into town I had one of those momentary glimpses which in things spiritual are so infinitely precious. The idea became clear and present to my mind that God, an actual presence, takes note of our actions and intentions. I thought how helpful it would be to us to pass our lives in a sense of this divine supervision. After this inward experience I was almost startled by the theme of Alger's sermon. I spoke to him of the coincidence and he said it must have been a thought wave. The thought is one to which I have need to cling. I have at this moment mental troubles, obsessions of imagination, from which I pray to be delivered. While this idea of the divine presence was clear to me, I felt myself lifted above these things. May this lifting continue."

WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1889

THE DESTINY OF THE SOUL: A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE / BY WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER appeared in its 14th edition, with a new supplementary chapter (Boston: Roberts).

The 1st hints that high cholesterol levels might cause atherosclerosis in humans.

September 8, Sunday: Julia Ward Howe wrote: "To-day for the second time I seemed to have met Mr. Alger's sermon as I drove in to attend church. The discourse was very metaphysical and long winded, but the direct and important train of thought was much like that which seized me as I sat in my carriage. I thought of the different ways of serving Duty; first, as Christ did, in loneliness and hardship. I thought of him as one standing on a lonely beach waiting to find, as he did, the pearl of a perfect doctrine with which to redeem the world; then of a fire ship with its devoted crew; then of a pleasant party of saintly people. This, it seemed to me, would be my best chance. Alger named several gates of Heaven, innocence, victory, penitence, resignation, retribution. This was the best part of the sermon because the most tangible. Tried to write this out in verse, some of which occurred to me as I drove into town; succeeded poorly."

WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1891

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE SPECIAL PRIVILEGES OF THE LIBERALIST IN RELIGION / BY WM. R. ALGER. San Francisco: C.A. Murdock.

REV. W.R. ALGER — REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1892

The Reverend William Rounseville Alger's THE SOURCES OF CONSOLATION IN HUMAN LIFE (Boston: Roberts). Also, a new edition of his 1867 SOLITUDES OF NATURE AND OF MAN; OR, THE LONELINESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

1905

February 7, Tuesday**:** William Rounseville Alger's unstinting labors to make God's creation a better place were at an end, and he was taken to his eternal reward.

1981

January-April: Gary Scharnhorst's "'He Is Able to Write a Work That Will Not Die': W. R. Alger and T. Starr King on Thoreau," in the Thoreau Journal Quarterly, 13, nos. 1-2: 5-17. Bradley P. Dean reported:

> Well over a month prior to Walden's official publication, Fields began distributing advance copies of the book to such prospective reviewers as John Sullivan Dwight, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and T. Starr King. Dwight favorably noticed the book in his Journal of Music, and Higginson wrote Thoreau to commend the book and to report he had bought two additional copies. Starr King, who thanked Fields for his "luscious copy" of WALDEN, on 9 July, praised the book without stint in a letter to his friend William Rounseville Alger on 1 August — still eight days before the book was officially published. "The latter half is wonderful," King wrote to Alger, and concluded, "I envy you your approaching rapture." He subsequently reviewed the book for the Boston Christian Register, a Unitarian weekly, and cited it twice in his 1859 travel book THE WHITE HILLS. On his part, Alger, who had eagerly awaited Thoreau's second book since reading A WEEK in 1849, became the first person to purchase a copy of WALDEN, placing the order on 1 August. He would refer to Thoreau as a "remarkable writer of our own day" and excerpt a passage from the "Sounds" chapter of WALDEN in an essay for the January 1855 issue of the North American Review.

1983

Summer: Gary Scharnhorst's article "Biographical Blindspots: The Case of the Cousins Alger" appeared in Biography 6/2.

WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER
HORATIO ALGER, JR.

1990

Gary Scharnhorst's LITERARY BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER was published by the Edwin Mellen press of Lewiston, New York:

> Most Thoreauvians know Alger, if at all, only as a very minor Transcendentalist who wrote a scathing denunciation of Thoreau as an "escapist." Yet Alger also wrote a charming eulogy of Thoreau. Scharnhorst devotes a whole chapter to their off-on relationship in this unique biography which is as much detective story as biography.... We found it fascinating reading.
>
> — The Thoreau Society Bulletin

> Alger's close friendship with Emerson and other Transcendentalists makes a study of the existing sources and his writings an important endeavor.
>
> — Studies in the American Renaissance

> ... convincingly demonstrates that this other Alger deserves the attention of literary historians for his writings and even more for his friendships with canonical figures and movements.
>
> — American Literature

> It is fascinating to follow Scharnhorst from one great library to another, and to observe how slender clews and hunches led to his uncovering the life and secrets of his subject ... should you decide to add it to your personal collection, you will be well repaid for your investment by the hours of enjoyment it will provide. I have read it twice, and hope to have the pleasure of one or two more perusals.
>
> — Bootblack, the Horatio Alger Magazine

1993

Arthur Versluis's AMERICAN TRANSCENDENTALISM AND ASIAN RELIGIONS. Religion in America Series. NY: Oxford UP, 1993. Those who suppose "the Western tradition" was something –somewhere, sometime– fixed in the United States will have this notion upset by this study of the relationship between the American transcendentalists and Asian religions. While fundamentalists and conservatives were denouncing aliens scriptures, the Transcendentalists were embracing the influx of new information on Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism. This account does not leave off with Emerson and Thoreau, but continues on into the early 20th Century, considering John Weiss, Samuel Johnson, William Rounseville Alger, Octavius Brooks Frothingham, Moncure Daniel Conway, and Lydia Maria Child.

2005

Fall: Professor Leigh E. Schmidt of the Department of Religion at Princeton University argued, in "Spirit Wars" in The Wilson Quarterly, that perhaps we will be able to derive a next wave of religious influence on American life not from the evangelicals of the Moral Majority but from a neglected tradition of spiritual seeking stretching from Henry Thoreau to the present-day US Senate. While it may be that Thoreau had been ridiculously individualistic, a contemporary of his, the Reverend William Rounseville Alger, a transcendentalist and Unitarian minister, had been able to supply a corrective to Thoreau's excess. Alger had been able to be equivalently as concerned for the spiritual as Thoreau, and without resorting to anything as inappropriate for Americans as solitude. He had characterized Thoreau in terms that scream "Masturbator! Masturbator! Masturbator!" as: "constantly feeling himself, reflecting himself, fondling himself, reverberating himself, exalting himself, incapable of escaping or forgetting himself." The Reverend's take on the attitude toward life that his contemporary Thoreau had recommended in WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS had been that it would lead not to social progress but to a "self-nauseated weariness." Thus, it would seem, according to Professor Schmidt, if we could bring ourselves to accept the reputable Reverend Alger rather than the nut-case isolate Thoreau, we might be able to reinstate and restore this neglected tradition of spiritual seeking in America!

"MAGISTERIAL HISTORY" IS FANTASIZING, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

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

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

Prepared: April 15, 2014

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE

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

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

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

REV. W.R. ALGER REVEREND WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER

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