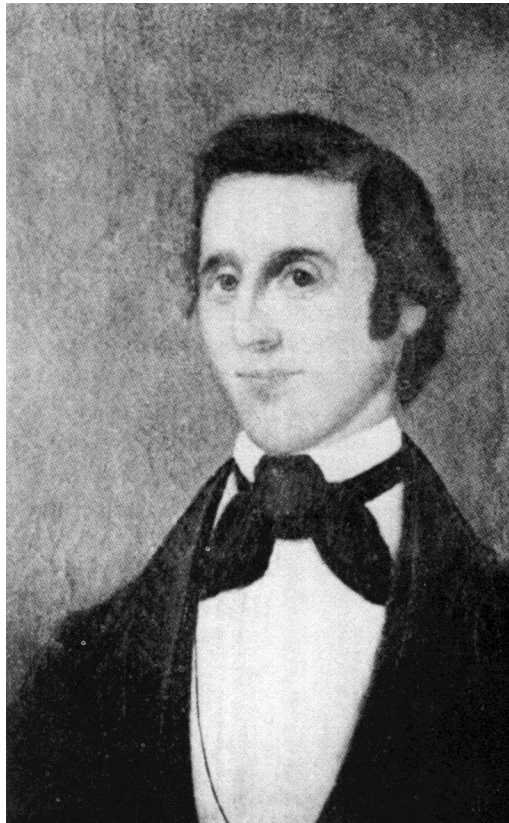


HENRY'S RELATIVES

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



				BORN	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819
1820	1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827	1828	1829
1830	1831	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839
1840	1841	DIED							

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

1685

October 18, day (Old Style): [John Evelyn](#)'s diary entry for this day was in part as follows:



*Dr. Good-man [at Whitehall:] preached on 2:Cor:4:18:
The King was now building all that range from East to west by the Court & Garden to the
streete, & making a new Chapel for the Queene, whose Lodgings this new building was:
as also a new Council Chamber & offices next the South end of the Banqueting-house:*

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

King Louis XIV of France commenced a merciless persecution of his Protestant subjects., by declaring the April 13, 1598 Edict of Nantes which had been issued by King Henry IV to be null and void and by removing all religious and civil liberties of any French citizens who were [Huguenots](#). The eighth and largest mass out-migration of Huguenots began:¹



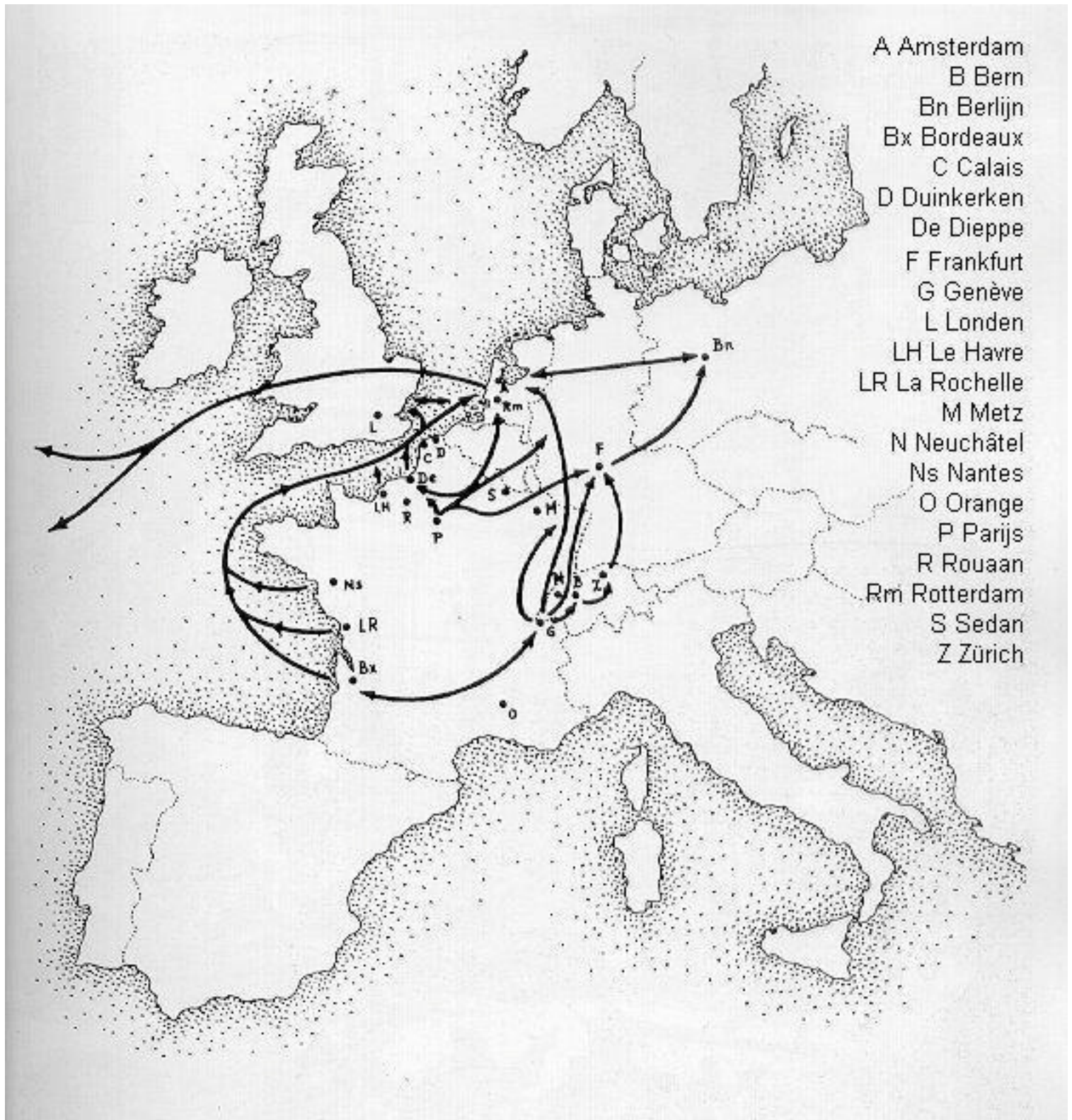
WALDENSES

In this year [Pierre Thoreau](#), who at the time was approximately ten years of age, his two sisters Francoise and Marie, and their mother, fled from the Poitou-Charentes district of France, initially to Richmond near London and then to St. H  lier on the island of [Jersey](#) in the English Channel. Presumably this religio-political situation was what occasioned the flight, at penalty of being sent to row in the galleys had they been intercepted. (We can imagine the image above, which is of Huguenots arriving in this year on the shingle beach under the white cliffs at Dover, as an approximation of the group including the combined Thoreau and Guillet families disembarking in the harbor on the island of Jersey!) Presumably the Thoreau family fled from France to Jersey in the Channel Islands in about 1685, at roughly the same time that the Jacques Louis Guillet family fled to

1. This movement of refugees is said to have been the "largest forced migration of Europeans in the early modern period." Refer to Jon Butler's THE HUGUENOT IN AMERICA: A REFUGEE PEOPLE IN NEW WORLD SOCIETY. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1983. The English word "refugee" would come about due to reluctance to employ the term "diaspora" which seemed to be reserved for the scattering of the Jews per JOHN 7:35. The Huguenots amounted to some 1/4th million out of France's 20 million citizens, and during the years 1682-1690 were concentrated in the West and in the South. After some 50,000 had fled to England, they made up 5% of London town at a time when the London population was 10% of England. Genetically, the statistical probability that the next English person you meet in England will have at least some [Huguenot](#) ancestry is 75%. Refer to Bernard Cottret's THE HUGUENOT IN ENGLAND and to Peter Steven Gannon's volume on REFUGEES IN THE SETTLING OF COLONIAL AMERICA. In 1985 French President Mitterrand would issue an official apology, on behalf of the French government and the French people, for Louis XIV's *diktat* revoking the Edict of Nantes, and a commemorative postage stamp would be issued characterizing this our modern era as under the suasion of "Tolerance, Pluralism, Brotherhood.")

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Jersey, because the two families were intermarried.



It would be Pierre's grandson [Philippe Thoreau](#) who would become the ancestor of Henry David, but it would be his great-granddaughter Marie who would marry Charles William Guillet in 1796 and it would be their son John Guillet who would emigrate in 1832 to Cobourg on Lake Ontario east of Toronto, eventually producing Edwin Clarence Guillet, the Canadian historian. Since the American branch of the Thoreau family would come to an end with the unmarried generation of [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#), [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), [Henry David Thoreau](#), and [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), this Edwin Clarence Guillet, who died in 1974, would be one of Henry David's few modern American relatives (though Henry had a closer relative in England until 1949, a son of Sophia Thoreau Du Parcq who had risen to the status of Law Lord and been entitled, who was named at birth Herbert Du Parcq).

HENRY'S RELATIVES

As you can see in the following footnote from page 230 of his THE PIONEER FARMER AND BACKWOODSMAN,

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Edwin was quite proud of Henry — although reluctant to brag about being a relative:

The period of the settlement of Upper Canada was too late for the inclusion of religious refugees among its settlers. But a large number of descendants of French Huguenots, driven from France in the sixteen-eighties, came to the United States and Canada, where they have tended to retain an independent and non-conformist attitude. The greatest of them all, of course, is Henry David Thoreau, whose philosophy and example have been so influential in shaping the career of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, British labour leaders, and broader loyalties of every type throughout the world.

In addition to the above revocation of religious liberty at home, Louis also proclaimed a *Code Noir* for his colonies in the Caribbean. First, all Jews get out, you are to be gone within three months. Second, Huguenots may not observe their religion in any way. There was to be no intermarriage of non-Catholics with Catholics. Products of such unions were declared bastards. Slaves of Huguenots were to be baptized as Catholics. When the news of this reached the Caribbean, many Huguenot families fled from French islands to English and Dutch islands.

Now I need to lay on you an analogy which you may consider, at first glimpse, to be severe. “Even with due allowance for exaggeration in contemporary accounts, one gets the impression of stark terrorism just as grim as the anti-Semitic nightmare in Nazi Germany.” Yet the opinion I just gave you is that of a reputable historian, Warren C. Scoville.² As an example, the king of France had declared that if any “New Convert” from Protestantism to Catholicism should recant his conversion on his death bed, all his property was to be seized by the authorities, and they were to have his “naked body dragged through the streets and tossed on a public dump.” Of every six men captured in Huguenot worship meetings, one was to be executed and five condemned to serve as galley slaves, and in fact we know of at least 1,132 men who became galley slaves in this manner prior to the death of Louis XIV. Serving out one’s sentence as a galley slave was no guarantee of release, and in fact a number of Huguenots were kept at their seats on the rowing benches, in their chains, for the duration of their lives, in spite of the fact that they had long since completed their sentences.³

It was in the Languedoc-Dauphine area of southern France, so impacted by the Catholic extermination of the Cathar heresy, that Huguenots were most concentrated. Under persecution, there were visions, people claimed they had heard choirs of angels in the sky and so on and so forth, and a belief arose that the Christian millennium was coming in the year 1689.

A number of Huguenots would wind up in Charleston.

2. Scoville, Warren C. THE PERSECUTION OF HUGUENOTS AND FRENCH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1680 TO 1720. Berkeley CA: U of California P, 1960, page 61.

3. During this period the Pope himself, in the Papal States, was holding galley slaves to row him to and fro. These slaves might be in one or another of the following categories: “convicted criminals condemned to a life sentence” — “captured non-Christian prisoners of war” — “bonavoglie, so-called ‘volunteers’ who through indigence had sold themselves into slavery, and could be released at the end of their contracted period of service in the galleys on condition of good conduct.”



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

I suppose Abraham D. Lavender to be the poet who wrote the following (since he did not attribute the poem and since the color lavender appears in it):



THE EXILE

Your sunny shores,
Your rugged peaks,
Your vineyards, fields, and forests,
Your flowery gardens in bloom,
With red, yellow, lavender, pink, and blue,

Your meandering rivers,
Your flowing streams,
Your roads that lead everywhere,
Your humble hamlets,
Your teeming towns,
Your courtly cities ablaze,

Your toiling farmers,
Your masterful merchants,
Your artful artisans and would-be scholars,
Your poor, pious, pampered, and princely,
Men and women of all nuances and shades,

Your lives so colorful,
Vivaciously vibrant,
But oppressive,
Struggling to be free,
To break the shackles of an ancient age,

Blood of my fathers,
Tears of my mothers,
Roots of my branches,
All intertwined in your soil so deep,
My mother earth,
My father land,

How my heart weeps for you,
From whom I was so cruelly exiled,
In leaking boats,
Over frightful borders,
Hurried journeys in the darkened nights,
Leaving behind so much of me,
Embittered, impoverished, but free,

Angered by the fearful tyrant,
The betraying countrymen,
The yoke of intolerance,

Saddened by the theft of freedom,
The rupture of dreams,
The hopeful hope of a speedy return,

A new beginning,
In a strange new land,
Different, engulfing, demanding,
But flexible, sensitive, and free,
This land that welcomed me,



Exhausted, lonely, afraid,
Sadder, but wiser,
Stronger and prouder,

Reaffirmed in honor,
From a life torn asunder,
This exile that became me,

Days turned into years,
And years into decades,
And generations multiply and divide,

A new language,
A new name,
A new home,
New loves to love,
In this no longer strange new land,

But, your sunny shores,
Your rugged peaks,
Your vineyards, fields, and forests,
Your flowery gardens in bloom,
With red, yellow, lavender, pink, and blue,

My colorfully vibrant memories,
That my mind cannot repress,
My meandering gazes ablaze,
That go with me everywhere,

My mother earth,
My father land,
How my soul dreams of you,
I am a part of you,
And you are a part of me,

The dreams,
The hope,
The faith,
That neither tyranny,
Nor time,
Can ever erase.

1803

➡ Publication of two volumes that would end up in the library of [Henry Thoreau](#) (bearing the autograph of [John Thoreau](#)), THE LIFE AND POSTHUMOUS WRITINGS OF [WILLIAM COWPER](#), ESQ. WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL COWPER. BY [WILLIAM HAYLEY](#), ESQ. (Boston: W. Pelham, Manning & Loring, and E. Lincoln).



WILLIAM COWPER, I

WILLIAM COWPER, II

1813

➡ 1st half of October: Mrs. [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) became pregnant for the 2d time.

JOHN THOREAU

DUNBAR
FAMILY

THOREAU
GENEALOGY

1814

➡ July 5, Tuesday: As part of the [War of 1812](#), American forces under General Jacob Brown turned back British forces under Major-General Phineas Riall at the Chippawa River of the Niagara front, after a 20-minute exchange of musket fire during which 148 British and 60 American soldiers lost their lives.

A son, [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), was born to [John Thoreau](#) and [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#).⁴



John in later years



Cynthia in later years

July 5th was an unusual date for a childbirth, in a rural white American community. For whatever reasons, the white babies were being birthed most frequently during the months of last winter and early spring, and sometimes, in the North, there was another, smaller, peak of white births in the early fall. However, uniformly, babies were born to white people least often in the late spring and early summer.⁵ (I can remember, as a child, listening to my aunts talking among themselves about timing children so they didn’t have to be “heavy” just during the heat of the summer.)

When the birth would be recorded in [Concord](#)’s town records, it would be recorded as of the wrong year:

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

4. The gravestone, saying that John had been born in 1815, is incorrect, for the older brother had turned three before the younger brother was born. Horace Rice Hosmer reported, much later, that his mother Lydia Davis Hosmer had told him that one of [John Thoreau](#) and [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#)’s children had “narrowly escaped being born on Lee’s Hill.”

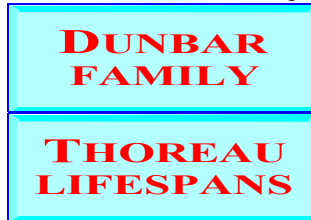
5. The pattern was quite different for enslaved Americans, [slave](#) births tending to peak at midsummer and to bottom out in late fall and early winter.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.


At some point during the second half of this year, [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#), the stepmother who had cared for the Thoreau children in [Concord](#), including [John Thoreau](#), died.⁶ John and Cynthia were living in Boston, and John would write thence about this death to sisters in Bangor ME with his son John, Jr. on his knee.



6. [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) said that “Mary and Nancy” Thoreau died before coming of age — he must have meant Sarah Thoreau and some other Thoreau daughter since it seems unlikely that there would have been a daughter Mary as well as a daughter Maria, and since [Nancy Thoreau](#) married a Billings in Maine and had a daughter Rebecca Jane Billings. He said that “David Thoreau” died before he had any occupation — I wonder whether he meant David Orrok, Henry’s cousin after whom he was named, who died before he had any occupation. If there were eight Thoreau children to rear, John being the eldest, what were the names of all eight, and what was their birth order? [John Thoreau](#)’s sister [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), was reared, like him and the other six children, in the Thoreau home in [Concord](#) after the death of their mother [Jane “Jennie” Burns Thoreau](#) in 1896, by [Jean Thoreau](#)’s second wife, the widow [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#). Eventually [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#) married and went to live in Maine. So: what was her husband’s name, Thatcher? Where did they live? Did Henry visit them on his trips to Maine? And what were the names and ages of the Kettell children with whom the Thoreau children were reared?

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

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**DUNBAR
FAMILY**

**THOREAU
LIFESPANS**

1815



July 5, Wednesday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s 1st birthday.

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

*4th day 5th of 7 M 1815 / On Board the Alonzo Capt Westcot
Rose this Mornng just as the sun was rising in a clear horizon
from the Water – I have several times rose early & gone on the
Hill to see this sight but never before had the opportunity, it
was truly beautiful – We find ourselves off Crane Neck on L
Island & only about 60 Miles from NYork - a poor run last night,
which I hope will be compensated by a good breeze & favorable
tide today tho the prospect before us is Dull – I slept
comfortably & had to sympathize with several who lay on the Cabin
floor –*

*At 11 OC of Oldmans harbor on L Island in a flat Calm At 2 OC
while at dinner the Wind Breezed up finely – I find we have on
board Doctor John Waterhouse of Philadelphia son of Benj
Waterhouse – & Ray Clarke of [Greenwich](#) who is one of my old
school fellows -a renewal of acquaintance with him is very
pleasant – At Sunsett of Oyster Pond with a good breese – At 1
/ 2 past 9 OC a little past Gull light with a good breese – The
Air is very clear & we have the very singular sight of five Light
Houses all in view at once Vizt Gull, Saybrook, Montaugue, New
London & Watch Hill*

*In the course of the eveng I have discovered that there was a
man on board by the name of Saml G Adams of Richmond Virginia,
by whom I enquired after & sent my love to Thos Ladd – at several
times engaged in agreeable conversation with Parson Kellog. –*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

9. [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) said that “Mary and Nancy” Thoreau died before coming of age — he must have meant Sarah Thoreau and some other Thoreau daughter since it seems unlikely that there would have been a daughter Mary as well as a daughter Maria, and since [Nancy Thoreau](#) married a Billings in Maine and had a daughter Rebecca Jane Billings. He said that “David Thoreau” died before he had any occupation — I wonder whether he meant David Orrok, Henry’s cousin after whom he was named, who died before he had any occupation. If there were eight Thoreau children to rear, John being the eldest, what were the names of all eight, and what was their birth order? [John Thoreau](#)’s sister [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), was reared, like him and the other six children, in the Thoreau home in [Concord](#) after the death of their mother [Jane “Jennie” Burns Thoreau](#) in 1896, by [Jean Thoreau](#)’s second wife, the widow [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#). Eventually [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#) married and went to live in Maine. So: what was her husband’s name, Thatcher? Where did they live? Did Henry visit them on his trips to Maine? And what were the names and ages of the Kettell children with whom the Thoreau children were reared?



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

1816



July 5, Friday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s 2d birthday.

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

*6th day 5th of 7 M 1816 / My dear Aged Aunt Martha Gould & sister
Mary Rodman spent the Day with us –
My heart has been very seriously affected this day I hardly know
what to call the Exercise, but Deep seriousness pervades my
spirit –*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

1817



At about this point [John Thoreau](#)'s mortgage on his 8th share to the house at Number 57 in [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#) was discharged.

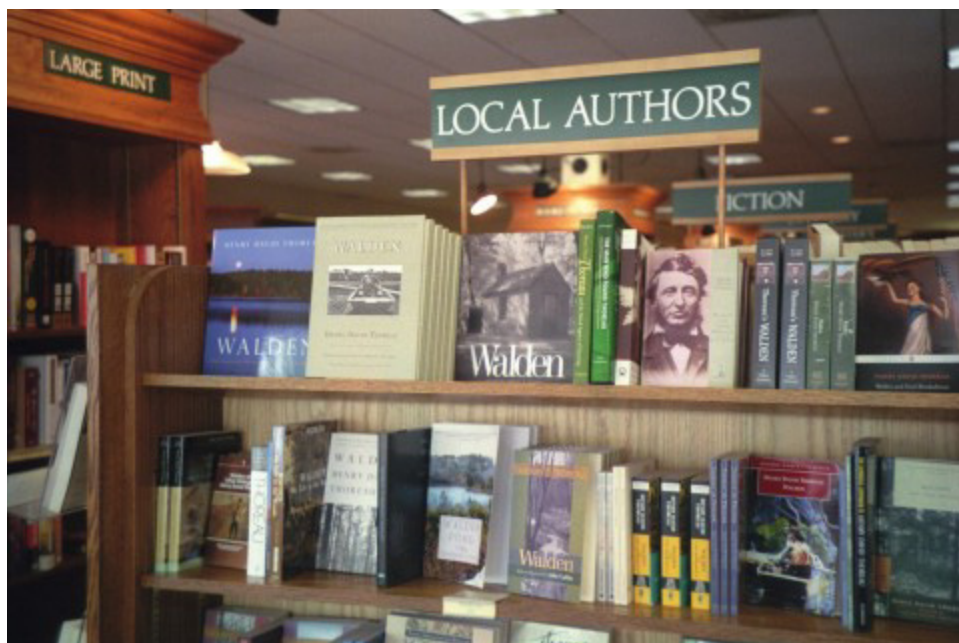
**DUNBAR
FAMILY**

**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

The Thoreaus moved to [Concord](#) where [David Henry](#) would be born.



Thoreau recorded in 1855 at his mother [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#)'s suggestion that David Henry Thoreau had been ...

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



Born, July 12, 1817, in the Minott House, on the Virginia Road, where Father occupied Grandmother's thirds, carrying on the farm.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



The Minott house on the Virginia Road

341 Virginia Rd

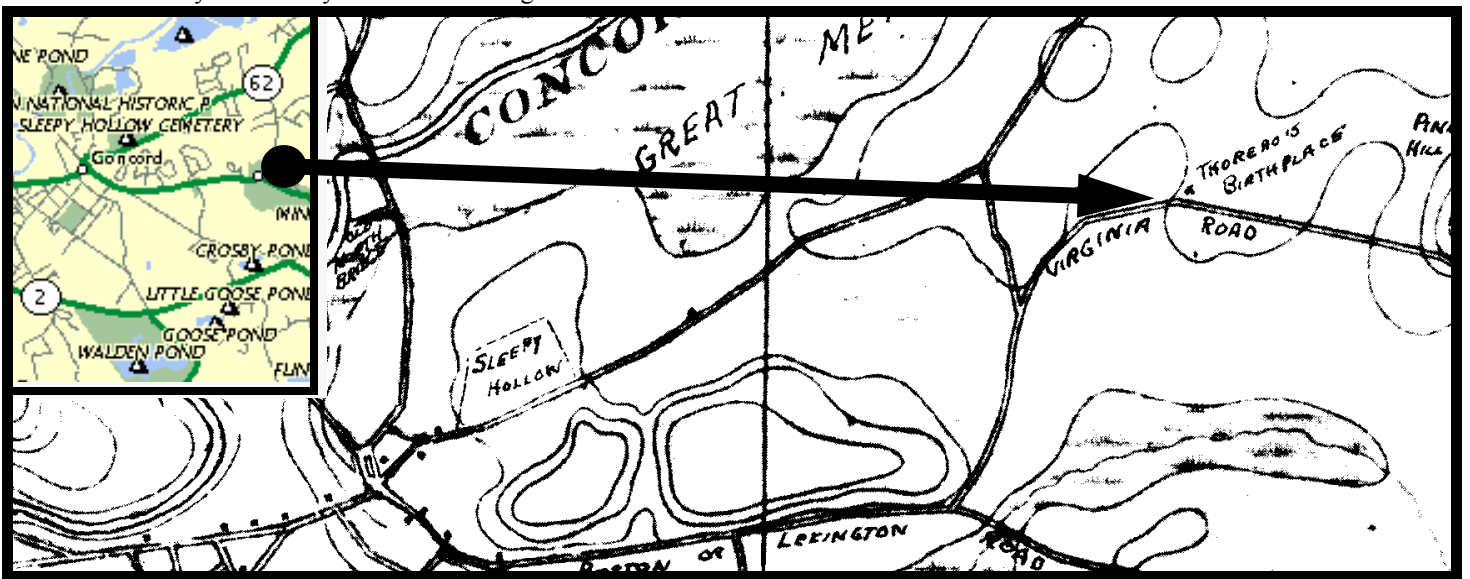
THOREAU RESIDENCES

Thoreau continued in 1855:



The Catherines the other half of the house. Bob Catherines and John threw up the turkeys. Lived there about eight months. Si Merriam next neighbor. Uncle David died when I was six weeks old.

David Henry would be born on his grandmother's farm, on the Bedford levels of [Virginia Road](#) 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles northeast of Concord, in sight of Walden Woods and not too far from the Concord River. This house was unpainted and gray, and the child was born in the easternmost of the upstairs chambers. The dooryard was unfenced and grassy, and led down to a brook. This was the home in which [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), little David Henry's mother, had spent her own childhood, and another family, the Catherines, was renting one end of the house, and Thoreau remembered that Bob Catherines and his brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) had had some fun tossing their turkey hens up into the air to make them fly and flap and gobble — if you've never done this, you've really missed something.



July 5, Saturday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s 3d birthday.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



[David Henry Thoreau](#)'s 1st year of existence, the initial stanza of the poem that was his life, began, nominally, on the day of his birth, July 12th, 1817 (although some cultures might instance that he had already during the previous year begun his mortal trajectory *in utero*: in China he would have been considered to be having this as his 1st birthday — which is approximately nine months more accurate than our “Western” style).

BACKGROUND EVENTS OF 1817

BACKGROUND EVENTS OF 1818

David Henry was born “in the Minott House, on the Virginia Road, where [Father](#) occupied Grandmother’s thirds, carrying on the farm.” (On an internet astrology page, I have noticed that the assertion is being made that he had been born at 9PM. I have no idea whether that is accurate. the same page instances the following astrological data pertaining to this birth: “Sun: 20°14' Cancer; AS: 18°37' Aquarius; Moon: 4°09' Cancer; MC: 7°19' Sagittarius; Dominants: Sagittarius, Cancer, Aquarius, Jupiter, Uranus, Venus; Houses 5, 10, 9 / Water, Fire / Mutable; Numerology: Birthpath 9.” I have no clue what any of that means. I have ascribed in the attached illustration, that he was born at 11:36AM — but I freely here acknowledge that I have merely fabricated that out of whole cloth because I can summon no interest about the hour at which Cynthia gave birth.)

Do you wonder what sort of diaper they would have put on our little guy? –Wonder no more:

Infants Flannel Pilchers or Savers¹⁰

Infants often wear pilchers or savers, put over their napkins, to prevent their clothes from being wetted. They are made as follows:-

Cut a piece of flannel 11 nails square (a nail is 2-1/4”), fold it in half, and cut it crosswise, A B: it will make two pilchers. It must next be rounded off a little at the two corners, A B, and at the third corner, E, (which, observe, is opposite the cross-way of the flannel,) sew on a piece of calico, in which cut a button-hole. The crossed part, A B, is then neatly plaited into a calico band, 1 nail deep, when doubled, and 8 nails long, and a button and button-hole sewn on at the ends. In putting it on, first button the band round the waist in front, bring the corner between the legs, and button it to the same button.¹¹

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CUTTING OUT APPAREL FOR THE POOR, a guide issued in 1789, had recommended 24 squares of diaper and 2 squares of flannel for each poor mother, and had given instructions:

Squares of Diaper - Made of figured Diaper, called ell wide, but measures a yard, one nail and a quarter only. Ten shillings the piece, which contains seven yards and a quarter. Two pieces divided each into twelve, make 24 squares of diaper double, half a yard and near a nail wide, but not quite square.¹²

Squares of Flannel - One yard and three quarters of white baize flannel, called yard wide, but measures three quarters and a half only, at 11 and a half pence per yard, which make two squares.¹³

10. The OED has a 1674 reference: “Pilch – now used for a flannel cloth to wrap about the lower part of young children.”

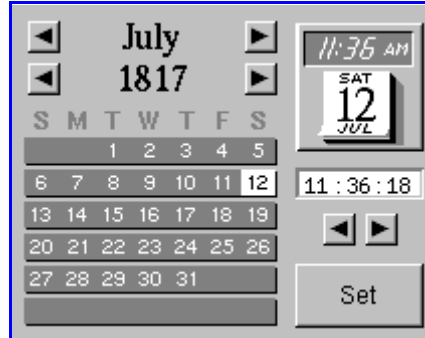
JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Thoreau would make a record in 1855 –at his mother [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#)’s suggestion– that David Henry Thoreau had been



Born, July 12, Saturday, 1817, in the Minott House, on the Virginia Road, where Father occupied Grandmother’s thirds, carrying on the farm.



VIRGINIA ROAD



(It is good that this was recorded at least in this manner, because in fact for an unknown reason, [Concord](#) town records would make no mention of the event.)

Thoreau drew his first breath and yet (as Wendell Berry has pointed out) “not a breath is drawn but for the grace of an inconceivable series of vital connections joining an inconceivable multiplicity of created things in an inconceivable unity.” **In this contexture we will attempt to plot out a modest subset of that inconceivable multiplicity of created things and explore a few of the more obvious of the unities which bind them into one universe. Various persons have from time to time asked “Why do this?” and the only answer I have ever been able to come up with has been “Why not?”**¹⁴

Thoreau continued in 1855:

11. THE NURSERY BASKET, published in 1854 by D. Appleton & Co. of New-York, advised,
 “We give, therefore, three lists — the first adviseable from practical experience, the second possible, and the last indispensable:—
 “5 dozen napkins of three sizes,”
 “4 dozen napkins,”
 “3 Dozen napkins.”

On page 92 a gift basket is assembled for the infant: “Place in the basket a complete set of the child’s first clothes, slip, night petticoat, shirt, flannel band, and two small soft napkins; a fine wash cloth, as some nurses prefer it to a sponge; a pot of cold cream. A roll of old linen is especially to be thought of, worn-out handkerchiefs, or any other fine white fabrics.” On page 97 for fastening the napkin pins: “The Victorian shield pin is, in a measure, out of the use for the napkins, as its place is supplied by a clever invention of elastic bands, with metal tips, one forming the head, the other receiving the point of the pin, as in one style of knitting sheaths. A half dozen of these pins, costing six cents a pair, will be an ample provision for as many months. When two napkins are worn, only one should be folded through the limbs, otherwise the thick fold separates them to far to the risk of crockness. Half napkins of bound flannel or oiled silk are often used: the latter require to be renewed frequently. Experienced nurses recommend prepping, at least, a dozen small sized napkins for the first use, from well worn table linen; wash cloths, feeding clothes, and bibs, may be made of the same. Two size of napkins will be required, the common diamond pattern, 12 yards in the piece, comes at \$1.50, and makes eleven or twelve, according to the width, as they must be cut just twice that; or a double square, bird’s-eye, or Russia, fine enough for any use, and much wider, comes in longer pieces at 25 cents a yard.”

12. An Ell in England equals 45 inches, a nail is a quarter of a quarter of a yard, or two and a quarter inches. Each piece would be 21.75 by 37.8 inches. This would be folded in half, sewn around most of three sides — a small running stitch with occasional backs would be sufficient, perhaps a quarter inch from the edge — then turned through the space not sewn and that carefully closed.

Diaper is a particular linen weave with a small diamond pattern, for this use perhaps quarter inch diamonds with long floats — soft on babies skin, very absorbent. Flannel is a soft, spongy woollen cloth, not usually fulled or napped; baize flannel would seem to imply a fulled flannel (especially considering the measurements) perhaps intended for just this purpose — soft, but more absorbent than regular woollen flannel.

13. Each piece will be about 31 inches square. Baize flannel presumably was fulled enough to have stable cut edges so no hemming would be necessary — or perhaps something smooth like a blanket stitch with fine 2-ply wool over the raw edge.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

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The Catherines the other half of the house. Bob Catherines and John threw up the turkeys. Lived there about eight months. Si Merriam next neighbor. Uncle David died when I was six weeks old.



That is, Davidem Henricum Thoreaus was born on the Bedford levels in the Holocene on July 12, 1817 C.E.

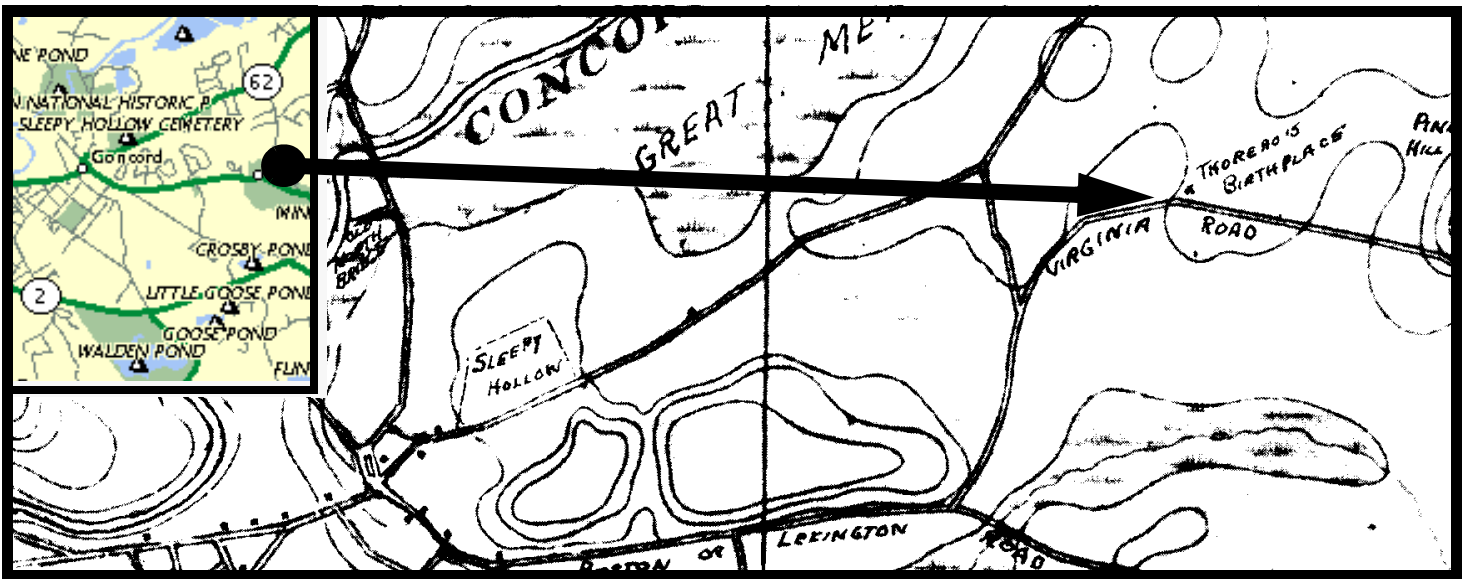
14. Pardon me for hypothecating an 11:36AM birth. It merely happened to be 11:36AM as I pulled this illustration off my orphaned NeXT computer's screen (orphaned, because Steve Jobs had recently abandoned his NeXT hardware to concentrate on software). I have no idea at what hour Thoreau was born on July 12, 1817, nor for that matter do the astrologers at <http://www.bobmarksastrologer.com/famouscharts/Henry%20Thoreau.htm>, who suppose Thoreau to have been some sort of escapist, have any idea at what hour he was born:

“Time of birth questionable. That does not affect the sign positions of the planets. A five planet majority in Mutable signs (communications). Only one in a Fixed sign: Mars in Taurus. Most of his emphasis was on simplifying life and had to do with the trivia of day-to-day living. The one Fixed sign planet drew his attention to longer range matters and he turned ‘Simplify, simplify, simplify’ into a crusade. A five planet majority in Water signs as well. This made his horoscope strong in both Mutable and Water. The Mutable Water sign is Pisces so we would expect traits of that sign to show up strongly in his life (‘Let’s run off to Walden Pond and get away from the world.’). Mars was also Thoreau’s only planet in an Earth sign. Venus was his only Air sign placement. They have one thing in common. They both rule the small matters of day-to-day living.”

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David Henry was born on his grandmother's farm, on the Bedford levels of Virginia Road 2½ miles northeast of Concord, in sight of Walden Woods and not too far from the Concord River. This house was unpainted and gray, and the child was born in the easternmost of the upstairs chambers. The dooryard was unfenced and grassy, and led down to a brook. This was the home in which Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau, little David Henry's mother, had spent her own childhood, and another family, the Catherines, was renting one end of the house, and Thoreau remembered that Bob Catherines and his brother John Thoreau, Jr. had had some fun tossing their turkey hens up into the air to make them fly and flap and gobble — if you've never done this, you've really missed something.



Hey, show some respect, we're talking infant memories here! The flapping and gobbling of those thrown up turkeys was the first memory trace planted indelibly in the new brain of David Henry. —The start of Thoreau's inner journal.

THOREAU RESIDENCES

The Thoreaus would leave this gray house in March 1818, when David Henry had reached eight months old.



1818


 July 5, Sunday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s 4th birthday.

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

1st day 5th of 7 M / Our Meeting this forenoon was to me a season of dullness as to life, tho' I tryed to rouse my mind to feelings that I desired yet was unable Father Rodman was concerned in a short but lively testimony – In the Afternoon father had a short lively testimony – but to me it was an almost lifeless time – After tea took John & walked round the Hill & went into the Clifton burying ground – This repository of the dead has many times afforded me very serious reflections. – as I believe I have before inserted many of my relations are there inter'd, & also many who in their day were conspicuous in our society as members zealous & active for the promotion of Truth & righteousness on the earth, their spirits I trust are now in Heaven where I hope many who are now endeavouring to promote the same good cause, will join them, when their services here are at an end. –

My dear H has not been able to go to meeting, her ancle is very lame & she has suffered much with it, but I am in hopes, if she can cease to use it for a short time it will be better, but while she keeps using it as much as she does there is but little amendment to be expected. –

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

 Winter: The Thoreaus had abandoned [Concord](#) in favor of Chelmsford MA:



Chelmsford, till March, 1821. (Last charge in Chelmsford about middle of March, 1821.) Aunt Sarah taught me to walk there when fourteen months old. Lived next the meeting-house, where they kept the powder in the garret. Father kept shop and painted signs, etc.¹⁵

JOHN THOREAU

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

THOREAU RESIDENCES

This was during [David Henry Thoreau](#)'s year one.

At some point [John Thoreau, Senior](#) “got a fall while painting Hale’s (?) factory.”

At some point [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) was playing with an inflated bladder when it “burst on the hearth.”

At some point “The cow came into the entry after pumpkins.”

At some point “I cut my toe and was knocked over by a hen with chickens, etc., etc.”

15. That house next door to the meeting-house in Concord was of course the house bought in 1799 by David Henry’s grandfather, which is now the east wing of the Colonial Inn. “Aunt Sarah” was of course [Sarah Thoreau](#), John’s sister who worked in [Concord](#) as a seamstress. (I am unclear, however, whether Thoreau intended that powder had been stored in the garret of the Concord meetinghouse, or in the garret of the Chelmsford one.)



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

1819



July 5, Monday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s 5th birthday.

On the day after his 15th birthday, [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), or [Hathorne](#), was sent from his mother at the Manning household in Raymond, Maine, to reside with Manning relatives in Salem, Massachusetts, attend the school of Samuel Archer, and do college prep work under the tutelage of Benjamin Lynde Oliver, a lawyer.

1820



July 5, Wednesday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s 6th birthday.

Leaders of disaffected [Neapolitans](#) demanded of the king that he grant a constitution.

A bill was introduced in the British House of Lords, accusing Lady [Caroline Amelia of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, Princess of Wales](#) of adultery, to strip her of the title of Queen and possibly to end the marriage between her and [King George IV of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King of Hanover](#).


4th day 5th of 7 M / Uncle & Aunt Stanton Spent the Day with us, also my Mother, Sally & Isaac took tea – This evening called to see my old friend Mary Tillinghast found her very weak & low, apparently drawing to a conclusion. She was glad to see me, tho' partially deranged It also affected my mind to find she was a little unsettled with respect to her wellfare hereafter, observing that she had been loong seeking & not finding what her soul desired, - after conversing some time & finding that the fever lay much in her head, we droped into Silence, in which I felt the necessity of having Salt[?] in myself a solemnity covered my mind & I believe spread over us, after thus sitting a few moments I observed to her that I had no doubt that her innocent life & sincerity of motive would be acceptable & that in true Stillness was to be found, that which Surpassed words, recommended to her to labor after it & not distrust the kind hand which had from season to season been with her thro' life, & if she labord in this way I had no doubt She would find that consolation which the World can neither give nor take away - after this the she said she would labor not to distrust but be quiet & I left her more to Satisfaction than I found her



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JOHN THOREAU, JR.

1821

 July 5, Thursday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s 7th birthday.

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

5th day 5th of 7M / Our Meeting was nearly silent, & to me it was a very dull hard time, but dull as it was, I did indeavour to maintain the warfare & at times over come the enemy - This Afternoon attended the funeral of Betsy Buffum

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1822

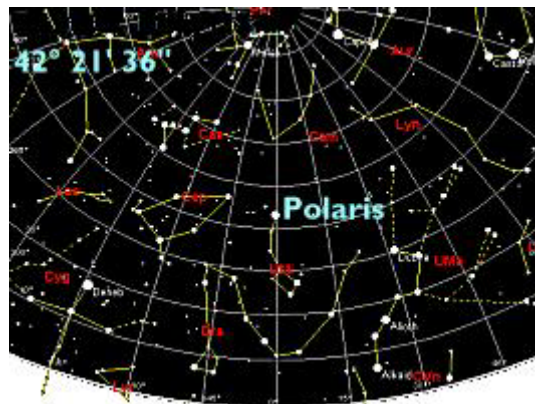
➡ I'll insert this here, since at this point little [David Henry Thoreau](#) is five years old. This is a story passed on by [Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson](#) in his 1917 volume HENRY THOREAU AS REMEMBERED BY A YOUNG FRIEND EDWARD WALDO EMERSON, which he heard had been related by [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) to an old friend. I would caution the reader to take into consideration, in reading such stories, the general context of stories as they were told by parents about their children in the early 19th Century, which they need to understand is **most definitely not the same** context as now. The story may actually tell us more about the parent than about the child:



John and Henry slept together in the trundlebed, that obsolete and delightful children's bed, telescoping on large castors under the parental four-poster. John would go to sleep at once, but Henry often lay long awake. His mother found the little boy lying so one night, long after he had gone upstairs, and said, "Why, Henry dear, why don't you go to sleep?" "Mother," said he, "I have been looking through the stars to see if I could n't see God behind them."

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However, just in case this story actually does have something to do with the appearance of the night sky over [Concord](#), Massachusetts, here is what the night sky at the latitude of Concord, Massachusetts amounts to:



➡ July 5, Friday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s 7th birthday.

➡ December 24, Tuesday: Matthew Arnold was born in Laleham, Middlesex, England.

Here is a [Christmas](#) memory dating to about this point in time, that [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) would post in 1839 to a young boy:

When I was a little boy I was told to hang my clean stocking with those of my brother and sister in the chimney corner the night before Christmas, and that "Santa Claus," a very good sort of sprite, who rode about in the air upon a broomstick (an odd



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kind of horse I think) would come down the chimney in the night, and fill our stockings if we had been good children, with doughnuts, sugar plums and all sorts of nice things; but if we had been naughty we found in the stocking only a rotten potato, a letter and a rod. I got the rotten potato once, had the letter read to me, and was very glad that the rod put into the stocking was too short to be used....

I determined one night to sit up until morning that I might get a sight at [Santa Claus] when he came down the chimney.... I got a little cricket and sat down by the fireplace looking sharp up into the chimney, and there I sat for about an hour later than my usual bed time, I suppose, when I fell asleep and was carried off to bed before I knew anything about it. So I have never seen him, and don't know what kind of a looking fellow he was.

John would add that his younger brother [David Henry](#) most often got the nice things, such as the candy.

In [Maryland](#), upon the death of the owner of John Thompson, Mrs. Wagar, her slaves had been divided among her children and grandchildren. Since, at the turn of the year, the slaves were to be taken to their new lives, they were finding their [Christmas](#) holidays this year to be distressful — despite their being left alone for the time being as was the custom of the white patrollers:

[E]ach one was to go to his new home on the first of January, 1823. My father's family fell to Mr. George Thomas, who was a cruel man, and all the slaves feared much that they should fall to him. He was a very bad man. He fed his slaves well, but drove and whipped them most unmercifully, and not unfrequently selling them.

The time drew near for our departure, and sorrowful it was. Every heart was sad; every countenance downcast. Parents looking upon their darling children would say, "is it possible that I must soon bid them adieu, possibly forever!" Some rejoiced in hope of a better situation, while others mourned, fearing a worse one. Christmas came, but without bringing the usual gladness and joy. We met together in prayer meeting, and petitioned for heavenly strength to sustain our feeble frames. These were continued during holiday week, from Christmas to New Year's day, when slaves are not to be molested; consequently, no patrolers annoyed us.



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There was an interesting proslavery letter published by the [Baptists](#) of Charleston, South Carolina:

“EMANCIPATION IN THE ... INDIES...”: On the other part, appeared the reign of pounds and shillings, and all manner of rage and stupidity; a resistance which drew from Mr. Huddleston in Parliament the observation, “That a curse attended this trade even in the mode of defending it. By a certain fatality, none but the vilest arguments were brought forward, which corrupted the very persons who used them. Every one of these was built on the narrow ground of interest, of pecuniary profit, of sordid gain, in opposition to every motive that had reference to humanity, justice, and religion, or to that great principle which comprehended them all.”

SLAVERY

**Rev. Dr. Richard Furman’s
EXPOSITION
of
The Views of the Baptists,
RELATIVE TO THE
COLOURED POPULATION
In the United States
IN
A COMMUNICATION
To the Governor of South-Carolina**

BENJAMIN ELLIOT, Esq.
Charleston, 24th December, 1822.
SIR,

WHEN I had, lately, the honour of delivering to your Excellency an Address, from the Baptist Convention in this State, requesting that a Day of Public Humiliation and Thanksgiving might be appointed by you, as our Chief Magistrate, to be observed by the Citizens of the State at large, in reference to two important recent events, in which the interposition of Divine Providence has been conspicuous, and in which the interests and feelings of our Citizens have been greatly concerned,— viz: The protection afforded them from the horrors of an intended Insurrection; and the affliction they have suffered from the ravages of a dreadful Hurricane—I took the liberty to suggest, that I had a further communication to make on behalf of the Convention, in which their sentiments would be disclosed respecting the policy of the measure proposed; and on the lawfulness of holding slaves — the subject being considered in a moral and religious point of view.

You were pleased, sir, to signify, that it would be agreeable to you to receive such a communication. And as it is incumbent on me, in faithfulness to the trust reposed in me, to make it,



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I now take the liberty of laying it before you. The Political propriety of bringing the intended Insurrection into view by publicly acknowledging its prevention to be an instance of the Divine Goodness, manifested by a providential, gracious interposition, is a subject, which has employed the serious attention of the Convention; and, if they have erred in the judgment they have formed upon it, the error is, at least, not owing to a want of consideration, or of serious concern. They cannot view the subject but as one of great magnitude, and intimately connected with the interests of the whole State. The Divine Interposition has been conspicuous; and our obligations to be thankful are unspeakably great. And, as principles of the wisest and best policy leads nations, as well as individuals, to consider and acknowledge the government of the Deity, to feel their dependency on him and trust in him, to be thankful for his mercies, and to be humbled under his chastening rod; so, not only moral and religious duty, but also a regard to the best interests of the community appear to require of us, on the present occasion, that humiliation and thanksgiving, which are proposed by the Convention in their request. For a sense of the Divine Government has a meliorating influence on the minds of men, restraining them from crime, and disposing them to virtuous action. To those also, who are humbled before the Heavenly Majesty for their sins, and learn to be thankful for his mercies, the Divine Favour is manifested. From them judgments are averted, and on them blessings are bestowed. The Convention are aware that very respectable Citizens have been averse to the proposal under consideration; the proposal for appointing a Day of Public Thanksgiving for our preservation from the intended Insurrection, on account of the influence it might be supposed to have on the Black Population—by giving publicity to the subject in their view, and by affording them excitements to attempt something further of the same nature. These objections, however, the Convention view as either not substantial, or over-balanced by higher considerations. As to publicity, perhaps no fact is more generally known by the persons referred to; for the knowledge of it has been communicated by almost every channel of information, public and private, even by documents under the stamp of Public Authority; and has extended to every part of the State. But with the knowledge of the conspiracy is united the knowledge of its frustration; and of that, which Devotion and Gratitude should set in a strong light, the merciful interposition of Providence, which produced that frustration. The more rational among that class of men, as well as others, know also, that our preservation from the evil intended by the conspirators, is a subject, which should induce us to render thanksgivings to the Almighty; and it is hoped and believed, that the truly enlightened and religiously disposed among them, of which there appear to be many, are ready to unite in those thanksgivings, from a regard to their own true interests: if therefore it is apprehended, that an undue importance would be given to the subject in their view, by making it the matter of public thanksgiving; that this would induce the designing and wicked to infer our fear and sense of weakness from the fact, and thus induce them to form some other scheme of mischief: Would not our silence, and the



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omission of an important religious duty, under these circumstances, undergo, at least, as unfavorable a construction, and with more reason?

But the Convention are persuaded, that publicity, rather than secrecy is the true policy to be pursued on this occasion; especially, when the subject is taken into view, in connexion with other truths, of high importance and certainty, which relate to it, and is placed in a just light; the evidence and force of which truths, thousands of this people, when informed, can clearly discern and estimate. It is proper, the Convention conceives, that the Negroes should know, that however numerous they are in some parts of these Southern States, they, yet, are not, even including all descriptions, bond and free, in the United States, but little more than one sixth part of the whole number of inhabitants, estimating that number which it probably now is, at Ten Millions; and the Black and Coloured Population, according to returns made at 1,786,000: That their destitution in respect to arms, and the knowledge of using them, with other disabilities, would render their physical force, were they all united in a common effort, less than a tenth part of that, with which they would have to contend. That there are multitudes of the best informed and truly religious among them, who, from principle, as well as from prudence, would not unite with them, nor fail to disclose their machinations, when it should be in their power to do it: That, however in some parts of our Union there are Citizens, who favour the idea of general emancipation; yet, were they to see slaves in our Country, in arms, wading through blood and carnage to effect their purpose, they would do what both their duty and interest would require; unite under the government with their fellow citizens at large to suppress the rebellion, and bring the authors of it to condign punishment: That it may be expected, in every attempt to raise an insurrection (should other attempts be made) as well as it was in that defeated here, that the prime movers in such a nefarious scheme, will so form their plan, that in case of exigency, they may flee with their plunder and leave their deluded followers to suffer the punishment, which law and justice may inflict: And that therefore, there is reason to conclude, on the most rational and just principles, that whatever partial success might at any time attend such a measure at the onset, yet, in this country, it must finally result in the discomfiture and ruin of the perpetrators; and in many instances pull down on the heads of the innocent as well as the guilty, an undistinguishing ruin.

On the lawfulness of holding slaves, considering it in a moral and religious view, the Convention think it their duty to exhibit their sentiments, on the present occasion, before your Excellency, because they consider their duty to God, the peace of the State, the satisfaction of scrupulous consciences, and the welfare of the slaves themselves, as intimately connected with a right view of the subject. The rather, because certain writers on politics, morals and religion, and some of them highly respectable, have advanced positions, and inculcated sentiments, very unfriendly to the principle and practice of holding slaves; and by some these sentiments have been advanced among us, tending in their nature, directly to disturb the



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domestic peace of the State, to produce insubordination and rebellion among the slaves, and to infringe the rights of our citizens; and indirectly, to deprive the slaves of religious privileges, by awakening in the minds of their masters a fear, that acquaintance with the Scriptures, and the enjoyment of these privileges would naturally produce the aforementioned effects; because the sentiments in opposition to the holding of slaves have been attributed, by their advocates, to the Holy Scriptures, and to the genius of Christianity. These sentiments, the Convention, on whose behalf I address your Excellency, cannot think just, or well-founded: for the right of holding slaves is clearly established by the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were directed to purchase their bond-men and bond-maids of the Heathen nations; except they were of the Canaanites, for these were to be destroyed. And it is declared, that the persons purchased were to be their "bond-men forever;" and an "inheritance for them and their children." They were not to go out free in the year of jubilee, as the Hebrews, who had been purchased, were: the line being clearly drawn between them.¹⁶ In example, they are presented to our view as existing in the families of the Hebrews as servants, or slaves, born in the house, or bought with money: so that the children born of slaves are here considered slaves as well as their parents. And to this well known state of things, as to its reason and order, as well as to special privileges, St. Paul appears to refer, when he says, "But I was free born."

In the New-Testament, the Gospel History, or representation of facts, presents us a view correspondent with that, which is furnished by other authentic ancient histories of the state of the world at the commencement of Christianity. The powerful Romans had succeeded, in empire, the polished Greeks; and under both empires, the countries they possessed and governed were full of slaves. Many of these with their masters, were converted to the Christian Faith, and received, together with them into the Christian Church, while it was yet under the ministry of the inspired Apostles. In things purely spiritual, they appear to have enjoyed equal privileges; but their relationship, as masters and slaves, was not dissolved. Their respective duties are strictly enjoined. The masters are not required to emancipate their slaves; but to give them the things that are just and equal, forbearing threatening; and to remember, they also have a master in Heaven. The "servants under the yoke"¹⁷ (bond-servants or slaves) mentioned by Paul to Timothy, as having "believing masters," are not authorized by him to demand of them emancipation, or to employ violent means to obtain it; but are directed to "account their masters worthy of all honour," and "not to despise them, because they were brethren" in religion; "but the rather to do them service, because they were faithful and beloved partakers of the Christian benefit." Similar directions are given by him in other places, and by other Apostles. And it gives great weight to the argument, that in this place, Paul follows his directions concerning servants with

16. See Leviticus XXV. 44, 45, 46, &c.

17. *upo zugon Douloi*: bond-servants, or slaves. *Doulos*, is the proper term for slaves; it is here in the plural and rendered more expressive by being connected with yoke—UNDER THE YOKE.



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a charge to Timothy, as an Evangelist, to teach and exhort men to observe this doctrine.

Had the holding of slaves been a moral evil, it cannot be supposed, that the inspired Apostles, who feared not the faces of men, and were ready to lay down their lives in the cause of their God, would have tolerated it, for a moment, in the Christian Church. If they had done so on a principle of accommodation, in cases where the masters remained heathen, to avoid offences and civil commotion; yet, surely, where both master and servant were Christian, as in the case before us, they would have enforced the law of Christ, and required, that the master should liberate his slave in the first instance. But, instead of this, they let the relationship remain untouched, as being lawful and right, and insist on the relative duties.

In proving this subject justifiable by Scriptural authority, its morality is also proved; for the Divine Law never sanctions immoral actions.

The Christian golden rule, of doing to others, as we would they should do to us, has been urged as an unanswerable argument against holding slaves. But surely this rule is never to be urged against that order of things, which the Divine government has established; nor do our desires become a standard to us, under this rule, unless they have a due regard to justice, propriety and the general good.

A father may very naturally desire, that his son should be obedient to his orders: Is he, therefore, to obey the orders of his son? A man might be pleased to be exonerated from his debts by the generosity of his creditors; or that his rich neighbour should equally divide his property with him; and in certain circumstances might desire these to be done: Would the mere existence of this desire, oblige him to exonerate his debtors, and to make such a division of his property? Consistency and generosity, indeed, might require it of him, if he were in circumstances which would justify the act of generosity; but, otherwise, either action might be considered as the effect of folly and extravagance.

If the holding of slaves is lawful, or according to the Scriptures; then this Scriptural rule can be considered as requiring no more of the master, in respect of justice (whatever it may do in point of generosity) than what he, if a slave, could consistently, wish to be done to himself, while the relationship between master and servant should still be continued.

In this argument, the advocates for emancipation blend the ideas of injustice and cruelty with those, which respect the existence of slavery, and consider them as inseparable. But, surely, they may be separated. A bond-servant may be treated with justice and humanity as a servant; and a master may, in an important sense, be the guardian and even father of his slaves.

They become a part of his family, (the whole, forming under him a little community) and the care of ordering it and providing for its welfare, devolves on him. The children, the aged, the sick, the disabled, and the unruly, as well as those, who are capable of service and orderly, are the objects of his care: The labour of these, is applied to the benefit of those, and to their own support, as well as that of the master. Thus, what is effected, and often at a great public expense, in a free



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community, by taxes, benevolent institutions, bettering houses, and penitentiaries, lies here on the master, to be performed by him, whatever contingencies may happen; and often occasions much expense, care and trouble, from which the servants are free. Cruelty, is, certainly, inadmissible; but servitude may be consistent with such degrees of happiness as men usually attain in this imperfect state of things.

Some difficulties arise with respect to bringing a man, or class of men, into a state of bondage. For crime, it is generally agreed, a man may be deprived of his liberty. But, may he not be divested of it by his own consent, directly, or indirectly given: And, especially, when this assent, though indirect, is connected with an attempt to take away the liberty, if not the lives of others? The Jewish law favours the former idea: And if the inquiry on the latter be taken in the affirmative, which appears to be reasonable, it will establish a principle, by which it will appear, that the Africans brought to America were, slaves, by their own consent, before they came from their own country, or fell into the hands of white men. Their law of nations, or general usage, having, by common consent the force of law, justified them, while carrying on their petty wars, in killing their prisoners or reducing them to slavery; consequently, in selling them, and these ends they appear to have proposed to themselves; the nation, therefore, or individual, which was overcome, reduced to slavery, and sold would have done the same by the enemy, had victory declared on their, or his side. Consequently, the man made slave in this manner, might be said to be made so by his own consent, and by the indulgence of barbarous principles.

That Christian nations have not done all they might, or should have done, on a principle of Christian benevolence, for the civilization and conversion of the Africans: that much cruelty has been practised in the slave trade, as the benevolent Wilberforce, and others have shown; that much tyranny has been exercised by individuals, as masters over their slaves, and that the religious interests of the latter have been too much neglected by many cannot, will not be denied. But the fullest proof of these facts, will not also prove, that the holding men in subjection, as slaves, is a moral evil, and inconsistent with Christianity. Magistrates, husbands, and fathers, have proved tyrants. This does not prove, that magistracy, the husband's right to govern, and parental authority, are unlawful and wicked. The individual who abuses his authority, and acts with cruelty, must answer for it at the Divine tribunal; and civil authority should interpose to prevent or punish it; but neither civil nor ecclesiastical authority can consistently interfere with the possession and legitimate exercise of a right given by the Divine Law.

If the above representation of the Scriptural doctrine, and the manner of obtaining slaves from Africa is just; and if also purchasing them has been the means of saving human life, which there is great reason to believe it has; then, however the slave trade, in present circumstances, is justly censurable, yet might motives of humanity and even piety have been originally brought into operation in the purchase of slaves, when sold in the circumstances we have described. If, also, by their own



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confession, which has been made in manifold instances, their condition, when they have come into the hands of humane masters here, has been greatly bettered by the change; if it is, ordinarily, really better, as many assert, than that of thousands of the poorer classes in countries reputed civilized and free; and, if, in addition to all other considerations, the translation from their native country to this has been the means of their mental and religious improvement, and so of obtaining salvation, as many of themselves have joyfully and thankfully confessed—then may the just and humane master, who rules his slaves and provides for them, according to Christian principles, rest satisfied, that he is not, in holding them, chargeable with moral evil, nor with acting, in this respect, contrary to the genius of Christianity.—It appears to be equally clear, that those, who by reasoning on abstract principles, are induced to favour the scheme of general emancipation, and who ascribe their sentiments to Christianity, should be particularly careful, however benevolent their intentions may be, that they do not by a perversion of the Scriptural doctrine, through their wrong views of it, not only invade the domestic and religious peace and rights of our Citizens, on this subject; but, also by an intemperate zeal, prevent indirectly, the religious improvement of the people they design, professedly, to benefit; and, perhaps, become, evidently, the means of producing in our country, scenes of anarchy and blood; and all this in a vain attempt to bring about a state of things, which, if arrived at, would not probably better the state of that people; which is thought, by men of observation, to be generally true of the Negroes in the Northern states, who have been liberated.

To pious minds it has given pain to hear men, respectable for intelligence and morals, sometimes say, that holding slaves is indeed indefensible, but that to us it is necessary, and must be supported. On this principle, mere politicians, unmindful of morals, may act. But surely, in a moral and religious view of the subject, this principle is inadmissible. It cannot be said, that theft, falsehood, adultery and murder, are become necessary and must be supported. Yet there is reason to believe, that some of honest and pious intentions have found their minds embarrassed if not perverted on this subject, by this plausible but unsound argument. From such embarrassment the view exhibited above affords relief.

The Convention, Sir, are far from thinking that Christianity fails to inspire the minds of its subjects with benevolent and generous sentiments; or that liberty rightly understood, or enjoyed, is a blessing of little moment. The contrary of these positions they maintain. But they also consider benevolence as consulting the truest and best interests of its objects; and view the happiness of liberty as well as of religion, as consisting not in the name or form, but in the reality. While men remain in the chains of ignorance and error, and under the domination of tyrant lusts and passions, they cannot be free. And the more freedom of action they have in this state, they are but the more qualified by it to do injury, both to themselves and others. It is, therefore, firmly believed, that general emancipation to the Negroes in this country, would not, in present circumstances, be for their own happiness, as a body;



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while it would be extremely injurious to the community at large in various ways: And, if so, then it is not required even by benevolence. But acts of benevolence and generosity must be free and voluntary; no man has a right to compel another to the performance of them. This is a concern, which lies between a man and his God. If a man has obtained slaves by purchase, or inheritance, and the holding of them as such is justifiable by the law of God; why should he be required to liberate them, because it would be a generous action, rather than another on the same principle, to release his debtors, or sell his lands and houses, and distribute the proceeds among the poor? These also would be generous actions: Are they, therefore, obligatory? Or, if obligatory, in certain circumstances, as personal, voluntary acts of piety and benevolence, has any man or body of men, civil or ecclesiastic, a right to require them? Surely those, who are advocates for compulsory, or strenuous measures to bring about emancipation, should duly weigh this consideration.

Should, however, a time arrive, when the Africans in our country might be found qualified to enjoy freedom; and, when they might obtain it in a manner consistent with the interest and peace of the community at large, the Convention would be happy in seeing them free: And so they would, in seeing the state of the poor, the ignorant and the oppressed of every description, and of every country meliorated; so that the reputed free might be free indeed, and happy. But there seems to be just reason to conclude that a considerable part of the human race, whether they bear openly the character of slaves or are reputed freemen, will continue in such circumstances, with mere shades of variation, while the world continues. It is evident, that men are sinful creatures, subject to affliction and to death, as the consequences of their nature's pollution and guilt: That they are now in a state of probation; and that God as a Righteous, All-wise Sovereign, not only disposes of them as he pleases, and bestows upon them many unmerited blessings and comforts, but subjects them also to privations, afflictions and trials, with the merciful intention of making all their afflictions, as well as their blessings, work finally for their good; if they embrace his salvation, humble themselves before him, learn righteousness, and submit to his holy will. To have them brought to this happy state is the great object of Christian benevolence, and of Christian piety; for this state is not only connected with the truest happiness, which can be enjoyed at any time, but is introductory to eternal life and blessedness in the future world: And the salvation of men is intimately connected with the glory of their God and Redeemer.

And here I am brought to a part of the general subject, which, I confess to your Excellency, the Convention, from a sense of their duty, as a body of men, to whom important concerns of Religion are confided, have particularly at heart, and wish it may be seriously considered by all our Citizens: This is the religious interests of the Negroes. For though they are slaves, they are also men; and are with ourselves accountable creatures; having immortal souls, and being destined to future eternal reward. Their religious interests claim a regard from their masters of the most serious nature; and it is indispensable. Nor



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can the community at large, in a right estimate of their duty and happiness, be indifferent on this subject. To the truly benevolent it must be pleasing to know, that a number of masters, as well as ministers and pious individuals, of various Christian denominations among us, do conscientiously regard this duty; but there is a great reason to believe, that it is neglected and disregarded by many.

The Convention are particularly unhappy in considering, that an idea of the BIBLE's teaching the doctrine of emancipation as necessary, and tending to make servants insubordinate to proper authority, has obtained access to any mind; both on account of its direct influence on those, who admit it; and the fear it excites in others, producing the effects before noticed. But it is hoped, it has been evinced, that the idea is an erroneous one; and, that it will be seen, that the influence of a right acquaintance with that Holy Book tends directly and powerfully, by promoting the fear and love of God, together with just and peaceful sentiments toward men, to produce one of the best securities to the public, for the internal and domestic peace of the State.

It is also a pleasing consideration, tending to confirm these sentiments, that in the late projected scheme for producing an insurrection among us, there were very few of those who were, as members attached to regular Churches, (even within the sphere of its operations) who appear to have taken a part in the wicked plot, or indeed to whom it was made known; of some Churches it does not appear, that there were any. It is true, that a considerable number of those who were found guilty and executed, laid claim to a religious character; yet several of these were grossly immoral, and, in general, they were members of an irregular body, which called itself the African Church, and had intimate connection and intercourse with a similar body of men in a Northern City, among whom the supposed right to emancipation is strenuously advocated.

The result of this inquiry and reasoning, on the subject of slavery, brings us, sir, if I mistake not, very regularly to the following conclusions:—That the holding of slaves is justifiable by the doctrine and example contained in Holy writ; and is; therefore consistent with Christian uprightness, both in sentiment and conduct. That all things considered, the Citizens of America have in general obtained the African slaves, which they possess, on principles, which can be justified; though much cruelty has indeed been exercised towards them by many, who have been concerned in the slave-trade, and by others who have held them here, as slaves in their service; for which the authors of this cruelty are accountable. That slavery, when tempered with humanity and justice, is a state of tolerable happiness; equal, if not superior, to that which many poor enjoy in countries reputed free. That a master has a scriptural right to govern his slaves so as to keep it in subjection; to demand and receive from them a reasonable service; and to correct them for the neglect of duty, for their vices and transgressions; but that to impose on them unreasonable, rigorous services, or to inflict on them cruel punishment, he has neither a scriptural nor a moral right. At the same time it must be remembered, that, while he is receiving from them their uniform and best services,



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he is required by the Divine Law, to afford them protection, and such necessities and conveniencies of life as are proper to their condition as servants; so far as he is enabled by their services to afford them these comforts, on just and rational principles. That it is the positive duty of servants to reverence their master, to be obedient, industrious, faithful to him, and careful of his interests; and without being so, they can neither be the faithful servants of God, nor be held as regular members of the Christian Church. That as claims to freedom as a right, when that right is forfeited, or has been lost, in such a manner as has been represented, would be unjust; and as all attempts to obtain it by violence and fraud would be wicked; so all representations made to them by others, on such censurable principles, or in a manner tending to make them discontented; and finally, to produce such unhappy effects and consequences, as been before noticed, cannot be friendly to them (as they certainly are not to the community at large,) nor consistent with righteousness: Nor can the conduct be justified, however in some it may be palliated by pleading benevolence in intention, as the motive. That masters having the disposal of the persons, time and labour of their servants, and being the heads of families, are bound, on principles of moral and religious duty, to give these servants religious instruction; or at least, to afford them opportunities, under proper regulations to obtain it: And to grant religious privileges to those, who desire them, and furnish proper evidence of their sincerity and uprightness: Due care being at the same time taken, that they receive their instructions from right sources, and from their connexions, where they will not be in danger of having their minds corrupted by sentiments unfriendly to the domestic and civil peace of the community. That, where life, comfort, safety and religious interest of so large a number of human beings, as this class of persons is among us, are concerned; and, where they must necessarily, as slaves, be so much at the disposal of their masters; it appears to be a just and necessary concern of the Government, not only to provide laws to prevent or punish insurrections, and other violent and villanous conduct among them (which are indeed necessary) but, on the other hand, laws, also, to prevent their being oppressed and injured by unreasonable, cruel masters, and others; and to afford them, in respect of morality and religion, such privileges as may comport with the peace and safety of the State, and with those relative duties existing between masters and servants, which the word of God enjoins. It is, also, believed to be a just conclusion, that the interest and security of the State would be promoted, by allowing, under proper regulations, considerable religious privileges, to such of this class, as know how to estimate them aright, and have given suitable evidence of their own good principles, uprightness and fidelity; by attaching them, from principles of gratitude and love, to the interests of their masters and the State; and thus rendering their fidelity firm and constant. While on the other hand, to lay them under an interdict, as some have supposed necessary, in a case where reason, conscience, the genius of Christianity and salvation are concerned, on account of the bad conduct of others, would be felt as oppressive, tend to sour and alienate



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their minds from their masters and the public, and to make them vulnerable to temptation. All which is, with deference, submitted to the consideration of your Excellency.

With high respect, I remain, personally, and on behalf of the Convention,

Sir, your very obedient and humble servant,

RICHARD FURMAN.

President of the Baptist State Convention.

His Excellency GOVERNOR WILSON.

1827



Winter: [Concord](#)'s school committee consisted of the [Reverend Ezra Ripley](#), Dr. Abiel Heywood, Esq., Deacon [John White](#), Dr. Joseph Hunt (perhaps a son of the Joseph Hunt who had died in 1812?), and Deacon [George Minott](#). [Horatio Wood](#) was from September 27th to August 28th the teacher of the grammar-school in the town center (among his pupils was William Stevens Robinson, and, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn would allege, John Thoreau, Jr.; in the following year he would teach instead at Newburyport) and was [Edward Jarvis](#)'s principal companion out of school and study hours, walking together on many mornings. [Henry Swasey McKean](#) had charge of the #3 "out-school" in [Concord](#), that is, the one-room wooden school located in the Nine-acre Corner district (this was during the winter of his senior year at [Harvard College](#)).

However, [the Thoreau brothers](#) 13-year-old [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and 9-year-old [David Henry Thoreau](#) were neither with schoolmaster McKean nor with schoolmaster Wood — they were instead being schooled at the [Town School](#) in the center district under schoolmaster [Edward Jarvis](#) to prepare them for their transfer to the [Concord Academy](#) under preceptor [Phineas Allen](#).

REVEREND HORATIO WOOD

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1828



Fall: This was the end of [David Henry Thoreau](#)'s period of instruction in [Concord](#)'s [Town School](#) in the center district under schoolmaster [Edward Jarvis](#). Apparently at some point during this school term [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and his 11-year-old brother David Henry were transferred by their parents from the public system to the [Concord Academy](#) at which the fees were \$5.⁰⁰ per student per quarter, to study not only [Virgil](#), [Caesar](#), Sallust, [Marcus Tullius Cicero](#), and Horace, but also botany. According to this new arrangement, the preceptor there, a recent [Harvard College](#) graduate named [Phineas Allen](#), was to board at the Thoreau boardinghouse — presumably in lieu of cash tuition. David Henry would be attending this academy until 1833.



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Since Thoreau's own copy of [Virgil](#), now in the Special Collections department of the Minneapolis Public Library, is signed "D.H. Thoreau, Hollis 20, Sept. 4th," the copy of Virgil from which he studied at this point would likely have been not this volume but instead a school copy.

1829



Fall: A deal was cut whereby Preceptor [Phineas Allen](#) was to board at the boarding house of the Thoreaus in [Concord](#) and [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and [David Henry Thoreau](#) were to attend his [Concord Academy](#), a private college-preparatory alternative to the public school system, to study [Virgil](#), Sallust, Caesar, [Euripides](#), [Homer](#), Xenophon, Voltaire, Molière, and Racine in the original languages.

P. VIRGILII AENEIDOS LIB. III. 160

Nec longo distant cursu: modo Juppiter adfit,
Tertia lux classẽm Cretæis fistet in oris.

- Sic fatus, meritos aris maclavit honores,
Taurum Neptuno, taurum tibi, pulcher Apollo;
120 Nigram Hiemi pecudem, Zephyris felicibus albam.
Fama volat, pulsum regnis cessisse paternis
Idomenea ducem, desertaque litora Cretæ;
Hoste vacare domos, sedesque astare relictas.
Linquimus Ortygiæ portus, pelagoque volamus:
125 Bacchatamque jugis Naxon, viridemque Donyfam,
Olearon, niveamque Paron, sparsasque per æquor
Cycladas, et crebris legimus freta confita terris.
Nauticus exoritur vario certamine clamor:
Hortantur focii, Cretam, proavosque petamus.
130 Prosequitur surgens a puppi ventus euntes;
Et tandem antiquis Curetum allabimur oris.
Ergo avidus muros optatæ molior urbis;
Pergameamque voco: et lætam cognomine gentem
Hortor amare focos, arcemque attollere tectis.
135 Jamque fere ficco subductæ litore puppes:
Connubiis, arvisque novis operata juvenus:
Jura domosque dabam: subito quum tabida membris,
Corrupto cœli tractu, miserandaque venit
Arboribusque fatisque lues, et lethifer annus.
140 Linquebant dulces animas, aut ægra trahebant
Corpora: tum steriles exurere Sirius agros,
Arebant herbæ, et victum seges ægra negabat.
Rursus ad oraclum Ortygiæ, Phœbumque, remenso
Hortatur pater ire mari, veniamque precari:
145 Quem fessis finem rebus ferat: unde laborum
Tentare auxilium jubeat: quo vertere cursus.



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1831

➡ [Mrs. Eliza Ware Rotch Farrar](#)'s THE STORY OF THE LIFE OF [LAFAYETTE](#) AS TOLD BY A FATHER TO HIS CHILDREN.

In the rare books collection of the [Concord Free Public Library](#) we now find a volume from the library of [Henry Thoreau](#), bearing the autograph of [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), and we notice that although this volume alleged that it was a translation of materials by “Adrien Marie Legendre,” actually it consisted primarily of the instructional materials of [Professor Charles Davies](#): ELEMENTS OF GEOMETRY; WITH NOTES. TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF A.M. LEGENDRE, MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE, AND OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR AND OF THE ROYAL SOCIETIES OF LONDON AND EDINBURGH, &C. FOR THE USE OF THE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AT CAMBRIDGE, NEW ENGLAND ... BY [JOHN FARRAR](#) (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little & Wilkins, 1831).

(Google Books has made something similar to this available in electronic text, to wit an 1830 2d edition of the same materials published by White, Gallaher, & White; Collins & Hannay; and James Ryan of New-York and allegedly edited by a David Brewster, LL.D.)

“A.-M. LEGENDRE”

1832

➡ Republication in Philadelphia, by L. Johnson, of the complete [The Spectator](#), as 2 volumes in 1. (There was a copy of this publication in the Thoreau home in [Concord](#), inscribed with the autograph “[J. Thoreau](#).”)

THE SPECTATOR

1833


➡ Gulian Crommelin Verplanck (1786-1870)'s DISCOURSES AND ADDRESSES ON SUBJECTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY, ARTS, AND LITERATURE (New York: J. & J. Harper). A copy of this would be inscribed in ink on the front free endpaper “[Mr John Thoreau Jr.](#)” and, beneath that in pencil, “[Henry D. Thoreau](#),” would be presented in 1874 by [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) to the Concord Library, and is now in Special Collections at the [Concord Free Public Library](#).

CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY




JOHN THOREAU, JR.

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 October 18, Friday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) wrote to George Luther Stearns of Woburn, Massachusetts. He mentioned that his brother [David Henry Thoreau](#) and his brother's roommate, Charles Stearns Wheeler, had hiked from [Harvard College](#) in Cambridge out to [Concord](#) a week before, and that his brother's shoes had given him blisters, and that he had been forced to hobble the last couple of miles into Concord in his stocking feet. This must have been rather difficult for Henry, because as we know, he had lost his right big toe in a childhood accident. He would have needed to wear shoes of stiff leather, and keep a piece of cloth carefully wadded into the toe of his right shoe, in order to compensate for that missing piece of his foot. Without such a corrective appliance, there would have been a pronounced imbalance in Thoreau's stride.

1834


 [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) inscribed his name into the front of a volume of advice to young men. That volume was Jane West (1758-1852)'s LETTERS ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG MAN, ON HIS FIRST ENTRANCE INTO LIFE, AND ADAPTED TO THE PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PRESENT TIMES ... printed in 1803 in Charlestown by Samuel Etheridge for Samuel H. Parker of Court-Street, Boston as two volumes in one. I cannot show you electronic copy of that particular volume (which is now in Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library because it had been found in the personal library of Henry Thoreau), but I can show you something that must be quite similar. Here, then, is an electronic edition of Volume I of a three-volume set bearing the same title and authored by the same author, as issued in 1801:

MRS. JANE WEST'S ADVICE

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

1835

 [David Henry Thoreau](#) began a 24-page blotting book which is now held by Clifton Waller Barrett. It bears on its first page its date, 1835, and a quotation from THE COMPLAINT: OR, NIGHT THOUGHTS by Edward Young:¹⁸



Retire; —the world shut out; —thy thoughts call home;—
Imagination's airy wing repress;—
Lock up thy senses; —let no passion stir;—
Wake all to reason; —let her reign alone;



Thoreau's flute: We know by the inscription on the baroque instrument, of fruitwood with ivory trim with one or two metal keys at the end, in the display case in Concord Museum, that John Thoreau obtained this instrument in 1835. I presume this was [John Thoreau, Sr.](#) rather than [John Thoreau, Jr.](#),



John in later years

because the old Primo Flauto music book, in which Thoreau pressed and dried botanical specimens, had been his father's:

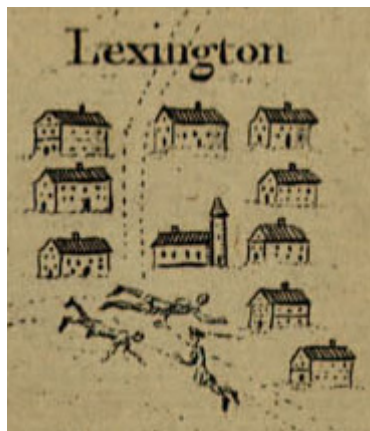
John Thoreau +1835+

18. This blotting book has become once of the four sources treated by Kenneth Walter Cameron in his TRANSCENDENTAL APPRENTICESHIP: NOTES ON YOUNG HENRY THOREAU'S READING: A CONTEXTURE WITH A RESEARCHER'S INDEX volume.

Henry D. Thoreau +1845+



April 20, Monday: The caskets of Lexington's 8 slaughtered militiamen martyrs of 1775 were opened in the Old Burying Ground and their bones were reinterred inside the monument on the green, along with a lead box to function as a "time capsule." The interment procession included 12 survivors of the original 27 Lexington militiamen.



Over in [Concord](#), [Henry Thoreau](#) was creating his "MUSINGS", about how he and his big brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) liked to get up early and hike out to sit in the freshness of dawn at Fairhaven Cliff and catch the sunrise:

In the freshness of the dawn my brother and I were ever ready to enjoy a stroll to a certain cliff, distant a mile or more, where we were want to climb the highest peak, and sitting ourselves on some rocky platform, catch the first ray of the morning sun.

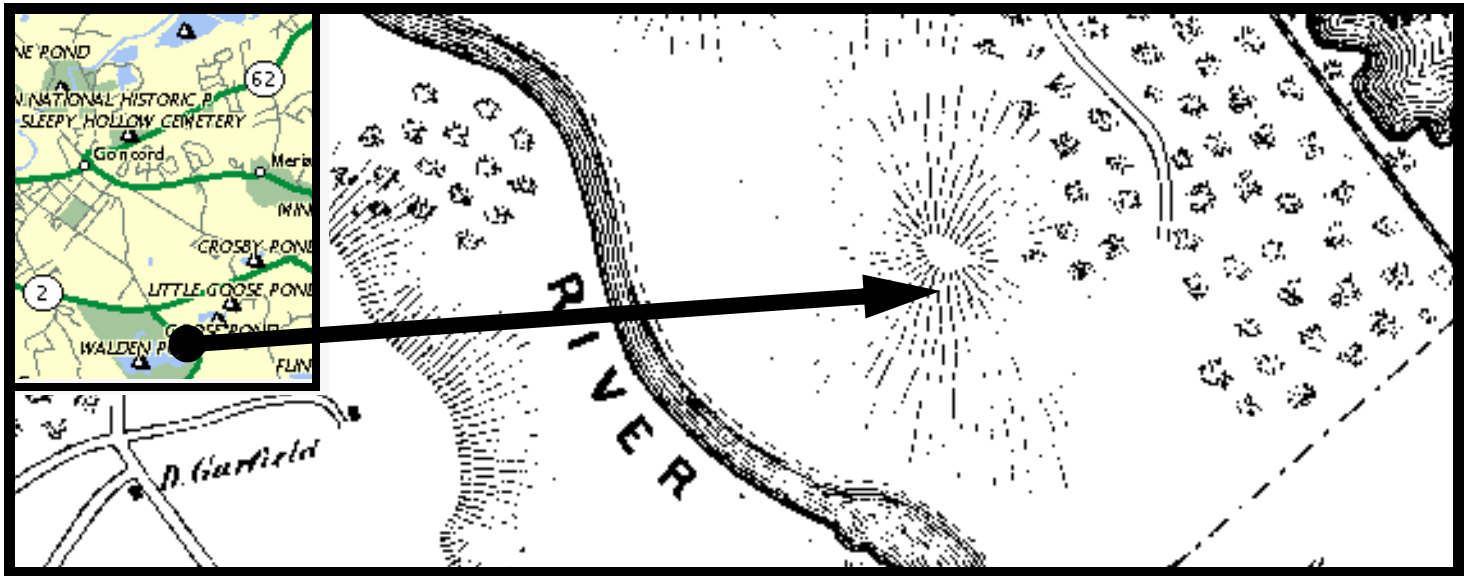
[HDT](#)

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1837



November 11, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) indicated a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of [Lemuel Shattuck's A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD:...](#), which had appeared in October 1835.

At some point between this day and the 14th, [Henry](#) wrote his older brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), who was teaching in [Taunton](#).

*Brother, it is many suns that I have not seen
the print of thy moccasins by our council fire,
the Great Spirit has blown more leaves from the trees
and many clouds from the land of snows have visited
our lodge – the earth has become hard like a frozen
buffalo skin, so that the trampling of many herds
is like the Great Spirit's thunder – the grass on
the great fields is like the old man of eight [sic?]
winters – and the small song-sparrow prepares for
his flight to the land whence summer comes.*

In Salem, the [Hawthornes](#) paid a visit to the Peabody sisters.

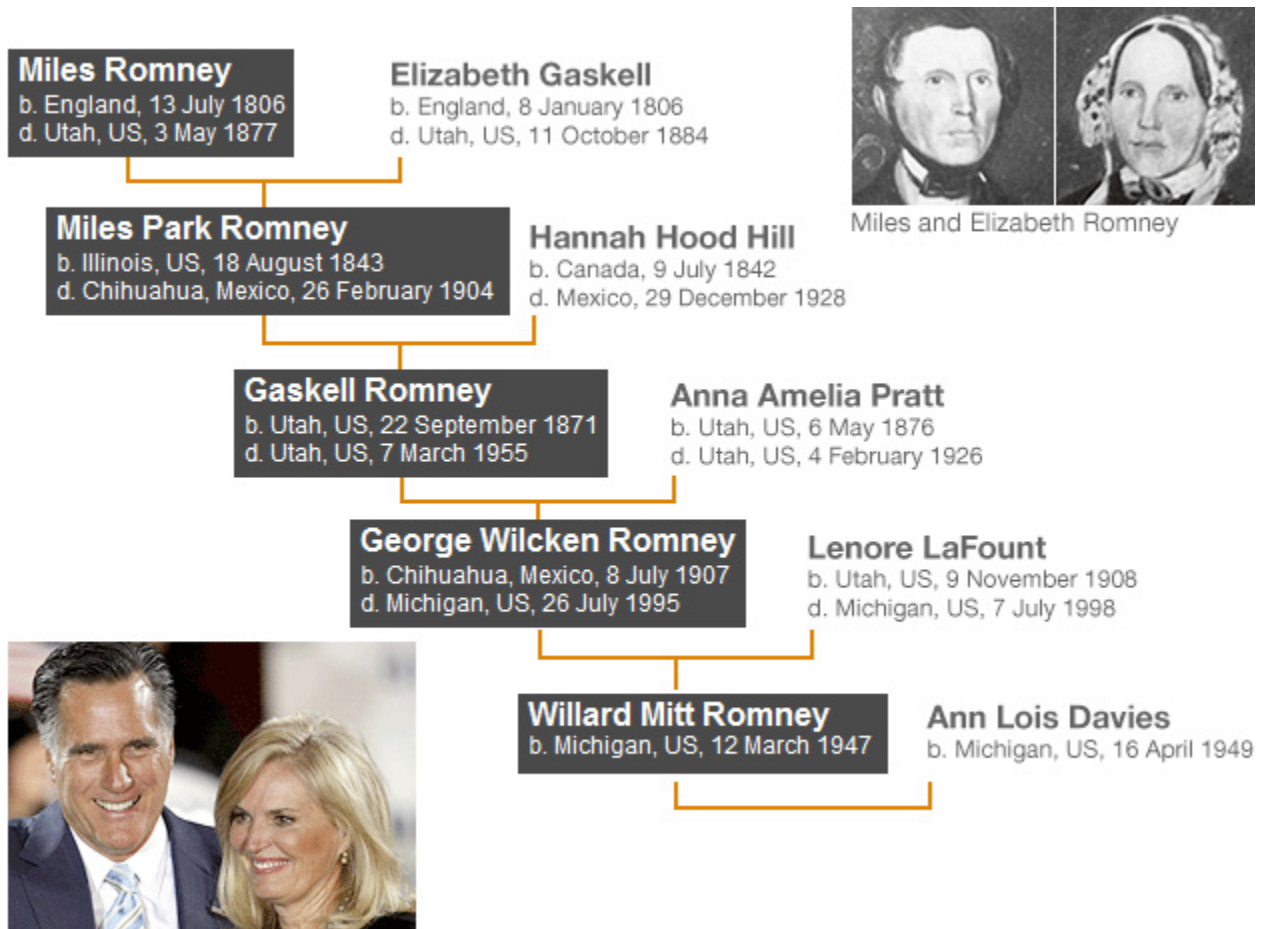
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE
ELIZABETH PALMER PEABODY
SOPHIA AMELIA PEABODY
MARY TYLER PEABODY


[Thomas Green Fessenden](#) died in Boston.

[Mormon](#) missionaries had been sent from America to England and had begun preaching the apocalyptic end of the world as we know it, in Preston in Lancashire. This day saw the carpenter Miles Romney and his wife Elizabeth Gaskell Romney, previously adherents of the Church of England, being baptized there in the Ribble River (in 1841 this Romney family would emigrate to Nauvoo, Illinois and Miles would become an architect for a Mormon Church in Utah; Miles Park Romney, one of their sons, would when US anti-polygamy laws began to be seriously enforced flee from Utah to Mexico in 1885 with his 4 wives and 30 children).

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



 December 18, Monday: [Lidian Emerson](#) made a record of the fact that “Mr. E.” was taking to “Henry” with great interest, finding him to be “uncommon in mind & character” by way of contrast with his brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) — whom [Waldo Emerson](#) had evaluated as “good but not uncommon.”



GOETHE

Dec. 18. He required that his heroine, Iphigenia, should say nothing which might not be uttered by the holy Agathe, whose picture he contemplated.¹⁹

IPHIGENIE AUF TAURIS

IMMORTALITY POST

The nations assert an immortality *post* as well as *ante*. The Athenians wore a golden grasshopper as an emblem that they sprang from the earth, and the Arcadians pretended that they were *προσέληνοι*, or before the moon. The Platos do not seem to have considered this backreaching tendency of the human mind.

THE PRIDE OF ANCESTRY

19. Thoreau would have accessed this in [Emerson](#)’s 55-volume copy of the 1828-1833 German edition of [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#)’s *WERKE* (unfortunately, electronic text is presently available only for the 1840 German edition of the *WERKE*).

IPHIGENIE AUF TAURIS

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Men are pleased to be called the sons of their fathers, — so little truth suffices them, — and whoever addresses them by this or a similar title is termed a poet. The orator appeals to the sons of Greece, of Britannia, of France, or of Poland; and our fathers' homely name acquires some interest from the fact that Sakai-suna means sons-of-the-Sakai.



Undated 1837-47: I hate museums; there is nothing so weighs upon my spirits. They are the catacombs of nature. One green bud of spring, one willow catkin, one faint trill from a migrating sparrow would set the world on its legs again. The life that is in a single green weed is of more worth than all this death. They are dead nature collected by dead men. I know not whether I muse most at the bodies stuffed with cotton and sawdust or those stuffed with bowels and fleshy fibre outside the cases.

1838



February 10: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote from Concord responding to a question from [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) as to how "flints" are made:

Dost expect to elicit a spark from so dull a steel as myself, by that flinty subject of thine? Truly, one of your copper percussion caps would have fitted this nail-head better.

Unfortunately, the "Americana" has hardly two words on the subject. The process is very simple. The stone is struck with a mallet so as to produce pieces sharp at one end, and blunt at the other. These are laid upon a steel line (probably a chisel's edge), and again struck with the mallet, and flints of the required size are broken off. A skilled workman may make a thousand a day.

So much for the "Americana." Dr. Jacob Bigelow in his "Technology" says, "Gunflints are formed by a skillful workman, who breaks them out with a hammer, a roller, and small chisel, with small repeated strokes."

Thoreau would here be referring to Professor [Jacob Bigelow](#), the Rumsford Chair in Application of Sciences to the useful arts at [Harvard College](#), and to his ELEMENTS OF TECHNOLOGY, published in 1829.

ELEMENTS OF TECHNOLOGY

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

7th day 10th of 2nd M 1838 / Mother Rodmans funeral was largely attended by friends & others - the sitting at the House was a solid season & Father had a short lively & feeling testimony to bear she was interred by the side of her son Caleb C Rodman who died about 29 Years ago in the upper burying ground in friends Meadow field. —

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

March 17, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) from [Concord](#).

Since Doctor [Edward Jarvis](#) of [Concord](#), who had settled in Louisville as a family doctor but had developed as a specialist in nervous and mental disease, and had become a statistical author, had recently suggested to the Thoreau brothers that one or the other or both of them should come and try their fortunes in the native territory of Kentucky, this letter not only acknowledged arrival of John's box of Indian artifacts but also suggested that they go to this new West together:²⁰

To: John Thoreau, Jr.

From: HDT

Date: 17 March 1838

Concord, March 17th 1838

Dear John,

Your box of relics came safe to hand, but was speedily deposited on the carpet I assure you. What could it be? Some declared it must be Taunton herrings— Just nose it sir. So down we went onto our knees and commenced smelling in good earnest, now horizontally from this corner to that, now perpendicularly from the carpet up, now diagonally, and finally with a sweeping movement describing the entire circumference. But it availed not. Taunton herring would not be smelled. So we e'en proceeded to open it vi et chisel. What an array of nails! Four nails make a quarter four quarters a yard— i faith this is'nt cloth measure. Blow away old boy, clap in another wedge, then!—there! softly she begins to gape— Just give that old stickler with a black hat on a hoist - Aye! W'ell pare his nails for him. Well done old fellow there's a breathing hole for you— "Drive it in," cries one, "rip it off," cries another. Be easy I say. What's done, may be undone— Your richest veins don't lie nearest the surface. Suppose we sit down and enjoy the prospect, for who knows but we may be disappointed? When they opened Pandora's box, all the contents escaped except hope, but in this case hope is uppermost and will be the first to escape when the box is opened. However the general voice was for kicking the coverlid off.

The relics have been arranged numerically on a table. When shall we set up house-keeping? Miss Ward thanks you for her share of the spoils, also accept many thanks from your humble servant "for yourself".

20. Dr. [Edward Jarvis](#) himself would not of course remain in the wild and woolly native American West of Louisville, for he would return to Massachusetts at some point and spend the remainder of his productive years caring for the mentally ill in the asylum at Dorchester. And, of course, eventually, in retirement, he would write the ADDENDA to the Shattuck volume, and his REMINISCENCES, which so flesh out for us this period of Concord history.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

I have a proposal to make. Suppose by the time you are released, we should start in company for the West and there either establish a school jointly, or procure ourselves separate situations. Suppose moreover you should get reddey to start previous to leaving Taunton, to save time. Go I must at all events. Dr Jarvis enumerated nearly a dozen schools which I could have—all such as would suit you equally well. I wish you would write soon about this. It is high season to start. The Canals are now open, and travelling comparatively cheap. I think I can borrow the cash in this town. There's nothing like trying

Brigham wrote you a few words on the eighth. which father took the liberty to read, with the advice and consent of the family. He wishes you to send him those of the library of health received since-38, if you are in Concord, otherwise, he says, you need not trouble yourself about it at present. {MS torn} is in {MS torn} and enjoying better health than usual. But one number, and that you have, has been received.

The bluebirds made their appearance the 14th day of March—robins and pigeons have also been seen. Mr. E—has put up the blue-bird box in due form.

All send their love. From
Y'r Aff. brother
H. D. Thoreau

We may learn more of this in a letter from boarder Miss Prudence Ward to her sister, Mrs. Edmund Quincy Sewall of Scituate:



...Mrs. John Thoreau's children are soon to leave her; Helen and Sophia to keep school in Roxbury, and John and Henry to go West. They purpose instructing there, but have no fixed plan. They will go as far as Louisville in Kentucky, unless employment can be found nearer....

HELEN LOUISA THOREAU

SOPHIA E. THOREAU

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

May 2, Wednesday: Miss Prudence Ward wrote more to her sister in Scituate, Mrs. Edmund Quincy Sewall, Sr.:



...Mr. Thoreau has begun to prepare his garden, and I have been digging the flower-beds. Henry has left us this morning, to try and obtain a school at the eastward (in Maine). John has taken one in West Roxbury. Helen is in another part of Roxbury, establishing herself in a boarding and day-school. Sophia will probably be wanted there as an assistant; so the family are disposed of. I shall miss the juvenile members very much; for they are the most important part of the establishment....

JOHN THOREAU, SR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

HELEN LOUISA THOREAU

SOPHIA E. THOREAU



“Went to Maine for a school.” Searching for a teaching position with a letter of recommendation from [Waldo Emerson](#) in his pocket, [Henry Thoreau](#) was taking a steamer out of Boston past Gloucester’s Eastern Point and Cape Ann to Portland, to travel through Brunswick, Bath, Gardiner, Hallowell, Augusta, China, Bangor, Oldtown, Belfast, Castine, Thomaston, Bath, and Portland and back to Boston. Passing Nahant, he was



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

underimpressed at the sight of the Frederic Tudor “Rockwood” estate and its ugly fences:

THE MAINE WOODS: But Maine, perhaps, will soon be where Massachusetts is. A good part of her territory is already as bare and commonplace as much of our neighborhood, and her villages generally are not so well shaded as ours. We seem to think that the earth must go through the ordeal of sheep-pasturage before it is habitable by man. Consider Nahant, the resort of all the fashion of Boston, – which peninsula I saw but indistinctly in the twilight, when I steamed by it, and thought that it was unchanged since the discovery. John Smith described it in 1614 as “the Mattahunts, two pleasant isles of groves, gardens, and cornfields”; and others tell us that it was once well wooded, and even furnished timber to build the wharves of Boston. Now it is difficult to make a tree grow there, and the visitor comes away with a vision of Mr. Tudor’s ugly fences, a rod high, designed to protect a few pear-shrubs. And what are we coming to in our Middlesex towns? – a bald, staring town-house, or meeting-house, and a bare liberty-pole, as leafless as it is fruitless, for all I can see. We shall be obliged to import the timber for the last, hereafter, or splice such sticks as we have; – and our ideas of liberty are equally mean with these. The very willow-rows lopped every three years for fuel or powder, – and every sizable pine and oak, or other forest tree, cut down within the memory of man! As if individual speculators were to be allowed to export the clouds out of the sky, or the stars out of the firmament, one by one. We shall be reduced to gnaw the very crust of the earth for nutriment.

While he was in Oldtown he would meet an old Indian on the dock who would point up the Penobscot and inform Thoreau that:

Two or three miles up that river one beautiful country.

TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS

July 8, Sunday: Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin was born.

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

1st day 8th of 7 M / Our friend Richard Mott attended Our Meeting in [Newport](#) this Morning in which he was favoured to get hold of our State & administer comfort to some who were heavy hearted - at the close of the Meeting he requested the Afternoon Meeting should be deferred till 5 O'clock & a general invitation given to the people of the Town – which was done. a very large meeting gathered, it was rather long in getting together but it consisted of the most respectable inhabitants of the Town who were very attentive to a truly gospel testimony, in which our friend was much favoured – a number of the Ministers of the Town were present as well as some of the Most religious & well informed of their persuasions – West the Minister of the New

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

episcopal Church gave out the Meeting at the close of his afternoon Meeting, & deferred his evening Meeting on the occasion - This is a view of liberality never before done by that persuasion - it was once asked but refused - Richard took tea & lodged at Mary Williams but our friend Abraham Sherman Jr who came with him from [New Bedford](#) returned home with us, again lodged & took tea

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) about the prospect of teaching private school there in [Concord](#).

Concord July 8th 38—
 Dear John,
 [We] heard from
 Helen today and she informs us
 that you are coming home by
 the first of August, now I wish
 you to write, and let me know ex-
 actly when your vacation take[]place,
 that I may take one at the same
 time. I am in school from 8
 to 12 in the morning, and [form]
 2 to 4 in the afternoo[n]; after
 that I read a little Greek or
 English, or for variety, take a
 stroll in the fields. We hav not
 had such a year for berries this
 long time—the earth is actually
 [b]lue with them. High blubberries,
 three kinds of low—thimble and

HELEN LOUISA THOREAU

Page 2
 rasp-berries constitute my [diet]
 at present. (Take notice—I only
 diet between meals.) Among my deeds
 of charity I may reckon the picking
 of a cherry tree for two helpless single
 ladies who live under the hill[-]—but
 i'faith it was robbing Pet[er] to pay
 Paul—for while I was exalted in
 charity towards them, I had no mercy
 on my own [stomach]. Be advised,
 my love for currants continues.

The only addition that I have made
 of late to my stock of ornithological
 information—is in the shape, not of
 a Fring. [M]elod. but surely a mel-
 odious Fringilla--the F. [J]uncorum,



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

*or rush sparrow. I had long know
him by his note but never by name.
Report says that Elijah Stearn[s]
is going to take the town school.*

Page 3

*I have four [scholars], and one more
engaged. Mr. [Fenner] left town [yest-]
terday. Among occurrences of ill omen,
may be mentioned the ~~era~~ falling out
and cracking of the inscription stone
of Concord monument. Mrs Lowell
and children are at Aunt 's.
Peabody walked up last Wednesday—
spen[t] the night, and took a stroll in
the woods. Sophia says I mu[]
leave off and pen a few lines for
her to Helen. S Good bye.
Love from all and among
them yr
aff brother
H D T*

Postmark: CONCORD

Jul

10

Address: John Thoreau

West Roxbury

Mass.

Postage: 6

1839

[John Thoreau, Jr.](#) wrote to a young boy about his memories of childhood Christmases in the Thoreau household, mentioning that his younger brother [Henry](#) most often had gotten the nice presents for good little boys for [Christmas](#), he the bad things for bad little boys:

When I was a little boy I was told to hang my clean stocking with those of my brother and sister in the chimney corner the night before [Christmas](#), and that "[Santa Claus](#)," a very good sort of sprite, who rode about in the air upon a broomstick (an odd kind of horse I think) would come down the chimney in the night, and fill our stockings if we had been good children, with dough-nuts, sugar plums and all sorts of nice things; but if we had been naughty we found in the stocking only a rotten potato, a letter and a rod. I got the rotten potato once, had the letter



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

read to me, and was very glad that the rod put into the stocking was too short to be used.... I determined one night to sit up until morning that I might get a sight at [[Santa Claus](#)] when he came down the chimney.... I got a little cricket and sat down by the fireplace looking sharp up into the chimney, and there I sat for about an hour later than my usual bed time, I suppose, when I fell asleep and was carried off to bed before I knew anything about it. So I have never seen him, and don't know what kind of a looking fellow he was.

February 9, Saturday: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) came and took over the duties of Preceptor at the [Concord Academy](#), and his name began to appear as such in advertisements in the [Yeoman's Gazette](#):

Concord Academy. / The Above School will be continued under the care of the subscriber, after the commencement of the spring term, Monday, March 11th. / Terms for the Quarter: / English branches, \$4.00 / Languages included 6.00 / He will be assisted in the classical department by Henry D. Thoreau, the present instructor. / N.B. Writing will be particularly attended to. / John Thoreau, Jr., Preceptor. / Concord, Feb. 9, 1838

Concord Academy.
THE Spring Term will commence on MONDAY
March 23d.
Terms, English branches \$4,00
Languages included \$6,00
Henry D. Thoreau will continue to assist in the Department of the languages. N. B. Scholars will be received at any time for a term not less than twelve weeks.
JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.
Concord, March 6, 1840.

February 16, Saturday: On this evening [Henry Thoreau](#) would encounter Bronson Alcott for the first time.

Advertisement for the [Concord Academy](#) under Preceptor [John Thoreau, Jr.](#):

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JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.
Concord, March 6, 1840.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

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JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.
Concord, March 6, 1840.

March 2, Saturday: Advertisement for the [Concord Academy](#) under Preceptor [John Thoreau, Jr.](#):

Concord Academy.
THE Spring Term will commence on MONDAY
March 23d.
Terms, English branches \$4,00
Languages included \$6,00
Henry D. Thoreau will continue to assist in the Department of the languages. N. B. Scholars will be received at any time for a term not less than twelve weeks.
JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.
Concord, March 6, 1840.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

March 9, Saturday: The war between Mexico and France was brought to an end.

Oliver Brown, the youngest of John Brown’s sons to reach adulthood, was born in Franklin, Ohio. He would be a bookish lad.



(This son would be shot dead at the age of 20 while standing as a sentinel at the river bridge in Harpers Ferry.)

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JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.
Concord, March 6, 1840.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

March 23, Saturday: At this point in journalism, it was a fad to use humorously incorrect initialisms. They tried out for instance “K.Y.,” meaning “know yuse” or “no use,” an innovation that would not catch on. However, in this day’s issue the Boston Morning Post pioneered something that would indeed catch on, catch on big time, world wide: “o.k. — all correct” (so, despite whatever you have heard, the term “OK” did not originate as a misspelling by Andrew Jackson, or as a Choctaw word, or as a superior brand of Army biscuit — it stood, quite simply, for “oll korrekt”).

ABBREVIATIONS.

ALA. Alabama.	MISS. Mississippi.
ARK. Arkansas.	MO. Missouri.
C. H. Court House.	N. C. North Carolina.
CONN. Connecticut.	N. H. New Hampshire.
DEL. Delaware.	N. M. New Mexico.
F. F. V. First Family of Virginia.	N. Y. New York.
GA. Georgia.	O. Ohio.
IA. Iowa.	<u>O. K. Oll Korrekt, i. e. All correct.</u>
ILL. Illinois.	O. T. Oregon Territory.
IND. Indiana.	PA. Pennsylvania.
K. T. Kansas Territory.	R. I. Rhode Island.
KY. Kentucky.	S. C. South Carolina.
LA. Louisiana.	TENN. Tennessee.
M. C. Member of Congress.	V. A five dollar bill.
MASS. Massachusetts.	VA. Virginia.
MD. Maryland.	VT. Vermont.
ME. Maine.	W. T. Washington Territory.
MICH. Michigan.	X. A ten dollar bill.

Advertisement for the [Concord Academy](#) under Preceptor [John Thoreau, Jr.](#):

Concord Academy.

THE Spring Term will commence on MONDAY
March 23d.

Terms, English branches	\$4,00
Languges included	\$6,00

Henry D. Thoreau will continue to assist in the Department of the languges. N. B. Scholars will be received at any time for a term not less than twelve weeks.

JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.
Concord, March 6, 1840.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

March 30, Saturday: Advertisement for the [Concord Academy](#) under Preceptor [John Thoreau, Jr.](#):

Concord Academy.

THE Spring Term will commence on MONDAY
March 23d.

Terms, English branches	\$4,00
Languages included	\$6,00

Henry D. Thoreau will continue to assist in the Department of the languages. N. B. Scholars will be received at any time for a term not less than twelve weeks.

JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.

Concord, March 6, 1840.

Spring: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#) built their boat, the *MUSKETAQUID*: “Our boat, which had cost us a week’s labor in the spring, was in form like a fisherman’s dory, fifteen feet long by three and a half in breadth at the widest part, painted green below, with a border of blue, with reference to the two elements in which it was to spend its existence. It ... was provided with wheels in order to be rolled around falls, as well as two sets of oars, and several slender poles for shoving in shallow places, and also two masts, one of which served as a tent-pole at night It was strongly built, but heavy, and hardly of better model than usual.”

Bronson Alcott wrote his old mother:

I am full of hope, and everything looks encouraging. As to money, that you know, is one of the last of my anxieties. I have many friends, and am making more daily, and have only to be true to my principles, to get not only a useful name, but bread and shelter, and raiment....

I am still the same Hoper that I have always been. Hope crowned me while I was following the plow on the barren and rocky fields of that same farm on which you now dwell, and Hope will never desert me either on this or the other side of the grave.

I fancy that I was quickened and born in Hope, and Hope in the form of a kind and smiling mother, nursed me, rocked my cradle, and encouraged my aspirations, while I was the child, and the youth, seeking life and light amidst the scenes of my native hills. Those visits to libraries; those scribblings on the floor; those hours given to reading and study, at night or noon, or rainy-day; and even those solitary wanderings over southern lands, were this same Hope seeking to realize its highest objects. My grandfather was a Hoper; my mother inherited the old sentiment....



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

April 6, Saturday: Abba Alcott gave birth to a “fine boy, full grown, perfectly formed” who lived only a few minutes. The anniversary of April 6th would become, for the next two decades, a sad gray-tinged day with a “draught of bitterness to taste, yes to drink from death’s bitterest beaker.... Ah Me! My Boy!” [Bronson Alcott](#) always wanted a boy, and Abba always wanted to give him one, but it would never be. Senile old Joseph May asked to accompany Bronson to the May family vault in the Old Granary burying ground on that Sunday, because, as Bronson was laying down the body of the baby, Joseph desired to look at his wife’s remains.

[THE ALCOTT FAMILY](#)

Advertisement for the [Concord Academy](#) under Preceptor [John Thoreau, Jr.](#):

Concord Academy.


THE Spring Term will commence on MONDAY
March 23d.

Terms, English branches	\$4,00
Languages included	\$6,00

Henry D. Thoreau will continue to assist in the Department of the languages. N. B. Scholars will be received at any time for a term not less than twelve weeks.

JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.

Concord, March 6, 1840.



April 13, Saturday: Advertisement for the [Concord Academy](#) under Preceptor [John Thoreau, Jr.](#):

Concord Academy.

THE Spring Term will commence on MONDAY
March 23d.

Terms, English branches	\$4,00
Languages included	\$6,00

Henry D. Thoreau will continue to assist in the Department of the languages. N. B. Scholars will be received at any time for a term not less than twelve weeks.

JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.

Concord, March 6, 1840.

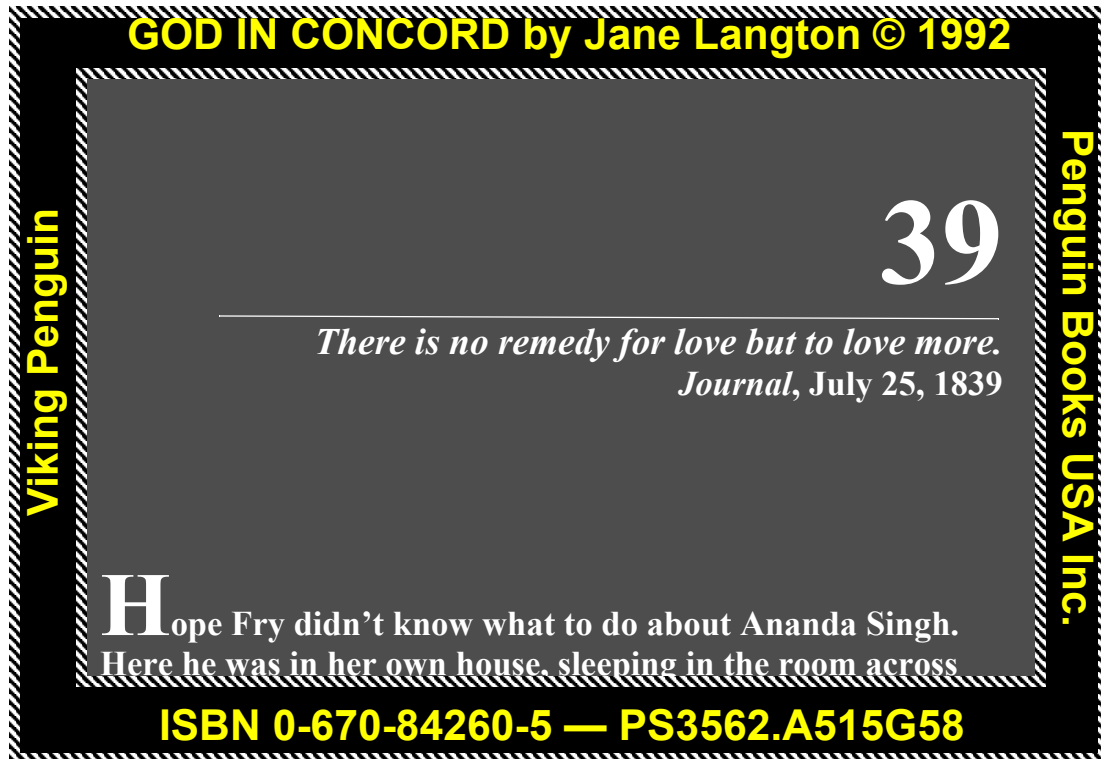
(Several more such advertisements would appear during this year.)



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

July 20, Saturday: Miss Ellen Devereux Sewall, age 17, joined her young brother, Master Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr., and her aunt, Miss Prudence Ward, at the Thoreau boardinghouse in [Concord](#), for a stay of a couple of weeks. Both [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), age 24, and his younger brother [Henry Thoreau](#), would be falling in love with Ellen — who was also at that time being courted by another Harvard man:



Thoreau would take her to see the camelopard (giraffe) that was on tour through Concord, and take her and her aunt sailing. The only request he would refuse would be her request that he accompany her to church on a Sunday morning. They would play a [phrenology](#) game: manipulating Ellen's cranium, Henry would announce that he could feel no bumps at all (which, in the evaluations of the time, was an ambiguous reading indicative either of idiocy or genius).



July 20.

THE BREEZE'S INVITATION

Come let's roam the breezy pastures,
Where the freest zephyrs blow,
Batten on the oak tree's rustle,
And the pleasant insect bustle,
Dripping with the streamlet's flow.

What if I no wings do wear,
Thro' this solid-seeming air
I can skim like any swallow;
Whoso dareth let her follow,
And we'll be a jovial pair.

Like two careless swifts let's sail,
Zephyrus shall think for me;
Over hill and over dale,
Riding on the easy gale,



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

We will scan the earth and sea.

Yonder see that willow tree
Winnowing the buxom air;
You a gnat and I a bee,
With our merry minstrelsy
We will make a concert there.

One green leaf shall be our screen,
Till the sun cloth go to bed,
I the king and you the queen
Of that peaceful little green,
Without any subject's aid.

To our music Time will linger,
And earth open wide her car,
Nor shall any need to tarry
To immortal verse to marry
Such sweet music as he'll hear.

Nature doth have her dawn each day,
But mine are far between;
Content, I cry, for, sooth to say,
Mine brightest are, I weep.

For when my sun doth deign to rise,
Though it be her noontide,
Her fairest field in shadow lies,
Nor can my light abide.


Sometimes I bask me in her day,
Conversing with my mate;
But, if we interchange one ray,
Forthwith her heats abate.

Through his discourse I climb and see,
As from some eastern hill,
A brighter morrow rise to me
Than lieth in her skill.

As 't were two summer rays in one.
Two Sundays come together,
Our rays united make one sun.
With fairest summer weather.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.


JOHN THOREAU, JR.

 August 29, Thursday: [John Shepard Keyes](#), who had been a schoolmate of [Henry Thoreau](#) at the [Concord Academy](#), commented in his diary on a melon party, the first melons to ripen that year, that was being thrown by Thoreau in anticipation of his and his brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)'s departure for an adventure from Concord MA to Concord NH by boat and on into the White Mountains:

Went up to see Henry Thoreau who is about starting on his expedition to the White Mts[.] in his boat. He has all things arranged prime and will have a glorious time if he is fortunate enough to have good weather. He showed me all the minutiae of packing and invited me up there to eat some fine melons in the evening.... I spent ... the rest of the time getting the fellows ready to go to the Thoreaus['] melon spree. We went about 9 and saw a table spread in the very handsomest style with all kinds and qualities of melons and we attacked them furiously and I eat [sic] till what with the wine & all I had quite as much as I could carry home.

This is perhaps the Thursday evening party mentioned by Walter Harding as in “a recently discovered letter”:

David had a party of gentlemen, Thursday evening, to eat melons. I went in to see the table, which was adorned with sunflowers, cornstalks, beet leaves & squash blossoms. There were forty-six melons, fifteen different kinds; & apples, all the production of his own garden. This is the only thing of interest that has happened in town this week. When we went in to see the tables, Mrs. Thoreau felt called upon to apologize for Henry having a party, it having been spread abroad by her that such customs met with his contempt & entire disapprobation.

 August 30, Friday: In the evening the Thoreau brothers loaded their *MUSKETAQUID*, which they had provided with wheels in order to be able to roll it around falls, with [potatoes](#) and melons from a patch they had cultivated, and a few utensils, at the door of the family home half a mile from the river.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

HENRY THOREAU

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

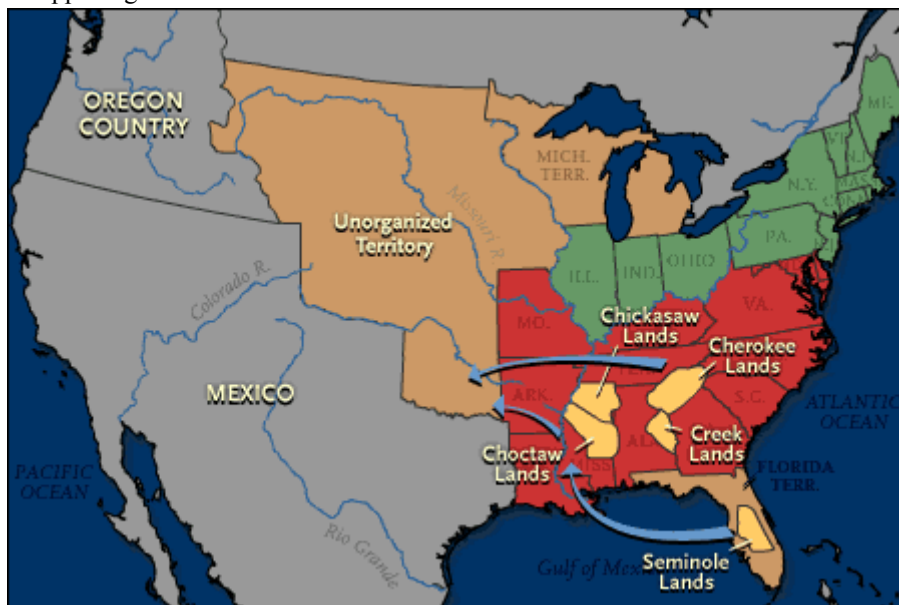
JOHN THOREAU, JR.

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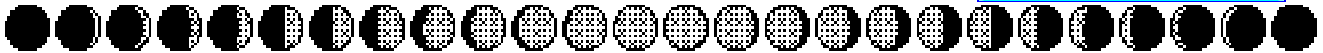
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A little bread and sugar and Cocoa boiled in river water made our repast— As we had drank in the fluvial prospect all day so now we took a draught of the water with our evening meal, to propitiate the river gods, & whet our vision of the sights it was to behold.

The building a fire and spreading our buffalo skins was too frank an advance to be resisted. The fire and smoke seemed to tame the scene— The rocks consented to be our walls and the pines our roof. *{One-third page blank}* I have never insisted enough on the nakedness and simplicity of friendship — the result of all emotions — their subsidence a fruit of the temperate zone. The friend is an unrelated man, solitary and of distinct outline. On this same river a young maiden once sailed in my boat — thus solitary and unattended but by invisible spirits— As she sat in the prow there was nothing but herself between me and the sky — so that her form and lie itself was picturesque as rocks and trees— She was not child to any mortal, and has no protector she called no mortal father. No priest was keeper of her soul no guardian of her free thoughts. She dared ever to stand exposed on the side of heaven.

Our life must be seen upon a proper back ground— For the most part only the life of the anchorite will bear to be considered. Our motions should be as impressive as objects in the desert, a broken shaft or crumbling mound against a limitless horizon.

I shall not soon forget the sounds which I heard when falling asleep this night on the banks of the Merrimack. Far into night I hear some tyro beating a drum incessantly, preparing for a country muster — in Campton as we have heard — and think of the line

“When the drum beat at dead of night”

I am thrilled as by an infinite sweetness, and could have exclaimed —

Cease not thou drummer of the night — thou too shalt have thy reward— The stars hear thee, and the firmament shall echo thy beat, till it is answerd, and the forces are mustered. Fear not, I too will be there. While this darkness lasts heroism will not be deferred.

But still he drums on alone in the silence & the dark.²³ *{One-fifth page blank}*

We had made 7 miles, and moored our boat on the west side of a little rising ground which in the spring forms an island in the river. The sun was setting on the one hand while the shadow of our little eminence was rapidly stretching over the fields on the other. Here we found huckleberries still hanging on the bushes and palatable, which seemed to have slowly ripened for our especial use, and partook of this unlooked for repast with even a devout feeling.

When we had pitched our tent on the hill side a few rods from the shore, we sat looking though its triangular door in the twilight at our lonely mast on the shore, just seen above the alders, the first encroachments of commerce on this land— Here was the incipient city and there the port — it was Rome & Ostia— That straight geometrical line against the water — stood for the last refinements of civilized life. Whatever of sublimity there is in history was there symbolized. It was the founding of Tyre and Carthage.

For the most part there seemed to be no recognition of human life in the night— No human breathing was heard. Only the wind was alive and stirring. And as we sat up awakened by the novelty of the situation, we heard at intervals foxes stepping about over the dead leaves and brushing the dewy grass close to our tent; and once the the musquash fumbling among the potatoes and melons in our boat, but when we hastened to the shore to reconnoitre, we could see only the stars reflected in the water scarcely disturbed by a distant ripple on its surface. After each sound which near at hand broke the stillness of the night each crackling of the twigs or rustling of leaves there seemed to be a sudden pause and deeper silence, as if the intruder were aware that no life was rightfully abroad at that hour.

But as if to be reminded of the presence of man in nature as well as of the inferior orders — we heard the sound of distant alarm bells come to these woods not far from mid night probably from the town of Lowell But a most constant and characteristic sound of a summer night, which we did not fail to hear every night afterwards though at no time so incessantly and musically as now — was the barking of the house dog— I thought of Shakspeare's line "I had rather be a dog and bay the moon" Every variety of tone and time nearer and more remote from the patient but anxious mastiff to the timid and wakeful terrier — even in a country like this where the farm houses were few and far between —was a sufficiency of sound to lull the ears of night

WOW-WOW-WOW-WOW-WO-W

I have heard the voice of a hound just before dawn while the stars were still shining from over the woods & river far off in the horizon when it sounded sweet & melodious like an instrument

The night is almost equally indebted to a less constant and more musical interruption from the cock — who at intervals from the very shutting of nigh — prematurely ushers in the day.

The hounding of a dog pursuing a fox in the horizon seems naturally to have first suggested the harmonious notes of the hunting horn, to alternate with and relieve the lungs of the dog. How long this natural bugle must have rung in the woods of Attica and Latium before the horn was invented. (2, 11-15)

"Few people except those who arise with the sun have the good fortune to see such perfect reflections as Thoreau describes. For a short time after sunrise, broad expanses of water often reflect the surroundings perfectly, but as the earth warms unevenly a movement of the air shatters the image." -Cruikshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



[Saturday of WEEK] It is worth the while to make a voyage up this stream if you go no further than Sudbury, only to see how much country there is in the rear of us; great hills, and a hundred brooks, and farmhouses, and barns, and haystacks, you never saw before, and men everywhere; Sudbury, that is Southborough men, and Wayland, and Nine-Acre-Corner men, and Bound Rock, where four towns bound on a rock in the river, Lincoln, Wayland, Sudbury, Concord. Many waves are there agitated by the wind, keeping nature fresh, the spray blowing in your face, reeds and rushes waving; ducks by the hundred, all uneasy in the surf, in the raw wind, just ready to rise, and now going off with a clatter and whistling like riggers straight for Labrador, flying against the stiff gale with reefed wings, or else circling round first, with all their paddles briskly moving, just over the surf, to reconnoitre you before they leave these parts; gulls wheeling overhead, muskrats swimming for dear life, wet and cold, with no fires to warm them by that you know of, their labored homes rising here and there like haystacks; and countless mice and moles and winged titmice along the sunny, windy

23. See June 19, 1840 entry:



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

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shore; cranberries tossed on the waves and heaving up on the beach, their little red skiffs beating about among the alders; - such healthy natural tumult as proves the last day is not yet at hand. And there stand all around the alders, and birches and oaks, and maples, full of glee and sap, holding their buds until the waters subside. You shall perhaps run aground on Cranberry Island, only some spires of last year's pipe-grass above water to show where the danger is, and get as good a freezing there as anywhere on the Northwest Coast. I never voyaged so far in all my life. You shall see men you never heard of before, whose names you don't know, going away down through the meadows with long ducking guns, with water-tight boots wading through the fowl-meadow grass, on bleak, wintry, distant shores, with guns at half-cock; and they shall see teal,- blue-winged green-winged, - sheldrakes, whistlers, black ducks, ospreys, and many other wild and noble sights before night, such as they who sit in parlors never dream of.

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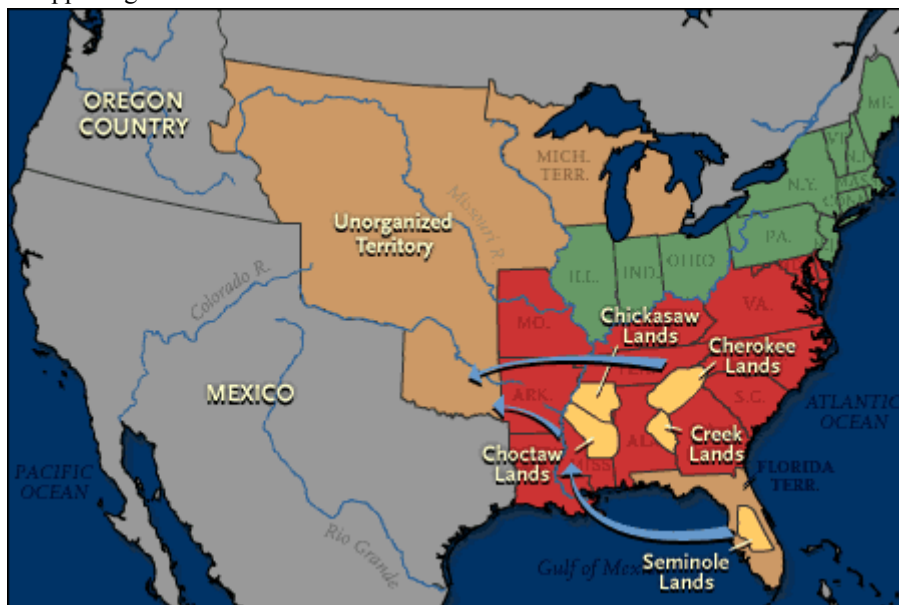
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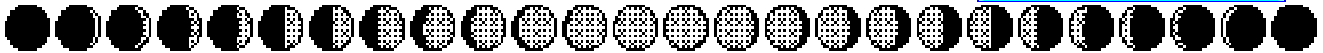
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JOHN THOREAU, JR.

But still he drums on alone in the silence & the dark.²⁶ {One-fifth page blank}

We had made 7 miles, and moored our boat on the west side of a little rising ground which in the spring forms an island in the river. The sun was setting on the one hand while the shadow of our little eminence was rapidly stretching over the fields on the other. Here we found huckleberries still hanging on the bushes and palatable, which seemed to have slowly ripened for our especial use, and partook of this unlooked for repast with even a devout feeling.

When we had pitched our tent on the hill side a few rods from the shore, we sat looking though its triangular door in the twilight at our lonely mast on the shore, just seen above the alders, the first encroachments of commerce on this land— Here was the incipient city and there the port — it was Rome & Ostia— That straight geometrical line against the water — stood for the last refinements of civilized life. Whatever of sublimity there is in history was there symbolized. It was the founding of Tyre and Carthage.

For the most part there seemed to be no recognition of human life in the night— No human breathing was heard. Only the wind was alive and stirring. And as we sat up awakened by the novelty of the situation, we heard at intervals foxes stepping about over the dead leaves and brushing the dewy grass close to our tent; and once the the musquash fumbling among the potatoes and melons in our boat, but when we hastened to the shore to reconnoitre, we could see only the stars reflected in the water scarcely disturbed by a distant ripple on its surface. After each sound which near at hand broke the stillness of the night each crackling of the twigs or rustling of leaves there seemed to be a sudden pause and deeper silence, as if the intruder were aware that no life was rightfully abroad at that hour.

But as if to be reminded of the presence of man in nature as well as of the inferior orders — we heard the sound of distant alarm bells come to these woods not far from mid night probably from the town of Lowell But a most constant and characteristic sound of a summer night, which we did not fail to hear every night afterwards though at no time so incessantly and musically as now — was the barking of the house dog— I thought of Shakspeare's line "I had rather be a dog and bay the moon" Every variety of tone and time nearer and more remote from the patient but anxious mastiff to the timid and wakeful terrier — even in a country like this where the farm houses were few and far between —was a sufficiency of sound to lull the ears of night

WOW-WOW-WOW-WOW-WO-W

I have heard the voice of a hound just before dawn while the stars were still shining from over the woods & river far off in the horizon when it sounded sweet & melodious like an instrument

The night is almost equally indebted to a less constant and more musical interruption from the cock — who at intervals from the very shutting of night — prematurely ushers in the day.

The hounding of a dog pursuing a fox in the horizon seems naturally to have first suggested the harmonious notes of the hunting horn, to alternate with and relieve the lungs of the dog. How long this natural bugle must have rung in the woods of Attica and Latium before the horn was invented. (2, 11-15)

"Few people except those who arise with the sun have the good fortune to see such perfect reflections as Thoreau describes. For a short time after sunrise, broad expanses of water often reflect the surroundings perfectly, but as the earth warms unevenly a movement of the air shatters the image." -Cruikshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



Sunday Sep 1st: We glided over the broad bosom of the merrimack between Middlesex and Tyngsboro at noon, here a quarter of a mile wide, while the rattling of our oars was echoed over the water to those villages, and their slight sounds to us. Their harbors lay as smooth and fairy like as the Lido, or Syracuse or Rhodes in our imaginations. Like a strange piratical craft we flitted past the dwellings of noble home-staying men — seeming to float upon a tide which came up to every villager's breast, as conspicuous as if we were on an eminence. Communicating with the villas and hills and forests on either hand by the glances we sent to them, or the echoes we awakened. We glanced up many a pleasant ravine with its farm house in the distance, where some contributory stream came in, Again the site of a saw-mill, and a few forsaken eel pots were all that greeted us. {One-third page blank}

Our thoughts reverted to Arabia Persia and Hindostan — the lands of contemplation — and dwelling place of the ruminant nations. And in the experience of those noon tides we found an apology and an instinct for the

26. See June 19, 1840 entry:

opium — betel — and tobacco chewers. Mount Saber, according to the French traveller and naturalist Botta is celebrated for producing the Kat tree. Of which “The soft tops of the twigs and tender leaves are eaten,” says his reviewer, “and produce an agreeable soothing excitement, restoring from fatigue, banishing sleep, and disposing to the enjoyment of conversation.”

What a dignified oriental life might be lived along this stream, browsing the tree tops — and chewing mallows and apple tree buds like the camelopards — rabbits and partridges.

Salmon Brook runs under the rail-way — but we sailed up far enough into the meadows which border it, to learn its piscatorial history from a haymaker on its banks. He told us that silver eel was formerly abundant here, and pointed to some sinker creels at its mouth.

TOBACCO
OPIUM

Salmon Brook Pennichook Ye sweet waters of my brain When shall I look Or cast the hook In thy waves again?	Silver eels Wooden creels These the baits that still allure And dragon fly That floated by May they still endure?
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September 1, Sunday: [Sunday of WEEK] As we thus dipped our way along between fresh masses of foliage overrun with the grape and smaller flowering vines, the surface was so calm, and both air and water so transparent, that the flight of a kingfisher or robin over the river was as distinctly seen reflected in the water below as in the air above. The birds seemed to flit through submerged groves, alighting on the yielding sprays, and their clear notes to come up from below.

MIDDLESEX CANAL

“While it was old, the canal between the Concord and the Merrimack just above Billerica Falls plainly revealed its youthfulness in comparison to the untouched lands about it. Thoreau noted that birds that fed in, and creatures which swam in the waters were the first to be at home in the man-made water-way. Plants adjust themselves more slowly to areas disturbed by man.” -Cruickshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



[Sunday of WEEK] This canal, which is the oldest in the country, and has even an antique look beside the more modern railroads, is fed by the Concord, so that we were still floating on its familiar waters. It is so much water which the river lets for the advantage of commerce. There appeared some want of harmony in its scenery, since it was not of equal date with the woods and meadows through which it is led, and we missed the conciliatory influence of time on land and water; but in the lapse of ages, Nature will recover and indemnify herself, and gradually plant fit shrubs and flowers along its borders. Already the kingfisher sat upon a pine over the water, and the bream and pickerel swam below.



Sunday Sep 1st: We glided over the broad bosom of the merrimack between Middlesex and Tyngsboro at noon, here a quarter of a mile wide, while the rattling of our oars was echoed over the water to those villages, and their slight sounds to us. Their harbors lay as smooth and fairy like as the Lido, or Syracuse or Rhodes in our imaginations. Like a strange piratical craft we flitted past the dwellings of noble home-staying men — seeming to float upon a tide which came up to every villager’s breast, as conspicuous as if we were on an eminence. Communicating with the villas and hills and forests on either hand by the glances we sent to them, or the echoes we awakened. We glanced up many a pleasant ravine with its farm house in the distance, where some contributory stream came in, Again the site of a saw-mill, and a few forsaken eel pots were all that greeted us. *{One-third page blank}*

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TOBACCO

OPIUM

Salmon Brook	Silver eels
Pennichook	Wooden creels
Ye sweet waters of my brain	These the baits that still allure
When shall I look	And dragon fly
Or cast the hook	That floated by
In thy waves again?	May they still endure?



Sunday 1st At a 3d of a mile over the water we heard distinctly children repeating their catechism in a cottage by the river side— While in the broad shallows between a herd of cows were cooling their hides and waging war with the mosquitoes.

While we sail here we can remember unreservedly those friends who dwell far away on the banks and by the sources of this very river and people this world for us — without any harsh and unfriendly interruptions. (2, 27)



Sunday sep 1st We passed the noon under an oak on the banks of the canal in chelmsford. From Ball’s hill which is the St Anne’s of Concord voyageurs to Billerica meeting house the river is twice or three times as broad as in Concord— A deep and dark stream, flowing between gentle hills and occasional cliffs, and well wooded all the way It is one long lake bordered with willows. The boatmen call it a dead stream. For long reaches you can see but few traces of any village.

It seemed a natural sabbath today — a stillness so intense that it could not be heightened. There was not breeze enough to ruffle the water. The cattle stood up to their bellies in the river and made you think of Rembrandt. we encamped under some oaks in Tyngsboro, on the east bank of the Merrimack, just below the ferry.

MIDDLESEX CANAL



Monday 2nd At noon we rested under the shade of a willow or maple which hung over the water, and drew forth a melon from our repast — and contemplated at our leisure the lapse of the river and of human life. The still unravelled fate of men ministered to the entertainment of our chance hours. As that current with its floating twigs and leaves so did all things pass in review before us— Far away in cities and marts and on this very stream the old routine was proceeding still— At length we would throw our rinds into the water for the fishes to nibble — and add our breath to the life of living men.

Our melons lay at home on the sands of the merrimack, and our potatoes in the sun and water on the bottom of the boat — looked like a fruit of the country.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



September 2, Monday, 1839: Now & then we scared up a king-fisher or a summer duck.

"On Monday afternoon the Thoreaus saw their first basswood, a tree new to them. This reminded them that they had reached a strange land quite unlike Concord. Thoreau speculated on the wonderful variety of nature's creations. The selection which follows cannot be called good science as far as the origin of species is concerned. If food chains are considered, a different light may be thrown on Thoreau's remarks. Leaves may be eaten by insects, which in turn are consumed by song birds, and the song birds may be devoured by a hawk. Thus the leaves may truly become a hawk." -Cruikshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



[Monday of WEEK] In all her products, Nature only develops her simplest germs. One would say that it was no great stretch of invention to create birds. The hawk which now takes his flight over the top of the wood was at first, perchance, only a leaf which fluttered in its aisles. From the rustling leaves she came in the course of ages to the loftier flight and clear carol of the bird.

[HERE IS THE SMOKING GUN!!!]

September 2, Monday: "Camped in Merrimack, on the west bank, by a deep ravine."

A WEEK: (September 2, Monday, 1839) We had found a safe harbor for our boat, and as the sun was setting carried up our furniture, and soon arranged our house upon the bank, and while the kettle steamed at the tent door, we chatted of distant friends and of the sights which we were to behold, and wondered which way the towns lay from us. Our cocoa was soon boiled, and supper set upon our chest, and we lengthened out this meal, like old voyageurs, with our talk. Meanwhile we spread the map on the ground, and read in the Gazetteer when the first settlers came here and got a township granted.

COCOA



[A WEEK](#): (September 2, Monday, 1839) The bass, *Tilia Americana*, also called the lime or linden, which was a new tree to us, overhung the water with its broad and rounded leaf, interspersed with clusters of small hard berries now nearly ripe, and made an agreeable shade for us sailors. The inner bark of this genus is the bast, the material of the fisherman's matting, and the ropes and peasant's shoes of which the Russians make so much use, and also of nets and a coarse cloth in some places. According to poets, this was once Philyra, one of the Oceanides. The ancients are said to have used its bark for the roofs of cottages, for baskets, and for a kind of paper called Philyra. They also made bucklers of its wood, "on account of its flexibility, lightness, and resiliency." It was once much used for carving, and is still in demand for sounding-boards of piano-fortes and panels of carriages, and for various uses for which toughness and flexibility are required. Baskets and cradles are made of the twigs. Its sap affords sugar, and the honey made from its flowers is said to be preferred to any other. Its leaves are in some countries given to cattle, a kind of chocolate has been made of its fruit, a medicine has been prepared from an infusion of its flowers, and finally, the charcoal made of its wood is greatly valued for gunpowder.

CHOCOLATE
LINDEN TREE

Although the following is an entry in [Henry Thoreau](#)'s JOURNAL of June 13, 1851, Thoreau ascribed this remark, while working on his [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) manuscript, to the night of his mystic experience, September 2, 1839: "I heard partridges drumming to-night as late as 9 o'clock. What singularly space penetrating and filling sound! Why am I never nearer to its source? We do not commonly live our life out and full; we do not fill all our pores with our blood; we do not inspire and expire fully and entirely enough, so that the wave, the comber, of each inspiration shall break upon our extremest shores, rolling till it meets the sand which bounds us, and the sound of the surf come back to us. Might not a bellows assist us to breathe? That our breathing should create a wind on a calm day! We live but a fraction of our life. Why do we not let on the flood, raise the gates, and set all our wheels in motion? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Employ your senses."

**ROSS/ADAMS
COMMENTARY**
**CRUICKSHANK
COMMENTARY**

27. However, when he had copied the penciled events of Sept. 2nd 1839 into his journal on June 21, 1840, the only reference Thoreau had copied was "Sept. 2nd Camped in Merrimack, on the west bank, by a deep ravine...." Presumably, then, he first heard these famous partridges drumming and thought these famous thoughts when they were camped near Penichook Brook and Nashville, on the west bank of the Merrimack River in the vicinity of a deep ravine and a pine wood, on September 2, 1839 as described on pages 171-7 of [A WEEK](#). Possibly, when young [Thoreau](#) lay on his pine branches, and then wrote as above of "some tyro beating a drum incessantly, preparing for a country muster," he was mistaking the sound of a ruffed grouse for the sound of some boy in a nearby village, practicing incessantly on a drum.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

A WEEK: Far in the night as we were falling asleep on the bank of the Merrimack, we heard some tyro beating a drum incessantly, in preparation for a country muster, as we learned, and we thought of the line,—

“When the drum beat at dead of night.”

We could have assured him that his beat would be answered, and the forces be mustered. Fear not, thou drummer of the night, we too will be there. And still he drummed on in the silence and the dark. This stray sound from a far-off sphere came to our ears from time to time, far, sweet, and significant, and we listened with such an unprejudiced sense as if for the first time we heard at all. No doubt he was an insignificant drummer enough, but his music afforded us a prime and leisure hour, and we felt that we were in season wholly. These simple sounds related us to the stars. Ay, there was a logic in them so convincing that the combined sense of mankind could never make me doubt their conclusions. I stop my habitual thinking, as if the plough had suddenly run deeper in its furrow through the crust of the world. How can I go on, who have just stepped over such a bottomless skylight in the bog of my life. Suddenly old Time winked at me, — Ah, you know me, you rogue, — and news had come that IT was well. That ancient universe is in such capital health, I think undoubtedly it will never die. Heal yourselves, doctors; by God, I live.

Then idle Time ran gadding by
And left me with Eternity alone;
I hear beyond the range of sound,
I see beyond the verge of sight, —

I see, smell, taste, hear, feel, that everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our maker, our abode, our destiny, our very Selves; the one historic truth, the most remarkable fact which can become the distinct and uninvited subject of our thought, the actual glory of the universe; the only fact which a human being cannot avoid recognizing, or in some way forget or dispense with.

It doth expand my privacies
To all, and leave me single in the crowd.

I have seen how the foundations of the world are laid, and I have not the least doubt that it will stand a good while.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life.
I will not doubt the love untold,
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young and woos me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

What are ears? what is time? that this particular series of sounds called a strain of music, an invisible and fairy troop which never brushed the dew from any mead, can be wafted down through the centuries from Homer to me, and he have been conversant with that same aerial and mysterious charm which now so tingles my ears? What a fine communication from age to age, of the fairest and noblest thoughts, the aspirations of ancient men, even such as were never communicated by speech, is music! It is the flower of language, thought colored and curved, fluent and flexible, its crystal fountain tinged with the sun's rays, and its purling ripples reflecting the grass and the clouds.

CAMPBELL



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

A strain of music reminds me of a passage of the Vedas, and I associate with it the idea of infinite remoteness, as well as of beauty and serenity, for to the senses that is farthest from us which addresses the greatest depth within us. It teaches us again and again to trust the remotest and finest as the divinest instinct, and makes a dream our only real experience. We feel a sad cheer when we hear it, perchance because we that hear are not one with that which is heard.

Therefore a torrent of sadness deep,
Through the strains of thy triumph is heard to sweep.

The sadness is ours. The Indian poet Calidas says in the Sacontala: "Perhaps the sadness of men on seeing beautiful forms and hearing sweet music arises from some faint remembrance of past joys, and the traces of connections in a former state of existence." As polishing expresses the vein in marble, and grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere. The hero is the sole patron of music. That harmony which exists naturally between the hero's moods and the universe the soldier would fain imitate with drum and trumpet. When we are in health all sounds fife and drum for us; we hear the notes of music in the air, or catch its echoes dying away when we awake in the dawn. Marching is when the pulse of the hero beats in unison with the pulse of Nature, and he steps to the measure of the universe; then there is true courage and invincible strength.

Continuing with this material about the drumming of the ruffed grouse that night, Thoreau modernized the spelling of a snippet from Book II of the Reverend [John Milton](#)'s PARADISE LOST:

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

A WEEK: Still the drum rolled on, and stirred our blood to fresh extravagance that night. The clarion sound and clang of corselet and buckler were heard from many a hamlet of the soul, and many a knight was arming for the fight behind the encamped stars.

“Before each van
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of Heaven the welkin burns.”

Away! away! away! away!
Ye have not kept your secret well,
I will abide that other day,
Those other lands ye tell.
Has time no leisure left for these,
The acts that ye rehearse?
Is not eternity a lease
For better deeds than verse?
'T is sweet to hear of heroes dead,
To know them still alive,
But sweeter if we earn their bread,
And in us they survive.
Our life should feed the springs of fame
With a perennial wave,
As ocean feeds the babbling founts
Which find in it their grave.
Ye skies drop gently round my breast,
And be my corselet blue,
Ye earth receive my lance in rest,
My faithful charger you;
Ye stars my spear-heads in the sky,
My arrow-tips ye are;
I see the routed foemen fly,
My bright spears fixed are.
Give me an angel for a foe,
Fix now the place and time,
And straight to meet him I will go
Above the starry chime.
And with our clashing bucklers' clang
The heavenly spheres shall ring,
While bright the northern lights shall hang
Beside our tourneying.
And if she lose her champion true,
Tell Heaven not despair,
For I will be her champion new,
Her fame I will repair.

MILTON

September 3, Tuesday: The 1st anniversary of Frederick Douglass's freedom, which we may well elect to celebrate in lieu of **an unknown slave birthday**.

"It has been a source of great annoyance to me, never to have a birthday."



September 3: Tuesday We passed a boat before sunrise, and though we could not distinguish it for the fog, the few dull sounds we heard, carried with them a sense of weight and irresistible motion which was impressive. *{Four-fifths page blank}*

If ever our idea of a friends is realised it will be in some broad and generous natural person — as frank as the daylight — in whose presence our behavior will be as simple and unconstrained, as the wanderer amid the recesses of the hills.

The language of excitement is picturesque merely — but not so with enthusiasm You must be calm before you can utter oracles— What was the excitement of the Delphic priestess compared with the calm wisdom of Socrates! God is calm

Enthusiasm is a supernatural serenity. *{Two-fifths page blank}*

Rivers are the natural highways of all nations, not only levelling and removing obstacles from the path of the traveller — quenching his thirst — and bearing him on their bosom, but conducting him through the most interesting scenery of a country most rich in natural phenomena, through the most populous portions of the globe where the animal and vegetable kingdoms attain the greatest perfection. *{Three-fifths page blank}*

We passed a man on the shore fishing with a long birch pole and a dog at his side — standing like caryatides under the cope of heaven— We passed so near as to agitate his float with our oars, and drive luck away for an indefinite term — but when we had rowed a mile as straight as an arrow with our faces toward him, he still stood with the proverbial patience of a fisherman the only object to relieve the eye in the extended meadow — under the other side of heaven — and there would stand abiding his luck — till he took his way home at evening with his fish — — He and his dog! (it was a superior contemplative dog) may they fare well. I trust we shall meet again. He was no chimera or vision to me.

When we had passed the bridge we saw men haying far off in the meadows, their heads moving like the herds grass. In the distance the wind seemed to bend all alike.²⁸

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



Plum Island, at the mouth of this river [The Merrimack] to whose formation, perhaps, these very banks have sent their contribution, is a similar desert of drifting sand, of various colors, blown into graceful curves by the wind. It is a mere sand-bar exposed, stretching nine miles parallel to the coast, and, exclusive of the marsh on the inside, rarely more than half a mile wide. There are but half a dozen houses on it, and it is almost without a tree, or a sod, or any green thing with which a country-man is familiar. The thin vegetation stands half buried in sand as in drifting snow. The only shrub, the beach plum, which gives the island its name, grows but a few feet high; but this is so abundant that parties of a hundred at once come from the mainland and down the Merrimack, in September, pitch their tents, and gather the plums, which are good to eat raw and to preserve. The graceful and delicate beach pea, too, grows abundantly amid the sand, and several strange moss-like and succulent plants. The island for its whole length is scalloped into low hills, not more than twenty feet high, by the wind, and, excepting a faint trail on the edge of the marsh, is as trackless as Sahara. There are dreary bluffs of sand and valleys plowed by the wind, where you might expect to discover the bones of a caravan. Schooners come from Boston to load with the sand for masons' uses, and in a few hours the wind obliterates all traces of their work. Yet you have only to dig a foot or two anywhere to come to fresh water; and you are surprised to learn that woodchucks abound here, and foxes are found, though you see not where they can burrow or hide themselves. I have walked down the whole length of its broad beach at low tide, at which time alone you can find a firm ground to walk on, and probably Massachusetts does not furnish a more grand and dreary walk. On the seaside there are only a distant sail and a few coots to break the grand monotony. A solitary stake stuck up, or a sharper sand-hill than usual, is remarkable as a landmark for miles; while for music you hear only the ceaseless sound of the surf, and the dreary peep of the beach-birds.

BEACH PLUM

PLUM ISLAND

28. The poet W.H. Auden has in 1962 brought forward a snippet from this day's entry as:

THE VIKING BOOK OF APHORISMS, A PERSONAL SELECTION BY W.H. AUDEN...

Pg	Topic	Aphorism Selected by Auden out of Thoreau
67	The Talker	The language of excitement is picturesque merely — but not so with enthusiasm You must be calm before you can utter oracles.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Near Litchfield, Thoreau saw an extensive desert area where sand had blown into dunes ten and twelve feet high. This recalled to his mind Plum Island, which he had visited in the past, for he thought some of this desert sand might well be borne down the Merrimack to its mouth not far from Newburyport, and there form part of that island so well known to the birding clan. Of course, Thoreau did not come nearer to Plum Island on this river trip than the junction of the Concord and Merrimack, some thirty miles away. But Thoreau's description of Plum Island is especially interesting to bird watchers. In his GUIDE TO BIRD FINDING, Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., calls this one of the most famous ornithological areas of the eastern United States. Birds traveling north or south along the Atlantic coast funnel over this area, and multitudes drop down to rest and feed there. A trip to this island is particularly rewarding during the peak of shorebird migration in spring and fall. The half-dozen houses of Thoreau's day have multiplied many times over. Nevertheless, ripe beach plums may still be picked there in September. Untracked sand, particularly in winter or after storms, may still be found. The fact that Thoreau mentioned only a few beach birds running on the sand and some coots (scoters) riding the waves behind the surf reveals clearly that his interest in birds was dormant when he visited Plum Island. C. Russell Mason, then Executive Director of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, after an early September visit to Plum Island with Dr. Roger Tory Peterson, wrote, "Every shore-bird in the book can be found on Plum Island, and as for gulls, if rare species appear on the north-east coast, they will almost surely be spotted at Plum Island." Plum Island is one of the most important areas covered by the Newburyport Christmas Bird Count. This Count is made at a time when weather is severe and one would expect bird life in that bleak area to be at a low ebb. Yet on the 1962 Count when winds blew off the ocean and the temperature scarcely rose into the thirties, when snow covered the ground and all the ponds were frozen, eighty-eight species and about twenty-eight thousand individual birds were seen. -Cruickshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



September 3: Tuesday The banks of the Merrimack are steep and clayey for the most part and trickling with water — and where a spring oozes out a few feet above the level of the river, the boatmen cut a trough out of a slab with their axes and place it so as to receive the water, and fill their jugs conveniently. Bursting out from under the root of a pine or a rock, sometimes this purer and cooler water is collected into a little basin close to the edge of and level with the river — a fountain head of the Merrimack.—

so near along life's stream lie the fountains of innocence and youth — making fertile the margin of its turbid stream. Let the voyageur replenish his vessel at these uncontaminated sources.— Some youthful spring perchance still empties with tinkling music into the oldest river, even when it is falling into the sea. I imagine that its music is distinguished by the river gods from the general lapse of the stream and falls sweeter upon their ears in proportion as it is nearer the sea.

As thus the evaporations of the river feed these unsuspected springs which filter through its banks so our aspirations fall back again in springs upon the margin of our life's stream to refresh and purify it.

The routine of these boatmen's lives suggests to me how indifferent all employments are, and how any may be infinitely noble and poetic in the eyes of men, if pursued with sufficient buoyancy and freedom. For the most part they carry down wood and bring back stores for the country, piling the wood so as to leave a little shelter in one part where they may sleep, or retire from the rain if they choose.

I can hardly imagine a more healthy employment, or more favorable to contemplation, or the observation of nature.— In no weather subject to great exposure — as the lumberers of Maine — and in summer inhaling the healthfullest breezes. But slightly encumbered with clothing — frequently with the head and feet bare.

From morning till night the boatman walks backwards and forwards on the side of his boat, now stooping with his shoulder to the pole, then drawing it back slowly to set it again — meanwhile moving steadily and majestically forward through an endless valley, amid an ever changing scenery, — now distinguishing his course for a mile or two — and now finding himself shut in by a sudden turn of the river, in a small woodland lake.

All the phenomena which surround him are simple and grand— The graceful majestic motion of his craft, must communicate something of the same to his character. So will he over forward to his objects on land. There is something impressive and stately in this motion which he assists. He feels the slow irresistible motion under him with pride as if it were the impetus of his own energy.

At noon his horn is heard echoing from shore to shore to give notice of his approach — to the farmer's wife with whom he is to take his dinner — frequently in such retired scenes that only muskrats and king fisher's seem to hear.



Tuesday sep 3d About noon we passed the village of Merrimac where some carpenters were at work mending a scow on the shore. The strokes of their mallets echoed from shore to shore and up and down the river, and their tools gleamed in the sun a quarter of a mile from us, which made boat building seem as ancient and honorable as agriculture, and we realized how there might be a naval as well as pastoral life— We thought of a traveller building his boat on the banks of the stream under the heavens— As we glided past at a distance these out-door workmen seemed to have added some dignity to their labor by its publicness — it seemed a part of the industry of nature like the work of hornets and mud wasps

The whole history of commerce was made plain in this scow turned bottom upward on the shore. Thus men begin to go down upon the sea in ships. There was Iolchos and the launching of the Argo. —

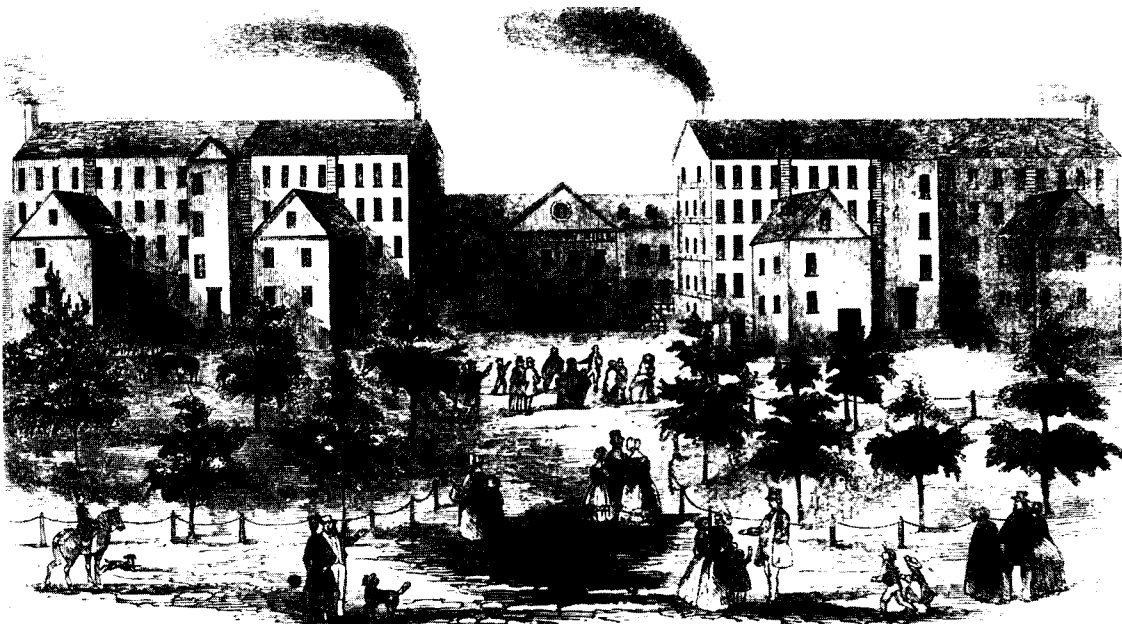
The waves slowly beat
Just to keep the noon sweet
And no sound is floated o'er
Save the mallet on shore
Which echoing on high
Seems a caulking the sky

We passed some shag-bark trees on the opposite shore skirting the water's edge. The first I had ever seen On the sandy shore of the Merrimack opposite to Tyngsboro, we first discovered the blue bell— A pleasant sight it must be to the Scotchman in Lowell mills.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

The moon now rises to her absolute rule,
 And the husbandman and hunter
 Acknowledge her for their mistress.
 Asters and golden reign in the fields
 And the life everlasting withers not.
 The fields are reaped and shorn of their pride
 But an inward verdure still crowns them
 The thistle scatters its down on the pool
 And yellow leaves clothe the vine—
 And nought disturbs the serious life of men.
 But behind the sheaves and under the sod
 There lurks a ripe fruit which
 the reapers have not gathered
 The true harvest of the year
 Which it bears forever.
 With fondness annually watering and maturing it.
 But man never severs the stalk
 Which bears this palatable fruit.



Mills of Lowell

The hardest material obeys the same law with the most fluid. Trees are but rivers of sap and woody fibre flowing from the atmosphere and emptying in to the earth by their trunks — as their roots flow upward to the surface. And in the heavens there are rivers of stars and milky ways— There are rivers of rock on the surface and rivers of ore in the bowels of the earth.

From this point the river runs perfectly straight for a mile or more to Carlisle bridge — which consists of 20 piers — and in the distance its surface looks like a cobweb gleaming in the sun. *{Two-fifths page blank}*

In the morning the whole river and adjacent country was covered by a dense fog — through which the smoke of our fire curled up like a subtler mist. But before we had rowed many rods the fog dispersed as by magic and only a slight steam curled up from the surface of the water.—

We reached the falls in Billerica before noon, where we left the river for the canal, which runs six miles through the woods to the Merrimack at Middlesex. As we did not care to loitre in this part of our voyage while one ran along the tow path drawing the boat by a cord, the other kept it off from the shore with a pole, so that we accomplished the whole distance in little more than an hour.

There is some abruptness and want of harmony in this scenery since the canal is not of equal date with the forests and meadows it runs through.

You miss the conciliatory influence of time on land and water.

In the lapse of ages no doubt nature will recover and idemnify herself. Gradually fit shrubs and flowers will be planted along the borders Already the king-fisher sits on a pine over the water, and the dace and pickerel swim

below. All works pass directly out of the hands of the architect. and though he has bungled she will perfect them at last.

Her own fish-hawks hover over our fish-ponds

were pleased to find that our boat would float in M. water

By noon we were fairly launched upon the bosom of the merrimack — having passed through the locks at Middlesex — and felt as if we were on the ocean stream itself.

Beaver river comes in a little lower down draining the meadows of Pelham, Windham, and Londonderry, the Irish settlers of which latter town were the first to introduce the potatoe into N.E. *{One-fourth page blank}*

Two men called out from the steep and wooded banks to be taken as far as Nashua but we were too deeply laden— As we glided away from them with even sweeps while the fates scattered oil in our course — as the sun was sinking behind the willows of the distant shore, — we could see them far off over the water — running along the shore and climbing over the rocks and fallen trees like ants till they reached a spot where a broad stream poured its placid tribute into the Merrimack— When a mile distant we could see them preparing to ford the stream— But whether they got safely through or went round by the source, we never learned.

Thus nature puts the busiest merchant to pilgrim's shifts. She soon drives us to staff and scrip and scallop shell. The Mississippi the Nile the Ganges can their personality be denied? have they not a personal history in the annals of the world— These journeying atoms from the andes and ural and mountains of the moon — by villas — villages — and mists — with the moccasined tread of an Indian warrior. Their sources not yet drained. The mountains of the moon send their tribute to the pasha as they did to Pharoah without fail. though he most collect the rest of his revenue at the point of the bayonnette

Consider the phenomena of morn — or eve — and you will say that Nature has perfected herself by an eternity of practice— Evening stealing over the fields— The stars come to bathe in retired waters The shadows of the trees creeping farther and farther into the meadows. And a myriad phenomena beside.

Occasionally a canal boat with its large white sail glided around a promontory a quarter of a mile before us and changed the scene in an instant— Occasionally attaching ourselves to its side we would float back in company awhile — interchanging a word with the voyageurs and obtaining a draught of cooler water from their stores.

Occasionally we had to muster all our energy to get round a point where the river broke rippling over rocks and the maples trailed their branches in the stream.

The rain had pattered all night And now the whole country wept, the drops falling in the river, and on the alder, and in the pastures, but instead of any bow in the heavens there was the trill of the tree sparrow all the morning. The cheery faith of this little bird atoned for the silence of the whole woodland quire.

POTATO

MIDDLESEX CANAL



Tuesday—

At intervals when there was a suitable reach in the river — we caught sight of the Goffstown mountain — the Indian Un-can-nu-nuc rising before us, on the left of the river— “The far blue mountain.” *{One-fourth page blank}*

We soon after saw the Piscataquoag emptying in on our left — and heard the falls of Amoskieg above. It was here according to tradition that the sachem Wonolanset resided, and when at war with the mohawks his tribe are said to have concealed their provisions in the cavities of the rocks in the upper part of the falls

The descent is 54 feet in half a mile.

The manchester manufacturing company have constructed a canal here — through which we passed.

Above the falls the river spreads out into a lake — stretching up toward Hooksett— We could see several canal boats at intervals of a mile or more standing up to Hooksett with a light breeze. With their broad sails set they moved slowly up the stream in the sluggish and fitful breeze — as if impelled by some mysterious counter current — like Antediluvian birds. A grand motion so slow and steady. For the most part they were returning empty, or at most with a few passengers aboard. As we rowed near to one which was just getting under way, the steers man offered to take us in tow — but when we came along side we found that he intended to take us on board, as otherwise we should retard his own voyage too much — but as we were too heavy to be lifted aboard — we left him and proceeded up the stream a half a mile to the shade of some maples to spend our noon

In the course of half an hour several boats passed up the river at intervals of half a mile — and among them came the boat we have mentioned, keeping the middle of the stream and when within speaking distance the steers man called out if we would come along side now he would take us in tow. But not heeding their taunts we made no haste to give chase until our preparations were made — by which time they were a quarter of a mile ahead. Then with our own sails set — and plying our four oars, we were soon along side of them — and we glided close under their side, we quietly promised if they would throw us a rope that we would take them in tow. And then we gradually overhauled each boat in succession untill we had the river to ourselves again.

No man was ever party to a secure and settled friendship — it is no more a constant phenomenon than meteors and lightning— It is a war of positions of silent tactics.

With a fair wind and the current in our favor we commenced our return voyage, sitting at ease in our boat and conversing, or in silence watching, for the last sign of each reach in the river, as a bend concealed it from view.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

The lumbermen who were throwing down wood from the top of the high bank, 30 or 40 feet above the water, that it might be sent down the river — paused in their work to watch our retreating sail. *{One-fifth page blank}*
In summer I live out of doors and have only impulses and feelings which are all for action— And must wait for the quiet & stillness and longer nights of Autumn and Winter, before any thought will subside.


I mark the summer's swift decline
The springing sward its grave clothes weaves
Oh could I catch the sounds remote
Could I but tell to human ear
The strains which on the breezes float
And sing the requiem of the dying year.

None of the feathered race have yet realized my conception of the woodland depths. I had fancied that their plumage would assume stronger and more dazzling colors, like the brighter tints of evening, in proportion as I advanced farther into the darkness and solitude of the forest. The red election, brought from their depth, did in some degree answer my expectation — gleaming like a coal of fire amid the pines.

In Autumn what may be termed the dry colors preponderate in Summer the moist. The Asters and golden rod are the livery which nature wears at present. The golden rod alone seem to express all the ripeness of the autumn, and sheds its mellow lustre on the fields as if the now declining summer sun had bequeathed its hues to it. Asters everywhere spot the fields like so many fallen stars.


Thoreau shot a Passenger Pigeon, one of a large flock near the mouth of the Souhegan River, and broiled it for supper. Scientists are not sure why these birds, once fantastically abundant, became extinct. Some attribute it to excessive slaughter on the breeding grounds and throughout the year. Some believe the destruction of the beech and oak forests was largely responsible. Some believe that the numbers having been severely reduced by overshooting, the species was no longer able to reproduce. Thoreau's concern about the dead pigeon was philosophical. Did he have a right to kill such a beautiful bird? Having killed it, he decided it should be eaten and not wasted.? Though Thoreau seldom saw a dead bird in the woods or fields, had he visited a nesting place of colonial birds, or walked along the drift of an ocean beach, he would have seen many dead birds. Probably the majority of song birds are finally caught and eaten by other creatures. Most of those that do die of disease or age, being quite small, are eaten by insects, mice, or even snakes, for the latter have been seen eating birds killed on highways. Certainly birds are never translated, as some of the Old Testament prophets were said to have been, being taken directly from earth to heaven without dying. -Cruickshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



[Tuesday of WEEK. **American Passenger Pigeon**  *Ectopistes migratorius* near the mouth of the Souhegan River.] During the heat of the day, we rested on a large island a mile above the mouth of this river, pastured by a herd of cattle, with steep banks and scattered elms and oaks, and a sufficient channel for canal-boats on each side. When we made a fire to boil some rice for our dinner, the flames spreading amid the dry grass, and the smoke curling silently upward and casting grotesque shadows on the ground, seemed phenomena of the noon, and we fancied that we progressed up the stream without effort, and as naturally as the wind and

tide went down, not outraging the calm days by unworthy bustle or impatience. The woods on the neighboring shore were alive with pigeons, which were moving south, looking for mast, but now, like ourselves, spending their noon in the shade. We could hear the slight, wiry, winnowing sound of their wings as they changed their roosts from time to time, and their gentle and tremulous cooing. They sojourned with us during the noon-tide, greater travellers far than we. You may frequently discover a single pair sitting upon the lower branches of the white pine in the depths of the woods, at this hour of the day, so silent and solitary, and with such a hermit-like appearance, as if they had never strayed beyond its skirts, while the acorn which was gathered in the forests of Maine is still undigested in their crops. We obtained one of these handsome birds, which lingered too long upon its perch, and plucked and broiled it here with some other game, to be carried along for our supper; for, beside provisions which we carried with us, we depended mainly on the river and forest for our supply. It is true, it did not seem to be putting this bird to its right use to pluck off its feathers, and extract its entrails, and broil its carcass on the coals; but we heroically persevered, nevertheless, waiting for further information. The same regard for Nature which excited our sympathy for her creatures nerved our hands to carry through what we had begun. For we would be honorable to the party we deserted; we would fulfill fate, and so at length, perhaps, detect the secret innocence of these incessant tragedies which Heaven allows.

Nature herself has not provided the most graceful end for her creatures. What becomes of all these birds that people the air and forest for our solacement? The sparrows seem always *chipper*, never infirm. We do not see their bodies lie about. Yet there is a tragedy at the end of each one of their lives. They must perish miserably, not one of them is translated. True, "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Heavenly Father's knowledge," but they do fall, nevertheless.

That night the Thoreau brothers camped "In [the township of] Bedford, on the west bank [of the Merrimack River], opposite a large rock, above Coos Falls." Did they, due to rainy weather, completely miss the northern lights display of that night? The next morning, as they shoved off, they would see a **Green-backed Heron**  *Butorides striatus*.

**Ross/Adams
commentary**

TIMELINE OF A WEEK

September 4, Wednesday: According to the journal of [Friend Thomas B. Hazard](#) or Hafsard or Hasard of [Kingstown, Rhode Island](#), also known as "Nailer Tom,"²⁹ there had been "strange [Northern lights](#) last night."



AURORA BOREALIS



Sept 4th [Wednesday of WEEK] As we shoved away from this rocky coast, before sunrise, the smaller bittern, the genius of the shore, was moping along its edge, or stood probing the mud for its food, with ever an eye on us, though so demurely at work, or else he ran along over the wet stones like a wrecker in his storm-coat, looking out for wrecks of snails and cockles. Now away he goes, with a limping flight, uncertain where he will alight, until a rod of clear sand amid the alders invites his feet; and now our steady approach compels him to seek a new retreat. It is a bird of the oldest [Thalesian](#) school, and no doubt believes in the priority of water to the other elements; the relic of a twilight antediluvian age which yet inhabits these bright American rivers with us Yankees. There is something venerable in this melancholy and contemplative race of birds, which may have trodden the earth while it was yet in a slimy and imperfect state. Perchance their tracks, too, are still visible on the stones. It still lingers into our glaring summers, bravely supporting its fate without sympathy from man, as if it looked forward to some second advent of which he has no assurance. One wonders if, by its patient study by rocks and sandy capes, it has wrested the whole of her secret from Nature yet. What a rich experience it must have gained, standing on one leg and looking out from its dull eye so long on sunshine and rain, moon and stars!

29. He was called "Nailer Tom" because his trade was the cutting of nails from scrap iron, and in order to distinguish him from a relative known as "College Tom," from another relative known as "Shepherd Tom," and from his own son who –because he had fits– was known as "Pistol-Head Tom."

What could it tell of stagnant pools and reeds and dank night fogs! It would be worth the while to look closely into the eye which has been open and seeing at such hours, and in such solitudes its dull, yellowish, greenish eye. Methinks my own soul must be a bright invisible green. I have seen these birds stand by the half dozen together in the shallower water along the shore, with their bills thrust into the mud at the bottom, probing for food, the whole head being concealed, while the neck and body formed an arch above the water.

Thoreau's smaller bittern, the Green Heron, like all members of the heron family, catches its food with quick stabs of its bill. It does not probe the mud as do many species of shorebird. Since Green Herons often feed in still, shallow water, reflections may have caused Thoreau to think their bills were thrust into the mud. It must be remembered that Thoreau had no optical equipment at this time to aid his observations. -Cruickshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



Sept 4th Wednesday. Hooksett east bank 2 or 3 miles below the village, opposite mr. Mitchels.

On Thursday, Thoreau and his brother halted at a point east of Uncannunuc Mountain near Manchester, New Hampshire. They hung their tent and buffalo robes in a farmer's barn to dry and then continued on foot up the Merrimack until it became the Pemigewasset and then the Wild Amonoosuck to its very fountainhead. This part of the adventure is not included in the book. However, Thursday morning as the brothers lay in their tent listening to the rain, they found such enjoyment in birds as those who never venture into a wet world can never know. -Cruickshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

A WEEK: The small houses which were scattered along the river at intervals of a mile or more were commonly out of sight to us, but sometimes, when we rowed near the shore, we heard the peevish note of a hen, or some slight domestic sound, which betrayed them. The lock-men's houses were particularly well placed, retired, and high, always at falls or rapids, and commanding the pleasantest reaches of the river, -for it is generally wider and more lake-like just above a fall,- and there they wait for boats. These humble dwellings, homely and sincere, in which a hearth was still the essential part, were more pleasing to our eyes than palaces or castles would have been. In the noon of these days, as we have said, we occasionally climbed the banks and approached these houses, to get a glass of water and make acquaintance with their inhabitants. High in the leafy bank, surrounded commonly by a small patch of corn and beans, squashes and melons, with sometimes a graceful hop-yard on one side, and some running vine over the windows, they appeared like beehives set to gather honey for a summer. I have not read of any Arcadian life which surpasses the actual luxury and serenity of these New England dwellings. For the outward gilding, at least, the age is golden enough. As you approach the sunny doorway, awakening the echoes by your steps, still no sound from these barracks of repose, and you fear that the gentlest knock may seem rude to the Oriental dreamers. The door is opened, perchance, by some Yankee-Hindoo woman, whose small-voiced but sincere hospitality, out of the bottomless depths of a quiet nature, has travelled quite round to the opposite side, and fears only to obtrude its kindness. You step over the white-scoured floor to the bright "dresser" lightly, as if afraid to disturb the devotions of the household, -for Oriental dynasties appear to have passed away since the dinner-table was last spread here,- and thence to the frequented curb, where you see your long-forgotten, unshaven face at the bottom, in juxtaposition with new-made butter and the trout in the well. "Perhaps you would like some molasses and ginger," suggests the faint noon voice. Sometimes there sits the brother who follows the sea, their representative man; who knows only how far it is to the nearest port, no more distances, all the rest is sea and distant capes, - patting the dog, or dandling the kitten in arms that were stretched by the cable and the oar, pulling against Boreas or the trade-winds. He looks up at the stranger, half pleased, half astonished, with a mariner's eye, as if he were a dolphin within cast. If men will believe it, *sua si bona norint*, there are no more quiet Tempes, nor more poetic and Arcadian lives, than may be lived in these New England dwellings. We thought that the employment of their inhabitants by day would be to tend the flowers and herds, and at night, like the shepherds of old, to cluster and give names to the stars from the river banks.

CAT

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

[The full Latin expression that goes with “*sua si bona norint*” is “*O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint*,” which means “O more than happy, if they only knew their advantages,” and was used by [Virgil](#) to describe those who led the rustic bucolic agricultural life. We can say, therefore, that Virgil is a presence not only in Thoreau’s WALDEN, but also in A WEEK.]



[Thursday of WEEK] When we awoke this morning, we heard the faint, deliberate, and ominous sound of raindrops on our cotton roof. The rain had pattered all night, and now the whole country wept, the drops falling in the river, and on the alders, and in the pastures, and instead of any bow in the heavens, there was the trill of the hair-bird all the morning. The cheery faith of this little bird atoned for the silence of the whole woodland choir beside....

The birds draw closer and are more familiar under the thick foliage, seemingly composing new strains upon their roots against the sunshine. What were the amusements of the drawing room and the library in comparison, if we had them here?

September 5: Again the intrepid Thoreau brothers had fortified themselves against the damp with hot cocoa:

A WEEK: (September 5, Thursday, 1839) There we went to bed that summer evening, on a sloping shelf in the bank, a couple of rods from our boat, which was drawn up on the sand, and just behind a thin fringe of oaks which bordered the river; without having disturbed any inhabitants but the spiders in the grass, which came out by the light of our lamp, and crawled over our buffaloes. When we looked out from under the tent, the trees were seen dimly through the mist, and a cool dew hung upon the grass, which seemed to rejoice in the night, and with the damp air we inhaled a solid fragrance. Having eaten our supper of hot cocoa and bread and watermelon, we soon grew weary of conversing, and writing in our journals, and, putting out the lantern which hung from the tent-pole, fell asleep.

COCOA

The brothers would leave their *Musketaquid* on the bank of the Merrimack River near the village of Hooksett NH and hoof it ten miles to Concord NH.



Sept 5th walked to Concord [NH] 10 miles

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

September 6, Friday: The intrepid Thoreau brothers took the stage from Concord NH to Plymouth, New Hampshire, then hiked through Thornton, Peeling, and Lincoln to Franconia below Mount Washington in the Presidential Range (Agiocochuck, elevation 6,288 feet).



The Thoreau brothers presumably both climbed and descended along the 1819 Crawford Path that begins at Crawford Notch and follows along the treeless ridge line, passing Mt. Eisenhower and Mt. Monroe and the Lake of the Clouds at about 5,000 feet to the summit of Mt. Washington. Thoreau's description of the actual climb, in [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), would be succinct:



A WEEK: Wandering on through notches which the streams had made, by the side and over the brows of hoar hills and mountains, across the stumpy, rocky, forested, and bepastured country, we at length crossed on prostrate trees over the Amonoosuck, and breathed the free air of Unappropriated Land. Thus, in fair days as well as foul, we had traced up the river to which our native stream is a tributary, until from Merrimack it became the Pemigewasset that leaped by our side, and when we had passed its fountain-head, the Wild Amonoosuck, whose puny channel was crossed at a stride, guiding us toward its distant source among the mountains, and at length, without its guidance, we were enabled to reach the summit of AGIOCOCHOOK.

“Sweet days, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
Sweet dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.”
— HERBERT

When we returned to Hooksett, a week afterward, the melon man, in whose corn-barn we had hung our tent and buffaloes and other things to dry, was already picking his hops, with many women and children to help him. We bought one watermelon, the largest in his patch, to carry with us for ballast. It was Nathan's, which he might sell if he wished, having been conveyed to him in the green state, and owned daily by his eyes. After due consultation with "Father," the bargain was concluded, — we to buy it at a venture on the vine, green or ripe, our risk, and pay "what the gentlemen pleased." It proved to be ripe; for we had had honest experience in selecting this fruit.

Thoreau's text does not remain at this elevation. With the words "When we returned to Hookset..." he embarked the brothers upon their literary return voyage downriver. The full poem "Vertue" by [Rector George Herbert](#) in his 1633 THE TEMPLE had been as follows:

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridall of the earth and skie:
The dew shall weep thy fall to night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye:
Thy root is ever in its grave
And thou must die.

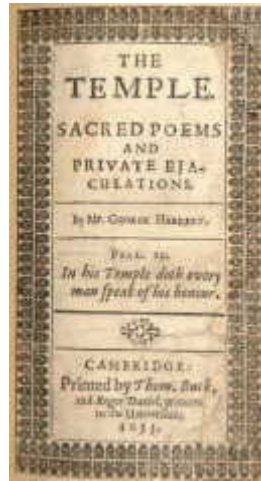
Sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
My musick shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Then chiefly lives.



THE TEMPLE

We may note that our adventurous author has referred earlier, in the text of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), to the poem “The Elixir” among the literary remainders of [Herbert](#):

[A WEEK](#): It required some rudeness to disturb with our boat the mirror-like surface of the water, in which every twig and blade of grass was so faithfully reflected; too faithfully indeed for art to imitate, for only Nature may exaggerate herself. The shallowest still water is unfathomable. Wherever the trees and skies are reflected, there is more than Atlantic depth, and no danger of fancy running aground. We notice that it required a separate intention of the eye, a more free and abstracted vision, to see the reflected trees and the sky, than to see the river bottom merely; and so are there manifold visions in the direction of every object, and even the most opaque reflect the heavens from their surface. Some men have their eyes naturally intended to the one and some to the other object.

“A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye,
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And the heavens espy.”

Two men in a skiff, whom we passed hereabouts, floating buoyantly amid the reflections of the trees, like a feather in mid-air, or a leaf which is wafted gently from its twig to the water without turning over, seemed still in their element, and to have very delicately availed themselves of the natural laws. Their floating there was a beautiful and successful experiment in natural philosophy, and it served to ennoble in our eyes the art of navigation; for as birds fly and fishes swim, so these men sailed. It reminded us how much fairer and nobler all the actions of man might be, and that our life in its whole economy might be as beautiful as the fairest works of art or nature.

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee:

Not rudely, as a beast,
To runne into an action;
But still to make thee prepossest,
And give it his perfection.

**A man that looks on glasse,
On it may stay his eye;
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
And then the heav'n espie.**

All may of thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold:
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for lesse be told.

THE TEMPLE

September 10, Tuesday:



September 10, Tuesday: Ascended the mountain and rode to Conway.



September 12, Thursday-13, Friday: The brothers made a rapid return voyage downstream before the wind.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

September 13, Friday: At the annual convention of the Middlesex County education Association, in Concord, Horace Mann, Sr. was orating about “the modern gloomy view of our democratical institutions,” and drawing out some obvious inferences about “the importance of Schools.” [Waldo Emerson](#) sat there ruminating on the fact that the dreary evening of oratory was emblematic of the dreary daytime learning experiences being provided by these people to their charges, and contrasting this in his mind with the sort of learning experiences which he fancied that the adventurous Thoreau brothers were currently providing themselves with in their boat upon the waters of the Concord River and the [Middlesex Canal](#) and the Merrimack River.

It was on this day that the adventurous Thoreau brothers began to retrace their path, back toward their family’s home in Concord, Massachusetts. Why would you suppose Henry would spend so many of the pages in Week describing the journey out, and so few describing the return trip? It seems this is a known characteristic of all exploration literature:

Coming back is not only essential to the traveller’s personal survival: it is also essential to his historic future. For, in so far as the journey has to become a journal, a map or a drawing in order to enter spatial history, going back is the traveller’s opportunity to check his facts. It is analogous to the process of revision. Indeed, these two processes are very closely related. If, for instance, we look at the journals of Sturt or Stuart or Mitchell, all of which recount double journeys, outwards and backwards, we find that a very small proportion of the text is given over to describing the return journey. The larger part of their journals is taken up with a narrative of the journey out. If, as I have suggested, the journal is not primarily a description of the country, but a symbolic representation of track-making, this is understandable. But it does not mean that the return journey has been left out: rather, it has been incorporated into the account of the outward journey as a series of marginal interpolations, erasures and name changes which, at a yet later stage of revision, can be woven into the narrative to increase its dramatic interest. The seamlessness of the journals is a literary illusion. Unfortunately, though, it has too often been taken at face value, with the result that the **reflective** attitude the explorer and settler literature embodies has been overlooked. Instead, the historical experience it records has been subjected to an “I came, I saw, I conquered” mythologizing, as if the explorers did not ride in elaborate circles, taking hours and sometimes days to get back where they had last begun; as if pioneers did not reconnoitre, did not go back to town, stake legal claims, take out loans, buy supplies and (perhaps only after half a dozen journeys, and even perhaps after rejecting half a dozen other places) eventually set about the business of making a home for themselves. And not only have the backtrackings implicit in such spatial experiences been ironed out, but the **order** of them has been linearized, subjected to a one-way imperial chronology. But spatial history does not advance. Or, better, it only advances by reflection, by going back and looking again at already trodden ground. The ground is not virgin: it already has a history. It is not a question of correcting what is already there, of replacing it with a better route. It is a question of interpretation, of attempting to recapture and evoke more fully “the world of the text” – not just the



September 13, Friday: Rowed and sailed to Concord — about 50 miles. I shall not soon forget my first night in a tent — how the distant barking of dogs for so many still hours revealed to me the riches of the night. — Who would not be a dog and bay the moon? —

DOG

biographical and stylistic history of the journals, but the “world” they refer to. If this process is not to become a tyranny, effacing what it attempts to describe, if it is to avoid falling into the positivist fallacy of supposing its own account of event decisively replaces the original one, then it is essential that it respect the **difference** of the historical tests it deals with. We can illustrate this by the journey analogy: however many times an explorer’s biographer takes the route first taken by the explorer, he can never take it for the first time. The route has already been constituted for him. In this sense, his journey is always a return journey; and, if he ignores this, imagining himself in the explorer’s place, the result may be good fiction, but not good history. For, by a too zealous and unreflective imitation, the explorer’s experience has been rendered infinitely repeatable. It has been translated into an experience anyone can have: it is but a matter of time before the television crews and the motorcyclists will be there.



September 13th we sailed along as gently and steadily as the clouds through the atmosphere over our heads — watching the receding shores and the motions of our sails. The north wind stepped readily into the harness we had provided for it — and pulled us along with good will— We were not tired of watching the motions of our sail — so thin and yet so full of life, now bending to some generous impulse of the breeze. And then fluttering and flapping with a kind of human suspense. We watched the play of its pulse as if it were our own blood beating there.

It was a scale on which the varying temperature of distant atmospheres was graduated. It was some attraction that the breeze it played with had been out of doors so long. Our lives are much like a sail alternately steady and fluttering — and always at the mercy of the breeze.



We had gone to bed in summer, and we awoke in autumn; for summer passes into autumn in some unimaginable point of time, like the turning of a leaf.... As the mist gradually rolled away, and we were relieved from the trouble of watching for rocks, we saw by the flitting clouds, by the first russet tinge on the hills, by the rushing river, the cottages on shore, and the shore itself, so coolly fresh and shining with dew, and later in the day, by the hue of the grape-vine, the goldfinch on the willow, the flickers flying in flocks, and when we passed near enough to the shore, as we fancied, by the faces of men, that the fall had commenced....



[Friday of WEEK. Homeward bound.] We had gone to bed in summer, and we awoke in autumn; for summer passes into autumn in some unimaginable point of time, like the turning of a leaf.... As the mist gradually rolled away, and we were relieved from the trouble of watching for rocks, we saw by the flitting clouds, by the first russet tinge on the hills, by the rushing river, the cottages on shore, and the shore itself, so coolly fresh and shining with dew, and later in the day, by the hue of the grape-vine, the goldfinch on the willow, the flickers flying in flocks, and when we passed near enough to the shore, as we fancied, by the faces of men, that the fall had commenced....



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JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



Friday We skimmed lightly over the water before a smacking breeze with all sails set— The wind in the horizon seemed to roll in a flood over valley and plain — and every tree bent to the blast, and the mountains — like school-boys turned their cheeks to the blast. *{One-fifth page blank}*

We lay listening to the sound of the current We already knew — before we had looked abroad — by the fresh wind that was blowing, the rustling of the leaves and the rippling of the water that there was a change in the weather.

The mist gradually rolled away, and we were relieved from the trouble of watching for rocks. We soon passed the mouth of the Souhegan with a fair wind, and the village of Merrimack.



Friday When we awoke the face of nature seemed to have undergone a change— We heard the sigh of the first autumnal wind, and saw the first tinge of russet on the hills — even the water seemed to have got a grayer hue.

We saw by the flitting clouds, by the rushing river, and the lights in the cottages on shore— We saw by the faces of men that the fall had commenced. The grape vine — the goldfinch in the willow — the flickers flying in flocks, and the piping of the plover — all repeated the tale. Cottages looked more snug and comfortable, and their tapers told more tales— We looked in vain for the south wind.

It proved a cool breezy autumn day, and by the time we reached Nashua we were obliged to sit muffled in our cloaks, while the wind and current carried us along. The inhabitants left their houses to gaze at us from the banks.

I who sail now in a boat, have I not sailed in a thought? V chaucer

Shad Salmon and bass are still taken in this river as well as at the mouth of the Concord.



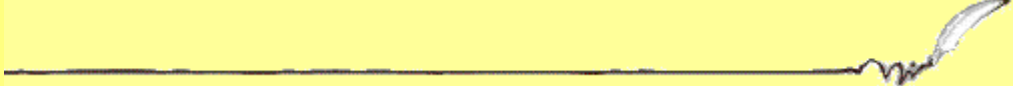
[Return to Concord, Friday evening of WEEK] The sun was just setting behind the edge of a wooded hill, so rich a sunset as would never have ended but for some reason unknown to men, and to be marked with brighter colors than ordinary in the scroll of time. Though the shadows of the hills were beginning to steal over the stream, the whole valley undulated with mild light, purer and more memorable than the noon. For so the day bids farewell even to solitary vales uninhabited by man. Two herons (*Ardea herodias*), with their long and slender limbs relieved against the sky, were seen traveling high over our heads, -their lofty and silent flight, as they were wending their way at evening, surely not to alight in any marsh on the earth's surface, but, perchance, on the other side of our atmosphere, a symbol for the ages to study, whether impressed upon the sky or sculptured amid the hieroglyphics of Egypt. Bound for some northern meadow, they held their stately, stationary flight, like the storks in the picture, and disappeared at length behind the clouds. Dense flocks of blackbirds were winging their way along the river's course, as if on a short evening pilgrimage to some shrine of theirs, or to celebrate so fair a sunset.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

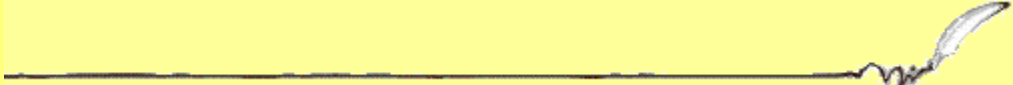
September 14, Saturday: With the Thoreau brothers back in town, [Waldo Emerson](#) heard of their great summer adventure down the Concord River and up the [Middlesex Canal](#) and the Merrimack River, possibly from [Dr. Josiah Bartlett](#), and considered that it must truly have been a learning experience, of a class with being able to grow up as a farm boy rather than a city boy:

An education in things is not: we are all involved in the condemnation of words, an Age of words. We are shut up in schools & college recitation rooms for ten or fifteen years & come out at last with a bellyfull of words & do not know a thing. We cannot use our hands or our legs or our eyes or our arms. We do not know an edible root in the woods. We cannot tell our course by the stars nor the hour of the day by the sun. It is well if we can swim & skate. We are afraid of a horse, of a cow, of a dog, of a cat, of a spider. Far better was the Roman rule to teach a boy nothing that he could not learn standing. Now here are my wise young neighbors who instead of getting like the wordmen into a railroad-car where they have not even the activity of holding the reins, have got into a boat which they have built with their own hands, with sails which they have contrived to serve as a tent by night, & gone up the river Merrimack to live by their wits on the fish of the stream & the berries of the wood. My worthy neighbor Dr Bartlett expressed a true parental instinct when he desired to send his boy with them to learn something. the farm, the farm is the right school. The reason of my deep respect for the farmer is that he is a realist & not a dictionary. The farm is a piece of the world, the School house is not. The farm by training the physical rectifies & invigorates the metaphysical & moral nature.



Between this day and the 17th, [Waldo Emerson](#) manifested to his journal that his readings about the [Peace Testimony](#) of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) had left him in the approximate state of awareness of a 9-year-old boy playing with a sabre made out of a stick:

I do not like to speak to the Peace Society if so I am to restrain me in so extreme a privilege as the use of the sword & bullet. For the peace of the man who has forsworn the use of the bullet seems to me not quite peace, but a canting impotence: but with knife & pistol in my hands, if I, from greater bravery & honor, cast them aside, then I know the glory of peace.





JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

September 16, Monday: The dashing Thoreau brothers, just back from their excellent adventure, heard that the Reverend Edmund Quincy Sewall, Sr. and Mrs. Edmund Quincy Sewall were vacationing at [Niagara Falls](#), and so dashing brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) promptly dashed off to Scituate in order to be able to visit Miss Ellen Devereux Sewall in her home — while she was without adult supervision (George and Edmund, her younger brothers, were the only chaperonage). Meanwhile the younger brother, [Henry Thoreau](#), left behind in Concord, worked furiously at his essay on bravery, at his essay on friendship, at his translation of Æschylus's PROMETHEUS BOUND, and at his essay on the satirist Aulus Persius Flaccus:

*The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous,
for he lives out of an eternity which includes all
time.*

*All questions rely on the present for their solution.
Time measures nothing but itself.*

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

September 30, Monday: Miss Prudence Ward wrote to a friend describing the visit which [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) had paid to Miss Ellen Devereux Sewall in Scituate MA in the absence of her parents, the Reverend and Mrs. Edmund Quincy Sewall.



[Waldo Emerson](#) had reminisced in his journal:

When I was thirteen years old, my uncle Samuel Ripley one day asked me, "How is it Ralph, that all the boys dislike you & quarrel with you, whilst the grown people are fond of you?" – Now am I thirty six and the fact is reversed – the old people suspect & dislike me, & the young love me.

December: During this month the brothers [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#), and Miss Prudence Ward from the Thoreau boardinghouse in Concord, visited Miss Ellen Devereux Sewall in Scituate, Massachusetts. Henry sent to Miss Ellen's father the Reverend Edmund Quincy Sewall, Sr. as a [Christmas](#) present [Jones Very](#)'s new volume of poems, and John sent to Miss Ellen herself some opals, and to Ellen's little brother Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr. some books. Afterward, during this month, Henry also sent to Miss Ellen some of his own poems, along with the counsel that she refuse the use of [tea](#) and [coffee](#).



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Christmas: Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck spent Christmas together at her mother's house in Berlin.

The dashing Thoreau brothers paid a visit to the Sewalls of Scituate.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

1840

March 6, Friday: The newspaper advertisement for the Concord Academy still showed John Thoreau, Jr. as the Preceptor:

Concord Academy.
THE Spring Term will commence on MONDAY
March 23d.
Terms, English branches \$4,00
Languages included \$6,00
Henry D. Thoreau will continue to assist in the Department of the languages. N. B. Scholars will be received at any time for a term not less than twelve weeks.
JOHN THOREAU, Jr. Instructor.
Concord, March 6, 1840.

April 1, Wednesday: For the first time the Alcott girls began to attend a school not taught by their own father. Anna Alcott was a student, probably a scholarship student, of John Thoreau, Jr. and Henry David Thoreau at Concord Academy, while Elizabeth Sewall Alcott and Louisa May Alcott were at the kinder-school run by Mary Russell in the Emerson home. We have a record of this period from a 10-year-old new student that summer who was John Junior's student rather than Henry's, Horace Rice Hosmer. Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson described Horace as a child who "craved affection." As a grown-up, Horace would inform Dr. Emerson that

Henry was not loved in the school. He had his scholars upstairs. I was with John only. John was the more human, loving; understood and thought of others. Henry thought more about himself. He was a conscientious teacher, but rigid. He would not take a man's money for nothing: if a boy were sent to him, he could make him do all he could. No, he was not disagreeable. I learned to understand him later. I think that he was then in the green-apple stage.

Another pupil was Thomas Hosmer of Bedford, who would grow up to be a dentist in Boston, but who at the time was walking to Concord for classes with another Bedford boy, B.W. Lee, who would later relocate to Newport, Vermont. Thomas Hosmer wrote Dr. Emerson to relate of Thoreau that:

I have seen children catch him by the hand, as he was going home from school, to walk with him and hear more.

One of the outings the class had this spring was a walk to Fairhaven Hill, where they did a survey of the hill and the adjacent shoreline of the river. A student's comment on this field-work with surveying instruments was that of the brothers, Henry was the more active during the surveying.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Before July 17: [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) again followed Miss Ellen Devereux Sewall to Scituate, before the 17th, and this time as he strolled with her on the beach, while her chaperone Miss Prudence Ward was resting on some rocks, out of earshot, he proposed marriage.³⁰ She accepted him, then shortly afterward declined.

30. It is this incident to which [Thoreau](#) would refer on page 293 of [A WEEK](#):



[A WEEK](#): I am astonished at the singular pertinacity and endurance of our lives. The miracle is, that what is **is**, when it is so difficult, if not impossible, for anything else to be; that we walk on in our particular paths so far, before we fall on death and fate, merely because we must walk in some path; that every man can get a living, and so few can do anything more. So much only can I accomplish ere health and strength are gone, and yet this suffices. The bird now sits just out of gunshot. I am never rich in money, and I am never meanly poor. If debts are incurred, why, debts are in the course of events cancelled, as it were by the same law by which they were incurred. I heard that an engagement was entered into between a certain youth and a maiden, and then I heard that it was broken off, but I did not know the reason in either case. We are hedged about, we think, by accident and circumstance, now we creep as in a dream, and now again we run, as if there were a fate in it, and all things thwarted or assisted. I cannot change my clothes but when I do, and yet I do change them, and soil the new ones. It is wonderful that this gets done, when some admirable deeds which I could mention do not get done. Our particular lives seem of such fortune and confident strength and durability as piers of solid rock thrown forward into the tide of circumstance. When every other path would fail, with singular and unerring confidence we advance on our particular course. What risks we run! famine and fire and pestilence, and the thousand forms of a cruel fate, – and yet every man lives till he – dies. How did he manage that? Is there no immediate danger? We wonder superfluously when we hear of a somnambulist walking a plank securely, – we have walked a plank all our lives up to this particular string-piece where we are. My life will wait for nobody, but is being matured still without delay, while I go about the streets, and chaffer with this man and that to secure it a living. It is as indifferent and easy meanwhile as a poor man's dog, and making acquaintance with its kind. It will cut its own channel like a mountain stream, and by the longest ridge is not kept from the sea at last. I have found all things thus far, persons and inanimate matter, elements and seasons, strangely adapted to my resources. No matter what imprudent haste in my career; I am permitted to be rash. Gulfs are bridged in a twinkling, as if some unseen baggage-train carried pontoons for my convenience, and while from the heights I scan the tempting but unexplored Pacific Ocean of Futurity, the ship is being carried over the mountains piecemeal on the backs of mules and lamas, whose keel shall plough its waves, and bear me to the Indies.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

It is known that her mother learned of this proposal and responded that her minister father disapproved of [Transcendentalists](#); Miss Ellen would be sent to stay with relatives in Watertown, New York safely out of the reach of those Thoreau boys. [Henry Thoreau](#) submitted "THE SERVICE" to [Margaret Fuller](#) for [THE DIAL](#):

"THE SERVICE": A man's life should be a stately march to an unheard music, and when to his fellows it seems irregular and inharmonious, he will be stepping to a livelier measure, which only his nicer ear can detect. There will be no halt ever, but at most a marching on his post, or such a pause as is richer than any sound – when the deepened melody is no longer heard, but implicitly consented to with the whole life and being. He will take a false step never, even in the most arduous circumstances, for then the music will not fail to swell into corresponding volume and distinctness and rule the movement it accompanies.

...

To the sensitive soul the Universe has her own fixed measure and rhythm, which is its measure also and constitutes the regularity and health of its pulse. When the body marches to the measure of the soul then is true courage and invincible strength.



In this, Thoreau made use of a couplet from [Robert Herrick](#)'s poem "To Fortune":

TUMBLE me down, and I will sit
Upon my ruins, smiling yet;
Tear me to tatters, yet I'll be
Patient in my necessity.
Laugh at my scraps of clothes, and shun
Me, as a fear'd infection;
Yet, scare-crow-like, I'll walk as one
Neglecting thy derision.

"THE SERVICE": The Romans "made Fortune surname to Fortitude," for fortitude is that alchemy that turns all things to good fortune. The man of fortitude, whom the Latins called **fortis** is no other than that lucky person whom **fors** favors, or **vir summae fortis**. If we will, every bark may "carry Cæsar and Cæsar's fortune." For an impenetrable shield, stand inside yourself; he was no artist, but an artisan, who first made shields of brass. For armor of proof, **mea virtute me involvo**, – I wrap myself in my virtue;

"Tumble me down, and I will sit
Upon my ruins, smiling yet."

July 17, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) learned that [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) had again followed Miss Ellen Devereux Sewall to Scituate, and had walked with her on the beach and proposed marriage, and that she had accepted his brother.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

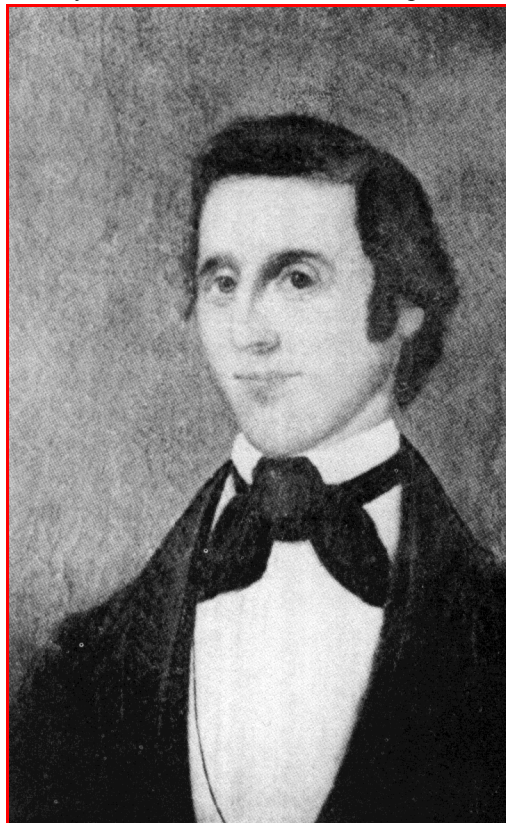
July 19, Sunday: The second Cunard packet, the *Britannica*, arrived in Boston harbor.

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote “These two days that I have not written in my journal, set down in the calendar as the 17th and 18th of July, have been really an aeon in which a Syrian empire might rise and fall. How many Persias have been lost and won in the interim. Night is spangled with fresh stars.” (One should compare and contrast this with the parable of the Artist of Kouroo in the concluding chapter of WALDEN.)

July 29, Wednesday: Preceptor [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) wrote out a receipt which happens still to exist. It records Moses Maynard’s payment of \$4.⁰⁰ for his child being instructed for one term at the [Concord Academy](#).

1841

Would it have been in about this year that [Nahum Ball Onthank](#) painted his portrait of [John Thoreau, Jr.](#)?³¹



February 22, Monday: George Ward wrote his mother about his friends [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#):

Henry will have to take care that he don't hurt himself seasoning – a very common occurence. When he gets settled on his farm – I should like to look in upon him ... & sing with him & John –

31. Richard J. Schneider, in his HENRY DAVID THOREAU: A DOCUMENTARY VOLUME, dates this to *circa* the previous year. The painting is now to be viewed at the Concord Museum.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

*"In good old [summer??] times".... We will "do up" the glee
& other matters with as hearty a will at least, as ever.*



February 22: The whole of the day should not be daytime, nor of the night nighttime, but some portion be rescued from time to oversee time in. All our hours must not be current; all out time must not lapse. There must be one hour at least which the day did not bring forth,—of ancient parentage and long-established nobility,—which will be a serene and lofty platform overlooking the rest. We should make our notch every day on our characters, as Robinson Crusoe on his stick. We must be at the helm at least once a day; we must feel the tiller-rope in our hands, and know that if we sail, we steer...."



(That's just the best description I ever saw, of what's going on during Quaker silent worship.)

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

April 1, Thursday: Due to the continued weakness of [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), on this day the Thoreau brothers closed their school –the [Concord Academy](#) they had begun in mid-June of 1838– before it had completed its 3d year.

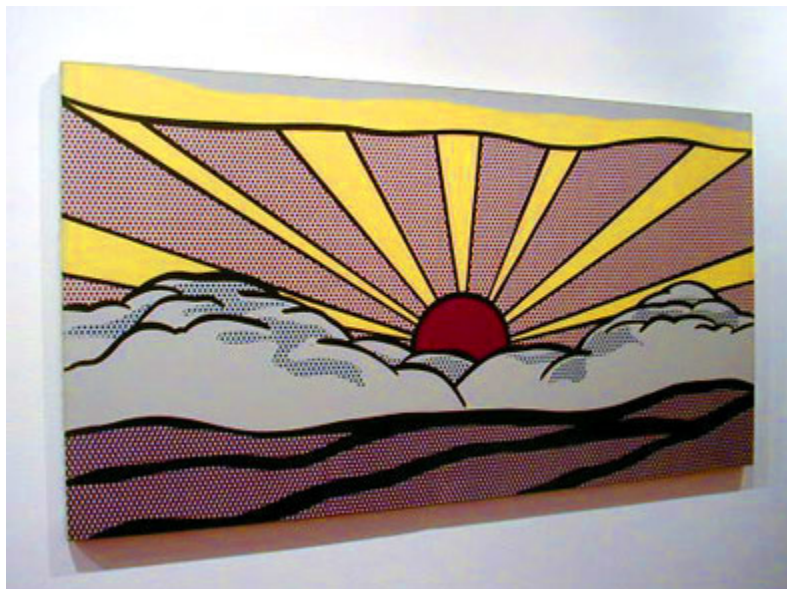
[Henry David Thoreau](#) copied into his literary notebook, evidently out of a 6-volume set of THE WORKS OF [BEN JONSON](#) that was in [Emerson](#)'s library, a poem in which the sun is characterized as the “day-star.”



Even at this early period, I would submit, Thoreau was preparing to confront the cultural politicians who have their reasons for needing to characterize the star Sol as unique in its power and majesty. (This bears upon material which he reworked for his [WALDEN](#) manuscript, as of Draft F.)

[WALDEN](#): I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN



“JOHN” (BULL)
“JONATHAN”

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



April 1. ON THE SUN COMING OUT IN THE AFTERNOON

Methinks all things have travelled since you shined,
But only Time, and clouds, Time's team, have moved;
Again foul weather shall not change my mind,
But in the shade I will believe what in the sun I loved.

In reading a work on agriculture, I skip the author's moral reflections, and the words "Providence" and "He" scattered along the page, to come at the profitable level of what he has to say. There is no science in men's religion; it does not teach me so much as the report of the committee on swine. My author shows he has dealt in corn and turnips and can worship God with the hoe and spade, but spare me his morality.

EMMONS

October: The first traveling Daguerreotypist arrived in [Concord](#). [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) thought to have little [Wallie Emerson](#)'s picture as he was just turning age 5.





JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

November 22, Monday: A real pipe organ was purchased for \$1,050 for [Concord](#)'s parish church.

Returning from a business trip to Boston, [Waldo Emerson](#) found [Lidian Emerson](#) with [Edith Emerson](#), born at 5PM.

Emerson wrote to William and Susan Haven Emerson:

Be it known unto you that a little maiden child is born unto this house this day at 5 o clock this afternoon; it is a meek little girl which I have just seen, & in this short dark winter afternoon I cannot tell what color her eyes are, and the less, because she keeps them pretty closely shut: But there is nothing in her aspect to contradict the hope we feel that she has come for a blessing to our little company. Lidian is very well and finds herself suddenly recovered from a host of ails which she suffered from this morning. Waldo is quite deeply happy with this fair unexpected apparition & cannot peep & see it enough. Ellen has retired to bed unconscious of the fact & of all her rich gain in this companion. Shall I be discontented who had dreamed of a young poet that should come? I am quite too much affected with wonder & peace at what I have and behold & understand nothing of, to quarrel with it that it is not different.

(Not only little Edith, but also [Henry Thoreau](#) joined the Emerson household on this day.)

At some point along in here some events would occur, that later, approaching a lamentable 20th anniversary on January 17, 1862, [Waldo Emerson](#) would muse about in his journal:

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

WALLIE EMERSON

Long ago I wrote of "Gifts," & neglected a capital example. John Thoreau Jr. one day put up a bluebird's box on my barn fifteen years ago, it must be – and there it is still with every summer a melodious family in it, adorning the place, & singing his praises. There's a gift for you which cost the giver no money, but nothing he could have bought would be so good. I think of another quite inestimable. John Thoreau, Junior, knew how much I should value a head of little Waldo, then five years old. He came to me, & offered to carry him to a daguerreotypist who was then in town, & he, Thoreau, would see it well done. He did it, & brought me the daguerre which I thankfully paid for. In a few months after, my boy died, and I have ever since had deeply to thank John Thoreau for that wise & gentle piece of friendship.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

[Bluebird, Eastern  *Sialia sialis*]

At 9PM, John York and Jehiel Kinney set out from Port Day for Hudson's Tavern, two miles above Chippawa on the [Niagara River](#) above the falls, with a load of six barrels of whiskey.

They would be caught in the rapids and go over the always-deadly American Falls.

In the night, Mahomed Akber Khan, second son of the late Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, arrived in Cabul, [Afghanistan](#) from Bameean.

1842

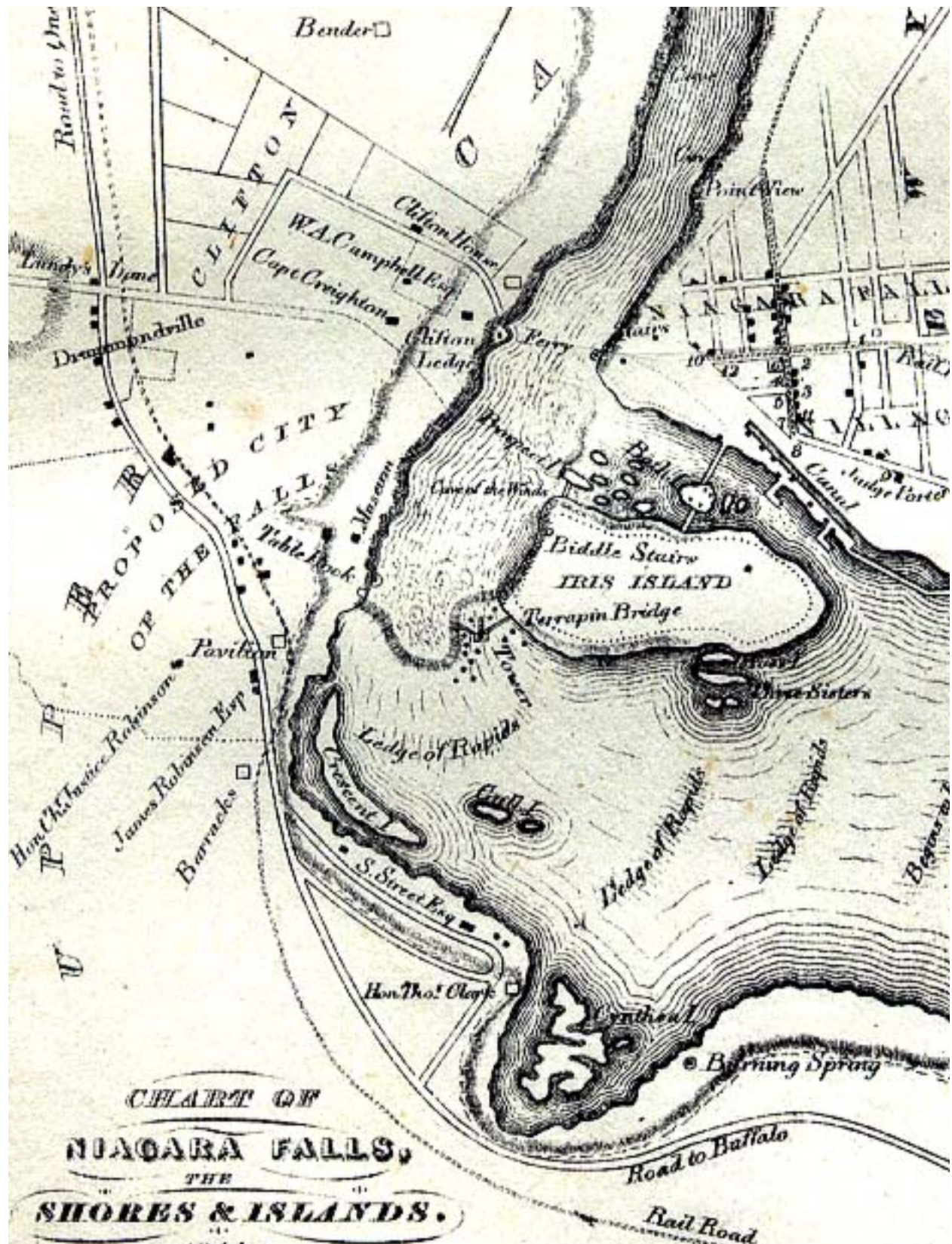
John Goldsbury's A SEQUEL TO THE COMMON SCHOOL GRAMMAR; CONTAINING, IN ADDITION TO OTHER MATERIALS AND ILLUSTRATIONS, NOTES AND CRITICAL REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE; AND EXPLAINING SOME OF ITS MOST DIFFICULT IDIOMATIC PHRASES. DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF THE FIRST CLASS IN COMMON SCHOOLS. BY JOHN GOLDSBURY, A.M., TEACHER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS. (Boston: James Munroe and Company; New York: Collins, Brother & Co.; Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Co.; Baltimore: Cushing & Brothers). Since a copy of this book would be discovered in the personal library of [Henry Thoreau](#), may we be allowed to speculate that it may have been something that had been on pre-order for use as a text at the [Concord Academy](#) — before that school had needed to be closed in 1841 due to the tuberculosis of John Thoreau, Jr.?

GOLDSBURY'S GRAMMAR

I know, it's speculative. —But, can anyone come up with some other possible explanation for how a schoolbook on grammar with a publication date of 1842 happens to turn up on a shelf in Thoreau's attic room in Concord?

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.





JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

January 1, Saturday: The Athenæum Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts (London) contained a “Review of [Paul Émile Botta](#)’s Travels in Arabia [*RELATION D’UN VOYAGE DANS L’YÉMEN, ENTREPRIS ON 1837, POUR LE MUSÉUM D’HISTOIRE NATURELLE DE PARIS*].”

[refer to following screen for Thoreau’s comment in [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#)]



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

A WEEK: The ready writer seizes the pen, and shouts, Forward! Alamo and Fanning! and after rolls the tide of war. The very walls and fences seem to travel. But the most rapid trot is no flow after all; and thither, reader, you and I, at least, will not follow. A perfectly healthy sentence, it is true, is extremely rare. For the most part we miss the hue and fragrance of the thought; as if we could be satisfied with the dews of the morning or evening without their colors, or the heavens without their azure. The most attractive sentences are, perhaps, not the wisest, but the surest and roundest. They are spoken firmly and conclusively, as if the speaker had a right to know what he says, and if not wise, they have at least been well learned. Sir Walter Raleigh might well be studied if only for the excellence of his style, for he is remarkable in the midst of so many masters. There is a natural emphasis in his style, like a man's tread, and a breathing space between the sentences, which the best of modern writing does not furnish. His chapters are like English parks, or say rather like a Western forest, where the larger growth keeps down the underwood, and one may ride on horseback through the openings. All the distinguished writers of that period possess a greater vigor and naturalness than the more modern, — for it is allowed to slander our own time, — and when we read a quotation from one of them in the midst of a modern author, we seem to have come suddenly upon a greener ground, a greater depth and strength of soil. It is as if a green bough were laid across the page, and we are refreshed as by the sight of fresh grass in midwinter or early spring. You have constantly the warrant of life and experience in what you read. The little that is said is eked out by implication of the much that was done. The sentences are verdurous and blooming as evergreen and flowers, because they are rooted in fact and experience, but our false and florid sentences have only the tints of flowers without their sap or roots. All men are really most attracted by the beauty of plain speech, and they even write in a florid style in imitation of this. They prefer to be misunderstood rather than to come short of its exuberance. Hussein Effendi praised the epistolary style of Ibrahim Pasha to the French traveller Botta, because of "the difficulty of understanding it; there was," he said, "but one person at Jidda, who was capable of understanding and explaining the Pasha's correspondence." A man's whole life is taxed for the least thing well done. It is its net result. Every sentence is the result of a long probation. Where shall we look for standard English, but to the words of a standard man? The word which is best said came nearest to not being spoken at all, for it is cousin to a deed which the speaker could have better done. Nay, almost it must have taken the place of a deed by some urgent necessity, even by some misfortune, so that the truest writer will be some captive knight, after all. And perhaps the fates had such a design, when, having stored Raleigh so richly with the substance of life and experience, they made him a fast prisoner, and compelled him to make his words his deeds, and transfer to his expression the emphasis and sincerity of his action.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Although no-one thought anything of it at the time, Henry's brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), age 27, while hurrying to strop his straight razor and shave before going off to a party, nicked the end of the ring finger of his left hand.



January 8: One music seems to differ from another chiefly in its more perfect time— In the steadiness and equanimity of music lies its divinity. It is the only assured tone When men attain to speak with as settled a faith—and as firm assurance their voices will sing and march as do the feet of the soldier. Because of the perfect time of this music box —its harmony with itself— is its greater dignity and stateliness. This music is more nobly related for its more exact measure — so simple a difference as this more even pace raises it to the higher dignity.



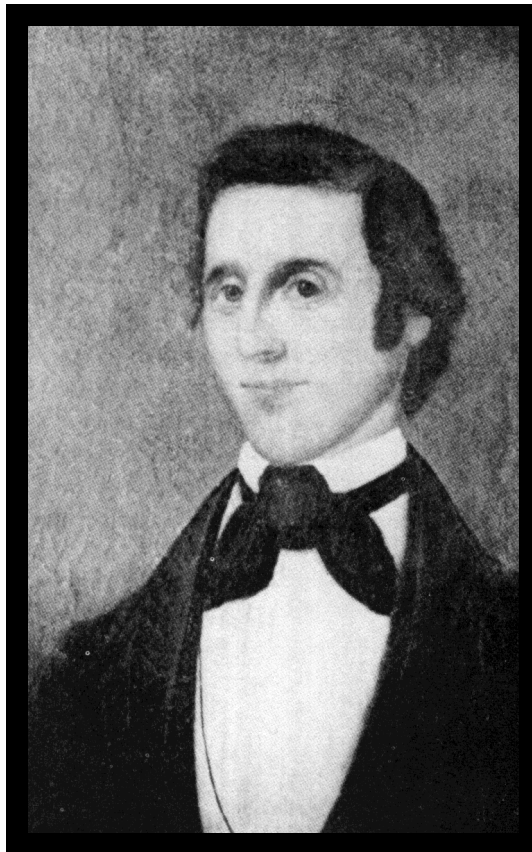
Man's progress in nature should have an accompaniment of music — It relieves the scenery — which is seen through it as a subtler element— like a very clear morning air in autumn. Music wafts me through the clear sultry valleys — with only a light grey vapor against the hills. Of what manner of stuff is the web of time wove — when these consecutive sounds called a strain of music can be wafted down through the centuries from Homer to me— And Homer have been conversant with that same unfathomable mystery and charm, which so newly tingles my ears.— These single strains—these melodious cadences which plainly proceed out of a very deep meaning— and a sustained soul are the interjections of God.

Am I so like thee my brother that the cadences of two notes affects us alike?



It is the arch reformer. It hastens the sun to his setting It invites him to his rising. It is the sweetest reproach, a measured satire.

I know there is a people somewhere this heroism has place Or else things are to be learned which it will be sweet to learn. This cannot be all rumor. When I hear this I think of that everlasting and stable something which is not sound but to be a thrilling reality and can consent to go about the meanest work for as many years of time as it pleases even the Hindo penance — for a year of the gods were as nothing to that which shall come after What then can I do to hasten that other time or that space where there shall be no time and these things be a more living part of my life. Where there will be no discords in my life?



Shall I not sometime have an opportunity to thank him who made music? I feel very when I hear these lofty strains because there must be something in me as lofty that hears— Does it not rather hear me? If my blood were clogged in my veins I am sure it would run more freely— God must be very rich who for the turning of a pivot can pour out such melody on me.— It is a little prophet — it tells me the secrets of futurity — where are its secrets wound up but in this box? So much hope has slumbered.— There are in music such strains as far surpass any faith in the loftiness of man's destiny— He must be very sad before he can comprehend them— The clear liquid note, from the morning fields beyond seems to come through a vale of sadness to man which gives all music a plaintive air— It hath caught a higher pace than any virtue I know.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

January 9, Sunday morning: Lieutenant Vincent Eyre would report³² from the border of [Afghanistan](#) that “Another morning dawned, awakening thousands to increased misery; and many a wretched survivor cast looks of envy at his comrades, who lay stretched beside him in the quiet sleep of death. Daylight was the signal for a renewal of that confusion which attended every movement of the force.” At 8AM, many of the troops and followers began to move forward without orders, but were recalled by the General [General Shelton? General Sale? General Elphinstone?], in consequence of an arrangement with Akber Khan. “This delay, and prolongation of their sufferings in the snow, of which one more march would have carried them clear, made a very unfavourable impression on the minds of the native soldiery, who now, for the first time, began very generally to entertain the idea of deserting.” Akber Khan then proposed that the ladies and children should be made over to his care; and, anxious to save them further suffering, the General gave his consent to the arrangement, permitting their husbands and the wounded officers to accompany them. “Up to this time scarcely one of the ladies had tasted a meal since leaving Cabul. Some had infants a few days old at the breast, and were unable to stand without assistance. Others were so far advanced in pregnancy, that, under ordinary circumstances, a walk across a drawing-room would have been an exertion; yet these helpless women, with their young families, had already been obliged to rough it on the backs of camels, and on the tops of the baggage yaboos: those who had a horse to ride, or were capable of sitting on one, were considered fortunate indeed. Most had been without shelter since quitting the cantonment—their servants had nearly all deserted or been killed—and, with the exception of Lady Macnaghten and Mrs Trevor, they had lost all their baggage, having nothing in the world left but the clothes on their backs; *those*, in the case of some of the invalids, consisted of *night dresses* in which they had started from Cabul in their litters. Under such circumstances, a few more hours would probably have seen some of them stiffening corpses. The offer of Mahomed Akber was consequently their only chance of preservation. Anticipating an attack, the troops paraded to repel it, and it was now found that Her Majesty’s 44th foot regiment mustered only 100 files, and the native infantry regiments about 60 each. “The promises of Mahomed Akber to provide food and fuel were unfulfilled, and another night of starvation and cold consigned more victims to a miserable death.”

In Concord, Massachusetts, [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) began to have symptoms of lockjaw. The local doctor came and cleaned and bandaged John’s finger but his condition worsened.

32. 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?]



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

January 9, Sunday evening: In American farming communities, the danger of receiving a fatal infection through an open wound was a danger which was ever present. This was due to the intimate presence of farm animals. Any accident which produced an open skin cut would be alarming. There was [tetanus](#), there was gangrene (known as “mortification”), there was septicemia (known as “blood poisoning”), and if one of these started — there was no hope and nothing which might be attempted. Most vulnerable were males, from their midteens onward. Lewis Miller, in his *SKETCHES AND CHRONICLES*,³³ described how a young lady tossed an apple at his brother David, 18 years of age, while David was running a cider mill, and how David glanced around and caught his hand in the apple-crushing mechanism and got it “dreadful ground up.” (David would die on the 8th day, of infection.)

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

On this evening a doctor came out to Concord from Boston, but said only that there was nothing that could be done. [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) asked:

“The cup that my Father gives me, shall I not drink it?”³⁴

January 9-February 20: [Henry Thoreau](#) would be making no entries in his journal.

33. Miller, Louis. *SKETCHES AND CHRONICLES: THE REFLECTIONS OF A NINETEENTH CENTURY PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN FOLK ARTIST*. York PA: York County Historical Society, 1966.

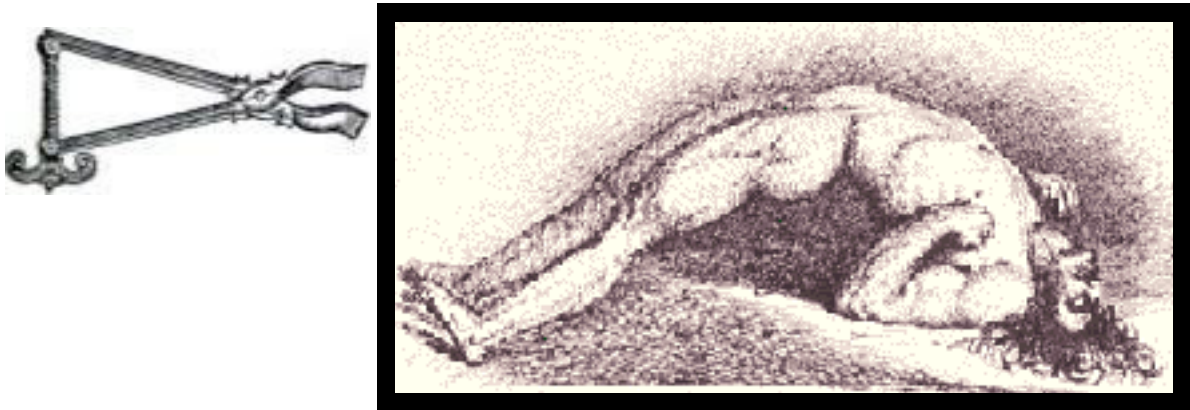
34. Henry never referred to this in his writing, directly, but surely he never could have forgotten his brother, in extremis, making such a remark! The poet W.H. Auden has in 1962 brought forward a snippet from [A WEEK](#), that Thoreau may well have intended as a reminiscence of those days during which he had held his dying brother in his arms:

THE VIKING BOOK OF APHORISMS, A PERSONAL SELECTION BY W.H. AUDEN...

Pg	Topic	Aphorism Selected by Auden out of Thoreau
216	The Professions	It often happens that the sicker man is the nurse to the sounder.

[A WEEK](#): The unwise are accustomed to speak as if some were not sick; but methinks the difference between men in respect to health is not great enough to lay much stress upon. Some are reputed sick and some are not. It often happens that the sicker man is the nurse to the sounder.

January 11, Tuesday: At the last point, while John Junior was delirious, he was thinking that he had written something for his friend Bill Robinson’s Concord Republican, and was trying to get his brother Henry to read this piece.



In the afternoon, in [Henry Thoreau](#)’s arms, at the age of 27, [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) died of [lockjaw](#).³⁵

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

DIED :

In this town, on Tuesday last, suddenly of the lock jaw, Mr JOHN THOREAU, Jr., aged 27.

THOREAU
LIFESPANS

35. Concord town records would, however, list the death as having occurred on January 12th.

On this day and the following one, [Lidian Emerson](#) was composing a letter to her sister:

I begin my letter with the strange sad news that John Thoreau has this afternoon left this world. He died of lockjaw occasioned by a slight cut on his thumb. Henry mentioned on Sunday morning that he had been at home helping the family who were all ailing; and that John was disabled from his usual work by having cut his finger. In the evening Mr. Brooks came for him to go home again, and said they were alarmed by symptoms of the lockjaw in John. Monday John was given over by the physicians – and to-day he died – retaining his senses and some power of speech to the last. He said from the first he knew he should die – but was perfectly quiet and trustful – saying that God had always been good to him and he could trust Him now. His words and behavior throughout were what Mr. Emerson calls manly – even great. Henry has been here this evening and seen Mr. Emerson but no one else. He says John took leave of all the family on Monday with perfect calmness and more than resignation.... Henry has just been here – (it is now Wednesday noon) I love him for the feeling he showed and the effort he made to be cheerful. He did not give way in the least but his whole demeanour was that of one struggling with sickness of heart. He came to take his clothes – and says he does not know when he shall return to us. We are wholly indebted to John for Waldo's picture. Henry and myself each carried him to a sitting but did not succeed in keeping him in the right attitude – and still enough. But John by his faculty of interesting children succeeded in keeping him looking as he should while the impression was making....

Lieutenant Vincent Eyre would report from the border of [Afghanistan](#) that “From Kutter-Sung to Jugdulluk it was one continued conflict; Brigadier Shelton, with his brave little band in the rear, holding overwhelming numbers in check, and literally performing wonders. But no efforts could avail to ward off the withering fire of juzails, which from all sides assailed the crowded column, lining the road with bleeding carcasses. About 3PM the advance reached Jugdulluk, and took up its position behind some ruined walls that crowned a height by the roadside. To show an imposing front, the officers extended themselves in line, and Captain Grant, assistant adjutant-general, at the same moment received a wound in the face. From this eminence they cheered their comrades under Brigadier Shelton in the rear, as they still struggled their way gallantly along every foot of ground, perseveringly followed up by their merciless enemy, until they arrived at their ground. But even here rest was denied them; for the Affghans, immediately occupying two hills which commanded the position, kept up a fire from which the walls of the enclosure afforded but a partial shelter. The exhausted troops and followers now began to suffer greatly from thirst, which they were unable to satisfy. A tempting stream trickled near the foot of the hill, but to venture down to it was certain death. Some snow that covered the ground was eagerly devoured, but increased, instead of alleviating, their sufferings. The raw flesh of three bullocks, which had fortunately been saved, was served out to the soldiers, and ravenously swallowed.”³⁶



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

At about 3:30PM Akber Khan called for Captain Skinner and despite the continuing rifle fire from above the survivors threw themselves down for a brief rest. Captain Bygrave led a sally of about 15 British and the riflemen atop one of the hills fell back, but as they came back down these riflemen returned and resumed firing. At 5PM Captain Skinner brought the information that Akber Khan was requesting a conference with the surviving General and to ensure that the British vacated the town of Jellalabad was demanding Brigadier Shelton and Captain Johnson as hostages. Akber Khan would feed these officers but not permit them to return to their troops.

36. 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?]

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

January 14(?), Friday(?): In rural New England, the town bell would be rung three times at the death of a child, six times for a woman, and nine times for a man. Then there would be a pause, and the death bell would be tolled once for each year of life of the deceased. In the Freeman Family Papers available in the Old Stourbridge Village Research Library in Stourbridge, Lyndon Freeman reminisced that “It was seldom that we could not tell who was the deceased person.” Why did it have to be the Reverend Barzillai Frost who officiated at John’s funeral?



With slow even blows he drove his wedge into the Thoreau family, suggesting that it might be a mistake to suppose that the dearly departed had “adopted the transcendental views to any considerable extent,” because although [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) had been exposed to such “revolutionary opinions abroad in society in regard to inspiration and religious instructions,” he had escaped this infection, or at least he had recently seemed to the reverend to have been shaking off this influence and coming toward “those views which have fortified the minds of the great majority of the wise and good in all ages.” In the absence of any deathbed conversion, Frost was imagining a post-deathbed conversion: alive or dead, people were going to see that



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

it was Barzillai Frost who owned the truth.

TRANSCENDENTALISM

The truth this man owned had something to do with the texts, James 4:14 and Job 14:2, upon which he relied for his funeral eulogy:

"For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away."
"He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down."

We note that these two texts used in Frost's eulogy of [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), by commenting upon human impermanence, place emphasis upon the human desire for permanence. I believe these were not hinted at by [Henry Thoreau](#) in any of his many uses of scriptural phraseology. It may be that such texts had by Frost's touch become contaminated, or become too painful to be contemplated. But, more likely in view of Thoreau's attitude toward time and eternity, Thoreau simply couldn't respect the human lust for permanence. An interesting letter has been found, dating to this period, from an Abby Tolman to her friend Eliza Woodward:



Have you received last week's paper? If so you have seen the death of J. Thoreau. How sad and melancholy his death seems. I cannot realize he is gone, that his bright cheerful countenance and pleasant voice will no longer be heard among us. Very few would be missed as he will among us. He was generally known but I do not think his character was truly appreciated by many. I presume you will learn more particulars of his sickness and death before this letter reaches you.... I'm glad that I have known him, my acquaintance with him though short will always be pleasantly remembered.



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

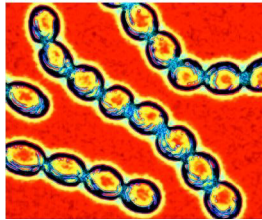
JOHN THOREAU, JR.



January 22, Saturday: Representative John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, in speaking in his own defense on the charge that he had a “monomania” in regard to the abuse of Americans of color, and in attempting to preserve his chairmanship over the House’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, made the tactical error of including one of his forbidden attacks upon the institution of human [slavery](#).



[Ellen Emerson](#) began to show symptoms of [scarlet fever](#).



[Henry Thoreau](#), who had held [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) in his arms as he gasped and heaved, began himself to have symptoms of [lockjaw](#). Perhaps one of the things he was remembering was that this had almost happened at age 3 or 4, when he had chopped his own toe with a dirty hatchet: how easy it would have been for him to have completed his earthly career at that early point!



37. See the screens for 1820-1821, for my son Guy Duramen Meredith's cartoon of that event.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

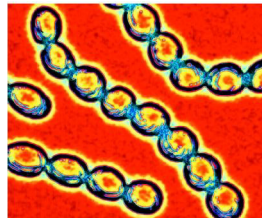
JOHN THOREAU, JR.

January 24, Monday: During the course of this morning, after the doctor and the Thoreau family had given up hope, it became apparent that [Henry Thoreau](#)'s symptoms were a sympathetic reaction rather than the result of an infection. His paralysis although life threatening was sympathetic, and although it left him in a weakened condition for a number of months, he did gradually recover and gradually resume various work activities, chopping wood, etc. On his walk he found a tree in the stripped forest that had retained all its leaves, to rustle sere and tattered in the winter gusts. Investigating, he found that it had been blasted by lightning that summer, and sympathetically noted that it had been unable to summon adequate life energy to cast them off.



The injured man with querulous tone resisting his age & destiny is like a tree struck by lightning, which rustles its sere leaves the winter through, not having vigor enough to cast them off.

In his childhood, [Henry](#), terrified at thunderstorms, had taken refuge in his father's bedroom. William Blake had said a fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees. Can you see this lightning-blasted tree, and why this lightning-blasted man noticed it? But enough about Thoreau and his sympathies, for on this evening [Wallie Emerson](#), age 5, began to have symptoms of [scarlet fever](#).



This was the day on which Representative John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts was presenting a petition that the federal union be dissolved.



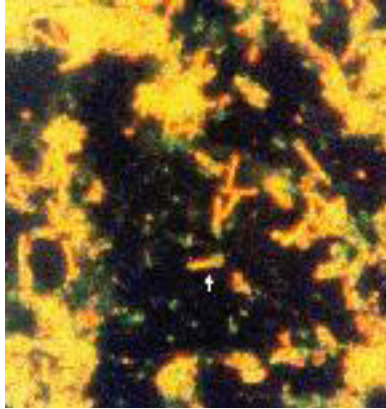
[Waldo Emerson](#) had returned to Concord from his 8th and final lecture on "The Times" at the Masonic Temple in Boston, and, in a letter to his brother, he wrote:

My pleasure in getting home on Saturday night at the end of my task was somewhat checked by finding that Henry Thoreau who had been at his father's since the death of his brother was ill & threatened with lockjaw! his brothers disease. It is strange – unaccountable – yet the symptoms seemed precise & on the increase. You may judge we were all alarmed & I not the least who have the highest hopes of this youth. This morning his affection be it what it may, is relieved essentially, & what is best, his own feeling of better health established.

TETANUS

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.



January 27, Thursday: In the House of Representatives, Representative John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts demanded the opportunity to defend himself against the charges leveled against him, that he was overpreoccupied with a single issue, the dismantling of the institution of human enslavement in the United States of America.

John Marston, who had known [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) while he had been teaching school in the 1830s in Taunton MA, wrote a letter of condolence to Helen and Sophia Thoreau. The letter would be postmarked on the 31st in Taunton, and the sender prepaid a charge of 25 cents. Louisa Marston included with this letter a note of her own.

1843

January 12, Thursday: Anniversary of brother John's death. Peter C. Carafiol would observed in 1991 in *THE AMERICAN IDEAL: LITERARY HISTORY AS A WORLDLY ACTIVITY* (NY: Oxford UP) that:



I disagree with John Carlos Rowe's assertion, typical of treatments of this issue, that "the importance of [[John Thoreau, Jr.](#)]'s death as a controlling concern cannot be overemphasized." I think it has almost always been overemphasized.

(Note that Rowe had merely been bringing forward uncritically the Richard Bridgman sort of speculation from 1982's *DARK THOREAU*.)

1844

January 12, Tuesday: Anniversary of brother John's death. Peter C. Carafiol would observed in 1991 in THE AMERICAN IDEAL: LITERARY HISTORY AS A WORLDLY ACTIVITY (NY: Oxford UP) that:



I disagree with John Carlos Rowe's assertion, typical of treatments of this issue, that "the importance of [John Thoreau, Jr.]'s] death as a controlling concern cannot be overemphasized." I think it has almost always been overemphasized.

(Note that Rowe had merely been bringing forward uncritically the Richard Bridgman sort of speculation from 1982's DARK THOREAU.)

Dorothea Dix submitted a memorial to the New York state legislature, the 2d of many such documents in her international crusade for improved treatment conditions for people with mental illness (her initial memorial had been presented to the Massachusetts legislature in 1843). Dix was able to provide ample documentation for widespread filthy, brutalizing, and degrading conditions. Her crusade to expose such practices would in many cases result in new state facilities and less demeaning care.³⁹

PSYCHOLOGY



39. Street, W.R. A CHRONOLOGY OF NOTEWORTHY EVENTS IN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY. Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1994



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

1845

January 12, Sunday: Anniversary of brother John's death. Peter C. Carafiol would observed in 1991 in THE AMERICAN IDEAL: LITERARY HISTORY AS A WORLDLY ACTIVITY (NY: Oxford UP) that:



I disagree with John Carlos Rowe's assertion, typical of treatments of this issue, that "the importance of [John Thoreau, Jr.]'s death as a controlling concern cannot be overemphasized." I think it has almost always been overemphasized.

(Note that Rowe had merely been bringing forward uncritically the Richard Bridgman sort of speculation from 1982's DARK THOREAU.)

1849

Early June: Some day early in June was the day for the Artillery Election Sermon, which I suppose would have been held on the parade grounds out in what is now Sleepy Hollow.⁴⁰

[Helen Louisa Thoreau](#) was continuing gradually to weaken due to [tuberculosis](#). This was a well understood process at the time, it was something that was happening in a lot of families, it was like AIDS in that everybody knew pretty much how such a wasting illness was going to progress and what the inevitable result was going to be. A letter from Aunt Maria Thoreau to a family friend, now held by the Huntington Library, indicates that when [Henry Thoreau](#) learned of the presence in Concord of an itinerant Daguerreotypist (not necessarily on Artillery Election Day) he persuaded him to come to the Thoreau home to photograph his sister, holding a nosegay, her head propped up by her hand.



During the same session [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) was also separately Daguerreotyped, holding a closed mother-of-pearl inlaid Daguerreotype case that may well have contained an image of the deceased brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) — but Sophia was unsatisfied with the image and so the Daguerreotypist was recalled for another sitting.



40. This was not the general election day, the last Wednesday in May, as it didn't have anything to do with voting but had to do rather with patriotic indoctrination. The "Artillery Election" sermon was delivered annually before the assembled state militia, and focused on the military and upon preparedness for combat. An "Election" sermon was also preached annually to the governor and legislature after their election of their new officers (in Massachusetts, election sermons would occur for 256 consecutive years).



JOHN THOREAU, JR.

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

Within a week Helen would succumb to her [tuberculosis](#).

1863

Louisa Sampson Ricketson died.

Writing to describe his experience of [Henry Thoreau](#), [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) said in part that:



I do not remember of ever seeing him laugh outright, but he was ever ready to smile at anything that pleased him; and I never knew him to betray any tender emotion except on one occasion, when he was narrating to me the death of his only brother, John Thoreau, from lockjaw, strong symptoms of which, from his sympathy with the sufferer, he himself experienced. At this time his voice was choked, and he shed tears, and went to the door for air. The subject was of course dropped, and never recurred to again.

LOCKJAW

JOHN THOREAU, JR.

NEW BEDFORD MA

September 2, Wednesday: Calvin H. Greene had breakfast at the Middlesex House in [Concord](#), and then walked out to the cemetery, where he searched around and asked directions through the old burial grounds and the new burial grounds and the Sleepy Hollow area until he found a grave with a headstone that read “John Thoreau Jr.” and near it a new, unmarked grave. He then went into Walden Woods to Walden Pond and sought out the cite of [Henry Thoreau](#)’s cabin, and his bean-field. Later on this day he visited [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) at their home, and Thoreau’s mother told him “Why, this room (their parlor,) did not seem like a sickroom! — My son wanted flowers & pictures & books all around here — & he was always so cheerful & wanted others to be so too, while about him! And during the nights he wanted the lamp set on the floor — (footlights?) and some chairs placed around behind it (actors?) so that, in his waking or semi-sleeping hours he could somehow amuse himself...”

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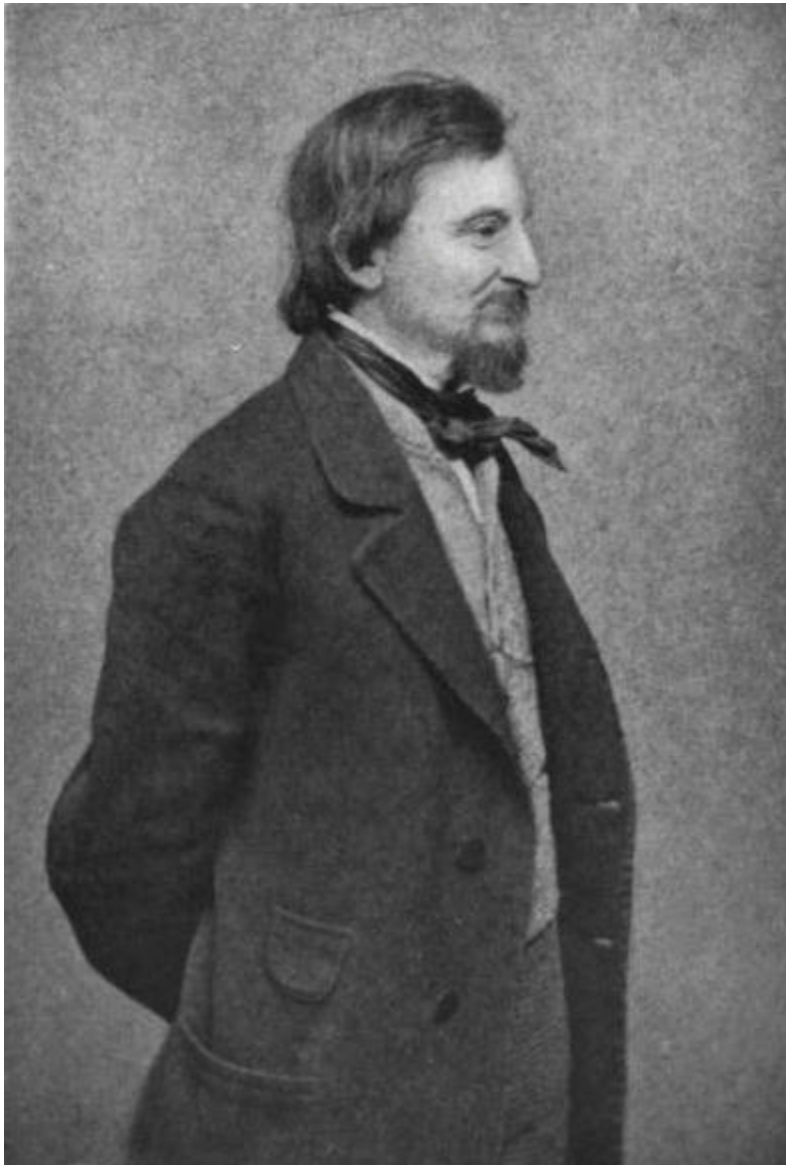
1893

January 4, Wednesday: Edward S. Burgess wrote a short manuscript of “Notes on [Concord](#) People,” which is now on deposit in the Concord Free Public Library (this document mentions [Henry Thoreau](#), his brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), his sister [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), [Edward Sherman Hoar](#), and [John Burroughs](#)):

Thoreau’s brother John was of practical rather than literary bent. Singular, it is that there is so little of him in Henry’s book Week on Concord when he too was bred in our schools & had

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the same adventures Henry had. He was frightened to death. He cut his finger, lockjaw followed. Henry held him in his arms when he died. Henry told me for 2 or 3 days after that he felt the lockjaw tightening on him too – so great was his sympathy. Henry was very affectionate; he had a great deal of sympathy that people did not know; during his last illness he received a great deal of attention; people were constantly coming & sending him flowers &c. He came to feel very differently toward people, & said if he had known he wouldn't have been so offish. He had got into his head before that people didn't mean what they said....

LOCKJAW

*From Mr. Edward Hoar. Dec. 30, '92.
I have just finished reading Thoreau's "Winter." There is not so much natural history in it as in some other works, not so*



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much as there is of matter addressed to man's moral nature. I have greatly regretted that I did not know Thoreau better. Did you not often go out with him? Yes, I did; I was one of the few to whom he granted that favor. I was shown that side of his nature to the full, the natural history side, the minute observer. But there were other sides to him, and I was wholly unaware then of the moral side that appears so strongly in his books. He did not show me that in our walks. Thoreau was intensely a moralist, to him everything was valuable according as it appealed to the moral sentiment & he would lose no opportunity to intone a moral sentiment. Nor would he lose any opportunity for observing nature, even if it was to get up in dark night and watch for hours the lightning and a rotten log in Maine. He was ready to open that side of himself to any one who would pay the price. But that meant, to go with him in his walk; to walk long & far; to have wet feet & go so for hours; to pull a boat all day & to come home late at night after many miles. If you would do that with him, he would take you with him. If you flinched at anything, he had no more use for you. Thoreau was of a very fine-grained family. He knew he had not long to live & he determined to make the most of it. How to observe and acquire knowledge & secure the [word?] aspects of life without much expenditure of money was his great study. He would not wait as most men, to acquire a competence before settling down to realize the ends of life. He would show how they could be secured without money; or with very little. This was the object of his Walden Pond.

Thoreau's family had a scrofulous tendency; his sister Sophia, a very fine-grained nature, died of consumption and so did his brother; he died in Thoreau's arms & that nearly killed Henry....

I could not become a good ornithologist. When I was young I was a good shot, & could hit a bird on the wing at 200 yards. But when I became acquainted with Henry Thoreau, he persuaded me out of it. He would never shoot a bird, & I think his method greatly preferable to that of Mr. John Burroughs. Thoreau would lie & watch the movements of a bird for hours & also get the [word?] he wanted. He used to say that if you shot the bird, you got only a dead bird anyway; you could make out a few parts in anatomy or plumage just such as all Dr. Coues' work is; but you couldn't see how the bird lives & acts. Since then I have never shot a bird....

I think Thoreau has suffered in his editing. I think many things have been published which should not have been, notes & hints in [word?] to guide himself in future observations which are of no use to the public.



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1905

Four hundred and eighty-nine copies of THE FIRST AND LAST JOURNEYS OF THOREAU, edited by [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), were printed in two volumes for members of the Bibliophile Society.

VIEW THE PAGE IMAGES

Sanborn alleged that much of the material Thoreau had inserted into his account of his adventure, with his brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) on the Concord and the Merrimack rivers into the mountains of southern New Hampshire in 1849, actually had originated during this 1844 hiking tour with Channing into the mountains of western Massachusetts and New York state: "This journey Thoreau in THE WEEK breaks into two parts, printing the last first, near the beginning of his "Tuesday," where it runs on for fourteen pages. Then ... he takes up the tale of his tramp from Shelburne Falls on the Deerfield River, up the valley of that stream, and over the Hoosac Mountain, through which the railroad has since bored its way." [Professor Walter Roy Harding](#) has commented, in attempting to rework this Sanborn material, that:

In 1905 [Henry Thoreau](#)'s friend and biographer [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) edited the manuscript for a volume limited in distribution to the 489 members of the Bibliophile Society of Boston, Massachusetts. Enough has been said elsewhere of Sanborn's high-handed editorial techniques so that I need add little other than to say that in general he added confusion to the already existent chaos. Instead of following either the order of the manuscript or a chronological order, he skipped around haphazardly, sometimes quoting Thoreau literally, sometimes paraphrasing, and often omitting - but never indicating which of the three techniques he was following at the moment. His edition gives an entirely misleading picture of the manuscript, though in fairness to Sanborn, it should be added that when he did follow the manuscript, he showed remarkable ability in deciphering Thoreau's atrocious handwriting. Since Sanborn's time several other scholars have looked at the manuscript but have given it up as a hopeless confusion. The real stumbling block has been the numbering of the pages. Because tradition said that they had been numbered by Thoreau (Evadene Swanson, "The Manuscript Journal of Thoreau's Last Journey," [Minnesota History](#), XX, 1939, 170), it was assumed that they must be in the order he wished them. Yet Lyndon Shanley's experience with the Walden manuscripts ([The Making of Walden](#), Chicago, 1957) and Arthur Christy's with the Harvard Thoreau manuscripts ([The Transmigration of the Seven Brahmins](#), New York vi 1932) should have made scholars aware of the fact that most of Thoreau's manuscripts have become badly jumbled through the years.

TIMELINE OF JOURNAL



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1926

T.M. Raysor, an English professor specializing in Coleridge, had married a descendant of Miss Prudence Ward and of Ellen Devereux Sewall, and had learned a thing or to from the idle chatter of his in-laws. What had he



learned? That they were of the opinion that their lodger ancestor living in the Thoreau boardinghouse had had a conversation with [Henry Thoreau](#), in which he had confessed to her the following simplistic equivalences:

lost hound	Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr.
lost bay horse	John Thoreau, Jr.
lost turtle-dove	Ellen Devereux Sewall



Was there any sort of document to support the “memory” of these in-laws? No. There was nothing whatever to indicate that one of them had not simply made this up. Nevertheless, the good professor placed a “Love Story of Thoreau” in [Studies in Philology](#) 23, alleging the above.

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.



(Refer to Raymond Adams's "Thoreau's Growth at Walden," Christian Register 224 [1945]: 268-70.)

**The
WALDEN
parable**

**The
other
analyses**

According to Professor Thomas Middleton Raysor, his in-laws made him do it:

Miss Sewall ... told her story to her daughters, who have now expressed their willingness for its publication. Two of Ellen Sewall's daughters, Mrs. George Davenport of Los Angeles and



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Mrs. L. O. Koopman of Cambridge, Mass., wrote down the story which she had told them separately. This account ... is the basis of this article.

Since the account supplied to Professor Raysor by these two of his in-laws, Mrs. George Davenport of Los Angeles, California and Mrs. L.O. Koopman of Cambridge, Massachusetts—that Thoreau's lost hound was their relative Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr., that his lost bay horse was his brother John Thoreau, Jr., and that his lost turtle-dove was their relative Ellen Devereux Sewall—is patently absurd as an interpretation of the passage, it is obvious that somebody has concocted out of whole cloth what they considered to be a plausible literary exegesis. Now it may be that Miss Prudence Crandall was the liar, or it may be that some intermediary descendant was the liar, or that Mrs. Davenport and Mrs. Koopman were liars, or that Professor Raysor was a liar. —This family tale can only have originated as a plausible invention because Thoreau simply was not, at the time of its origination, in search for any one of this trio of personages. However, I don't care enough to investigate which of these persons it was who originated this obvious fabrication.

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.

— Henry Seidel Canby, THOREAU (Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1939)


By the way, you won't need to remind me to never look at anything that Professor Raysor, a Coleridge expert, ever wrote about Samuel Taylor Coleridge. As far as I am concerned, merely by passing along a fabrication like this, whether or not he personally originated it, he has discredited himself as a scholar.

1971

According to Edward Weeks, an editor at The Atlantic Monthly, writing an essay included in Louis Kronenberger's ATLANTIC BRIEF LIVES: A BIOGRAPHICAL COMPANION TO THE ARTS (Boston: Little, Brown, page 779), Henry Thoreau's brother's name had been Tom Thoreau and their school had already been disbanded in 1839 rather than remaining active into 1841:

The progressive school for twenty-five pupils at which he and his older brother Tom had enjoyed teaching was disbanded in 1839, and that summer the brothers took a leisurely trip on the Concord and Merrimack rivers, in a skiff of their building, sleeping in a pup tent, their staples the potatoes and melons from home. Both kept diaries which provide the text for Henry's first book ten years later.

1976

 Moller, Mary Elkins. "Thoreau, Womankind, and Sexuality." ESQ 22 (1976): 123-48

HOMOSEXUALITY

“A Review From Professor Ross’s Seminar”

FIRST REVIEW: In this article Moller analyzes [Henry Thoreau](#)’s attitudes toward women and his own sexuality. She identifies two popular opinions regarding this subject: that Thoreau was “a woman-hater, and that his feeling about sex was consistently negative.” Moller, however, recognizes a “functional distinction” between Thoreau’s view of women in general and his view of sexuality and proceeds to prove the “striking contradictions” – the “frequent ambivalence” – existing between them.

Thoreau’s relationships with the members of his own family, reveal that “there is little in what is known ... which would have disposed him to serious or chronic misogyny.” He had a good relationship with his active mother [[Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#)], a close relationship with his older sister [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#), and after Helen’s death, an increasingly strong relationship with his other sister [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#). And although the death of his brother [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) made the family “quite lopsidedly female,” Thoreau’s “escapes” into the countryside are balanced by his desired returns to the [Concord](#) home.

During the years 1837-1842, his “impressionable years,” several women evoked Thoreau’s response. Among these is Margaret Fuller, the intelligent, strong-willed editor of [THE DIAL](#), with whom he maintained a constant though never intimate friendship. In contrast to his admiration of Margaret, Thoreau revealed his impatience with the lecturer Mrs. Elizabeth Oakes Smith, whose “flirtatiousness or frivolity” annoyed him. Thoreau included several “exasperated outbursts” in his JOURNAL as he reacted against the stereotypical “ideal woman”: the woman whose priority was “to be as pretty and charming as possible, and as pliant, and helpless as necessary, in order to attract the admiration of men.” While he condemned women’s “slavery” to fashion and to the idea of marriage, he praised [Waldo Emerson](#)’s aunt, [Mary Moody Emerson](#), for her wisdom and clear thinking. Thoreau also maintained positive relationships with other women in the Concord community, women such as Emerson’s daughters [[Ellen Emerson](#) and [Edith Emerson](#)], [Sophia Peabody Hawthorne](#), Mrs. Mary Peabody Mann, etc.

However, there were four women to whom Thoreau was attracted romantically during 1837-1845. The first was [Mrs. Lucy Jackson Brown](#), Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#)’s elder sister. Although she was twenty years older than he, Thoreau revealed a “half younger-brotherly and half lover-like” affection for her. It was Ellen Devereux Sewall, however, to whom Thoreau eventually proposed. During a visit with her grandmother then living with the Thoreaus, Ellen sparked the interest of both John and Henry. Later, after John had proposed to Ellen, been initially accepted then rejected, Henry asked for her hand in marriage but was also refused. This was Thoreau’s “closest brush with matrimony.” His third romantic encounter was with Mary Ellen Russell, a young friend of the Emersons who sometimes acted as the children’s governess. While both she and Thoreau were living in the Emerson home, they developed a strong mutual attraction.

But it was Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#) for whom Thoreau probably maintained the longest sustained admiration and attraction. Getting to know Lydia during his residences in the Emerson home, Thoreau wrote letters to her that were often intimate in tone, although there is no evidence “that any physical intimacy ever took place.” Thoreau realized Lidian was “ultimately inaccessible” and eventually

“A Review From Professor Ross’s Seminar”

decided he would never marry. This decision did not seem to be based solely on the fact that he could not marry the woman he loved or on some critics’ assumption that he was not capable of propagation. Indeed, Thoreau appeared to be “an extraordinarily sensuous man” who had “by no means lost all interest in sexual love.”

His view of love and marriage, however, seemed to be ambivalent. While taking offense at Channing’s vulgar allusions to sex, [Henry Thoreau](#) often maintained a seemingly “puritanical” attitude: he expressed “diffidence and shame” regarding his thoughts in the piece “Chastity and Sensuality” and in a journal entry expressed “disgust” toward his own body with its sexual desires. Nevertheless, Thoreau at times wrote idealistically of the “passionate love between men and women,” revealing “his own yearning for a mate.” And in many different passages Thoreau used “erotically suggestive imagery” or “sex-related figures of speech.” Clearly Thoreau was not “hostile” to the idea of sexual love but “acknowledged his own sexuality, and that of every other man and woman, as a valued part of his and their emotional nature and thus at the core of a sympathetic relatedness to all other human beings.”

[Janet B. Ergino (Sommers), May 1989]

SECOND REVIEW: A long article the sole purpose of which seems to be to prove that Thoreau was heterosexual, had sexual attractions to several women (we know which ones), and perhaps was actually sexually active.

Moller makes a distinction between Thoreau’s general attitude toward women and his feelings for specific women. She points out his idealization of women and contrasts it with the way he felt about young, non-intellectual women. “What Thoreau reacted against was a traditional stereotype of ideal womanhood: the assumption that the first business of any girl or woman is to be as pretty and charming as possible” to attract a mate and that intellect and independence are dangerous. She then cites several journal passages which are critical of women’s frivolity and explores Thoreau’s feelings toward older, intellectual women, such as [Mary Moody Emerson](#) and Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#).

Moller discounts [homosexual](#) tendencies that Thoreau might have had with a cursory look at his poem “Sympathy” (the “gentle boy” poem). She calls his attraction to Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr. “a fleeting emotional complication.” She does not however mention any journal passages from that time which are also homoerotic and celebrate masculinity. She cites four passages that illustrate Thoreau’s feelings for Ellen Devereux Sewall at that time, though she admits that by the time he proposed to her he probably wasn’t seriously interested.

She, of course, spends a lot of time on the relationship with Lidian Emerson and points out the passionate letters. She contrasts the letters from Staten Island to later letters which treat Lidian as a sister.

Finally Moller discusses “Love” and “Chastity and Sensuality.” Her conclusion is that Thoreau meant “control” when he said “chastity” and not “celibacy.” She asserts that sexual love was not necessarily taboo for Thoreau unless it was outside of a truly affectionate and highly intellectual relationship. She suggests that Thoreau may have been sexually active himself, though he probably was limited to wet dreams and [masturbation](#).

The point of all this sex talk, of course, is to find out what Thoreau’s sexuality had to do with his writing and his views of women, ideas of purity, etc. Moller doesn’t discuss Thoreau’s asceticism at all and largely ignores his feelings toward men and the sexuality that may have been behind it. The article seems to be a justification of Thoreau as a lover of women and not a misogynist.

[James J. Berg, May 8, 1989]



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Professor Richard M. Bridgman's DARK THOREAU was issued out of Lincoln, Nebraska by U of Nebraska P, a respected academic publisher.

The author of this effort in telepathic psychobabble had cherry-picked the evidences for a deeply pessimistic Thoreau "who could rarely bring himself to admit it; that he had a hostile, punishing streak in him, manifested most vividly in his imagery; that severe tensions necessarily existed between his temperament and his acquired idealism; and that, in consequence, his writings contain a good number of opaque and sometimes bizarre moments that can be attributed to these conditions of psychological strain." Henry was "a tormented and sometimes quite savage man, whose prose can be variously bizarre, ugly and opaque, although such moments are customarily ignored discreetly, since they fail to illustrate the affirmative individualist and priest of Nature." Not only that, but groking the secret nature of the author is Bridgman's shortcut to understanding the author's literary work: "The cost of ignoring these symptoms of Thoreau's humanity is a skewed understanding of his accomplishments as a writer."

As cherry-picked evidence for Thoreau's "plenitude of violent feelings" Bridgman cited among other things the famous incident while teaching in the Concord Town School as a recent graduate of Harvard College. "Admonished by an observing committeeman and deacon to thrash his pupils, Thoreau at first refused, then took six of them ostensibly at random (including, disconcertingly enough, 'the maid-servant in his own house'), used the ferule on them, and resigned his position."

Well, well! Had Henry indeed been under the sway of a "plenitude of violent feelings," would it not have made more sense for him to have remained in this well-paid position as the chief Concord schoolmaster — in order to be able to express daily his "hostile, punishing streak" by whailing away at the defenseless child scholars?⁴¹

About this order of speculation Peter C. Carafiol would comment in 1991, in his THE AMERICAN IDEAL: LITERARY HISTORY AS A WORLDLY ACTIVITY (NY: Oxford UP), that:



I disagree with John Carlos Rowe's assertion, typical of treatments of this issue, that "the importance of [[John Thoreau, Jr.](#)]'s death as a controlling concern cannot be overemphasized." I think it has almost always been overemphasized.

41. Having intuited the secret nature of Thoreau, Professor Bridgman would turn to intuiting the secret nature of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, who will seem to him to be sorta like unto some kinda shark: "He moved to keep from sinking." Such literary pushups would enable him to become the chair of the Mark Twain Project at The Bancroft Library, and a member of the James Russell Lowell Prize Committee of the Modern Language Association!



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

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



Prepared: October 25, 2013

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JOHN THOREAU, JR.

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.

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