

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING




The primary [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) style that flourished in house pattern books of the 1860s and 1870s was known as the "Stick House." This style of home had wooden wall cladding shingles or boards, interrupted by patterns of horizontal, vertical or diagonal stickwork raised for emphasis from the wall surface. The roof was always high-pitched and gabled. The gables commonly showed decorative trusses in the sharp apex angle. The eaves were overhung, with exposed rafter ends in the country or, in town, with brackets.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1815

 October 30, Monday: [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) was born in Newburgh, New York (his parents Samuel Downing and Susanna Brown Downing were natives of Lexington, Massachusetts who had upon their marriage removed to upstate New York).

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

2nd day 30 of 10 M / This morning my mind was favor'd with the arisings of life & tenderness & has continued most of the Day in a degree beyond what is usual. I desire to be thankful for the favor. a little relief from the dry destitute & barran condition which I have suffered for several days is refreshing.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS


NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE OCTOBER 30TH, 1815 AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFfy AT BEST).



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1822

 Samuel Downing, the prosperous nurseryman father of 7-year-old [Andrew Jackson Downing](#), died. Control of the family business would pass to an older brother, Charles Downing.


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



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1830

 Upon graduation from Montgomery Academy, [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) joined his brother Charles Downing in the family plant nursery, while continuing to study, as opportunities allowed, the natural sciences — especially botany and mineralogy. His first literary effort, a description of the “Danskamer” or Devil’s Dancing Ground, a point on the Hudson River near Newburgh, New York, appeared in the [New York Mirror](#).

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1835



It was at about this point that [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) began the study of art in landscape gardening. To that end he began to visit various estates along the Hudson River.


**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.**



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1838

 June 7, Thursday: Letitia Landon got married with George Maclean.

[Andrew Jackson Downing](#) got married with Caroline Elizabeth de Wint, daughter of John Peter de Wint of Fishkill Landing. Immediately, the newlyweds would be erecting a house of the husband's design on a 6-acre tract in Newburgh, New York. During this year he would buy out his brother's interest in the family nursery and begin composition of the treatise on theory and practice of landscape gardening that he would publish in 1841.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING



HDT

WHAT?

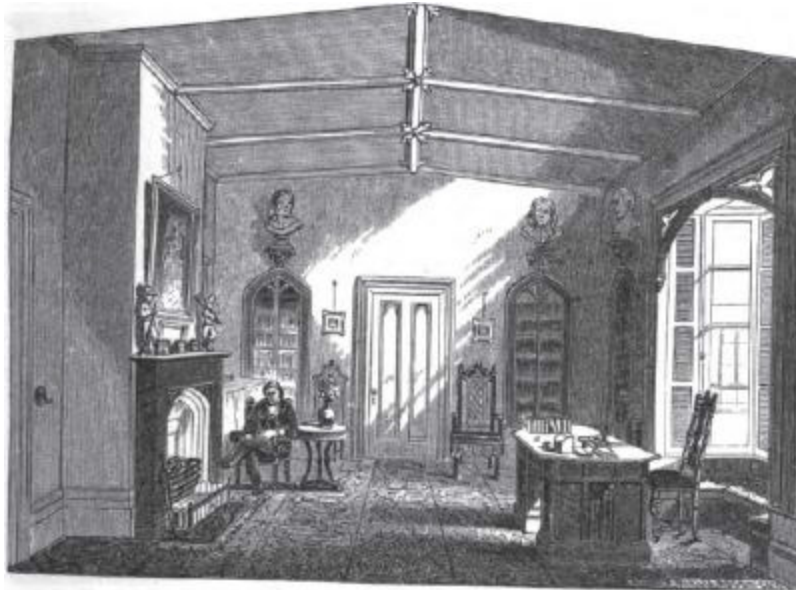
INDEX

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING



RESIDENCE OF THE LATE A. J. DOWNING. NEWBURGH, ON THE HUDSON.



THE LIBRARY: RESIDENCE OF THE LATE A. J. DOWNING.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

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





ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1841

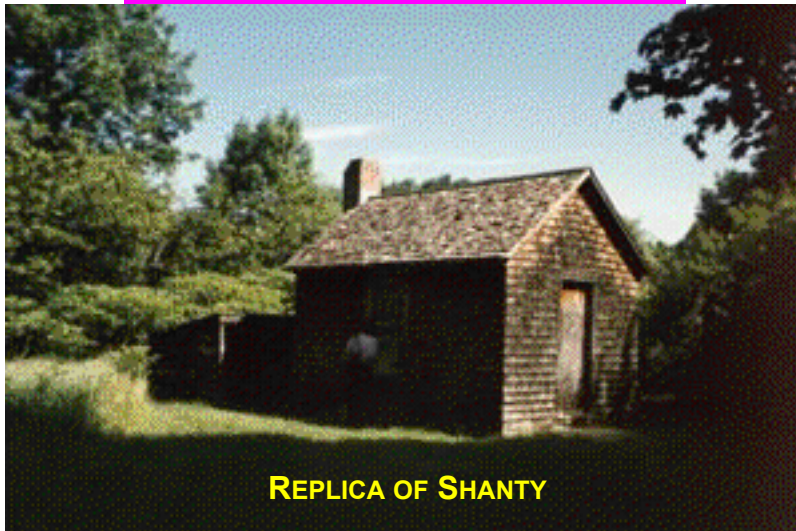
A “villa book,” A TREATISE ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF LANDSCAPE GARDENING by [Andrew Jackson Downing](#), was published. Since [Henry Thoreau](#) would mention this book in his journal for April 10, 1857, it

LANDSCAPE GARDENING

seems possible that he consulted it as one source for his architectural remarks in [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#). (In this context he would also instance another of Downing’s productions, his 1845 THE FRUITS AND FRUIT TREES OF NORTH AMERICA.)

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

FRUITS AND FRUIT TREES



REPLICA OF SHANTY

EMERSON'S SHANTY

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



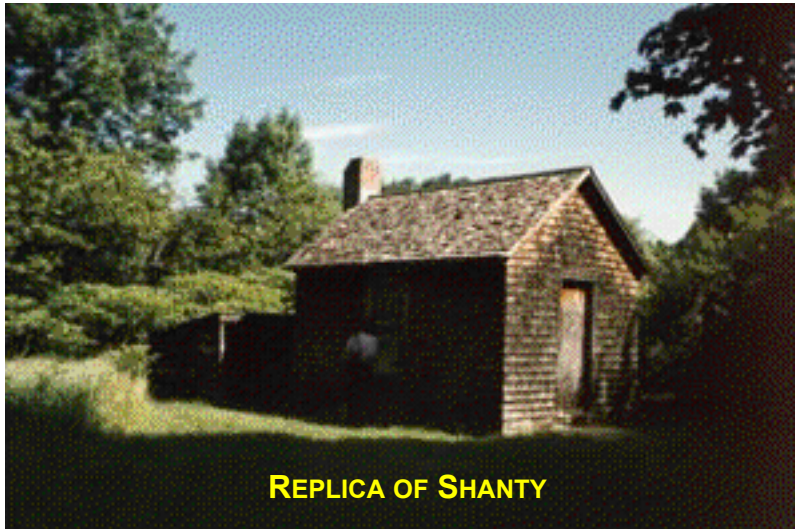


ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1842

A couple of “villa books” were published, COTTAGE RESIDENCES by [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) and RUSTIC ARCHITECTURE by T.J. Ricauti (London: James Carpenter). Would [Henry Thoreau](#) ever consult this as a source for his architectural remarks in [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)?



REPLICA OF SHANTY

EMERSON'S SHANTY

FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A “HISTORICAL CONTEXT” IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1843

January: A review article, "[Downing](#) on Rural Architecture," appeared in the North American Review (56: 1-2).

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1845

[Andrew Jackson Downing](#)'s THE FRUITS AND FRUIT TREES OF AMERICA: OR THE CULTURE, PROPAGATION, AND MANAGEMENT, IN THE GARDEN AND ORCHARD, OF FRUIT TREES GENERALLY; WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE FINEST VARIETIES OF FRUIT, NATIVE AND FOREIGN, CULTIVATED IN THIS COUNTRY ... ILLUSTRATED WITH MANY ENGRAVINGS (New-York & London. Wiley and Putnam. 1847).

FRUITS AND FRUIT TREES

**ESSENCE IS BLUR. SPECIFICITY,
THE OPPOSITE OF ESSENCE,
IS OF THE NATURE OF TRUTH.**



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1846

[Andrew Jackson Downing](#) began as editor of the magazine The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste. Devoted to Horticulture, Landscape Gardening, Rural Architecture, Botany, Pomology, Entomology, Rural Economy, &c.

**ESSENCES ARE FUZZY, GENERIC, CONCEPTUAL;
ARISTOTLE WAS RIGHT WHEN HE INSISTED THAT ALL TRUTH IS
SPECIFIC AND PARTICULAR (AND WRONG WHEN HE CHARACTERIZED
TRUTH AS A GENERALIZATION).**

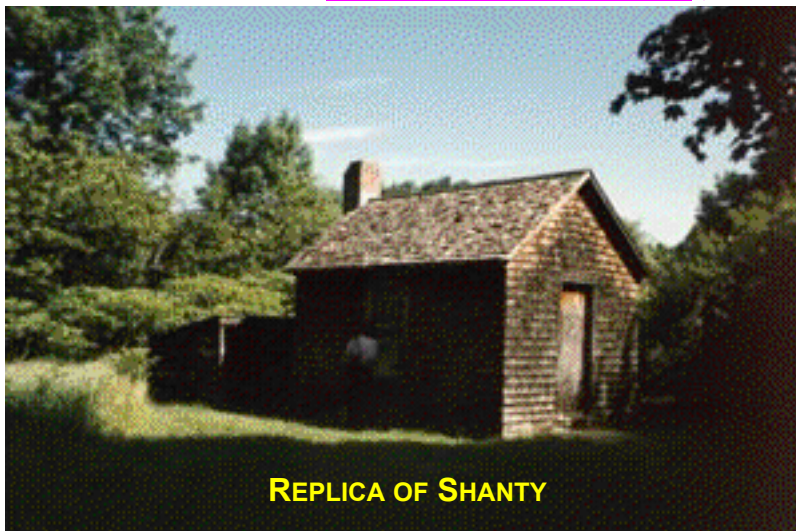


ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1847

May: In the 11th issue of The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste. Devoted to Horticulture, Landscape Gardening, Rural Architecture, Botany, Pomology, Entomology, Rural Economy, &c [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) had an article “On the Colour of Country Houses.” Would [Henry Thoreau](#) ever consult this as a source for his architectural remarks in [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS?](#)



REPLICA OF SHANTY

EMERSON'S SHANTY



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

... COUNTRY HOUSES



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

“HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE” BEING A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN TIME (JUST AS THE PERSPECTIVE IN A PAINTING IS A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN SPACE), TO “LOOK AT THE COURSE OF HISTORY MORE GENERALLY” WOULD BE TO SACRIFICE PERSPECTIVE ALTOGETHER. THIS IS FANTASY-LAND, YOU’RE FOOLING YOURSELF. THERE CANNOT BE ANY SUCH THINGIE, AS SUCH A PERSPECTIVE.

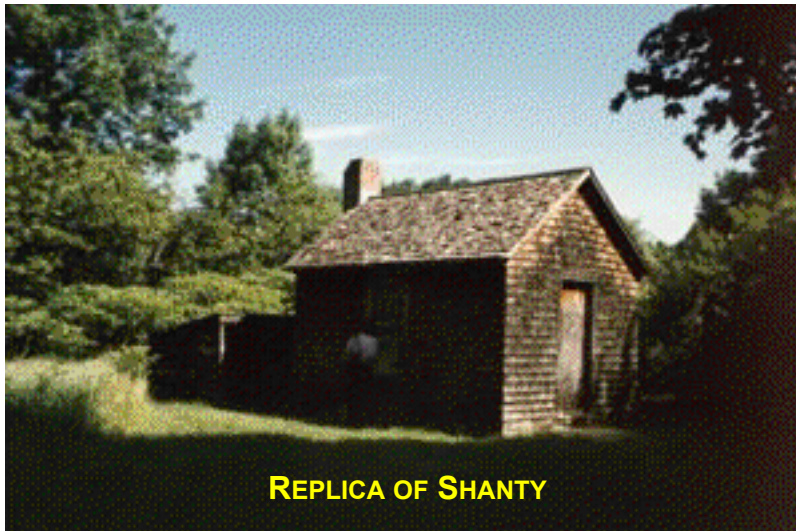


ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1848

July: In the 3d volume of The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste. Devoted to Horticulture, Landscape Gardening, Rural Architecture, Botany, Pomology, Entomology, Rural Economy, &c [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) had an article entitled “Hints to Rural Improvers.” Would [Henry Thoreau](#) ever consult this as a source for his architectural remarks in [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS?](#)



REPLICA OF SHANTY

EMERSON'S SHANTY

... RURAL IMPROVERS

YOUR GARDEN-VARIETY ACADEMIC HISTORIAN INVITES YOU TO CLIMB ABOARD A HOVERING TIME MACHINE TO SKIM IN METATIME BACK ACROSS THE GEOLOGY OF OUR PAST TIMESLICES, WHILE OFFERING UP A GARDEN VARIETY OF COGENT ASSESSMENTS OF OUR PROGRESSION. WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP! YOU SHOULD REFUSE THIS HELICOPTERISH OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL PAST, FOR IN THE REAL WORLD THINGS HAPPEN ONLY AS THEY HAPPEN. WHAT THIS SORT WRITES AMOUNTS, LIKE MERE “SCIENCE FICTION,” MERELY TO “HISTORY FICTION”:
IT'S NOT WORTH YOUR ATTENTION.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1849

January: In the 3d volume of The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste. Devoted to Horticulture, Landscape Gardening, Rural Architecture, Botany, Pomology, Entomology, Rural Economy, &c [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) had an article entitled “On the Mistakes of Citizens in Country Life,” in which he expressed his amazement at “the extravagance of Americans,” and pointed up the fact that “Large estates, large houses, large establishments, only make slaves of their possessors.” The author exclaims “It is so hard to be content with simplicity!” Might [Henry Thoreau](#)’s similar remarks in WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS have been

HDT

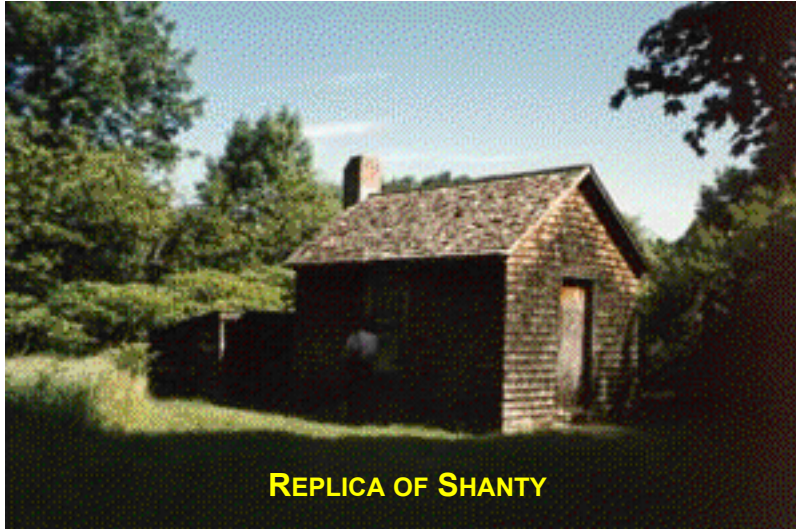
WHAT?

INDEX

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

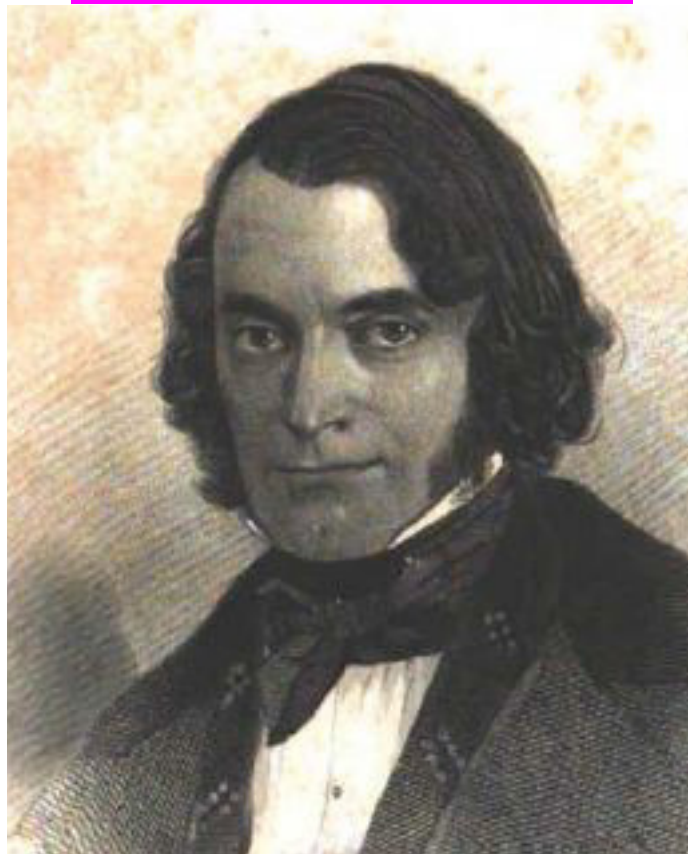
inspired by the sentiments to be found in this publication?



REPLICA OF SHANTY

EMERSON'S SHANTY

MISTAKES IN COUNTRY LIFE



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

**THE TASK OF THE HISTORIAN IS TO CREATE HINDSIGHT WHILE
INTERCEPTING ANY ILLUSION OF FORESIGHT. NOTHING A HUMAN CAN
SEE CAN EVER BE SEEN AS IF THROUGH THE EYE OF GOD.**



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

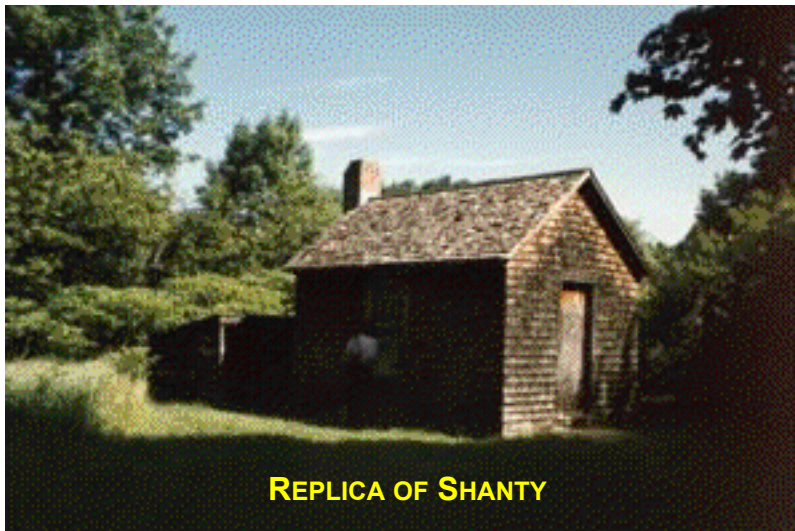
ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1850

President Millard Fillmore invited [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) to design an arboretum and pleasure ground as the grounds for the Washington Mall.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

A “villa book” was published, THE ARCHITECTURE OF COUNTRY HOUSES by [Andrew Jackson Downing](#). Would [Henry Thoreau](#) ever consult this as a source for his architectural remarks in [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS?](#)



REPLICA OF SHANTY

EMERSON'S SHANTY

Also during this year, in Dublin, James M'Glashan published Joel Tyler Headley's LIFE IN THE WOODS; OR, THE ADIRONDACK, a report on the author's having spent the summers of 1847 and of 1848 in the Adirondacks.¹

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

[Andrew Jackson Downing](#)

[“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project](#)

1. Forget it: [Thoreau](#) had already chosen his subtitle “Life in the Woods.” He did not derive it from this book of similar title published in this year in Dublin.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

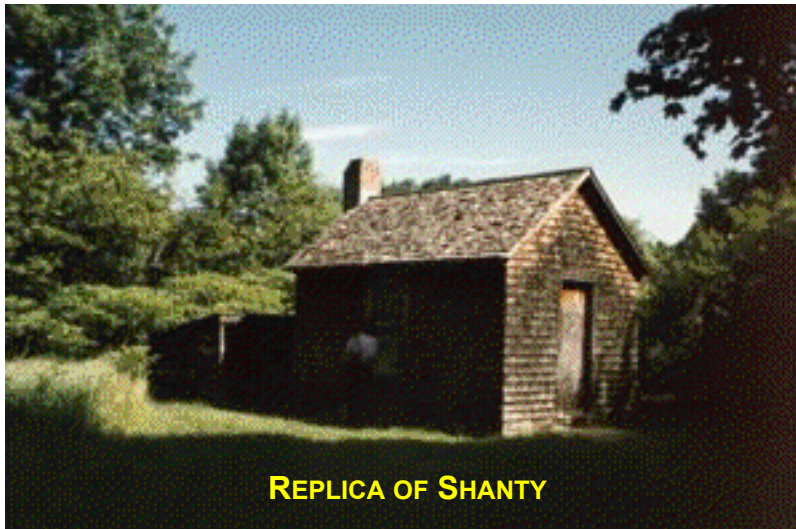
1851

April: [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) was invited by President Millard Fillmore to superintend the work of converting 160 acres of government land in Washington DC near the Capitol building, the White House, and the Smithsonian Institution into gardens and promenades. He set to work on this in full awareness that it was the largest such project ever contemplated in this nation.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

May: [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) came to Washington and took personal charge of the government land between 7th and 12th Streets. Beside the Mall he designed improvements for the square south of the White House.

June: In the 6th volume of The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste. Devoted to Horticulture, Landscape Gardening, Rural Architecture, Botany, Pomology, Entomology, Rural Economy, &c [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) had an article entitled “A Few Words on Our Progress in Building.” Would [Henry Thoreau](#) ever consult this as a source for his architectural remarks in [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS?](#)



REPLICA OF SHANTY

EMERSON'S SHANTY

OUR PROGRESS IN BUILDING

Andrew Jackson Downing

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)[ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING](#)[ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING](#)**1852**

July 28, Wednesday morning: [Andrew Jackson Downing](#),² his wife and her mother (Mrs. de Wint), his sister, his younger brother, and a Mrs. Wadsworth left the Downing residence “Highland Gardens” overlooking



RESIDENCE OF THE LATE A. J. DOWNING. NEWBURGH, ON THE HUDSON.

Newburgh, New York³ to be picked up by the Hudson River steamboat *Henry Clay*. They were bound for Newport, Rhode Island. The vessel had left Albany at 7 A.M., and another vessel, the *Armenia*, had pulled away from the dock at roughly the same time. Initially the *Armenia* had taken the lead, but then the two passenger vessels began racing for the advantage which would result in getting to the various landings along the river earliest, so as to get the benefit of additional passengers and freight, and so as to be first at the cords of wood stacked at the landings. Just above Kingston the *Henry Clay* deliberately cut across the bow of the *Armenia*, splintering its larboard woodwork to the cheers of its passengers. Some passengers complained to the captain, as the *Henry Clay* was passing Yonkers, that the steam engine was getting so hot that they could not bear to walk past it amidships. Embers were shooting from the smokestack. When some of these embers fell on a stretched canvas covering, a fire broke out, within five minutes the situation became so hopeless that at Riverdale the captain rammed the vessel into the east bank of the river. The passengers at the stern could

2. He was in the process of regularizing the naming of varieties of apples, such as the Grand Sachem, the Maiden Blush, the Vittles and Drink, the Sine Qua Non, the Jonathan, and the Mouse.

3. Highland Gardens is long gone, but some Newburgh homes that [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) showing his influence do still remain. There is a Sherwin-Williams series of exterior house colors named in his honor. Newburgh's Downing Park amounts to a smaller version of New York's Central Park.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

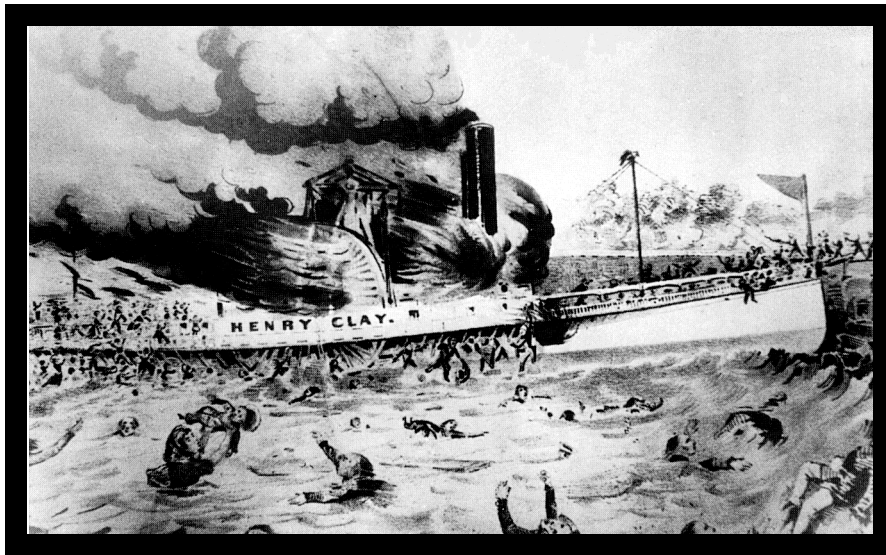
not get past the flames amidstships and as the fire consumed the vessel they were forced to leap into the deep, rapidly flowing river. The remains of [Andrew Jackson Downing](#) were recovered and he is buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery just north of Newburgh, New York.⁴

[Maria Louisa Hawthorne](#) drowned a few feet from the bank of the river.

Professor [Jacob Whitman Bailey](#), his wife [Maria Slaughter Bailey](#), their 17-year-old daughter [Maria Whitman Bailey](#) (who was ill), and their 9-year-old son [William Whitman Bailey](#) had been on a brief family outing. William managed to grab a floating wicker chair. Meanwhile, the father struggled to save his wife and daughter:

Swimming with his feet, Jacob held his wife and daughter afloat until they could hold onto ropes hanging from the ship. A drowning woman pulled him under water. When he came up again the two Marias were gone and flames were everywhere. A stranger pulled him ashore.

The father could not believe his son was alive, until taken to him.⁵ The area would be crowded for days with New-Yorkers seeking to recover the bodies of loved ones:



In total there were some 70 or 80 fatalities.

[Mary Brown Jones](#), widow of [William Jones](#), died of [tubercular consumption](#) in [Concord](#), Massachusetts. Her inscription would read “In memory of a beloved Mother Mary relict of William Jones died July 28, 1852 aged 74 y’rs / Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord”.

4. The uncompleted Mall in Washington DC would be taken over by W.D. Brackenridge and John Saul, who would of course continue until all appropriated funds were exhausted.

5. The family nurse “Aunt” Nancy Lewis, a manumitted slave, would need to take on the task of raising young William. While Robert E. Lee was Superintendent of West Point, from 1852 to 1855, his play companion was Robert E. Lee, Jr.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING



July 28, Wednesday: Pm to Yellow pine Lake.

Epilobium colorata road side just this side of Dennis Water lobelia is it that C. shows me? There is a yellowish light now from a low tufted yellowish broad leaved grass in fields that have been mown— A June like breezy air. The large shaped sagittaria out —a large crystalline white 3 petalled flower— Enough has not been said of the beauty of the shrub oak leaf Q. ilicifolia —of a thick firm texture for the most part injured by insects intended to last all winter —of a glossy green above & now silky smooth downy beneath —fit for a wreath or crown. The leaves of the chinquapin oak might be intermixed. Grass hoppers are very abundant —several to every square foot in some fields. I observed some leaves of woodbine which had not risen from the ground —turned a beautiful bright red —perhaps from heat & drought —though it was in a low wood.— This Ampelopsis Quinquefolia is in blossom— Is it identical with that about R W E's posts which was in blossom July 13th— Aster radula? in J. P. Browns meadow Solidago Altissima? beyond the corner bridge out some days at least —but not rough hairy Golden rod & asters have **fairly** begun i.e. there are several kinds of each out. What is that slender hieracium or aster like plant in woods on Corner road with lanceolate sessile coarsely —feather veined leaves — sessile & remotely toothed —minute clustered imbricate buds? or flowers & buds? Panicked.

The evenings are now sensibly longer —& the cooler weather makes them improvable.

THE FALLACY OF MOMENTISM: THIS STARRY UNIVERSE DOES NOT CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF MOMENTS. THAT IS A FIGMENT, ONE WE HAVE RECOURSE TO IN ORDER TO PRIVILEGE TIME OVER CHANGE, A PRIVILEGING THAT MAKES CHANGE SEEM UNREAL, DERIVATIVE, A MERE APPEARANCE. IN FACT IT IS CHANGE AND ONLY CHANGE WHICH WE EXPERIENCE AS REALITY, TIME BEING BY WAY OF RADICAL CONTRAST UNEXPERIENCED — A MERE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT. THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO INSTANT HAS EVER FOR AN INSTANT EXISTED.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1855

Here, in a Currier and Ives print dating to this year, is the sort of country home and rural genteel life that was being recommended to Americans by [Andrew Jackson Downing](#).



YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT EITHER THE REALITY OF TIME OVER THAT OF CHANGE, OR CHANGE OVER TIME — IT'S PARMENIDES, OR HERACLITUS. I HAVE GONE WITH HERACLITUS.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1857

April 10, Good Friday: In the morning [Richard Wagner](#) conceived the idea for a work *Parsifal* that would be based on Wolfram von Eschenbach's 13th-Century epic poem *Parzival* about a quest for the Holy Grail:

... on Good Friday I awoke to find the sun shining brightly for the first time in this house: the little garden was radiant with green, the birds sang, and at last I could sit on the roof and enjoy the long-yearned-for peace with its message of promise. Full of this sentiment, I suddenly remembered that the day was Good Friday, and I called to mind the significance this omen had already once assumed for me when I was reading Wolfram's *Parzival*. Since the sojourn in Marienbad [in the summer of 1845], where I had conceived [Die Meistersinger](#) and *Lohengrin*, I had never occupied myself again with that poem; now its noble possibilities struck me with overwhelming force, and out of my thoughts about Good Friday I rapidly conceived a whole drama, of which I made a rough sketch with a few dashes of the pen, dividing the whole into three acts.

(Actually, as his wife Cosima would point out to him later, this couldn't have occurred as described on this Good Friday morning, he had merely made it up. In his story he was sitting on the roof of the "cottage" Asyl on the green hill outside of Zürich, but they had not moved into this "cottage" belonging to the Wesendonck family until the 28th of the month. Had this actually happened on the 10th, then it would have needed to have happened while they were still residing at Zeltweg 13 inside the city of Zürich, where the environment couldn't have been nearly so nice.)

R. today recalled the impression which inspired his "Good Friday Music"; he laughs, saying he had thought to himself, "In fact it is all as far-fetched as my love affairs, for it was not a Good Friday at all - just a pleasant mood in Nature which made me think, 'This is how a Good Friday ought to be.'"

LISTEN TO IT NOW

[Henry Thoreau](#) noticed among the decorations in [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)'s shanty a wall-motto from [Horace](#)'s ODES. We note that although he jotted down several such conceits, this stands out as the only one for which it was unnecessary to also register the name of an author.



April 10: D.R.'s Shanty is about half a dozen rods S.W. of his house (which may be one hundred rods from the road), nearly between his house and barn, is 12 x 14 feet, with 7 feet posts, with common pent roof. In building it he directed the carpenter to use western boards and timbers, though some eastern studs (spruce?) were inserted. He had already occupied a smaller shanty at "Woodlee," about a mile S. The roof is shingled, and the sides made of matched boards, and painted a light clay color, with chocolate (?) colored blinds. Within, it is not plastered, and is open to the roof, showing the timbers and rafters, and rough boards and cross-timbers overhead, as if ready for plastering. The door is at the east end, with a small window on each side of it, a similar window on each side of the building, and one at the west end, the latter looking down the garden walk. In front of the last window is a small box stove with a funnel rising to a level with the plate, and there inserted in a small



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

brick chimney which rests on planks. On the south side of the room, against the stove, is a rude settle with a coarse cushion and pillow; on the opposite side a large low desk with some bookshelves above it; on the same side by the window, a small table covered with books; and in the N.E. corner, behind the door, an old-fashioned secretary, its pigeonholes stuffed with papers. On the opposite side as you enter is a place for fuel, which the boy leaves each morning, a place to hang greatcoats. there were two small pieces of carpet on the floor, and R. or one of his guests swept out the Shanty each morning. There was a small kitchen clock hanging in the S.W. corner, and a map of Bristol County behind the settle. The west and N.W. side is well-nigh covered with slips of paper on which are written some sentences or paragraphs from R.'s favorite books. I noticed among the most characteristic Didbin's "Tom Tackle," a translation of Anacreon's *Cicada*, lines celebrating tobacco, Milton's "How charming is divine philosophy," &c., "*Inveni requiem; Spes et Fortuna valete: Nil mihi vobiscum est: laudite nunc alios.*" (Is it Petrarch?) this is also over the door, "*Mors pallida æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turres.*" Some lines of his own in memory of A.J. Downing, "Not to be in a hurry," over the desk, and many other quotations, celebrating retirement, country life, simplicity, humanity, sincerity, &c., &c., from Cowper and other English poets, and similar extracts from newspapers. There were also two or three advertisements of cattle-show exhibitions, and the warning not to kill birds contrary to laws, he being one of the subscribers notified to enforce the act, an advertisement of a steamboat on Lake Winnepiseogee, &c., cards of his business friends. The size of different brains, from "Hall's Journal of Health," and "Take the world Easy." A sheet of blotting paper tacked up, and of Chinese characters from a tea-chest. Also a few small pictures and pencil sketches, the latter commonly caricatures of his visitors or friends, as "The Trojan" ([Channing](#)) and Van Beest; I take the most notice of these particulars because his peculiarities are so commonly unaffected. He has long been accustomed to put these scraps on his walls, and has a basket full somewhere saved from the old Shanty, though there were some quotations which had no right there. I found all his peculiarities faithfully expressed, his humanity, his fear of death, love of retirement, simplicity, &c. The more characteristic books were Bradley's Husbandry, Drake's Indians, Barber's Hist. Coll., Zimmermann on Solitude, Bigelow's Plants of Boston, &c., Farmer's Register of the first Settlers of New England, Marshall's Gardening, Vick's Gardener, John Woolman, The Modern Horse Doctor, Downing's Fruits, &c., The Farmer's Library, Walden, Dymond's Essays, Jobb Scott's Journal, Morton's Memorial, Bailey's Dictionary, Downing's Landscape Gardening, etc., The Task, Nuttall's Ornithology, Morse's Gazetteer, The Domestic Practice of Hydropathy, John Bunclie, Dwight's Travels, Virgil, Young's Night Thoughts, History of Plymouth, and other Shanty books.

There was an old gun, hardly safe to fire, said to be loaded with an inextractable charge, and also an old sword over the door; also a tin sign, "D. Ricketson's office" (he having set up for a lawyer once), and a small crumpled horn; there I counted more than 20 rustic canes scattered about, a dozen or 15 pipes of various patterns (mostly the common), two spy-glasses, an open paper of tobacco, an Indian's jaw (dug up), a stuffed Bluejay, and Pine Grosbeak, and a rude Indian stone hatchet, &c., &c. There was a box with fifteen or twenty knives, mostly very large old-fashioned jack-knives, kept for curiosity, occasionally giving one to a boy or friend. A large book full of pencil sketches, "to be inspected by whomsomever," containing mostly sketches of his friends, &c., acquaintances, and himself, of wayfaring men whom he had met, Quakers, &c., &c., and now and then a verse under fence rail, or an old-fashioned house sketched on a peculiar pea-green paper. A pail of water stands behind the door, with a peculiar tin cup for drinking, made in France.

ANACREON

HORACE

COWPER

BARBER

BIGELOW

QUAKERS

A.J. DOWNING

A.J. DOWNING

DWIGHT

PIPE

JONATHAN DYMOND
FRIEND DANIEL RICKETSON

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT IT IS MORTALS WHO CONSUME OUR HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS, FOR WHAT WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS EVADE THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE HUMAN LIFESPAN. (IMMORTALS, WITH NOTHING TO LIVE FOR, TAKE NO HEED OF OUR STORIES.)

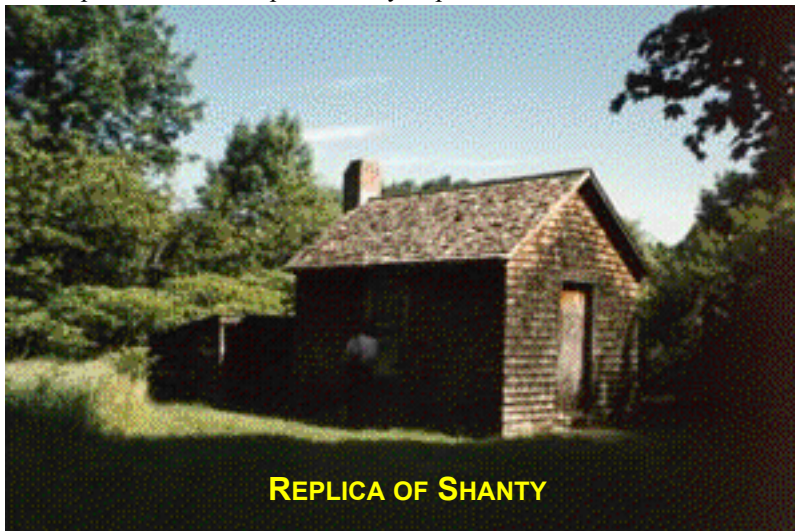


ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

1999

June: W. Barksdale Maynard, an adjunct faculty member of the Delaware College of Art and Design, writing in the Art Bulletin for June 1999 on “Thoreau’s House at Walden” (pages 303-325), properly protested that although Henry Thoreau has been “long mythologized as a uniquely brilliant and self-sufficient figure,” literary scholars have been failing to provide the sort of “broadly contextual studies” which are needed if we are to understand how the guy fitted into his locale and his era. An example of this, he offers, is the improper adulation which has been expressed for Thoreau as a seminal architectural thinker who, in the first half of the 19th Century, was allegedly writing already in anticipation of the tradition of Frank Lloyd Wright and other 20th-Century architectural innovators. That sort of adulation is improper because these hagiographers really have not made any serious study of 19th-Century architectural attitudes or of how Thoreau’s own attitudes compared with these. They have not properly contextualized their appreciation. Maynard’s present article is offered in partial correction of this deficiency: it is an attempt at such a contextualization, demonstrating that rather than being a seminal architectural thinker who was already in the 1st half of the 19th Century anticipating such 20th-Century figures as Frank Lloyd Wright, Thoreau was actually a man of his times, with architectural attitudes typical of the most enlightened of his times. The 10 X 15 shanty at Walden Pond, which was framed not with the new “balloon” framing that had been being pioneered in Chicago but with the older style of in-place framing, “has seldom been examined in the full context of contemporary architectural thought.” The shanty structure was not depicted with exact precision by Sophia Thoreau in her famous frontispiece drawing, for



REPLICA OF SHANTY

EMERSON’S SHANTY

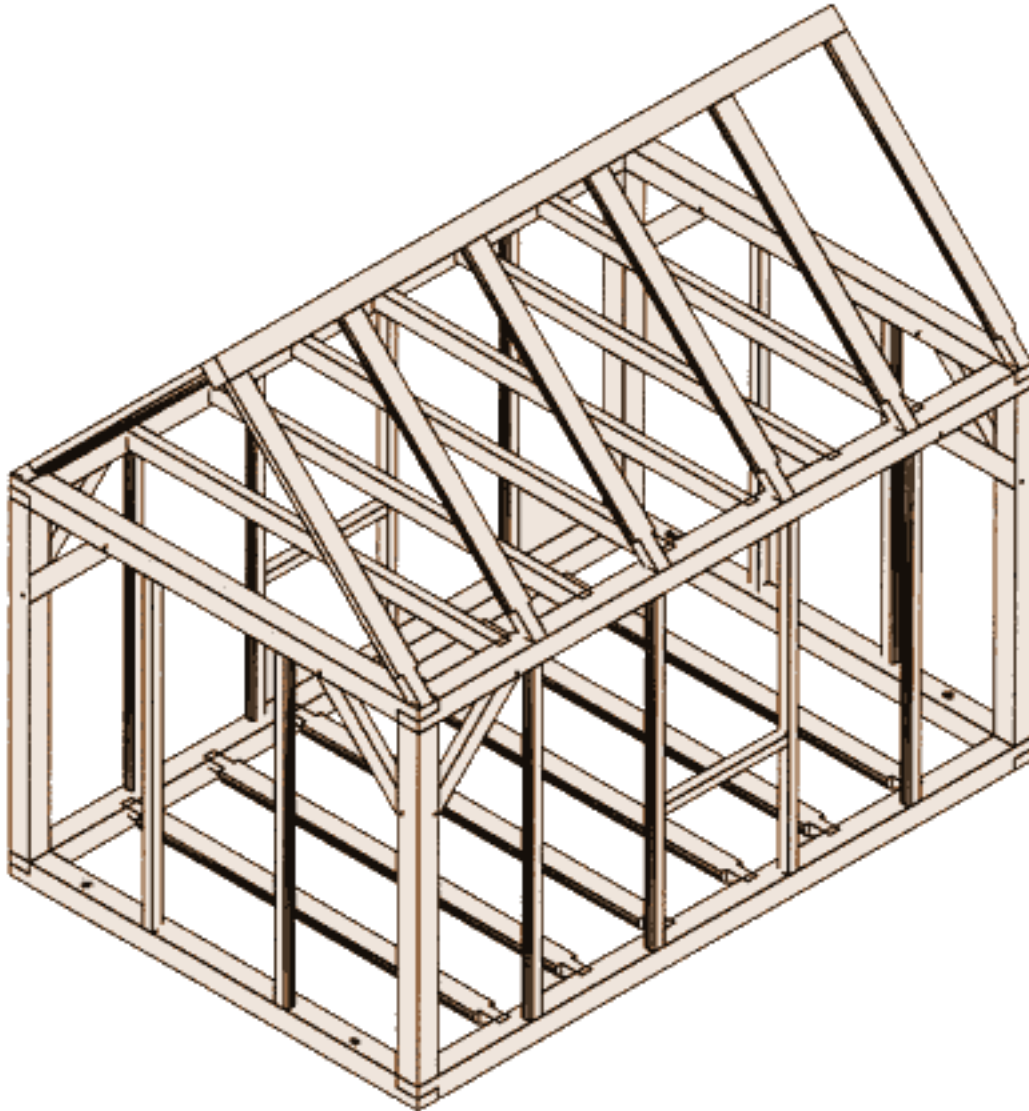
Henry noted in his copy of the book that “I would suggest a little alteration, chiefly in the door, in the wide projection of the roof at the front; and that the bank more immediately about the house be brought out more distinctly.” Evidently, in accordance with what was considered good architectural design in that period, Thoreau had made the eaves of the roof project a bit farther out over the doorway than was depicted by his sister, in order to protect his lintel from falling rain, and evidently the structure was, in accordance with what was then considered the best siting for a country villa, more snugly than would be apparent in Sophia’s drawing under the protection of the slope to the northwest.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

This is what the frame of the shanty would have looked like, standing in the woods before any boards or shingles or lathe and plaster had been applied:



(I would not myself have bothered to demonstrate that the hagiographers who have alleged that [Thoreau](#) was not a man of his times, but had already in the 1st half of the 19th Century uniquely been anticipating such 20th-Century architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, had their heads up their collective asses. I would have assumed that **everyone who matters already is very well aware** that such hagiographers have their heads up their collective asses. I would have automatically assumed that such hagiographers had actually not done their homework, had not done any comparative research whatever into architectural history. I have **met** some of these hagiographers, and understand where they are coming from. I ignore their work product.)

Along the way, W. Barksdale Maynard points out that [Roland Wells Robbins](#) found the cabin foundation at 204 feet from the pond edge (when the pond is full enough to form a marsh in Thoreau's Cove), whereas on [Thoreau's](#) manuscript map (to his eye) the distance to the little marshy protrusion appears to be about 190 feet,⁶ and



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

whereas, in the text of [WALDEN](#), Thoreau roughly indicated this distance as merely some “half a dozen rods,” which, if it had been intended as a precise measurement rather than a fuzzy approximation, would have been precisely 99 feet and therefore most inaccurate. “About a dozen rods” would be appropriate, if the foundation that Robbins dug into was indeed the foundation of Thoreau’s shanty rather than that of some other unknown previous or subsequent structure that had stood on that small ledge of land. The orientation of the shanty, on Thoreau’s 1846 manuscript survey map of [Walden Pond](#), is at about 145 degrees, its door facing between southeast and south-southeast. The compass declination taken by Robbins from the chimney foundation which he uncovered, when corrected for the known magnetic differences between 1846 and 1946, does corroborate this survey map.

(I find that I am not as amazed as Maynard, that [Thoreau](#)’s fuzzy approximation “half a dozen rods” actually was off by about half a dozen rods.)

What Maynard intends by all this is that “within the boundaries of the nearly fourteen acres owned by Emerson, [[Thoreau](#)] had located his house in precisely the way prescribed by the villa books” that were contemporary in Thoreau’s era, books that he may well have perused either firsthand or secondhand. “Suiting the ideal –and at the same time adapting itself to the somewhat awkward orientation of Emerson’s lot– it stood partway up a moderate rise, was protected to the north and east, and faced southeast, toward a sunny exposure and the view of the lake.” Could this similarity to the recommendations of the existing villa books have been a mere coincidence? “Naturally, some of the similarities between Thoreau’s situation at Walden and the villa books are coincidental, but his own written accounts seem to emphasize these similarities deliberately, as if to signal his awareness of accepted principles concerning the fitness of a country house to its location.”

Building on pastoral conventions popularized by eighteenth-century poetry, these men advocated the habit of retirement and the reform of domestic architecture along the lines of the humble English cottage, a model of integrity, fitness, and the rustic Picturesque.

6. This is now controverted by Professor Donald W. Linebaugh, who tells me that he has overlaid Thoreau’s map over his own GPS map of Robbins’s diggings and has demonstrated that they do match within a foot or two.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

Maynard provides an interesting commentary on [Thoreau](#)'s lengthy architectural ren **ASHER BENJAMIN**

Far from being novel, this is an eloquent summary of philosophies in the villa books, signaling [Thoreau](#)'s sympathy for a central goal of those books – to reform architecture in light of “humble log huts and cottages of the poor.” It is in this same spirit of the “indweller” that he attacks the “take up a handful of earth” conceit: “What do you take up a handful of dirt for – Why dont [sic] you paint your house with your blood?” ... [Thoreau] did not pioneer fitness, truth, or the “organic”; all these ideas he borrowed, shaping them to his own purposes and expressing them in bold, sharp words that [Andrew Jackson] Downing, bound by polite conventions, necessarily avoided. Rather than seeing Thoreau as an anomalous visionary, we should appreciate his shrewd grasp and effective rephrasing of the radical architectural ideas current in his day.

**PEOPLE O
WALDEN**



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

WALDEN: True, there are architects so called in this country, and I have heard of one at least possessed with the idea of making architectural ornaments have a core of truth, a necessity, and hence a beauty, as if it were a revelation to him. All very well perhaps from his point of view, but only a little better than the common dilettantism. A sentimental reformer in architecture, he began at the cornice, not at the foundation. It was only how to put a core of truth within the ornaments, that every sugar plum in fact might have an almond or caraway seed in it -though I hold that almonds are most wholesome without the sugar,- and not how the inhabitant, the indweller, might build truly within and without, and let the ornaments take care of themselves. What reasonable man ever supposed that ornaments were something outward and in the skin merely, -that the tortoise got his spotted shell, or the shellfish its mother-o'-pearl tints, by such a contract as the inhabitants of Broadway their Trinity Church? But a man has no more to do with the style of architecture of his house than a tortoise with that of its shell, nor need the soldier be so idle as to try to paint the precise **color** of his virtue on his standard. The enemy will find it out. He may turn pale when the trial comes. This man seemed to me to lean over the cornice and timidly whisper his half truth to the rude occupants who really knew it better than he. What of architectural beauty I now see, I know has gradually grown from within outward, out of the necessities and character of the indweller, who is the only builder, - out of some unconscious truthfulness, and nobleness, without ever a thought for the appearance; and whatever additional beauty of this kind is destined to be produced will be preceded by a like unconscious beauty of life. The most interesting dwellings in this country, as the painter knows, are the most unpretending, humble log huts and cottages of the poor commonly; it is the life of the inhabitants whose shells they are, and not any peculiarity in their surfaces merely, which makes them **picturesque**; and equally interesting will be the citizen's suburban box, when his life shall be as simple and as agreeable to the imagination, and there is as little straining after effect in the style of his dwelling. A great proportion of architectural ornaments are literally hollow, and a September gale would strip them off, like borrowed plumes, without injury to the substantials. They can do without **architecture** who have no olives nor wines in the cellar. What if an equal ado were made about the ornaments of style in literature, and the architects of our bibles spent as much time about their cornices as the architects of our churches do? So are made the *belles-lettres* and the *beaux-arts* and their professors. Much it concerns a man, forsooth, how a few sticks are slanted over him or under him, and what colors are daubed upon his box. It would signify somewhat, if, in any earnest sense, **he** slanted them and daubed it; but the spirit having departed out of the tenant, it is of a piece with constructing his own coffin, -the architecture of the grave, and "carpenter" is but another name for "coffin-maker." One man says, in his despair or indifference to life, take up a handful of the earth at your feet, and paint your house that color. Is he thinking of his last and narrow house? Toss up a copper for it as well. What an abundance of leisure he must have! Why do you take up a handful of dirt? Better paint your house your own complexion; let it turn pale or blush for you. An enterprise to improve the style of cottage architecture! When you have got my ornaments ready I will wear them.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

W. Barksdale Maynard gives Thomas Woodson full credit for having already pointed out to us that there was an obvious and important link yet to be discovered between [Thoreau](#)'s excursion to the Berkshires and Catskills during 1844 and his subsequent sojourn on [Walden Pond](#). "His country house ... seems to have been initially suggested by a Catskills 'mountain house' he had recently admired," a house which, when it was looked for, turns out, most sadly, no longer to be in existence. (We can visit the approximate site of this structure – but there is now nothing there.)

At this point Maynard conflates the author Thoreau with the literary protagonist he created in [WALDEN](#), and conflates Thoreau's stay at [Walden Pond](#) with the book by that title: "His Catskills trip has been virtually overlooked as an essential source of inspiration for Walden." In committing such an elementary error, Maynard more or less places himself in the same boat as the folks who summer after summer wrongheadedly make a pilgrimage to [Walden Pond](#) expecting that this venue will inspire them, only to find themselves turned off by its crowds, noise, trash, and natural degradation, and its general local crassness being right next door to a trailer park and a dump and visible from a well-traveled road and from a railroad tracks on which there are frequent trains. Such reader pilgrims depart cursing Concord and/or the 20th Century, and cursing their fellow [tourists](#), but only because they fail to recognize that the book [WALDEN](#) wasn't about **finding** some really great geographical place to be at, the very best place to be at, better than any other place to have a pic-nic at, a beautiful pristine place that can in itself because of its beauteousness and pristineness provoke endless inspiration, and reporting that place's location so that everybody and her brother could go there and enjoy it,



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

but rather was about **learning how to make the place where one is**, wherever one is, whatever its condition, become endlessly inspiring by means of an internal change in one's personal climate of mentation. Maynard supposes that the book [WALDEN](#) was preaching about the external circumstances which Thoreau describes – a mistake which admittedly is an easy one to commit because Thoreau simply does not allow any easy binary opposition between the external and the internal. By making such a conflation, however, Maynard puts [Thoreau](#) more than I would consider entirely appropriate in the same bucket with other 19th-Century disaffected individualist types such as Friend Ricketson of New Bedford, folks who equivalently indulged themselves with personal shanties.

In the wake of his Catskills trip of 1844, Maynard alleges,

Thoreau creatively translated wilderness values to a suburban location as part of his desire "to live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization." Following, in part, the lead of the villa books, he published his house design in *WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS* (1854), urging it as a model both intellectual and practical, stressing its complete opposition to all that was false and pretentious in the architecture of the day and highlighting its affinities to the so-called primitive hut, thereby joining the many contemporaries concerned with the origins of architecture and the promise, by return to "first principles," of true architectural reform. Viewed in context, the Walden experiment no longer seems, as it is so often portrayed, anomalous, antisocial, and escapist; instead, it may be understood as an intelligent and ambitious attempt to engage in current dialogues on the villa, the rustic, and the reform of domestic architecture, as Thoreau sought to participate in a popular new kind of lifestyle, suburban retirement.

(While I cannot disagree that the author of [WALDEN](#) is often portrayed as "anomalous, antisocial, and escapist," I do not agree that at this point our scholars need to produce any further refutations of such popular attitudes. Such attitudes are held only by those who have not yet begun their study of this literary figure, and do not need to be treated with any seriousness.)

However, I have a further caveat: Was that all that Henry David Thoreau's life and writing supposedly was about? –About a mere seeking to "participate in a popular new kind of lifestyle, suburban retirement," as indicated by this architectural historian in the summation to his article? If this was indeed so, I suggest, Cynthia should have sent our poet up garret at once: "And don't you sneak back down here, either, Hank, my boy, until you are ready to be a full human being!" No, this wasn't so. [Thoreau](#)'s life and writing, although it was conducted largely within a town, Concord, which was at that point becoming a bedroom community connected to beautiful downtown business Boston by a commuter rail line, was **not** about seeking retirement to the



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

suburbs as a popular new kind of lifestyle. Get a clue!

WALDEN: A comfortable house for a rude and hardy race, that lived mostly out of doors, was once made here almost entirely of such materials as Nature furnished ready to their hands. Gookin, who was superintendent of the Indians subject to the Massachusetts Colony, writing in 1674, says, "The best of their houses are covered very neatly, tight and warm, with barks of trees, slipped from their bodies at those seasons when the sap is up, and made into great flakes, with pressure of weighty timber, when they are green.... The meaner sort are covered with mats which they make of a kind of bulrush, and are also indifferently tight and warm, but not so good as the former.... Some I have seen, sixty or a hundred feet long and thirty feet broad.... I have often lodged in their wigwams, and found them as warm as the best English houses." He adds, that they were commonly carpeted and lined within with well-wrought embroidered mats, and were furnished with various utensils. The Indians had advanced so far as to regulate the effect of the wind by a mat suspended over the hole in the roof and moved by a string. Such a lodge was in the first instance constructed in a day or two at most, and taken down and put up in a few hours; and every family owned one, or its apartment in one.

**PEOPLE O
WALDEN**

DANIEL GOOKIN



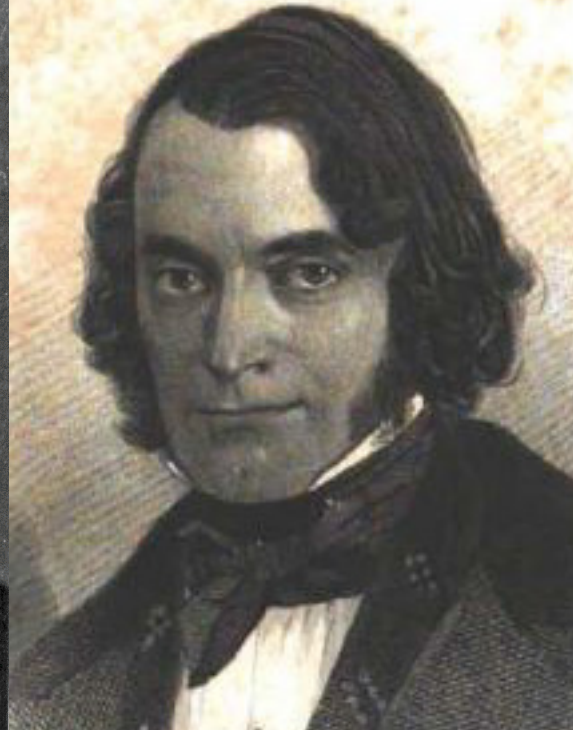
ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

To encapsule my personal attitude in regard all this, [WALDEN](#) didn't happen to be about living in a house, it happened to be about living:



(WROTE WALDEN)



(DID NOT WRITE WALDEN)

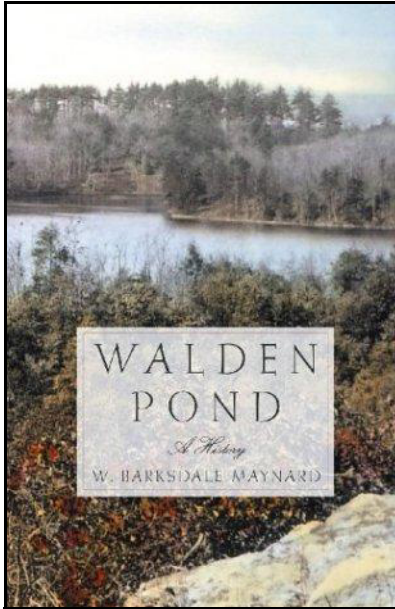
But don't bother to consult our architect wannabee's lengthy 1999 article. Due to the passage of time, you can consult his hot idea at greater length:



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

W. Barksdale Maynard. WALDEN POND: A HISTORY. NY: Oxford UP, 2004



EMERSON'S SHANTY

**THE AGE OF REASON WAS A PIPE DREAM, OR AT BEST A PROJECT.
ACTUALLY, HUMANS HAVE ALMOST NO CLUE WHAT THEY ARE DOING,
WHILE CREDITING THEIR OWN LIES ABOUT WHY THEY ARE DOING IT.**



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

COPYRIGHT NOTICE: In addition to the property of others, such as extensive quotations and reproductions of images, this "read-only" computer file contains a great deal of special work product of Austin Meredith, copyright ©2016. Access to these interim materials will eventually be offered for a fee in order to recoup some of the costs of preparation. My hypercontext button invention which, instead of creating a hypertext leap through hyperspace -resulting in navigation problems- allows for an utter alteration of the context within which one is experiencing a specific content already being viewed, is claimed as proprietary to Austin Meredith - and therefore freely available for use by all. Limited permission to copy such files, or any material from such files, must be obtained in advance in writing from the "Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project, 833 Berkeley St., Durham NC 27705. Please contact the project at <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.



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

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



Prepared: February 4, 2016



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

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.



ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

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.