

## PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

### PEOPLE MENTIONED OR ALMOST MENTIONED IN WALDEN:

#### SOLON OF ATHENS



**WALDEN:** According to Evelyn, "the wise Solomon prescribed ordinances for the very distances of trees; and the Roman praetors have decided how often you may go into your neighbor's land to gather the acorns which fall on it without trespass, and what share belongs to that neighbor."

PEOPLE OF  
WALDEN

JOHN EVELYN  
SOLON OF ATHENS

(This was a mistake. [Thoreau](#) should not have indicated the by-tradition-wise [King Solomon](#) of Judaea, for Evelyn had been referring in *SYLVA*, OR A DISCOURSE OF FOREST-TREES, to this by-tradition-wise originator of Athenian democracy.)



## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

**630 BCE**

[Solon](#) was born. According to tradition, this man may have started out as a merchant rather than as a politician. He would first become prominent in Athens around 600 BCE, at a point at which the Athenians had become disheartened by lack of progress in a war against their neighbors in Megara over control of the island of Salamis, through public recitation of a patriotic poem calling on his fellow citizens to “arise and come to Salamis, to win that fair island and undo our shame.”

**597 BCE**

Athenian statesman [Solon of Athens](#) established government by the eupatridae (plutocracy based upon inherited wealth and standing).

1198 The rape of Helen by Paris, which, in 1193, gave rise to the Trojan war, and siege of Troy by the Greeks, which continued ten years, when that city was taken and burnt.

1048 David is sole king of Israel.

1004 The Temple is solemnly dedicated by Solomon.

896 Elijah the prophet is translated to Heaven.

894 Money first made of gold and silver at Argos.

869 The city of Carthage, in Africa, founded by queen Dido.

824 The kingdom of Macedon begins.

753 Æra of the building of Rome in Italy, by Romulus, first king of the Romans.

720 Samaria taken, after three years siege, and the kingdom of Israel finished by Salmanasar, king of Assyria, who carries the ten tribes into captivity.

The first eclipse of the moon on record.

658 Byzantium (now Constantinople) built by a colony of Athenians.

604 By order of Necho, king of Egypt, some Phœnicians sailed from the Red Sea round Africa, and returned by the Mediterranean.

600 Thales, of Miletus, travels into Egypt, consults the priests of Memphis, acquires the knowledge of geometry, astronomy, and philosophy; returns to Greece, calculates eclipses, gives general notions of the universe, and maintains that one Supreme Intelligence regulates all its motions.

Maps, globes, and the signs of the Zodiac, invented by Anaximander, the scholar of Thales.

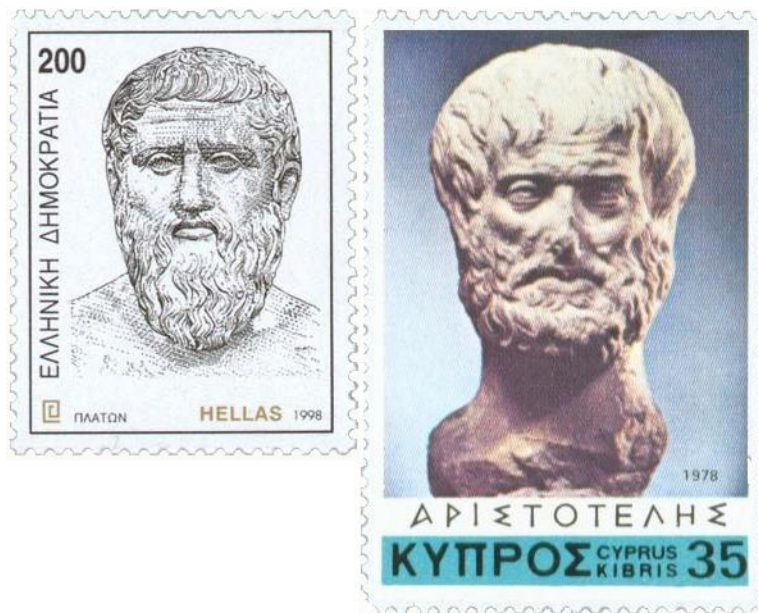
597 Jehoiakin, king of Judah, is carried away captive, by Nebuchadnezzar, to Babylon.

587 The city of Jerusalem taken after a siege of eighteen months.

562 The first comedy at Athens acted upon a moveable scaffold.

**594 BCE**

Archonship of [Solon](#) at Athens (an archon was a supreme ruler with a one-year term of office). According to Diogenes Laertius, “Besides the laws, of course, he wrote Speeches to the People and Exhortations to himself in elegiacs, and the poems on Salamis and Athenaion Politeia, 5000 lines in all; also Iambics and Epodes. His statue is inscribed as follows: ‘This is Solon the Thesmothete, whom Holy Salamis bore, who ended the hubris of the Medes.’ According to Sosicrates he flourished in Olympiad 46, in the third year of which [594 BCE] he was Archon in Athens. It was then that he made the laws.” According to Plutarch, “According to Heracleides of Pontos, Solon survived the beginning of the reign of Peisistratus [his mother’s sister’s son] by some considerable time; according to Phantias of Eresos, by less than two years. Peisistratus began his tyranny in the Archonship of Komias [561/560 BCE], and Phantias says that Solon died in that of Hegestratos, the man who served as archon after Komias.” According to [Aristotle](#), “The most democratic of Solon’s enactments were these three: the first, and greatest, the forbidding of loans on the person [i.e. using oneself as security for a loan, foreclosure to result in slavery]; the second, the possibility for anyone who wishes to sue over wrongdoings; the third, what is said more than anything else to have strengthened the power of the majority, the right of appeal to the dicastery. For the people, lord of the vote, became lord of the constitution....” According to [Plato](#), “Now he was connected with my family (oikeios), and very much a friend of my great-grandfather Dropides, as he often says in his poetry.



Proclus’s comment on the passage would be: ‘The history of Solon’s family (genos) and of Plato’s connection (syngenneia) is as follows: Solon and Dropides were the sons of Execestides, and Dropides was the father of Kritias, who is mentioned by Solon in his poetry, saying: Tell golden-haired Kritias to listen to his father;/ for




## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

he will obey an unerring commander (hegemoni).” According to Philo of [Alexandria](#), “These ages of life are given by Solon the Athenian lawgiver in the following elegiac lines: In seven years the half-grown boy casteth the first teeth he cut as a child; when God hath accomplished him seven years more he showeth signs that his youthful prime is nigh; in the third seven, when his limbs are still a-waxing, his chin groweth downy with the bloom of changing skin; in the fourth every man is at his best in the strength which men bear for a token of virtue and valour; in the fifth ’tis time for a man to bethink him of marriage and to seek offspring to come after him; in the sixth, a man’s mind is trained in all things, and he wisheth not so much now for what may not be done; in seven sevens and in eight he is at his best in mind and tongue, to wit fourteen years of both; in the ninth age he is still an able man, but his tongue and his lore have less might unto great virtue; and if a man come to the full measure of the tenth, he will not meet the fate of Death untimely.”

**574 BCE**

In this year P/Tempel-Tuttle passed through our solar system, evidently without being recorded (the 1st observation of this periodic [comet](#) of which we presently have a record would not occur until 69 BCE .

When the Athenians voted to grant to [Solon](#) full powers as a reformer and as a lawgiver, his first concern was to relieve the immediate distress that was being caused among the populace by debt. He redeemed all forfeited land and freed all enslaved citizens, presumably by means of a declaration. This measure, known popularly as the “shaking off of burdens,” would be described by Solon in one of his poems:

These things the black earth ... could best witness for the judgment of posterity; from whose surface I plucked up the marking-stones [signs of a farmers’ indebtedness?] planted all about, so that she who was enslaved is now free. And I brought back to Athens ... many who had been sold, justly or unjustly, or who had fled under the constraint of debt, wandering far afield and no longer speaking the Attic tongue; and I freed those who suffered shameful slavery here and trembled at their masters’ whims.

(Solon’s use of poetry as a means of statecraft would be echoed, in a much later timeframe, in Massachusetts, in the use of poetry as a means of statecraft by Friend John Greenleaf Whittier.)

The first written legal code of Athens, that of Draco (*circa* 621 BCE), was still in force. Draco’s legislation had such severe (draconian!) penalties that they were said to have been set down not in ink but in blood. Death was the penalty for almost any criminal offense, and the result of not satisfactorily paying back a loan would often be enslavement. Solon’s revisions to this code were posted on revolving wooden tablets for the public to read. He prohibited, for the future, the issuance of any loans that offered security in the borrower’s person (that if the borrower did not repay on schedule with interest, he or members of his family could be sold into slavery). However, he also declined to redistribute the fields of Athens. Instead, he took action to make it possible for the marginal farmers who were being forced out to become traders or to enter a profession. So much of the city state’s grain was being exported that not enough was left behind to feed the local population of Attica, and so he forbade the export of any produce other than olive oil. The circulation of a currency made up of pocket coins was a technology that was being pioneered during Solon’s lifetime, and this he was able to stimulate through the local minting of an Athenian coinage. He introduced new weights and measures.

Up to this point, whether you were wealthy or poor was often estimated on the basis of whether your family



## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

of origin was part of the known local aristocracy. This was disadvantaging the new-money families, so Solon instituted a census of annual income, reckoned primarily in measures of grain, oil, and wine (the principal products of the soil), in order to classify the free men accordingly into four income groups. Under this new scheme, political privilege would be allotted without regard to the social standing of the family of one's origin. Any free man who was in one of the top two of the four new categories could occupy a high post in the government. Any free man who was in one of the top three of the four new categories could serve, a year at a time, on a new Council of Four Hundred, the function of which would be to prepare business for the Assembly. All free men regardless of category (no slaves) would be entitled to attend the general Assembly (*Ecclesia*), this functioning, at least potentially, as the sovereign body, entitled to pass laws and decrees, elect officials, and hear appeals from the most important decisions of the courts.

**560 BCE**

[Solon](#) died. According to Diogenes Laertius, “He died in Cyprus at 80 years of age, having left the following instruction to his relatives: to carry his bones to Salamis and having burnt them to scatter them over the land. So Kratinos says in the *CHEIRONES*, making Solon say: ‘I live on an island, as the report of men has it, scattered over all the polis of Ajax.’” According to Plutarch, “The absurdity of the scattering of his ashes over the island of Salamis would seem to make it entirely improbable and mythical, and yet the story is attested by reputable authorities including Aristotle the Philosopher.”<sup>1</sup>

At about this point the Deuteronomist or “D” source for JOSHUA to KINGS was being written in Babylon.

After Pisistratus seized power in Athens, the “Tyrants” would rule until 510BCE. Pisistratus would be succeeded by his sons until eventually, in 527BCE, this era would be brought to an end by Cleisthenes.

At about this point the Spartan army was defeated in Arcadia.

Lydia’s King Croesus conquered the city states of Ionia.

1. It would not be until the following century that accounts of [Solon](#)’s life and works would begin to be put together, by inferences based upon the 300 or so lines preserved in snippets out of his lengthy poems, his law code, still-existing institutions, and oral tradition.



428 BCE

May 21: [Plato](#) was born, presumably in the vicinity of Athens, and was given the name Aristokles of Athens. His wealthy father, Ariston, was believed to have descended from Codrus, one of the ancient kings of Athens, and his mother, Perictione, was distantly related to the 6th-century BCE lawgiver [Solon of Athens](#). Plato became a wrestler and seems in that way to have picked up his nickname, “Platon,” meaning “Broad-Shouldered.” The family was very conservative in its politics: his uncles Charmides and Critias, who appear as characters in his dialogues, took part in the coup of The Thirty. Adiemantus and Glaucon, who appear in the *REPUBLIC*, were Plato’s brothers. His half-brother Antiphon (after his father’s early death, his mother had remarried, to an associate of Pericles named Pylampes) appears in the *PARMENIDES*. His sister Potone would have a son, Speusippus, who would succeed him as leader of his Academy. According to Aristotle’s *METAPHYSICS*, Plato was initially a follower of the Heraclitean philosopher Cratylus. Diogenes Laertius informs us that the given story was that [Socrates](#) of Athens in a dream “saw a swan on his knees, which all at once put forth plumage, and flew away after uttering a loud sweet note.” Another version of this dream has the swan as flying towards him. “And the next day Plato was introduced as a pupil, and thereupon he recognized in him the swan of his dreams.” Here is Plato’s mentor, virtualized first in antique petrification and then in modern pixilation:



(It was during the year 428 BCE that, in Israel, the Samaritans were building their temple on Mount Gerizim.)

## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLOON OF ATHENS

401 BCE

It was probably before the end of the 5th century that the Greeks first drew up their list known as The Seven Wise Men of Antiquity (οἱ ἑπτὰ σοφοί), typical members being [Bias of Priene](#) (Βίας ο Πριηνεὺς), [Chilon of Sparta](#) (Χεῖλων), [Cleobulus of Lindos](#) (Κλεόβουλος), [Periander of Corinth](#) (Περίανδρος), [Pittacus of Mytilene](#) (Πιττακός), [Solon of Athens](#) (Σόλων), [Thales of Miletus](#) (Θαλῆς), and [Myson of Chenae](#) (Μύσων ὁ Χηνεὺς).



The earliest version of this list that we now have is the one that was recorded by [Plato](#). To accommodate rival claimants to wisdom, the list would expand to 10 and then 17. As you can see, [Plato](#) is the only source that lists [Myson](#). All versions, however, do contain four unchallenged names, such as “[Solon of Athens](#).”





## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

<b>Plato</b>	<b>Ephorus</b>	<b>Demetrius</b>	<b>Anonymous</b>	<b>Anonymous</b>	<b>Maeandrius</b>	<b>Dicaearchus</b>
Θαλῆς	Θαλῆς	Θαλῆς	Θαλῆς	Θαλῆς	Θαλῆς	Θαλῆς
Πιττακός	Πιττακός	Πιττακός	Πιττακός	Πιττακός	Πιττακός	Πιττακός
Βίας	Βίας	Βίας	Βίας	Βίας	Βίας	Βίας
Σόλων	Σόλων	Σόλων	Σόλων	Σόλων	Σόλων	Σόλων
Χεῖλων	Χεῖλων	Χεῖλων	Χεῖλων	Χεῖλων	Χεῖλων	Περίανδρος
Κλεόβουλος	Κλεόβουλος	Κλεόβουλος	Κλεόβουλος	Κλεόβουλος	Ἐπιμενίδης	Ἀριστόδημος
Μύσων	Ἀνάχαρσις	Περίανδρος	Ὁ Πυθαγόρας	Ἄκουσίλαος	Λεωφαντος	Παμφίλος





## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

1907

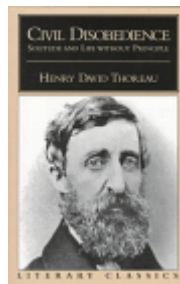
Bubonic Plague killed 1,200,000 in [India](#).

[Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi](#), a British-educated [Indian](#) lawyer in prison in Pretoria, South Africa, read "RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT":



The Thoreau-Gandhi entente has ... become a straw for Indo-American amity for both nations to clutch at on appropriate occasion. The Thoreau Centennial provided such an occasion in 1962, and the Indian Ambassador to the United States made a whole log out of this straw when he delivered his address at the dedication of Malvina Hoffman's bust of Thoreau in the Hall of Fame at New York University.

Thoreau's essay titled "Civil Disobedience" was republished in a South African newspaper [Indian Opinion](#) which Gandhi was editing.



The leading anarchist journal in the US, [Liberty](#), began to claim "Civil Disobedience" as an "anarchist classic." However, these people were still focusing more upon [Waldo Emerson](#) and Walt Whitman than upon [Henry Thoreau](#). (And they were paying no attention at all to actual US legal enactment and precedent.)



Publication of the Reverend James Wood's THE NUTTALL ENCYCLOPÆDIA BEING A CONCISE AND COMPREHENSIVE DICTIONARY OF GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CONSISTING OF OVER 16,000 TERSE AND ORIGINAL ARTICLES ON NEARLY ALL SUBJECTS DISCUSSED IN LARGER ENCYCLOPÆDIAS, AND SPECIALLY DEALING WITH SUCH AS COME UNDER THE CATEGORIES OF HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, GEOGRAPHY, LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND ART:

THE SEVEN SAGES OF GREECE:

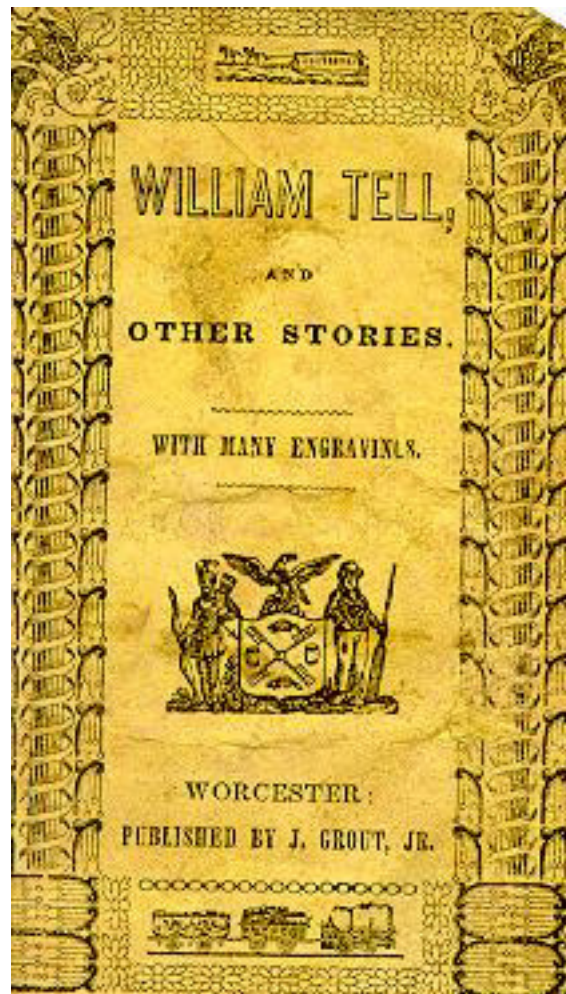
- [Solon of Athens](#), his motto "Know thyself"
- [Chilo of Sparta](#), his motto "Consider the end"
- [Thales of Miletus](#), his motto "Whoso hateth suretyship is sure"
- [Bias of Priene](#), his motto "Most men are bad"
- [Cleobulus of Lindos](#), his motto "Avoid extremes"
- [Pittacus of Mitylene](#), his motto "Seize Time by the forelock"

## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

- Periander of Corinth, his motto "Nothing is impossible to industry."

WILLIAM TELL, Swiss hero and patriot, a peasant, native of the canton of Uri, who flourished in the beginning of the 14th century; resisted the oppression of the Austrian governor Gessler, and was taken prisoner, but was promised his liberty if with his bow and arrow he could hit an apple on the head of his son, a feat he accomplished with one arrow, with the second arrow in his belt, which he told Gessler he had kept to shoot him with if he had failed. This so incensed the governor that he bound him to carry off to his castle; but as they crossed the lake a storm arose, and Tell had to be unbound to save them, when he leapt upon a rock and made off, to lie in ambush, whence he shot the oppressor through the heart as he passed him; a rising followed, which ended only with the emancipation of Switzerland from the yoke of Austria.



## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

(People still play around with this legend. For instance, on January 16, 2001, at a circus performance in Paris, Mme Cathy Jamet has been shot in the face by a crossbow arrow fired by her husband M Alain Jamet.)



1919

John Bartlett (1820-1905). FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS, 10th ed.

- Anacharsis coming to Athens, knocked at [Solon](#)'s door, and told him that he, being a stranger, was come to be his guest, and contract a friendship with him; and Solon replying, "It is better to make friends at home," Anacharsis replied, "Then you that are at home make friendship with me." (Life of Solon)

Have in readiness this saying of [Solon](#), "But we will not give up our virtue in exchange for their wealth."

[Solon](#) used to say that speech was the image of actions;... that laws were like cobwebs,—for that if any trifling or powerless thing fell into them, they held it fast; while if it were something weightier, it broke through them and was off.

Solon. x.

[Solon](#) gave the following advice: "Consider your honour, as a gentleman, of more weight than an oath. Never tell a lie. Pay attention to matters of importance."

Solon. xii.

As some say, [Solon](#) was the author of the apophthegm, "Nothing in excess."

Solon. xvi.

- [Pittacus](#) said that half was more than the whole.  
Pittacus. ii.



## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

Heraclitus says that [Pittacus](#), when he had got Alcæus into his power, released him, saying, “Forgiveness is better than revenge.”

[Pittacus](#). iii.

One of his sayings was, “Even the gods cannot strive against necessity.”

[Pittacus](#). iv.

Another was, “Watch your opportunity.”

[Pittacus](#). vii.

- Alcæus mentions Aristodemus in these lines:—  
’T is money makes the man; and he who ’s none  
Is counted neither good nor honourable.

[Thales](#). vii.

[Thales](#) said there was no difference between life and death. “Why, then,” said some one to him, “do not you die?” “Because,” said he, “it does make no difference.”

[Thales](#). ix.

When [Thales](#) was asked what was difficult, he said, “To know one’s self.” And what was easy, “To advise another.”

[Thales](#). ix.

He said that men ought to remember those friends who were absent as well as those who were present.

[Thales](#). ix.

The apophthegm “Know thyself” is his.

[Thales](#). xiii.

Writers differ with respect to the apophthegms of the Seven Sages, attributing the same one to various authors.

[Thales](#). xiv.

- [Chilo](#) advised, “not to speak evil of the dead.”  
[Chilo](#). ii.
- [Bias](#) used to say that men ought to calculate life both as if they were fated to live a long and a short time, and that they ought to love one another as if at a future time they would come to hate one another; for that most men were bad.  
[Bias](#). v.
- Ignorance plays the chief part among men, and the multitude of words; but opportunity will prevail.  
[Cleobulus](#). iv.

## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

- The saying, “Practice is everything,” is [Periander](#)’s.  
Periander. vi.
- It was a common saying of [Myson](#) that men ought not to investigate things from words, but words from things; for that things are not made for the sake of words, but words for things.  
Myson. iii.

1922

Construction began on an edifice of government in Lincoln, Nebraska. Here is the Nebraska version of [Solon](#), one of the Seven Wise Men of Greek Antiquity:



[Henry Thoreau](#) had meant to allude to this [Solon](#) in [WALDEN](#), but he had gotten it wrong and it had come out instead as a reference to [King Solomon](#) of Judaea:



## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

**WALDEN:** The whole ground of human life seems to some to have been gone over by their predecessors, both the heights and the valleys, and all things to have been cared for. According to Evelyn, "the wise Solomon prescribed ordinances for the very distances of trees; and the Roman praetors have decided how often you may go into your neighbor's land to gather the acorns which fall on it without trespass, and what share belongs to that neighbor." Hippocrates has even left directions how we should cut our nails; that is, even with the ends of the fingers, neither shorter nor longer. Undoubtedly the very tedium and ennui which presume to have exhausted the variety and the joys of life are as old as Adam. But man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried. Whatever have been thy failures hitherto, "be not afflicted, my child, for who shall assign to thee what thou hast left undone?"

PEOPLE OF  
WALDEN



HORACE HAYMAN WILSON

HIPPOCRATES



## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS



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

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



Prepared: October 7, 2013

*ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT*

*GENERATION HOTLINE*



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



## THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

## SOLON OF ATHENS

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

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