

HENRY'S RELATIVES

THE LAST AMERICAN THOREAU¹



1750

According to one account of it, it would have been in about this year that [Friend Sarah Orrok](#), [Friend David Orrok, Sr.](#) and [Friend Sarah Tillet Orrok](#)'s daughter, married a Scotsman, Peter Burns (if so, then she was getting married at about the age of 12; another account has the wedding taking place on June 10, 1754 at the age of 16 and in fact she gave birth to her first child also during 1754, so perhaps the 1750 record is a record not of a wedding but of an elopement). The house on [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#) would at some point pass to her. According to [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#),

To gain the consent of her Quaker parents, Mr. Burns, my grandfather, was obliged to doff his rich apparel of gems and ruffles, and conform to the more simple garb of his Quaker bride.

1. Her given name was pronounced "Mar-EYE-uh."



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

1754

April 28, Sunday: [Jean Thoreau](#), son of [Philippe Thoreau](#) and [Marie Le Galais Thoreau](#), was baptized at St. Helier on the Isle of [Jersey](#). A certificate of this baptism would be made out on parchment on May 3, 1773, and would be in the possession of [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) who would lend it to her nephew [Henry Thoreau](#) in November or December of the year 1836, who would transcribe it as follows:

Extrait du Registra des Baptismes de la paroisse de S^t Helier en L'Isle de Jersey—

Jean fils de M^r Philippe Thoreau & de M^{se} Marie le Gallais sa femme fut Baptisé le vingt huiteme jour D'Avril mille sept Cents Cinquante Quatre

Mons^r Jean le Montays De la paroisse de S^t Ouën / Parrain & Marie le Preveu sa femme Marraine, ... Nous sousignés recteur & surveillans de la Paroisse de S^t Helier certifions l'Extrait cidessus conforme à l'original à Jersey ce 3^e Mai 1773.

J Du Pre Recteur.

*N Messerz [??] } Surveill'
Cha^s Marinel }*

Nous Sousignés Recteur & Principaux de la Paroisse de S^t Helier certifions que Jean Thoreau à participé au Sacrament de la S^{te} Cène dans l'Elgise de la d^{te} Paroisse de S^t Helier et que, du meilleur de notre Connaissance, il s'est toujours conduit conduit [sic] dune maniere edificante et chretienne, En foi de quoi nous lui avons signé le plresent certificat a Jersey ce 3^e Mai 1773

N Messerz [??]

Eduar Patriarche J Dupré rect—

*N Messerz [??] } Surveill'
Cha^s Marinel }*

Rich^d Carteret

Cha^s Le Maistre

Thos Hilgrove

John Luce

Chas D'Auvergne

J. Durell

Matt^u Gosvet

Jⁿ Montays

Jaques Hemery

D^e Mallette



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

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June 10, Monday: [Friend Sarah Orrok](#), [David Orrok, Sr.](#) and [Sarah Tillet Orrok](#)'s daughter, married a Scotsman, Peter Burns (the marriage record mistakenly listed the family name as "Bourn"). The house on Prince Street in [Boston](#) at some point passed to her. According to [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#),



To gain the consent of her Quaker parents, Mr. Burns, my grandfather, was obliged to doff his rich apparel of gems and ruffles, and conform to the more simple garb of his Quaker bride.

Which is to say, this Quaker maid married out of meeting, to a man who was not and would not become himself a Quaker (one might well infer from this, in the absence of any actual record, that Friend Sarah would automatically have been disowned by the Boston Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends). About all we know of this Peter Burns is that he was from Stirlingshire, Scotland and that he would return and die in Scotland.

1786

December 25, Monday: Since we know that [Henry Thoreau](#)'s [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#) was born on [Christmas Day](#), in Richmond Street in [Boston](#) between Salem and Hanover Streets, and since she was 64 as of the national census of September 1850, wouldn't she surely have been the Christmas present of [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#), the 42-year-old mother of nine-year-old [John Thoreau](#), to [Jean Thoreau](#), of the year 1786, and before the year was out died — despite the confusing change between year ends in the old and new calendars?²

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2. In any event, the tradition of giving gifts on [Christmas](#) had not yet begun. At the time, gifts were still being exchanged instead as of the New Year's!

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This surmise has not been borne out by review of the Concord town records, which are now on the Internet. According to those records, a Thoreau infant was born in that year, in Concord, and was named not Jane but “Mary.” Unless Thoreau’s [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) were born very early in the year 1786, and then the mother Jane Burns Thoreau got pregnant immediately and delivered a second baby at Christmas in Boston during the very same year, then it would seem that the likeliest hypothesis is that Thoreau’s Aunt Jane must have been born not on Christmas 1786 but on Christmas 1787:

Births


Name	Sex	Birth Date	Birth Place	Father's Name	Mother's Name
THOREAU, John		1754	Concord		
THOREAU, Mary	F	1786	Concord	John	
THOREAU, Sarah		1791	Concord		
THOREAU, Helen L.	F	1813	Concord	John	Cynthia
THOREAU, John	M	1815	Concord	John	Cynthia
THOREAU, Sophia Elizabeth	F	Sept. 27, 1819	Chelmsford	John	Cynthia

(We note that this “John Thoreau” registered as having been born in Concord in 1754, actually had been born on the Isle of [Jersey](#), in the English Channel, with his given name being “Jean.” Also, [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#) was born not in 1813 a year after her parents got married, but in 1812 — that is, in the same year in which they got married, and very likely not quite nine months later. Also, John, Junior was born not in 1815 but in 1814. Also, Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau was born not on September 27th, 1819 in Chelmsford, but on June 24th. We note in addition that although David Henry Thoreau’s three siblings’s births are present in the town records, and although his baptism can in fact be found recorded in the parish book, his own birth in 1817 to [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and John Thoreau is for some reason not present in this town record.)

Per [Thoreau](#)’s JOURNAL:



December 28, 1858: ... Aunt Jane says that she was born on Christmas Day, and they called her a Christmas gift, and she remembers hearing that her Aunt Hannah Orrock was so disconcerted by the event that she threw all the spoons outdoors, when she had washed them, or with the dish-water.



December 28, 1858: ... Father says that he and his sisters (except Elizabeth) were born in Richmond Street, Boston, between Salem and Hanover Streets, on the spot where a bethel now stands, on the left hand going from Hanover Street. They had milk of a neighbor, who used to drive his cows to and from the Common every day.

BOSTON

THOREAU
LIFESPANS



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

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[Noah Webster, Jr.](#) relocated from Hartford to Philadelphia. Not noted for his humility, it is remembered that when he arrived in Philadelphia and was greeted by Dr. Rush, the following conversational exchange took place: “How do you do, my dear friend. I congratulate you on your arrival in Philadelphia.” ‘Sir, you may congratulate Philadelphia on the occasion.’” He would teach “English Language” and “Mathematics” at the Protestant Episcopal Academy. George Washington would visit his rooms to return the courtesy of his visit to Mount Vernon. In Philadelphia he would also be encountering Rufus King, Edmund Randolph, and James Madison.

1796

The Boston Directory listed [Jean Thoreau](#) as “grocer, No. 43 Long Wharf, house Bridge’s Lane.” In Richmond Street, between Salem and Hanover Streets, on the left hand going from Hanover Street, in the North End of Boston, in this year [Jane “Jennie” Burns Thoreau](#) gave birth to [Maria Thoreau](#), and in this year she died at age 42, leaving Jean as a 42-year-old widower businessman with eight children to rear, among them the 9-year-old [John Thoreau](#).

(Jean would take a 2d wife, Rebecca Hurd Kettell, who would die in 1814.)

1797

June 6, Tuesday: An elaborate ["parhelion"](#) was observed from the port of St. Malo in Normandy:

Three Suns and an Inverted Rainbow.

The following is taken literally word for word from a rare copy of the Brighton (England) Advertiser of June 6, 1797: "A rare phenomenon is reported from St. Malo. Recently during the afternoon, between the hours of 4 and 5, three perfect suns were seen all in a row above the western horizon. The sky was very clear at the time, and there was no one who saw the unusual sight that believes it to have been a mirage or other atmospheric illusion. The central seemed more brilliant than his two luminous attendants, and between the three there seemed to be a communication in the shape of waves of light composed of all the prismatic colors. At about the same time a rainbow made its appearance at a short distance above the central sun, upside down—that is to say, the two ends pointed toward the zenith and the bow's neck toward the horizon."



Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun;
 Not separated with the racking clouds,
 But sever'd in a pale clear-shining sky.
 See, see! they join, embrace, and seem to kiss,
 As if they vow'd some league inviolable:
 Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.
 In this the heaven figures some event.

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After the death of [Jean Thoreau](#)'s first wife [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in the previous year, Papa Jean had eight children to rear the oldest of whom, at that point, [John Thoreau](#), would have been but 10 years of age. He got married a 2d time, the Reverend Ezra Ripley presiding, to a another parent who had minor children to rear, Rebecca Hurd Kettell the widow of a Mr. Kettell

Marriages

Spouses	Marriage Date	Marriage Place
THOREAU, John & Rebecca Kettell	Jun, 1797	Concord
THOREAU, John & Cynthia Dunbar	May, 1812	Concord

She was a relative of Concord's physician, Dr. Isaac Hurd. Her brother Joseph Hurd, a merchant in Charlestown, would become executor of Jean's will and, eventually, guardian of the children, at a salary of \$200.⁰⁰ per year. (Over and above this, legal fees relating to the Thoreau estate would amount to between \$50.⁰⁰ and \$100.⁰⁰ per annum. This 2d wife, when widowed a 2d time, would receive \$850.⁰⁰ per year to enable her to care for the children in Concord: Henry's father John and siblings [Sarah Thoreau](#), [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), [Nancy Thoreau](#), [Jane Thoreau](#), and [Maria Thoreau](#).) The Thoreau family, thus constituted, came to the crossroads town of [Concord](#) to live. And, as [Henry Thoreau](#) would later report in his journal about [Cynthia Dunbar](#), "Mother first came to Concord about the same age that father did, but a little before him."

Mr. Thoreau lost his health, moved to Concord, ...

HENRY'S
RELATIVES



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

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In the [Concord Antiquarian Museum](#), a donation by Russell H. Kettell under accession number M-332, is a *Memento Mori* or “Posy” consisting of two facing pages with the names “Rebecca” at the bottom of the left sheet and “Kettell.” at the bottom of the right. On the left sheet a male figure is depicted in period formal attire, who is pointing dramatically toward something high and is wearing a hat from which seem to be growing two flowers or vines. On the right sheet is the figure of a band major with sheathed sword and bandstaff. His bandstaff has a decorative tassel hanging from its bulbous top. The text of this composition reads, at top left:

Now Ive Efcap'd the eagles Claws
And am from Danger free
I'll fet my Heart To gather gold
Turn Down this Leaf and See

On the left inside the bottom is found:

an Heart here is opprest with care
What Salve can cure the Same
Under this leaf You'll find, a cure
Lift Up and See how Plain

The composition continues inside the top left:

A purse With gold & silver store
Has Cur'd my Heart I'm sick no more
But I'm from Care & Danger's free
No Worldly Care Shall trouble me

The composition resumes at the top right:

Now I have Gold and Silver store
Bribes from ye Rich pawns from the poor
What Worldly Cares shall trouble me
Turn Down This Leaf & then You'll See

The composition begins to deliver its moral punch at the top right:

Sickness is come & death draws Nigh
Help Gold & Silver, ere I Die
It will not Do, it is But Dross
Turn Up & See Mans End at Last
V.B.

Inside the right bottom we find:

O Man Now See thou art but dust
Thy Gold & Silver is but rust
Thy time is come thy glass is spent
What Worldly care can death prevent

In this composition, I fail to understand the presence of the initials “V.B.” Would this be *verba bene*, or perhaps an attribution to the Venerable Bede?

MRS. REBECCA KETTELL THOREAU

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1800

The quotation below about Mr. Thoreau is per [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#)'s obituary and appeared in [The Christian Disciple](#) of October 1815, Volume III, No. 10:

Mr. Thoreau lost his health, moved to Concord, and there finished his course like a christian.

After the death of Mr. [Jean Thoreau](#)'s 1st wife [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in 1797, he had had eight children to rear the oldest of whom, at that point, John, would have been but 10 years of age. He had therefore married a 2d time, to a widow who also had minor children to rear, [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#) the widow of a Mr. Kettell. She was a relative of Concord's physician, Dr. Hurd. Her brother Joseph Hurd, a merchant in Charlestown, would become executor of Jean's will and, eventually, guardian of children, at a salary of \$200.⁰⁰ per year. In addition to this, legal fees relating to the Thoreau estate would amount to between \$50.⁰⁰ and \$100.⁰⁰ per year. This 2d wife, soon to be widowed a 2d time, would receive \$850.⁰⁰ per year to enable her to care for the children in Concord, Henry's father [John Thoreau](#) and John's sisters [Sarah Thoreau](#), [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), [Nancy Thoreau](#), [Jane Thoreau](#), and [Maria Thoreau](#). The Thoreau family, thus constituted, came to [Concord](#) to live. And, as [Henry Thoreau](#) would later report in his journal about [Cynthia Dunbar](#), "Mother first came to Concord about the same age that father did, but a little before him."

1801

March 7, Saturday: In his home in [Concord](#), [Jean Thoreau](#) died "of consumption" at the age of 47, leaving an estate of some \$25,000.⁰⁰ inclusive of the approximate value of his two homes, plus about \$12,000.⁰⁰ in good securities and in cash:

Mr. Thoreau lost his health, moved to Concord, and there finished his course like a christian.³

Thoreau Deaths

Name	Death Date	Age	Buried
John	March 1801	47	Concord
Mary	July 24, 1811	25	Concord
Sarah	August 1829	38	Concord
Miss Betsey	November 1839	60s?	Concord
John	January 1842	27	Concord
Helen L.	June 1849	36	Concord

3. This is per the obituary of [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#), [Henry Thoreau](#)'s step-grandmother who had reared Henry's father [John Thoreau](#) and his sisters Sarah, [Elizabeth Thoreau](#), Nancy, [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#), and [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) — who, like his grandfather [Jean Thoreau](#), had already died before Henry was born. It appeared in [The Christian Disciple](#) of October 1815, Volume III, No. 10.

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After Jean's death his widow and children, including 14-year-old [John Thoreau](#), would continue residence in this home that eventually would become the east wing of Concord's present-day Colonial Inn, along with John's two sisters: [Sarah Thoreau](#), a town seamstress, and [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#) (Betsey), who had inherited the house. Soon the orphaned boy John would be working as a clerk in the store of Deacon [John White](#).



If [Henry Thoreau's Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) had been born, as we suppose, in 1796, the years of her mother [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau's](#) death, this would put her at roughly 5 years of age at the date of her father's death.

THOREAU LIFESPANS

The house at Number 57 in [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#) passed to the surviving children, [John Thoreau](#), [David Thoreau](#), [Sarah Thoreau](#), [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), [Maria Thoreau](#), [Jane Thoreau](#), Nancy Thoreau, and ????????? Thoreau (the name of this child does not seem to be anywhere on record), each receiving a one-eighth share.



July 1, Wednesday: [Peter Thoreau](#) of [Jersey](#) had the practice of communicating with the family in the New World by sending letters care of his friend, Captain John Harvey of Boston, or by way of a vessel out of Jersey under the command of a Captain Tousel. On this day he wrote from Jersey to his niece "[Miss Elizabeth Thoreau, Concord, Near Boston.](#)" He included with this letter a "Vue de la Ville de St. Helier." This letter would be given by [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) to [Henry Thoreau](#) on April 21, 1855. (The document has not yet been found. Below is what Thoreau recorded of it in his journal.)

Aunt Maria has put into my hands to day for safe keeping 3 letters—from Peter Thoreau, dated Jersey—(the 1st July 1st 1801, the 2nd Ap. 22nd 1804—& the 3d. Ap. 11th 1(806) & directed to his neice "Miss Elizabeth Thoreau Concord Near 63 Boston." &c also a "Vue de la Ville de St Helier &c" accompanying the 1st. She is not certain that any more were received from him. The 1st is in answer to one from Elizabeth announcing the death of her father (my grand father) [Written vertically in left margin in pencil, lines 27-32: "X Where is it?", to correspond to the "X" interlined in pencil above "copy", line 26).] He states that his mother died the 26th of June 1801—the day before he received E's letter—though not till after he had heard from another source of the death of his brother, which was not communicated to his mother. "She was in the 79th year of her



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age, & retained her memory to the last." — — — "She lived with my two sisters, who took the greatest care of her." He says that he had written to E's father about the death of his oldest brother, (who died about a year before, but had had no answer— had written that he left his children, two sons & a daughter, in a good way, "the eldest son and daughter are both married, and have children, the youngest is about eighteen. I am still a widower of 4 children, — — — — I have but two left, Betsy & Peter, James & Nancy are both at rest." He adds that he sends a view "of our native town" &c.

The 2d of these letters is sent by Capt. John then at Guernesey. Harvey of Boston.^ He says that on the 4th of Feb. previous he sent her a copy of the last letter he had written, which was in answer to her 2nd, since he feared she had not received it. Says they are still at war with the French— That they received the day before a letter from her "Uncle & Aunt Le Cappelain of London." Complains of not receiving letters. "Your Aunts Betsy & Peter join with me &c".

Ac. to the 3rd letter he received an answer to that he sent by Capt. Harvy, by Capt. Touzel, & will forward this by the last— who is going via Newfoundland to Boston. "He expects to go to Boston every year." Several vessels from Jersey go there every year. His nephew had told him some time before that he "met a gentleman from Boston who [torn out] told him he [saw or knew?] Thoreau & Hayse there." & he thinks the & he (Peter Thoreau) therefore thinks the children must have kept up the name of the firm. Says Capt. Harvey was an old friend of his. "Your Cousin John is a Lieutenant in the British service, he has been already a campaign on the continent, he is very fond of it." "Your aunts Betsy & Peter join &c".

Aunt Maria thinks the correspondence ceased at Peters death— because he was the one who wrote English.

1811



July 24, Wednesday: [Mary Thoreau](#), daughter of the late [Jean Thoreau](#), died in [Concord](#) at the age of 25.

Thoreau Deaths

Name	Death Date	Age	Buried
John	March 1801	47	Concord
Mary	July 24, 1811	25	Concord
Sarah	August 1829	38	Concord
Miss Betsey	November 1839	60s?	Concord
John	January 1842	27	Concord



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Thoreau Deaths

Name	Death Date	Age	Buried
<u>Helen L.</u>	<u>June 1849</u>	36	<u>Concord</u>

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

4th day 24 of 7 Mo// I have felt comfortable both in body & mind, for which I desire to be thankful, yea humbly thankful, & ascribe unto the Lord all that I receive, as respects my body it seems released from some symptoms that were alarming, but I know not that they have entirely left me. - as respects the mind, I have said it was comfortable, but Alass how destitute I am, & how I long for a fresh descending of the heavenly Manna, yesterdays is all consumed

How Oh Lord shall I present myself that thy holy bread may again be afforded, be pleased oh holy father to renew in me a right spirit, & incline me unto thy gentle Calls-

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1827



Fall: Among the 1st tenants to arrive at the Thoreau boardinghouse, the Shattuck House at #63 Main Street in Concord, were the Reverend Daniel Starr Southmayd and his bride Joanna Kent Southmayd, daughter of the Reverend Daniel Kent of Vermont, who had served in the American army during the Revolutionary War. (Professor Robert A. Gross has speculated that since the Reverend Southmayd was the pastor of the Trinitarian Congregationalist Church in Concord which was being attended by Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau, Jane Thoreau, and Maria Thoreau, the newlywed couple may well have been steered toward the Thoreau boardinghouse by these sisters.)

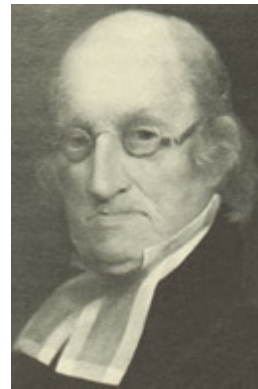
THOREAU RESIDENCES

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1828

➡ The “little band” of nine religious reactionaries of [Concord](#), led by Deacon [John White](#), established a “Trinitarian” society and put its new church across the brook from the old church, on Walden Street. By 1830, the [Reverend Ezra Ripley](#) would no longer have a monopoly on the religious life of Concord and thus it would become possible for people to “sign off” from paying the parish tax to his church.



THE DEACONS OF CONCORD

Even [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) was for a time involved in this defection. Professor Robert A. Gross describes it in his “Faith in the Boardinghouse: New Views of Thoreau Family Religion”.⁴

True to their stepmother [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#)’s example, [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), [Jane Thoreau](#), and [Maria Thoreau](#) made public professions of faith over the years from 1801 to 1818. So did [Cynthia Dunbar](#) in 1811. All single women in their late teens and early twenties, they entered a pious sisterhood. In a pattern common in New England Congregationalism, seven out of ten members of the Concord church were women. But in 1826 the “Misses Thoreau,” as they were often called in the town records, bolted from the Reverend [Ezra Ripley](#) fold. No longer willing to suppress misgivings over the parson’s “liberal” preaching, they enlisted in the orthodox fight to restore “the primitive faith of the new England pilgrims.” Elizabeth, Jane, and Maria Thoreau

4. Robert A. Gross. “Faith in the Boardinghouse: New Views of Thoreau Family Religion,” [Thoreau Society Bulletin](#), Winter 2005



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were among the "little band" of nine doughty dissenters who deserted Ripley's flock in May 1826 and founded a Trinitarian church. Soon they were recruiting their kin. In April 1827, sister-in-law [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) sought and won approval to leave the First Church in anticipation of joining its rival. But, as it turned out, she never did. Fourteen months later, she returned to the family pew in the First Church, having "changed her mind," as the Reverend Ripley happily noted in the church records. According to Walter Harding, who drew on the oral memories collected by Edward Emerson, the stumbling-block was the official creed that all members of the Trinitarian church were obliged to embrace. Cynthia Thoreau refused to accept it "verbatim," and the church would not allow her "staunch independence." By contrast, the creed proved no problem for her siblings: brother [Charles Jones Dunbar](#) began worshiping with the Trinitarians in 1829, sister [Louisa Dunbar](#) joined them six years later. In a Calvinist family circle, Cynthia and her husband [John Thoreau, Senior](#) stood alone.


1825



The sisters of [John Thoreau, Senior](#) ([Elizabeth Thoreau](#), [Maria Thoreau](#), and [Jane Thoreau](#)) again mortgaged their home at Number 57 on [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#) to Isaac Dupee for \$1,000.⁰⁰.

THOREAU RESIDENCES

1832

 The house at Number 57 in [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#) was mortgaged for \$1,000.⁰⁰ by [Elizabeth Thoreau](#), [Maria Thoreau](#), and [Jane Thoreau](#) to the Fireman's Insurance Company (Thomas C. Amory, President, Chief Engineer of the Boston Fire Department from 1829 to 1835).

12 *Boston Annual Advertiser.*

NOTICE.

**THE FIREMEN'S INSURANCE COMPANY, IN
BOSTON, with a Capital of**


\$300,000,

hereby give notice, that they continue to insure against FIRE, upon all descriptions of property in Boston and the immediate vicinity, not exceeding \$30,000 on any one Risk.

Section 8th of the Charter of this Company provides that the Directors "Shall annually set aside one tenth part of the net income, over and above six per centum, to be appropriated to the use and benefit of the Boston Fire Department."

THOMAS C. AMORY, *President.*
S. G. ROGERS, jr. *Secretary.*

1835

 Spring: The Thoreau family moved from the Shattuck house at 63 Main Street into [Aunt Maria Thoreau's](#) home in [Concord](#).



THOREAU RESIDENCES



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

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1837



This was the year in which [Waldo Emerson](#) would deliver his Phi Beta Kappa Society oration “The American Scholar” to the seniors at Harvard College (one of whom was in the process of changing his name from David Henry Thoreau to Henry David Thoreau, and was beginning a journal of sorts).

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for 1837 \(æf. 20\)](#)

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for 1838 \(æf. 20-21\)](#)

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for 1839 \(æf. 21-22\)](#)

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for 1840 \(æf. 22-23\)](#)

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for 1841 \(æf. 23-24\)](#)

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for 1842 \(æf. 24-25\)](#)

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal Volume for 1845-1846 \(æf. 27-29\)](#)

Can you parse this? According to Anita Haya Patterson's FROM EMERSON TO KING: DEMOCRACY, RACE, AND THE POLITICS OF PROTEST (NY: Oxford UP, 1997, page 120), during this year in which the Concord Female Anti-Slavery Society was constituting itself, the husband of Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#), one of the women⁵ involved in that formation, in the writing of a lecture on “SOCIETY”, would alter his concept of the obligations that obtain among friends. He would come to place primary reliance upon a concept “kindness” that savored of proto-racialism:

[H]e argues that political obligations associated with kindness can bind together not simply an intimate circle of friends, but also casual acquaintances and neighborhoods, whole towns, countries, and even continents. The obligations that arise out of such kindness, in this account, are in every case involuntarily assumed.

5. Also involved in this new society were Abba Alcott and seven women residing at the Thoreau boardinghouse:

[Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#)

[Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#)

[Helen Louisa Thoreau](#)

[Aunt Maria Thoreau](#)

[Aunt Jane Thoreau](#)

Miss Prudence Ward

Miss Prudence's mother.

1841

October 12, Tuesday: The combined British detachment that had ventured out from the relative safety of the metropolis, Cabul, [Afghanistan](#), by this morning had become large enough to transit the pass of Khoord-Cabul, and this was effected with some loss due to long range sniper fire down from the rocks at the sides of the defile. The force then set up a defensive camp perimeter on the far side of the defile at Khoord-Cabul and the 13th light infantry again subjected itself to losses due to its exposure to this unrelenting rifle fire, by returning through the pass to its defensive camp perimeter at Bootkhak. For some nights the camps would repel attacks, “that on the 35th native infantry being peculiarly disastrous, from the treachery of the Affghan horse, who admitted the enemy within their lines, by which our troops were exposed to a fire from the least suspected quarter. Many of our gallant sepoy, and Lieutenant Jenkins, thus met their death.”⁶

[Frederick Douglass](#) addressed the Middlesex County Anti-Slavery Society at the Universalist meetinghouse in [Concord](#).



We very much need to know who was in town at the time, and who did and who did not attend this meeting:

- Bronson Alcott ?

6. Lieut. V. Eyre (Sir Vincent Eyre, 1811-1881). THE MILITARY OPERATIONS AT CABUL: WHICH ENDED IN THE RETREAT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE BRITISH ARMY, JANUARY 1842, WITH A JOURNAL OF IMPRISONMENT IN [AFGHANISTAN](#). Philadelphia PA: Carey and Hart, 1843; London: J. Murray, 1843 (three editions); Lieut. V. Eyre (Sir Vincent Eyre, 1811-1881). PRISON SKETCHES: COMPRISING PORTRAITS OF THE CABUL PRISONERS AND OTHER SUBJECTS; ADAPTED FOR BINDING UP WITH THE JOURNALS OF LIEUT. V. EYRE, AND LADY SALE; LITHOGRAPHED BY LOWES DICKINSON. London: Dickinson and Son, [1843?]



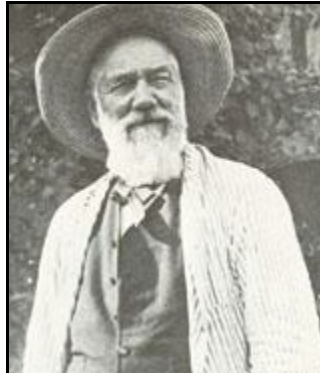
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- Abba Alcott ?
- Anna Bronson Alcott ?
- [Louisa May Alcott](#) (8 years old)?
- [Phineas Allen](#) ?
- Perez Blood ?
- Mrs. Mary Merrick Brooks ?
- Squire Nathan Brooks ?
- Caroline Downes Brooks ?
- George Merrick Brooks ?
- Deacon Simon Brown ?
- Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#) ?
- [Waldo Emerson](#) ?
- Reverend Barzillai Frost ?
- [Margaret Fuller](#) ?
- William Lloyd Garrison ?
- [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) ?
- Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar ?
- [Edward Sherman Hoar](#) ?
- Senator George Frisbie Hoar ?
- Elizabeth Sherman Hoar ?
- Squire Samuel Hoar ?
- Dr. [Edward Jarvis](#) ?
- Deacon [Francis Jarvis](#) ?
- [John Shepard Keyes](#), [Judge John Shepard Keyes](#) ?
- John M. Keyes ?
- [Reverend George Ripley](#) ?
- [Mrs. Sophia Dana Ripley](#) ?
- Reverend Samuel Ripley ?
- Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley ?
- [Lemuel Shattuck](#) ?
- [Daniel Shattuck](#) ?
- Sheriff Sam Staples ?
- [Henry David Thoreau](#) ?
- [John Thoreau](#), Senior ?
- [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) ?
- [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) ?
- [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#) ?
- [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) ?
- [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) ?
- [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#) ?
- Alek Therien ?
- Miss Prudence Ward ?

1846

July 23, Thursday or 24, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) provoked Sheriff Sam Staples, who was under contract as the



Concord tax farmer, into taking him illegally to the Middlesex County Prison⁷ and spent the night there, for having for several years (up to perhaps 9), following the example of [Bronson Alcott](#), refused to pay certain taxes as useful for the perpetuation of domestic slavery and foreign wars.⁸

“RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT”: It was formerly the custom in our village, when a poor debtor came out of jail, for his acquaintances to salute him, looking through their fingers, which were crossed to represent the grating of a jail window, “How do ye do?” My neighbors did not thus salute me, but first looked at me, and then at one another, as if I had returned from a long journey. I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker’s to get a shoe which was mended. When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half an hour – for the horse was soon tackled – was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen.

This is the whole history of “My Prisons.”

I have never declined paying the highway tax, because I am as desirous of being a good neighbor as I am of being a bad subject; and as for supporting schools, I am doing my part to educate my fellow-countrymen now. It is for no particular item in the tax-bill that I refuse to pay it.

7. The usual penalty for failure to pay the Massachusetts poll tax was property seizure and auction upon failure to display a stamped tax receipt, and was most certainly never imprisonment, but young [Thoreau](#) possessed few auctionable items and probably did not use a bank account.

8. During the one year 1845, in Massachusetts, the “poll tax” had been being reckoned as if it were a state tax, although in all other years it had been and would be reckoned as a municipality or county tax. As a town tax, and as a county tax, of course, it could hardly be considered to be in support of slavecatching or of foreign wars, since neither the Massachusetts towns nor the Massachusetts counties engaged in either slavecatching or the raising of armies. Also, even in the one year 1845, while this tax was being considered as a state tax, under the law no part of this revenue was to be used for the catching of fugitive slaves, and no foreign war was going on at the moment (the march upon [Mexico](#) had not yet fairly begun). Thoreau, therefore, in declining to pay voluntarily this tax bill, actually was not refusing to acknowledge slavery, as alleged, or a war effort, as alleged, but was refusing to recognize any political organization whatever.



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Walter Harding has tracked down what may well be the origin of the often-told but utterly spurious story, that [Waldo Emerson](#) came to visit Thoreau in his prison cell and expressed concern: he found a “Bringing Up Father” cartoon strip in the newspaper, in which Paddy was in jail for [drunkenness](#), and when Jiggs asks him how come he was in jail Paddy retorts “How come you’re not?”

Alcott has reported that Emerson’s reaction to the news of this was to find Thoreau’s stand to have been “mean and skulking, and in bad taste.” Therefore, is this not the point at which we can profitably ask, was Thoreau merely running away from his social responsibilities, as has been so often alleged, when he went out to live at Walden Pond? Let’s attach the humorous title “DECAMPING TO WALDEN POND: A GENDER ANALYSIS BY MARTHA SAXTON”⁹ to the following quotation:



It seems, from exaggerated nineteenth-century sex definitions, that Victorians were afraid men and women might not be able to distinguish gender. So women were trussed, corseted, and hustled into immobility while men posed in musclebound attitudes of emotionless strength. this suppression of tenderness, warmth, and most expressions of feelings produced the male equivalent of the vapors. Louisa [May Alcott]’s teacher and secret love, Henry David Thoreau, decamped to Walden Pond rather than confront social demands that he be conventionally “male.”

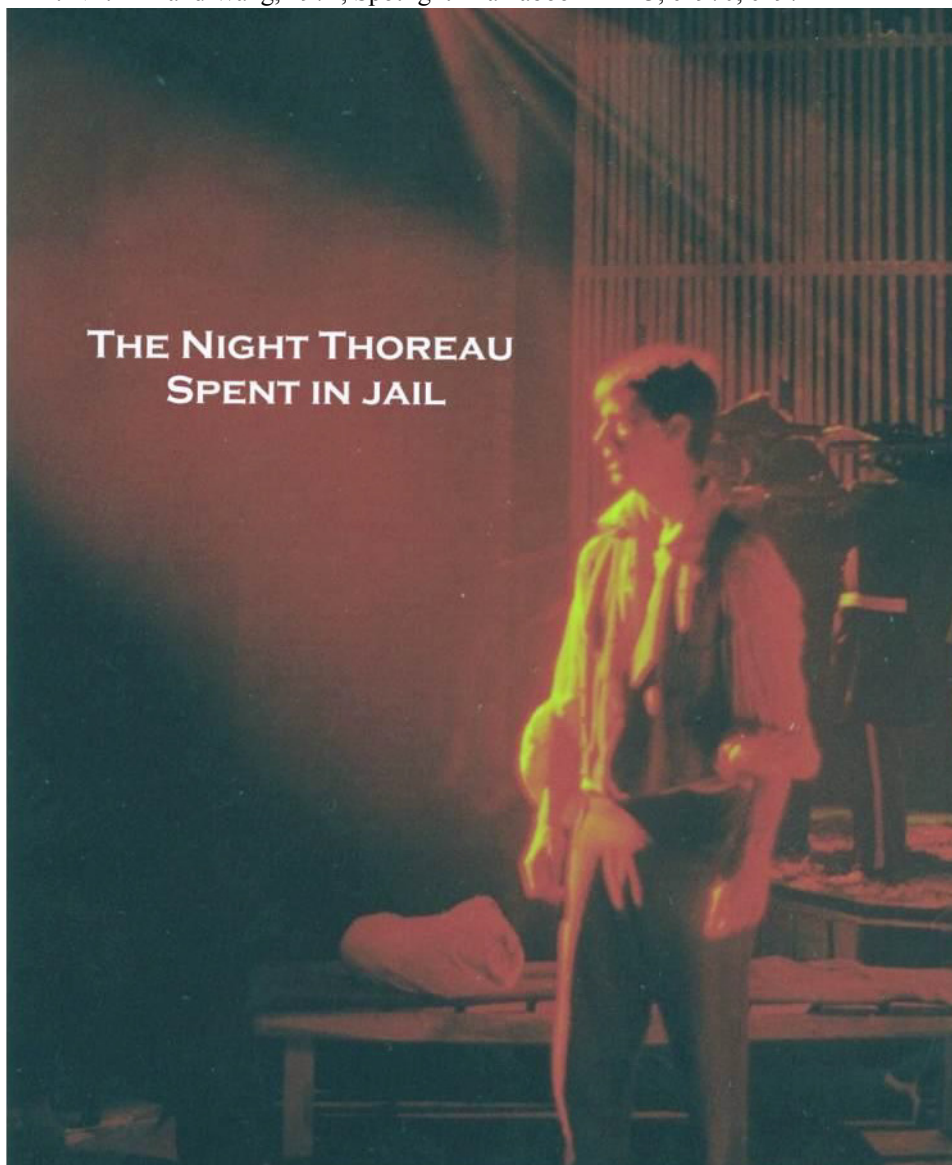
Another member of the Thoreau family, we don’t know who, paid the tax for him, as the tax had previously been paid by Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar when Alcott had almost been jailed on January 17, 1843. Although [Emerson](#) was irritated no end by such unseemly conduct, on the part of an associate, as failure to pay one’s share of the general tax burden, to his credit he did continue to press for publication of Thoreau’s WEEK manuscript. However, at that time Thoreau was still preparing additions to the second draft.¹⁰

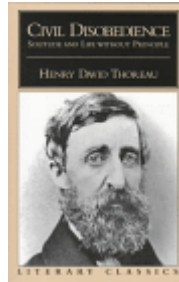
9. On page 226 of her LOUISA MAY: A MODERN BIOGRAPHY OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, Saxton accused [Thoreau](#) of “unrelenting misogyny” as her way of elaborating on Bronson Alcott’s remark of November 5, 1858 that Thoreau was “better poised and more nearly self-sufficient than other men.” This caused me to look back to her title page and inspect the date of publication and say to myself, “Yeah, this thing was published back in 1977, the bad old days when we thought we had to combat male sexism by nurturing prejudice against anyone with a penis.”

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10. Lawrence, Jerome (1915-2004) and Robert Edwin Lee (1918-1994), *THE NIGHT THOREAU SPENT IN JAIL: A PLAY*. NY: Hill and Wang, 1971, Spotlight Dramabook #1223, c1970, c1972





I should make reference here to a snide remark that Albert J. von Frank has included at page 202 of his AN EMERSON CHRONOLOGY.¹ The sentence is as follows, in its entirety: “**Henry Thoreau expressed his own anti-politics a month later by spending a night in jail for tax evasion, an act that drew Emerson's quick disapproval, thought the principles behind the act, as Thoreau explained in 'Civil Disobedience,' had more in common with Emerson's own position than he then suspected.**” Now here are the things that I suppose to be quite wrongheaded about von Frank’s assertion, which would seem on its face simply to be praising Thoreau against [Emerson](#):

- “**anti-politics**” Thoreau’s act was not an act of anti-politics but an act of politics. To privilege assent over dissent in such a manner constitutes an unconscionable expression of mere partisanship.
- “**tax evasion**” Thoreau’s act was not the act of a tax evader. A tax evader is a cheater, who is trying through secrecy or deception to get away with something. Thoreau’s act was the deliberate public act of a man who would rather be imprisoned than assist in ongoing killing, and thus is in an entirely separate category from such cheating. To conflate two such separate categories, one of self-service and the other of self-abnegation, into a single category, in such manner, is, again, an unconscionable expression of prejudicial politics.
- “**had more in common**” The implication here is that Emerson’s attitudes constitute the baseline for evaluation of Thoreau’s attitudes, so that Thoreau may be condescendingly praised for imitating Emerson whenever the two thinkers can be made to seem in agreement, while preserving the option of condemning him as a resistor or worse whenever these contemporaries seem at loggerheads. –But this is unconscionable.

Albert J. von Frank. AN EMERSON CHRONOLOGY. NY: G.K. Hall & Co. and Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994



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[Emerson](#) to his journal:

These rabble at Washington are really better than the snivelling opposition. They have a sort of genius of a bold & manly cast, though Satanic. They see, against the unanimous expression of the people, how much a little well directed effrontery can achieve, how much crime the people will bear, & they proceed from step to step & it seems they have calculated but too justly upon your Excellency, O Governor Briggs. Mr Webster told them how much the war cost, that was his protest, but voted the war, & sends his son to it. They calculated rightly on Mr Webster. My friend Mr Thoreau has gone to jail rather than pay his tax. On him they could not calculate. The abolitionists denounce the war & give much time to it, but they pay the tax. The State is a poor good beast who means the best: it means friendly. A poor cow who does well by you – do not grudge it its hay. It cannot eat bread as you can, let it have without grudge a little grass for its four stomachs. It will not stint to yield you milk from its teat. You who are a man walking cleanly on two feet will not pick a quarrel with a poor cow. Take this handful of clover & welcome. But if you go to hook me when I walk in the fields, then, poor cow, I will cut your throat.

DANIEL WEBSTER

We now understand that Sheriff Sam was considerably twisting the law under which he confined Thoreau for nonpayment of that \$5 or \$6 arrears of poll tax, and for his own convenience. For what the law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts required him to do in regard to such a tax resistor, prior to debt imprisonment, was to attempt to seize and sell some of Thoreau's assets, such as the books he had in storage in his parents' boardinghouse in [Concord](#). Sheriff Staples hadn't been inclined to do this and at this point didn't have time because he was leaving office — and the sad fact of the matter is that, since he was merely under contract as a "tax farmer," had he vacated his position without collecting this money from the Thoreau family, Massachusetts would simply have deducted the sum from his final paycheck (bottom line, The Man always takes his cut). For here is that law, and it simply offers no support whatever for what Sheriff Staples did to put pressure on Thoreau:



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Section 7. If any person shall refuse or neglect to pay his [poll] tax, the collector shall levy the same by distress and sale of his goods, excepting the good following, namely:

- The tools or implements necessary for his trade or occupation;
- beasts of the plow necessary for the cultivation of his improved lands;
- military arms, utensils for house keeping necessary for upholding life, and bedding and apparel necessary for himself and family.



Section 8. The collector shall keep the goods distrained, at the expense of the owner, for the space of four days, at the least, and shall, within seven days after the seizure, sell the same by public auction, for the payment of the tax and the charges of keeping and of the sale, having given notice of such sale, by posting up a notification thereof, in some public place in the town, forty eight hours at least before the sale.

Section 11. If the collector cannot find sufficient goods, upon which it may be levied, he may take the body of such person and commit him to prison, there to remain, until he shall pay the tax and charges of commitment and imprisonment, or shall be discharged by order of law.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



After July 24: In my short experience of human life I have found that the outward obstacles which stood in my way were not living men –but dead institutions. It has been unspeakably grateful & refreshing to make my way through the crowd of this latest generation honest & dishonest virtuous & vicious as through the dewy grass –men are as innocent as the morning to the early riser –and unsuspecting pilgrim and many an early traveller which he met on his way v poetry –but the institutions as church –state –the school property &c are grim and ghostly phantoms like Moloch & Juggernaut because of the blind reverence paid to them. When I have indulged a poets dream of a terrestrial paradise I have not foreseen that any cossack or Chipeway –would disturb it –but some monster institution would swallow it– The only highway man I ever met was the state itself– When I have refused to pay the tax which it demanded for that protection I did not want itself has robbed me– When I have asserted the freedom it declared it has imprisoned me.

I love mankind I hate the institutions of their forefathers–

What are the sermons of the church but the Dudleian lectures –against long extinct perhaps always imaginary evils, which he dead generations have *willed* and so the bell still tolls to call us to the funeral service which a generation can rightly demand but once.

It is singular that not the Devil himself –has been in my way but these cobwebs –which tradition says were originally spun to obstruct the fiend.

If I will not fight –if I will not pray –if I will not be taxed –if I will not bury the unsettled prairie –my neighbor will still tolerate me nd sometimes even sustains me –but not the state.

And should our piety derive its origin still from that exploit of pious Aeneas who bore his father Anchises on his shoulders from the ruins of Troy

Not thieves & highwaymen but Constables & judges –not sinners but priests –not the ignorant but pedants & pedagogues –not foreign foes but standing armies –not pirates but men of war. Not free malevolence –but organized benevolence.

For instance the jailer or constable as a mere man and neighbor –with life in him intended for this particular 3 score years & ten –may be a right worthy man with a thought in the brain of him –but as the officer & tool of the state he has no more understanding or heart than his prison key or his staff– This is what is saddest that men should voluntarily assume the character & office of brute nature.– Certainly there are modes enough by which a man may put bread into his mouth which will not prejudice him as a companion & neighbor. There are stones enough in the path of the traveller with out a man's adding his own body to the number.



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There probably never were worse crimes committed since time began than in the present Mexican war –to take a single instance– And yet I have not yet learned the name or residence and probably never should of the reckless villain who should father them– all concerned –from the political contriver to the latest recruit possess an average share of virtue & of vice the villainy is in the readiness with which men, doing outrage to their proper natures –lend themselves to perform the office of inferior & brutal ones.

The stern command is –move or ye shall be moved –be the master of your own action –or you shall unawares become the tool of the meanest slave. Any can command him who doth not command himself. Let men be men & stones be stones and we shall see if majorities *do* rule.

Countless reforms are called for because society is not animated or instinct enough with life, but like snakes I have seen in early spring –with alternate portions torpid & flexible –so that they could wriggle neither way.

All men more or less are buried partially in the grave of custom, and of some we see only a few hairs upon the crown above ground.

Better are the physically dead for they more lively rot.

Those who have stolen estate to be defended slaves to be kept in service –who would pause with the last inspiration & perpetuate it –require the aid of institutions –the stereotyped and petrified will of the past

But they who are something to defend –who are not to be enslaved themselves – –who are up with their time – ask no such hinderance

THOMAS CARLYLE

Carlyle's is not the most lasting words nor the loftiest wisdom –but for his genius it was reserved at last to furnish expression for the thoughts that were throbbing in a million breasts– It has plucked the ripest fruit in the public garden– But this fruit now least concerned the tree that bore it –which was rather perfecting the bud at the foot of the leaf stalk.

Carlyle is wonderfully true to the impressions on his own mind, but not to the simple facts themselves. He portrays the former so freshly and vividly –that his words reawaken and appeal to our whole Experience But when reinforced by this terrible critic we return to his page his words are found not to be coincident with the thing and inadequate and there is no host worthy to entertain the guest he has invited.

On this remote shore we adventurously landed unknown to any of the human inhabitants to this day – But we still remember well the gnarled and hospitable oaks, which were not strangers to us, the lone horse in his pasture and the patient ruminating herd whose path to the river so judiciously chosen to overcome the difficulty of the ascent we followed and disturbed their repose in the shade. And the cool free aspect of the wild apple trees, generously proffering their fruit to the wayfarers though still green and crude. The hard round glossy fruit which if not ripe –still is not poison but New English –brought hither its ancestor by our ancestors once.

And up the rocky channel of a brook we scrambled which had long served nature for the sluice in these parts leaping from rock –through tangled woods at the bottom of a ravine, darker and darker it grew and more hoarse, the murmur of the stream –until we reached the ruins of a mill where now the ivy grew and the trout glanced through the raceway and the flume.

And the dreams and speculations of some early settler was our theme

But now “no war nor battle’s sound”
Invades this peaceful battle ground
but waves of Concord murmuring by
With sweetly fluent harmony.

But since we sailed, some things have failed

And many a dream gone down the stream

Here then a venerable shepherd dwelt The Reverend [Ezra Ripley](#)

Who to his flock his substance dealt

And ruled them with a vigorous crook

By precept of the sacred Book.

But he the pierless bridge passed o’er

And now the solitary shore

Knoweth his trembling steps no more.

Anon a youthful pastor came [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)

Whose crook was not unknown to fame

His lambs he viewed with gentle glance

Dispersed o’er a wide expanse,

And fed with “mosses from the Manse”

We view the rocky shore where late

With soothed and patient ear we sat

Under our Hawthorne in the dale

And listened to his Twice told Tale.

It comes on murmuring to itself by the base of stately and retired mountains –through dark primitive woods – whose juices it receives and where the bear still drinks it– Where the cabins of settlers are still fresh and far between, and there are few that cross its stream. Enjoying still its cascades unknown to fame perhaps unseen as yet by man –alone by itself –by the long ranges of the mountains of Sandwich and of Squam with sometimes

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MT. KEARSARGE

the peak of Moose hillock the Haystack & Kearsarge reflected in its waters. Where the maple and the raspberry that lover of the mountains flourish amid temperate dews. Flowing as long and mysterious and untranslatable as its name Pemigewasset. By many a pastured Pielion and Ossa where unnamed muses haunt, and receiving the tribute of many an untasted Helicon Not all these hills does it lave but I have experienced that to see the sun set behind them avails as much as to have travelled to them.

From where the old Man of the Mountain overlooks one of its head waters –in the Franconia Notch, taking the basin and the Flume in its way –washing the sites of future villages –not impatient. For every mountain stream is more than Helicon, tended by oreads dryads Naiads, and such a pure and fresh inspirit draught gift of the gods as it will take a newer than this New England to know the flavor of.

Such water do the gods distill
And pour down hill
For their new England men.
A draught of this wild water bring
And I will never taste the spring
Of Helicon again.
But yesterday in dew it fell
This morn its streams began to swell
And with the sun it downward flowed
So fresh it hardly knew its road.

Falling all the way, not discouraged by the lowest fall –for it intends to rise again.

There are earth air fire & water –very well, this is water. down it comes that is the way with it.

It was already water of Squam and Newfound lake and Winnipiseogee, and White mountain snow dissolved on which we were floating –and Smith's and Bakers and Mad rivers and Nashua and Souhegan and Piscataquoag –and Suncook & Soucook & Contoocook –mingled in incalculable proportions –still fluid yellowish restless all with an inclination seaward but boyant.

Here then we will leave them to saw and grind and spin for a season, and I fear there will be no vacation at low water for they are said to have Squam and Newfound lake and Winipiseogee for their mill ponds.

By the law of its birth never to become stagnant for it has come out of the clouds, and down the sides of precipices worn in the flood through beaver dams broke loose not splitting but splicing and mending itself until it found a breathing plaace in this lowland– No danger now that the sun will steal it back to heaven again before it reach the sea for it has a warrant even to recover its own dews into its bosom again with every eve We wandered on by the side and over the brows of hoar hills and mountains –& through notches which the stream had made –looking down one sunday morning over Bethlehem amid the bleating of sheep, and hearing as we walked the loud spoken prayers of the inhabitants –like crusaders strolled out from the camp in Palestine–¹¹ And looking in to learning's little tenement by the way –where some literate swain earns his ten dollars by the month –after the harvest –with rows of slates and well cut benches round –as well cut as farther south –not noticing the herd of swine which had poured in at the open door, and made a congregation– So we went on over hill and dale through the stumpy rocky –woody –bepastured country –until we crossed a rude wooden bridge over the Amonnoosuck and breathed the free air of the Unappropriated Land.

Now we were in a country where inns begin– And we too now began to have our ins and outs– Some sweet retired house whose sign only availed to creak but bore no Phoenix nor golden eagle but such as the sun and rain had painted there – –a demi public demi private house –where each apartment seems too private for your use –too public for your hosts. One I remember where Landlord and lady hung painted as if retired from active life –upon the wall –remarkable one might almost say –if he knew not the allowed degrees of consanguinity for a family likeness –a singular deflexion of the nose turned each to each –so that the total variation could not have been better represented than in the picture.

–But here at any rate the cream rose thick upon the milk –and there was refreshment

One "Tilton's Inn" tooo sheltered us which it were well worth remembering, in Thornton it was where towns

11. We wandered on (by the side and over the brows of hoar hills and mountains — & through notches which the stream had made — looking down ^{with awe} one sunday morn- ing over Bethlehem amid the bleating of sheep, and hearing as we walked the loud spoken prayers of the inhabi- ~~where every house seemd to us a holy sepulchre~~ tants — like crusaders strolled out from ~~Richards as if we were~~ the camp in Palestine — (T 74)

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begin to serve as gores only to hold the world together –reached late in the evening and left before the sun rose. But the remembrance of an entertainment still remains and among publicans Tilttons name still stands conspicuous in our diary.

But where we took our ease was not Canterbury street, no Four corners nor Five points –no trivial place where 3 roads meet but hardly one road held together– A dank forest path –more like an otter’s or a marten’s trail or where a beaver had dragged his trap than where the wheels of travel ever raised a dust. The pigeon sat secure above our heads high on the dead limbs of the pine reduced to robins size– The very yard of our hostelrys was inclined upon the skirts of mountains and as we passed we looked up at angle at the stems of maples waving in the clouds –and late at evening we heard the drear bleating of innumerable flocks upon the mountains sides seeming to hold unequal parley with the bears

Shuddered through the Franconia where the thermometer is spliced for winter use, saw the blue earth heaved into mountain waves from Agiocochook, and where the Umbagog Ossipee and Squam gleamed like dewy cobwebs in the sun– And like bright ribbons the streamlets of Connecticut Saco & adroscoggin “take up their mountain march–

Went on our way silent & humble through the Notch –heard the lambs bleat in Bartlett on the mountains late at night –looked back on Conway peak –threaded the woods of Norway pine –and saw the Great Spirit smile in Winnipiseogee¹²

Varro advises to plant in Quincunx order in order not to “obstruct the beneficial effects of the sun and moon and air,” and adds “nuts, when they are whole, which you might comprize in one modius, because nature confines the kernels in their proper places, when they are broken, can hardly be held in a measure of a modius and a half.” Vines thus planted produce more fruit “more must and oil, and of greater value”.

I read in Varro that “Caesar Vopiscus AEdilicius, when he pleaded before the Censors, said that the grounds of Rosea were the gardens [(sedes)] of Italy, in which a pole being left would not be visible the day after, on account of the growth of the herbage.” This soil was not remarkably fertile yet I was so well contented with myself it may be & with my entertainment –that I was really remind of this anecdote.

In speaking of “the dignity of the herd” Varro suggests that the object of the Argonautic expedition was a ram’s fleece the gold apples of the Hesperides were by the ambiguity of language [Μηλον] goats and sheep which Hercules imported –the stars and signs bear their names the AEgean sea has its name from the goat and mountains and straits have hence their names –sic. The Bosphorus Piso makes Italy to be from Vitulis– The Romans were shepherds “Does not the fine [mulcta, a mulgendo] that was by ancient custom paid in kind refer to this?” The oldest coins bore the figures of cattle and the Roman names Porcius –Ovinus Caprilus & the surnames Equitius, Taurus, Capra Vitulus.

Vide Cato “Of purchasing an Estate –” “How an estate is to be planted –” &c in Lat & Eng.

12. <Like the pilgrims> ^{our way}
 <We> Shuddered ^ through that Fran-
 <ing>

conia where the thermometer is spliced
 for winter use, saw the blue earth
 heaved into mountain waves from Agioco-
 chook, and where the Umbagog Ossipee
 and Squam gleamed like dewy cobwebs
 in the sun — And like bright ribbons the
 streamlets of Connecticut Saco & adros-
 coggin “take up their mountain march —

<not knowing what to say>
 Went on our way ^ silent & humble
 <at> <vast> <the nick of time>

through the Notch ^— heard the lambs
 bleat in Bartlett on the mountains

holding unequal parley with the wolves & bears

late at night — ^looked back on
 Conway peak — threaded the woods of
 Norway pine — and saw the Great

<once more>
 Spirit smile ^ in Winnipiseogee (T 76-77)



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I will insert here some commentary on this early draft of material that would wind up in the “Monday” chapter of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#):

[A WEEK](#): If, for instance, a man asserts the value of individual liberty over the merely political commonweal, his neighbor still tolerates him, that is he who is **living near** him, sometimes even sustains him, but never the State. Its officer, as a living man, may have human virtues and a thought in his brain, but as the tool of an institution, a jailer or constable it may be, he is not a whit superior to his prison key or his staff. Herein is the tragedy; that men doing outrage to their proper natures, even those called wise and good, lend themselves to perform the office of inferior and brutal ones. Hence come war and slavery in; and what else may not come in by this opening? But certainly there are modes by which a man may put bread into his mouth which will not prejudice him as a companion and neighbor.

The following is, if I recall correctly and can trust my notes, from William Bronk’s THE BROTHER IN ELYSIUM: IDEAS OF FRIENDSHIP AND SOCIETY IN THE UNITED STATES (1980), pages 104-106:

The crux of the matter is that Thoreau believed that all evil did come in through the opening formed when any man might so betray his own nature as to lend himself to perform an inhuman office. While it might be contended that good and evil are something to be done at will and according to will, without reference to our own constitutions, – that we are of indifferent or irrelevant moral quality ourselves, and are able to choose between a good act and an evil one and so determine by the excess of one kind of action over the other our own moral quality and the moral quality of the world, yet it was Thoreau’s contention that the process by which good and evil came into being was more exacting and natural, less arbitrary than this. He believed that it was always necessary to make the choice between good and evil whenever such a choice was presented, but he also believed that in most cases, the choice was not presented, and that evil resulted in some mysterious way without anyone’s willing it, or being aware of it, and even to everyone’s surprise and chagrin. Thoreau accounted for this phenomenon by saying that being is more important and more effective than doing. Anything therefore might happen to us which was consistent with the nature we took for ourselves, even though the process by which the happening came about was so subtle or so complicated that we missed the apprehension of it, even after its end. If, as Thoreau said, we do outrage to our proper nature, – if we take our identity from the state, then we become liable to the evils of the state, and have no defense against war and slavery, since it has none. It is only by refusing to do the office of inferior and brutal natures that we can hope to escape, on our own part, treatment which in its brutality is suited to inferior natures. We must be treated according to the nature which we determine shall be ours. We can win or lose, or act in any other way, only in accordance with terms we set for ourselves. The identity which Thoreau wished us to find, which left no opening for the evil we claimed to deplore, was most certainly not to be found in the state; and neither was it to be found in any other external form,

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

for its essence was personal. It was to be found only through that steady communion with one's deepest desires and insights, which was called silence. He found no evil and little that was ambiguous in silence. It is easier to see now, of course, why Thoreau rejected philanthropy and reform, since to find one's identity, to become personal, was truly to ennoble one's being; it was to enjoy those moments of serene and self-confident life which were better than whole campaigns of daring; it was to combat evil directly by leaving no opening by which it could enter. Philanthropy's method was less direct. It offered the goodness of actions as an excuse and substitute for being. Reform was an attempt to avoid a change in true form by changing the surface only.

1847

September 25, Saturday: [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) wrote to Miss Prudence Ward:

Mr. Emerson is going to Europe soon to lecture there, and in consequence Henry has sold his house to him,¹³ and is going to reside in his family this winter.... Mr. Alcott's going to Europe for the present seems to have blown over, he and H_____ is building an harbour for Mr. Emerson, but H_____ says, A_____ pulls down as fast as he builds up, (quite characteristic) but it is rather expensive [and] somewhat tedious to poor Henry, to say nothing of endangering life and limbs for if here had not been a comfortable haystack near that he availed himself of by jumping into, when the top rafter was knock'd off, it might have been rather a serious affair. I do not know but I exaggerate a little, but at any rate jump he had to, and I believe it was in a hay mow. I hope they will find as soft a landing place, one and all, when they drop from the clouds.

WALDO EMERSON

EMERSON'S SHANTY



13. Aunt Maria was referring to the shanty that Thoreau built on Emerson's woodlot at Walden Pond; therefore this is inaccurate. Thoreau had not "sold his house" to Emerson—no money changed hands—because that shanty, being on Emerson's property, had from its origin been the property of Emerson and no other person.



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

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Fall: The 30-year-old [Henry Thoreau](#) worked on “KTAADN,” on relationship to government, and, abstractly, on relationship to others. He firmly rejected, however, the advances of 45-year-old [Sophia Foord](#), who had been living in the barn at the [Waldo Emersons](#) while tutoring the Emerson and Alcott children until she had become ill in October 1846 and had left Concord in March 1847.¹⁴

"By the way have you heard what a strange story there was about Miss Ford, and Henry, Mrs. Brooks said at the convention, a lady came to her and inquired, if it was true, that Miss F. had committed, or was going to commit suicide on account of H_____ Thoreau, what a ridiculous story this is. When it was told to H_____ he made no remark at all, and we cannot find out from him any thing about it, for a while, they corresponded, and Sophia said that she recollected one day on the reception of a letter she heard H_____ say, he shouldn't answer it, or he must put a stop to this, some such thing she couldn't exactly tell what."

— per an undated, unprovenanced letter by Maria Thoreau

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

SOPHIA FOORD

MARY MERRICK BROOKS

SOPHIA E. THOREAU

1848

September 7, Thursday: [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) wrote to the Ward family, about [Henry Thoreau](#), that:

"I wish he could find something better to do than walking off every now and then."

14. Nevertheless, Ms. [Sophia Foord](#) or Ford, formerly associated with the [Association of Industry and Education](#) in [Northampton](#), would love Henry all her life from a distance, and would remain in contact with his friend and neighbor Louisa May Alcott to be kept up to date about this man she loved. The fact that she loved Thoreau all his life shows the Edward Dahlberg rendition—that Thoreau's refusal of Miss Foord's advances must have been “orgiastic and savage”—to be a superficial reading perhaps motivated more by Mr. Dahlberg's personal situation in the world than by a familiarity with the historical materials. We may note that Mr. Dahlberg was also troubled that Professor Kant had been guilty of [masturbation](#), or perhaps troubled at Professor Kant's having acknowledged that he masturbated.

Immanuel Kant embraced godhead, the universe, the abstract Man, and, as he himself confessed, [masturbated](#)!

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

1849

February: [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) somewhat prematurely wrote to Miss Prudence Ward, the aunt of the Sewalls, announcing that:

He is preparing his Book for the press, and the title is to be, Waldien (I don't know how to spell it) or Life in the Woods.



February 28: 1st steamship entered San Francisco Bay, California.



[Sophia Peabody Hawthorne](#) wrote to her sister, [Mrs. Mary Peabody Mann](#), describing how [Henry Thoreau](#)'s great blue eyes offset his uncomely nose:

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

This evening Mr. Thoreau is going to lecture, and will stay with us. His lecture before was so enchanting; such a revelation of nature in all its exquisite details of wood-thrushes, squirrels, sunshine, mists and shadows, fresh, vernal odors, pine-tree ocean melodies, that my ear rang with music, and I seemed to have been wandering through copse and dingle! Mr. Thoreau has risen above all his arrogance of manner, and is as gentle, simple, ruddy, and meek as all geniuses should be; and now his great blue eyes fairly outshine and put into shade a nose which I once thought must make him uncomely forever.



This was either Henry's 1st, or his 3d, lecture, lecture on the general topic of his life in the woods, and it took place at Salem — either "Economy" or "Where I lived" (per a review quoted by Holtje), or "White Beans."



His [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) wrote to Miss Prudence Ward, "He is preparing his Book for the press, and the title is to be, Waldien (I don't know how to spell it) or Life in the Woods":

Today Henry has gone to Salem to read another lecture they seem to be wonderfully taken with him there, and next month he is to go to Portland [Maine], to deliver the same, and George wants him to keep on to Bangor they want to have him there, and if their funds will hold out they intend to send for him, they give



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25 dollars, and at Salem and Portland 20 – he is preparing his Book for the press and the title is to be, Waldien (I don't know how to spell it) or life in the Woods. I think the title will take if the Book don't. I was quite amused with what Sophia told me her mother said about it the other day, she poor girl was lying in bed with a sick head ache when she heard Cynthia (who has grown rather nervous of late) telling over her troubles to Mrs. Dunbar, after speaking of her own and Helen's sickness, she says, and there's Sophia she's the greatest trial I've got, for she has complaints she never will get rid of, and Henry is putting things into his Book that never ought to be there, and Mr. Thoreau has faint turns and I don't know what ails him, and so she went on from one thing to another hardly knew where to stop, and tho it is pretty much so, I could not help smiling at Sophia's description of it. As for Henry's book, you know I have said, there were parts of it that sounded to me very much like blasphemy, and I did not believe they would publish it, on reading it to Helen the other day Sophia told me she made the same remark, and coming from her, Henry was much surprised, and said she did not understand it, but still I fear they will not persuade him to leave it out.

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

JOHN THOREAU, SR.

HDT

WHAT?

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AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

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 22.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LIV.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

Here is [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#)'s famous drawing:



Here is Charles H. Overly's version of Sister Sophia's drawing:





AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

1850

September 17, Tuesday: To put down unrest between himself and the landed classes, Elector Friedrich Wilhelm II of Hesse requested military aid from the [German Confederation](#).

In the national census, the household of [Nehemiah Ball](#) in Concord amounted to Nehemiah, age 59, wife Mary, and children Mary (and husband), Caroline, Maria, Angelina, Ephraim, Elizabeth, and Nehemiah.

Assistant Marshall W.W. Wilde of the 1850 US Census inventoried the Thoreau household as consisting (for government purposes) of:

- [John Thoreau](#), 63-year-old male
- [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), 63-year-old female
- [Henry David Thoreau](#), 33-year-old male
- [Sophia E. Thoreau](#), 31-year-old female
- [Jane Thoreau](#), 64-year-old female
- [Maria Thoreau](#), 53-year-old female
- Margaret Doland, 18-year-old female
- Catherine Rioden, 13-year-old female

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

Catherine was listed as born in Ireland, the rest in Massachusetts. Presumably the name should have been listed as Riorden rather than Rioden. The head of the Thoreau family was listed as pencil maker and no occupations were indicated for the others. Presumably the two younger females were helping maintain the boardinghouse.

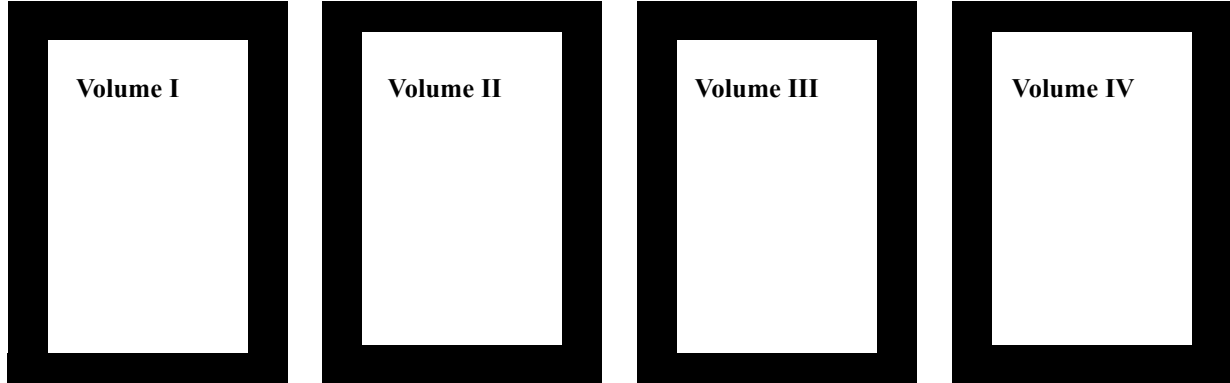


AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

1853

March 27, Easter Sunday: [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) had wanted her nephew [Henry Thoreau](#) to read the MEMOIRS of Dr. [Thomas Chalmers](#), a Scottish minister who had put up container after container of these preserves, but



he had not promised that he would do this. Henry recorded that on this date “she was heard through the Partition shouting to my Aunt Jane [[Aunt Jane Thoreau](#)], who is deaf,



‘Think of it! He stood half an hour today to hear the frogs croak, and he wouldn’t read the life of Chalmers.’”

1858

June: [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) and [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#) sued Eliza Pallies for \$1,000.⁰⁰ over a spite fence she had erected, that had darkened some windows of a house they owned in Boston.¹⁵



15. [Henry Thoreau](#) would spend four days in court testifying over the next four years. The case would not be closed till October 1862.

Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS.

EDITED BY REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

Forming Vols. I., II., and III. of "Chalmers's Posthumous Works." 12mo, Muslin, \$3 00; Sheep extra, \$3 75.

All must concede that Dr. Chalmers's works are destined to exert no small influence on the character of the age. For the last quarter of a century and more, he has been regarded in both hemispheres as one of the greatest intellectual and moral lights of the world; and though dead, he yet speaketh, and will speak in his productions to the end of time. The first three volumes of his posthumous works consist of his observations in connection with his daily reading of the Scriptures; and while they bear the impress of a magnificent intellect, they breathe a spirit of ethereal purity and lofty devotion. One scarcely knows, in reading these pages, which to admire most, the great man or the humble Christian.—*Argus*.

Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D.

SABBATH SCRIPTURE READINGS.

EDITED BY REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

Forming Volumes IV. and V. of "Chalmers's Posthumous Works." 12mo, Muslin, \$2 00; Sheep extra, \$2 50.

It is a book which few will open without deep interest and deeper reverence. There is no tinge of sectarianism in these pages: they are imbued throughout with a catholic spirit, and glow with that universal kindness which was so distinguishing a characteristic of the man.—*London Atlas*.

In heart and in brain, in mind and in soul, we may say Dr. Chalmers was one in a million of created beings; in these passages he has poured forth a rich stream of intelligence to interest mankind.—*Literary Gazette*.

These pages have the charm of originality—the mature fruits of a whole lifetime's study of the Divine Oracles.—*The Patriot*.

SERMONS BY THE LATE THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.,

Illustrative of different Stages in his Ministry. From 1798 to 1847.

EDITED BY REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

Forming Volume VI. of "Chalmers's Posthumous Works." 12mo, Muslin, \$1 00; Sheep extra, \$1 25.

This volume contains sermons, beginning in 1798, and we need not speak of the peculiar eloquence and effect of the preacher. They stand well the examination of the closest, not only in style, but, what is far better, in moral discipline and doctrine. The Divine summary of human duty is a fine example of the enforcement of both religious and moral duties; on the guilt of calumny, a glorious moral discourse. His several farewell discourses are full of rich humanity and touching reflections; but there are thirty-three sermons, and we can not particularize their relative merits. Leaving the more theological subjects, we would say, that those on courteousness, and the duties of masters and servants, are worthy of being framed in letters of gold, as lessons for the right discharge of simple daily duties.—*London Literary Gazette*.



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

1859

October 5, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written by attorney Edward Bangs of Boston, in regard to his [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#)'s lawsuit about a spite fence darkening their windows which had been erected by her next door neighbor, a Miss Pallies.



[NO JOURNAL ENTRY FOR 5 OCTOBER]

October 5, Wednesday-6, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) spent two days testifying in Boston in the case of [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) and [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#) vs. the spite fence darkening their windows which had been erected by her next door neighbor Eliza Pallies. He was reimbursed by the court for his time and travel.

HENRY'S RELATIVES

Typically Thoreauvian was the brevity of his notation in his JOURNAL in regard to such a matter:



October 6: A.M.—To Boston.

1860

January 9, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) went into [Boston](#) to spend the day testifying the case of their aunts [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) and [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#) vs. the spite fence that had been erected by Eliza Pallies. They were reimbursed by the court for their time and travel.

[Thoreau](#) was being written to by Hobart & Robbins in [Boston](#), paying \$9.⁰⁰ for six pounds of [plumbago](#).

*Boston Jan'y 9, 1860
Mr. Henry D. Thoreaux Concord, Mass.
Enclosed are Nine Dollars, for which, please send at once 6 lbs
best (ground) plumbago, with bill
Yrs &c
Hobart & Robbins*

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU





AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

Thoreau was being contacted by Edward Bangs of Boston, to testify on January 10th in the case of the Thoreau aunts versus Miss Pallies.

*Dear Sir:
Your Aunts case vs. Miss Pallies will be tried tomorrow – will you please come down by the first train?
Very truly yours
Edward Bangs*

Thoreau was being written to by the Superintendent of the Franklin Type and Stereotype Foundry of Cincinnati, R. Allison, who was paying a bill for \$10.⁰⁰ worth of supplies.

*From R. ALLISON
Jany 9th 1860
Mr. H.D. Thoreau Concord Mass.
Dear Sir:
Enclosed please find \$10 Amt of your bill of 27th Ult. Please acknowledge recpt and oblige
From EDWARD BANGS
Yours truly
R. Allison Supt.*

April: Early in this month, Lydia Maria Child's tract THE PATRIARCHAL INSTITUTION, AS DESCRIBED BY MEMBERS OF ITS OWN FAMILY and THE RIGHT WAY, THE SAFE WAY, PROVED BY EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES was printed and ready for distribution. She mailed off the first 1,000 copies to every Southerner whose name and address she could ascertain, as well as all the members of the US Congress, and to every governor and judge listed in the AMERICAN ALMANAC.

Completing work that began in April 1850, Henry Thoreau surveyed land on Lexington Road for John B. Moore. This was the site of the home of Dr. Prescott of Revolutionary War fame. Moore was purchasing and draining swampland for farming. The February 1853 survey shows land sold to Ephriam Wales Bull, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bronson Alcott, and Charles B. Davis. The land stretched over the hill to Bedford Road and as far east as the Merriam land on the Old Bedford Road. (The entire parcel would be sold at auction on May 10th.)

View Henry Thoreau's personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/94c.htm

Thoreau testified for one last day in court in Boston, during this month, in the continuing case of his aunts Aunt Maria Thoreau and Aunt Jane Thoreau vs. the spite fence that had been erected by Eliza Pallies.¹⁶

**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

September 29, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed, for [Daniel Shattuck](#), the estate which has become the Colonial Inn on Concord Common near Monument Street. His sketch shows as neighbors Joseph Reynolds, [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#), [John Shepard Keyes](#), and Mrs. Charles W. Goodnow.



View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/113.htm

Also, [Thoreau](#) was working on his natural history materials. He posted to editor [Horace Greeley](#) his "SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES" for publication in the New-York Weekly Tribune.

Concord Sep 29th 1860

Friend Greeley,

Knowing your interest in whatever relates to Agriculture, I send you with this a short Address delivered by me before "The Middlesex Agricultural Society", in this town, Sep. 20th; on The Succession of Forest Trees. It is part of a chapter on the Dispersion of Seeds. If you would like to print it, please accept it. If you do not wish to print it entire, return it to me at once, for it is due to the Societys "Report" a month or 6 weeks hence

Yrs truly

Henry D. Thoreau

16. This case had been before the court since June 1858.

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU



September 29, Saturday: Another hard frost and a very cold day.

In the hard frost of September 29th and 30th and October 1st the thermometer would go all the way down to 20° and all Ephriam Wales Bull's Concord grapes, some fifty bushels of them, would be frozen.



[Theodore Henry Hittell](#)'s THE ADVENTURES OF [JAMES CAPEN ADAMS](#),¹⁷ MOUNTAINEER AND GRIZZLY BEAR HUNTER, OF CALIFORNIA (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee and Company. 117 Washington Street. San Francisco: Towne and Bacon). The book contained a dozen woodcuts by Charles Nahl.

JAMES CAPEN ADAMS

1863

September 5, Saturday: Calvin H. Greene went out for a ride with [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), and with "the 2 Misses T. maiden aunts ... 4 of us in all."

MARIA THOREAU
JANE THOREAU

17. Hittell had completely bought into Grizzly Adams's story that his real name was James Capen Adams rather than John Adams.



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

1881

December: [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) died at the age of 84 in Bangor, Maine. She left most of her property to the Thatcher family with which she had been living, and her in-law relative [George A. Thatcher](#) was the executor of the will.

**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**

[Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) began to write, in [Rome](#), on international law.

1885

December 1, Tuesday: [George A. Thatcher](#) died, and would interred in Bangor's Mount Hope Cemetery near the graves of [Jane Thoreau](#) (who had died in 1867) and [Maria Thoreau](#) (who had died in 1881 at the age of 84 as the last American Thoreau).



Somewhere in Virginia toward the end of the 19th Century, a doctor named Pepper had owned a drugstore. He had a beautiful daughter and a young man whom he was employing at the drugstore, Charles Alderton, was given to experimentation. When the young employee was caught experimenting with the beautiful daughter, the doctor had fired this ardent and creative employee. The experimenter had then gone off to Waco, [Texas](#), where daughters hopefully might not be so well protected. On this day, having taken work at the Old Corner Drug Store, he served his "The Waco," a pleasing concoction, for the 1st time, his guinea pig being that store's proprietor, Wade Morrison. Morrison changed the name to Dr. Pepper® and put the drink on sale at several local soda fountains. (This introduction thus preceded by about a year the introduction of a cocaine-laced competitor, Coca-Cola® — eventually "Dr." would need to become "Dr" in order to avoid the suggestion of a health benefit. The story has a happy ending the truth of which I very much doubt: ardent employee Charles Alderton would return to Dr. Pepper's store in Virginia and obtain the hand of his daughter.)



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU


1894

May 21, Monday: The new [Manchester Ship Canal](#) had been in use since New Years Day, providing the city with direct access to the sea. On this day [Queen Victoria](#) "opened" it.

According to a letter from Eben J. Loomis to Alfred Winslow Hosmer of this date, which is preserved in the Alfred W. Hosmer Collection of the Concord Free Public Library,

The story of the meeting at the jail of Mr. Emerson and Mr. Thoreau was told me by Maria Thoreau in the following words:— "Henry, why are you here?" "Waldo, why are you not here?" So I think that may be considered authentic and accurate.

WALDO EMERSON
MARIA THOREAU

This emerging tall-tale-with-a-moral would see its 1st publication on December 14, 1939,  in an obituary of a lifelong [Concord](#) resident, "Howard Melvin Passes Away in 85th Year" in the Concord Journal. Since Melvin had not yet been born when Thoreau was jailed, this was at best hearsay:

One time Emerson and Thoreau agreed not to pay their taxes because they were so high. Well Thoreau didn't pay and they put him in the lock-up. When Emerson came to see him I guess he'd gone ahead and paid his because he said to Thoreau, "Henry! Henry! Why do I find you here?" Then Thoreau said, "Ralph! Ralph! Why aren't you here?"

1896

June: Eben J. Loomis wrote to Alfred Winslow Hosmer reminiscing about the Summer or Early Fall of 1854 which he and his wife spent at the Thoreau boardinghouse (this letter is in the Alfred W. Hosmer Collection at the Concord Free Public Library):

Looking at the pictures [photographs of [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#)] brings back to me very vividly the pleasant days long ago, when Henry Thoreau and I tramped over the Concord hills and boated on the Concord river; picking up Indian relics, investigating the birds, flowers, fish and other things: and talking all the while on every subject in which either or both of us was interested.

I always found Henry very hospitable to a new idea. If I happened to suggest some new thought, he would think it over, not saying much at the time, but afterward, perhaps the next day, or week, he would refer to it, having made up his mind since whether to accept or reject it.

It was delightful to hear him talk; his opinions were well formed, clear and gave no uncertain sound.

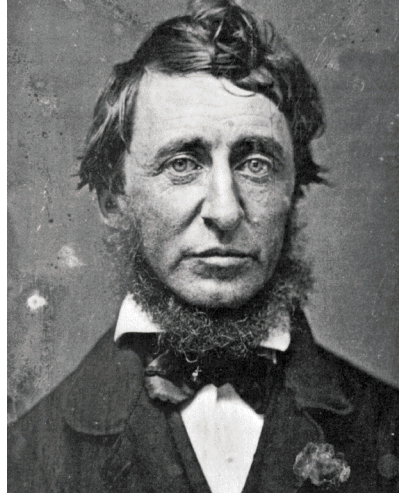
I spent the summer at Mr. Thoreau's house at the time Mr. Rowse [Samuel Worcester Rowse] was in Concord, and Thoreau, Rowse and



AUNT MARIA THOREAU

AUNT MARIA THOREAU

myself frequently sat up until twelve or one o'clock, talking on "fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute," or other topics equally or more interesting.



1939

Henry Seidel Canby, in his THOREAU (Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin), trying to recuperate [Henry Thoreau](#) from having been “known to us [as children] as a man who wrote about birds and animals for children,” discovered that Thoreau had more recently been discovered by certain unnamed critics as perhaps “the greatest critic of values among modern writers in English.” He attempted to explicate the parable of the hound, the bay horse, and the turtle-dove as no search for any lost maid or boy,

WALDEN: In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men’s, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint “No Admittance” on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.



but instead a search “for that sense of the spiritual reality behind nature, which again and again in his JOURNAL he deplores as something felt in youth, but never quite regained.”

The WALDEN parable	The other analyses
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The identification of these fabulous animals with Edmund Sewall, John Thoreau, and Ellen Sewall ... is both naïve and absurd. For no one of these three was Thoreau, by any stretch of the imagination, still searching.

On page xii in this new volume [Ellery Channing](#) was given a final opportunity to explore what wisdom he had accumulated over the decades about the essence of [Henry Thoreau](#), and this blazing amazing comment is what he was able to come up with:

Nothing bothered him so much as the friendships. Those and his moral sensitiveness. I have never been able to understand what he meant by his life.... Why was he so disappointed with everybody else &c. Why was he so much interested in the river and the woods and the sky &c. Something peculiar I judge.



“What a gump!...On the whole, he is but little better than an idiot. He should have been whipt often and soundly in his boyhood; and as he escaped such wholesome discipline then, it might be well to bestow it now.”

– [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), about [Ellery Channing](#)



On page 234, Jane Hosmer had the following to relate:

When his mother heard of his arrest, she hastened to the Jail,

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then to the Thoreau house in the Square, at which Misses Jane and Maria Thoreau then lived, and one of the latter, putting a shawl over her head, went to the jailer's door, and paid the tax and fees to Ellen Staples, her father the jailer being absent.



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[In this year, at the end of the "Wizard of Oz" movie, Dorothy summed up the lesson that she has learned out of all her questing down the yellow brick road: "If I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own backyard, because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with." She had learned that in order to get back to her Kansas, all she needs to do is repeat her mantra, "There's no place like home." — Would it be legitimate to consider this to be a possible interpretation of Thoreau's parable of the hound, the bay horse, and the turtledove?]

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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



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Prepared: October 24, 2013

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



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



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

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Arrgh.