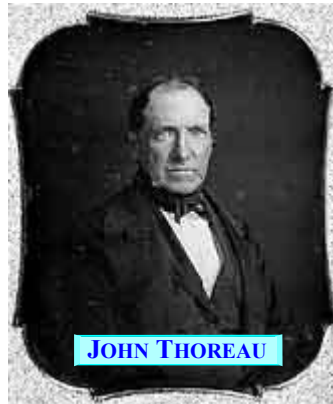


HENRY'S RELATIVES

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



(John, in later years)

A piece of inventive doggerel by [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#), who became a Thoreau family intimate, can help with the recurring question of the pronunciation of that family's name. We note that in this effort, the author underscored the words "Thor" and "row":

**My dear old Northman, sitting by the sea,
Whose azure tint is seen, reflected in the e'e,
Leave your sharks and your dolphins, and eke the sporting whale,
And for a little while on milder scenes regale:
My heart is beating strongly to see your face once more,
So leave the land of Thor, and row along our shore!**

I am, it would appear, actually not the 1st to hypothesize that the terrible history of the [Huguenot](#) diaspora must have had a marked impact upon the Thoreau family of Concord's general concept of the world. Horace Rice Hosmer's Huguenot hypothesis was that [John Thoreau, Sr.](#) was "a terribly cautious and secretive man" because he had been made so by "the religious persecution of his Huguenot ancestors":

I have tried to understand and describe a true French Gentleman of the middle class in the person of John Thoreau Sen. He was French from the shrug of his shoulders to his snuff box. I never saw a Yankee hair on his head. He was not alone in Concord and vicinity. A Frenchman [Chevally] married my grandmother's sister [Sarah Hosmer] and he was a Huguenot. John Le Gross lived in Concord with John Thoreau. The first Le Gross was an Aide to Lafayette. John Le Grosse would say more quaint, original things during a conversation, than any man I have ever seen. Lewis Rouillard is another French name. The Surettes of Concord [for whom [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed] are of French origin [sic] and are brainy fellows.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1787

October 8, Monday: [John Thoreau](#) was born in [Boston](#), son of [Jane “Jennie” Burns Thoreau](#) and [Jean Thoreau](#) (a member of the 4th cohort after the great [Huguenot](#) diaspora that had begun during the 16th Century, which would make his son [Henry Thoreau](#) out to be a member of the 5th cohort).¹

Meanwhile, back in France, King Louis XVI was issuing an “Edict of Toleration” which, among other things, was bringing to a state of legitimacy all the bastards who had been produced by a previous state ruling — that any marriage between loyal French Catholics and loyal French [Huguenots](#) was outside the law.

THOREAU
LIFESPANS

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT



1. Note: We don't have a date of birth for the other [John Thoreau](#), who would become a British officer. The most we can do safely is, to assign him to the same generation of the Thoreau family as this American [John Thoreau](#).



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1796

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

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

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR****JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR****1797**

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

Three Suns and an Inverted Rainbow.

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



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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



After the death of [Jean Thoreau](#)'s 1st wife [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in the previous year, Papa Jean had 8 children to rear the oldest of whom, at that point, [John Thoreau](#), would have been but 10 years of age. He got married a 2d time, the Reverend Ezra Ripley presiding, to a another parent who had minor children to rear, Rebecca Hurd Kettell the widow of a Mr. Kettell.²

Marriages

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

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

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

HENRY'S RELATIVES

2. Volume 30, page 469 of Boston marriage records lists this wedding as taking place on May 10th [sic] and as between "John Thoreau & Rebecca Kittle [sic] of Concord."

MRS. REBECCA KETTELL THOREAU



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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

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

On the left inside the bottom is found:

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

The composition continues inside the top left:

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

The composition resumes at the top right:

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

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

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

Inside the right bottom we find:

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

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

1799

[Jean Thoreau](#) of Boston purchased a house next door to the building in [Concord](#) in which the town stored its explosives.³



January 23, Saturday, 1858: ... Mrs. William Monroe told Sophia last evening that she remembered her (Sophia's) grandfather very well, that he was taller than Father, and used to ride out to their house—she was a Stone and lived where she and her husband did afterward, now Darius Merriam's—when they made cheeses, to drink the whey, being in consumption. She said that she remembered Grandmother too, Jennie Burns, how she came to the schoolroom (in Middle Street (?), Boston) once, leading her little daughter Elizabeth, the latter so small that she could not tell her name distinctly, but spoke thick and lispingly,—“Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau.”⁴

JANE “JENNIE” BURNS THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

CONSUMPTION

One should not forbear to mention that it would not have taken much to be “taller than Father” [John Thoreau](#), who was a remarkably short man, and that thus this passage in the journal **in no way** implied that [Jean Thoreau](#) had been tall:

3. This house is now the north end of the Colonial Inn, the building to the right, and to the best of any guest's knowledge no explosives are being stored next door.


4. Vide February 7th.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR




Table of Altitudes

	Yoda	2 ' 0 "
	Lavinia Warren	2 ' 8 "
	Tom Thumb, Jr.	3 ' 4 "
	Lucy (Australopithecus Afarensis)	3 ' 8 "
	Hervé Villechaize ("Fantasy Island")	3 ' 11"
	Charles Proteus Steinmetz	4 ' 0 "
	Mary Moody Emerson per FBS (1)	4 ' 3 "
	Alexander Pope	4 ' 6 "
	Benjamin Lay	4 ' 7 "
	Gary Coleman ("Arnold Jackson")	4 ' 8 "
	Queen Victoria with osteoporosis	4 ' 8 "
	Queen Victoria as adult	4 ' 10 "
	Margaret Mitchell	4 ' 10 "
	length of newer military musket	4 ' 10"
	Charlotte Brontë	4 ' 10-11"
	Harriet Beecher Stowe	4 ' 11"
	Laura Ingalls Wilder	4 ' 11"
	a rather tall adult Pygmy male	4 ' 11"
	John Keats	5 ' 0 "
	Clara Barton	5 ' 0 "
	Isambard Kingdom Brunel	5 ' 0 "
	Andrew Carnegie	5 ' 0 "
	Thomas de Quincey	5 ' 0 "
	Stephen A. Douglas	5 ' 0 "
	Danny DeVito	5 ' 0 "
	Immanuel Kant	5 ' 0 "
	William Wilberforce	5 ' 0 "
	Mae West	5 ' 0 "
	Mother Teresa	5 ' 0 "
	Deng Xiaoping	5 ' 0 "
	Dred Scott	5 ' 0 " (±)
	Captain William Bligh of HMS <i>Bounty</i>	5 ' 0 " (±)
	Harriet Tubman	5 ' 0 " (±)
	Mary Moody Emerson per FBS (2)	5 ' 0 " (±)
	John Brown of Providence, Rhode Island	5 ' 0 " (+)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

	Bette Midler	5' 1 "
	Jemmy Button	5' 2 "
	Margaret Mead	5' 2 "
	R. Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller	5' 2 "
	Yuri Gagarin the astronaut	5' 2 "
	William Walker	5' 2 "
	Horatio Alger, Jr.	5' 2 "
	length of older military musket	5' 2 "
	the artist formerly known as Prince	5' 2 1/2 "
	typical female of Thoreau's period	5' 2 1/2 "
	Francis of Assisi	5' 3 "
	Voltaire	5' 3 "
	Mohandas Gandhi	5' 3 "
	Sammy Davis, Jr.	5' 3 "
	Kahlil Gibran	5' 3 "
	Friend Daniel Ricketson	5' 3 "
	The Reverend Gilbert White	5' 3 "
	Nikita Khrushchev	5' 3 "
	Sammy Davis, Jr.	5' 3 "
	Truman Capote	5' 3 "
	Kim Jong Il (North Korea)	5' 3 "
	Stephen A. "Little Giant" Douglas	5' 4 "
	Francisco Franco	5' 4 "
	President James Madison	5' 4 "
	Iosef Vissarionovich Dzugashvili "Stalin"	5' 4 "
	Alan Ladd	5' 4 "
	Pablo Picasso	5' 4 "
	Truman Capote	5' 4 "
	Queen Elizabeth	5' 4 "
	Ludwig van Beethoven	5' 4 "
	Typical Homo Erectus	5' 4 "
	typical Neanderthal adult male	5' 4 1/2 "
	Alan Ladd	5' 4 1/2 "
	<i>comte de Buffon</i>	5' 5 " (-)
	Captain Nathaniel Gordon	5' 5 "
	Charles Manson	5' 5 "
	Audie Murphy	5' 5 "
	Harry Houdini	5' 5 "



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

	Hung Hsiu-ch'üan 洪秀全	5' 5"
	Marilyn Monroe	5' 5½"
	T.E. Lawrence "of Arabia"	5' 5½"
	average runaway male American slave	5' 5-6"
	President Benjamin Harrison	5' 6"
	President Martin Van Buren	5' 6"
	James Smithson	5' 6"
	Louisa May Alcott	5' 6"
	Johann Wolfgang von Goethe	5' 6½"
	Napoleon Bonaparte	5' 6½"
	Emily Brontë	5' 6-7"
	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	5' ?"
	average height, seaman of 1812	5' 6.85"
	minimum height, British soldier	5' 7"
	President John Adams	5' 7"
	President John Quincy Adams	5' 7"
	President William McKinley	5' 7"
	"Charley" Parkhurst (a female)	5' 7"
	Henry Thoreau	5' 7"
	the average male of Thoreau's period	5' 7½"
	Edgar Allan Poe	5' 8"
	President Ulysses S. Grant	5' 8"
	President William H. Harrison	5' 8"
	President James Polk	5' 8"
	President Zachary Taylor	5' 8"
	average height, soldier of 1812	5' 8.35"
	President Rutherford B. Hayes	5' 8½"
	President Millard Fillmore	5' 9"
	President Harry S Truman	5' 9"
	President Jimmy Carter	5' 9½"
	Herman Melville	5' 9¾"
	Calvin Coolidge	5' 10"
	Andrew Johnson	5' 10"
	Theodore Roosevelt	5' 10"
	Thomas Paine	5' 10"
	Franklin Pierce	5' 10"
	Abby May Alcott	5' 10"
	Reverend <u>Henry C. Wright</u>	5' 10"



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Nathaniel Hawthorne	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Louis "Deerfoot" Bennett	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Friend John Greenleaf Whittier	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
President Dwight D. Eisenhower	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Sojourner Truth	5' 11"
President Grover Cleveland	5' 11"
President Herbert Hoover	5' 11"
President Woodrow Wilson	5' 11"
President Jefferson Davis	5' 11"
President Richard M. Nixon	5' 11 ¹ / ₂ "
Robert Voorhis the hermit of Rhode Island	< 6'
Frederick Douglass	6' (-)
Anthony Burns	6' 0"
Waldo Emerson	6' 0"
Joseph Smith	6' 0"
David Walker	6' 0"
Sarah F. Wakefield	6' 0"
Thomas Wentworth Higginson	6' 0"
President James Buchanan	6' 0"
President Gerald R. Ford	6' 0"
President James Garfield	6' 0"
President Warren Harding	6' 0"
President John F. Kennedy	6' 0"
President James Monroe	6' 0"
President William H. Taft	6' 0"
President John Tyler	6' 0"
John Brown	6' 0 (+)"
President Andrew Jackson	6' 1"
Alfred Russel Wallace	6' 1"
President Ronald Reagan	6' 1"
Venture Smith	6' 1 ¹ / ₂ "
Crispus Attucks	6' 2"
President Chester A. Arthur	6' 2"
President George Bush, Senior	6' 2"
President Franklin D. Roosevelt	6' 2"
President George Washington	6' 2"



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Gabriel Prosser	6 ' 2 "
Dangerfield Newby	6 ' 2 "
Charles Augustus Lindbergh	6 ' 2 "
President Bill Clinton	6 ' 2 1/2 "
President Thomas Jefferson	6 ' 2 1/2 "
President Lyndon B. Johnson	6 ' 3 "
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.	6 ' 3 "
Richard "King Dick" Seaver	6 ' 3 1/4 "
President Abraham Lincoln	6 ' 4 "
Marion Morrison (AKA John Wayne)	6 ' 4 "
Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior	6 ' 4 "
Thomas Cholmondeley	6 ' 4 " (?)
Franklin Benjamin Sanborn	6 ' 5 "
Peter the Great of Russia	6 ' 7 "
Giovanni Battista Belzoni	6 ' 7 "
Thomas Jefferson (the statue)	7 ' 6 "
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Martin Van Buren Bates	7 ' 11 1/2 "
M. Bihin, a Belgian exhibited in Boston in 1840	8 ' "
Anna Haining Swan	8 ' 1 "



[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 or Lowell? Where did they live? Did Henry visit them on his trips to Maine?

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

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

October 30, Wednesday: As [Henry Thoreau](#) would later record in his journal, “Mother first came to Concord about the same age that father did, but a little before him.” Deacon [John White](#)’s cousin [Ammi White](#) sold [Jean Thoreau](#) some land and the home with added shed that eventually would become the East House of [Concord](#)’s Colonial Inn. This was the house next door to where the town stored its explosives — so it must have been available at a considerable discount.⁵ Deacon White’s wife Esther, a neighbor, was the sister of Jean’s 2nd wife in



Concord, [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#) (the brothers of Esther and Rebecca ran the bakery in Wright Tavern).

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



January 23, Saturday, 1858: ... Mrs. William Monroe told Sophia last evening that she remembered her (Sophia’s) grandfather very well, that he was taller than Father, and used to ride out to their house—she was a Stone and lived where she and her husband did afterward, now Darius Merriam’s—when they made cheeses, to drink the whey, being in consumption. She said that she remembered Grandmother too, Jennie Burns, how she came to the schoolroom (in Middle Street (?), Boston) once, leading her little daughter Elizabeth, the latter so small that she could not tell her name distinctly, but spoke thick and lispingly,—“Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau.”⁶

JANE “JENNIE” BURNS THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

CONSUMPTION

5. This house is now the north end of the Colonial Inn, the building to the right in the drawing by John Downes,



and to the best of any guest’s knowledge no explosives are presently being stored next door.

6. Vide February 7th.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

After [Christmas](#): The 54-year-old burglar [Samuel Smith](#) was taken to the [Concord](#) church to be one of the recipients of the Reverend [Ezra Ripley](#)'s special sermon. Mr. Ripley rose to the occasion:

Mr. RIPLEY'S SERMON, Delivered on the Day of the Execution of SAMUEL SMITH. LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOUR EXPLAINED and URGED in a SERMON, delivered at Concord, Massachusetts, December 26, 1799, Being the Day on which Samuel Smith was executed for *Burglary*. By EZRA RIPLEY, A.M. Minister of Concord.

He took his text from MATTHEW xxii. 39: "THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF." The reasoning which he employed was the same as if he had been Draco of Athens in 621BCE, or a bearded Taliban cleric enforcing the *QUR'AN* by hanging the town drunk in Afghanistan in the Year of Our Lord 2000: if you break the law of God even once even in the slightest way then you deserve to be put to death.

It is not good enough that you be a good neighbor to some neighbors, for you have been obligated to be a good neighbor to all your neighbors all the time. Loving your mother is great, but everybody loves their mother. Your father may have abused you but that's none of our business here. As a Christian individual you need to forgive others their transgressions against you but Christian society has no similar obligation to forgive individuals for transgressions. A human by being appointed as a judge becomes entitled to play God.

THE crime, which is this day to be capitally punished, is a direct violation of the law of love to our neighbour. The words read will not, therefore, it is presumed, be thought unfuitable for the theme of a discourse, on the present very solemn and affecting occasion. They are very concise and simple in expression; but their meaning is great, their contents are weighty and extremely interesting to individuals and to society. [There follows a commandment-by-commandment review of the Ten Commandments, in which we find:] ... The sixth aims directly at the heart. It forbids coveting the property and enjoyments of our neighbour; and implies that we be contented with such things as we have by the allotments of Providence, and can procure by honest industry. The coveting, which is a violation of the divine law of love to our neighbour, is an earnest desire to possess and enjoy the possessions and comforts of other people, without regard to equity and justice. To covet in this sense is sinful; and it prompts to unrighteous measures to obtain the things coveted. It induces deception, fraud, stealing, and the most atrocious crimes. Thus, to covet is the corrupt fountain whence flow those injurious vices, which frequently scourge individuals and society. This is the bitter root from which spring up fraud, injustice, stealing, robbery, and, sometimes, murder. According to the confession of the unhappy convict before us, all his crimes, which have more directly procured prosecutions, prisons, punishments (and I may add, the gallows) may be traced to this secret, fruitful, and corrupt source.... But as one perfection of God cannot be in such a sense infinite, as to infringe on any one other perfection, so neither does christian benevolence interfere with the proper exercise of justice, even when it inflicts pain and punishment. Love to others, to society, to ourselves, may require us, in a due course of law, to abridge the natural and civil liberty of individuals, to inflict punishment on offenders, and even to take away the life of malefactors, whose abuse of liberty, vicious conduct, and continuance in life are dangerous to the peace and happiness of individuals and the community. ... Love to society, to the great body of the people, frequently requires the execution of justice on individuals in pains and penalties.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Tortured property logic this, logic which Draco of Athens could have deployed to sanction any atrocity. True, this convict was a mere house burglar and house burglary is not in itself a capital offense, but being a house burglar amounts under our law to exactly the same thing as intending to commit murder (since “house-breakers for the purpose of stealing, intend to commit murder, if it be found necessary to prevent detection”) and we can reflect that it was perhaps only owing to the restraining grace of God and to circumstances, that this one did not ever in fact get to the point of the shedding of innocent blood.

[Samuel Smith](#) was then escorted from the [Concord](#) church by the Reverend [Ripley](#) and his flock, to the field east of the town’s new burying-ground, which probably was not yet being termed “Sleepy Hollow” but which at that time was still “Deacon Brown’s pretty pasture, circled with a ridge of oaks and pines ... reached only by a lane” and in use for group pic-nics, as a militia training field, and for the annual Cattle Show. There, having reached a likely spot, he was [hanged](#) by the neck until he was dead.⁷



7. Bear in mind here that burglary is not ordinarily now considered a capital crime, it was merely that in the case of this [Samuel Smith](#) just about every other method of social control had already been attempted, up to and including the mutilation of the man’s ears. How much more lenient they were in the 18th Century with the burglar Smith, than they had been with similar burglars in the previous century! Governor John Winthrop’s law had been, in furtherance of the commandment “Thou shalt not steal,” that “If any person shall commit burglary, by breaking up any dwelling house, or shall rob any person in the field or highways, such person so offending, shall be for the first offence, branded on the forehead with the letter (B).” His penalty for a second offense was that the burglar be “branded as before and severely whipped,” and his penalty for a third such offense was that “he shall be put to death as being incorrigible.” Three strikes and you’re out. Smith had had a lot more chances than three. Because property conferred status, property could be more important than life itself. Did [John Thoreau](#), age 12, arrive in Concord in time to attend this curious church ceremony and graveyard ceremony, and if so, did he, in 1828 when John Thoreau, Jr. was 12 and David Henry Thoreau was 10, tell them about this experience he had had at that same age? This could not have been a race case, in consideration of the differential penalty exacted by the state in the Washington Goode case some half-century later –Goode having been [hanged](#) in Boston rather than consigned to imprisonment at hard labor for the remainder of his natural life for a crime of passion obviously for one reason and one reason only, that he was black– for, since our recorders have not bothered to state of what race the hanged Samuel Smith was, then obviously he must have been a white man. EARLY AMERICAN IMPRINTS. FIRST SERIES; no. 36321 (Main-Microforms Microfiche M 00235 no. 36321): Smith, Samuel, 1745-1799. LAST WORDS AND DYING SPEECH OF SAMUEL SMITH, WHO WAS EXECUTED AT CONCORD, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, THE 26TH OF DECEMBER, A.D. 1799, FOR THE CRIME OF BURGLARY. Signed: Samuel Smith. Concord gaol, Dec. 26, 1799. One page; mourning border surrounds text in three columns and measures 42.6 x 29.2 centimeters. This was printed by Benjamin Edes in Kilby-Street, Boston to be sold at Mr. Reuben Bryant’s book-store in Concord. We have two forms of this. The first has the imprint as given above, and in addition has a relief cut of a coffin at head of title. The second, without the coffin image, bears the imprint: “To be sold at Mr. Reuben Bryant’s bookstore, Concord.—Also at Edes’s printing-office, Kilby-Street Boston.”



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1800



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

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

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

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1801

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

Mr. Thoreau lost his health, moved to Concord, and there finished his course like a christian.⁸

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

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



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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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

THOREAU LIFESPANS

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

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



HDT

WHAT?

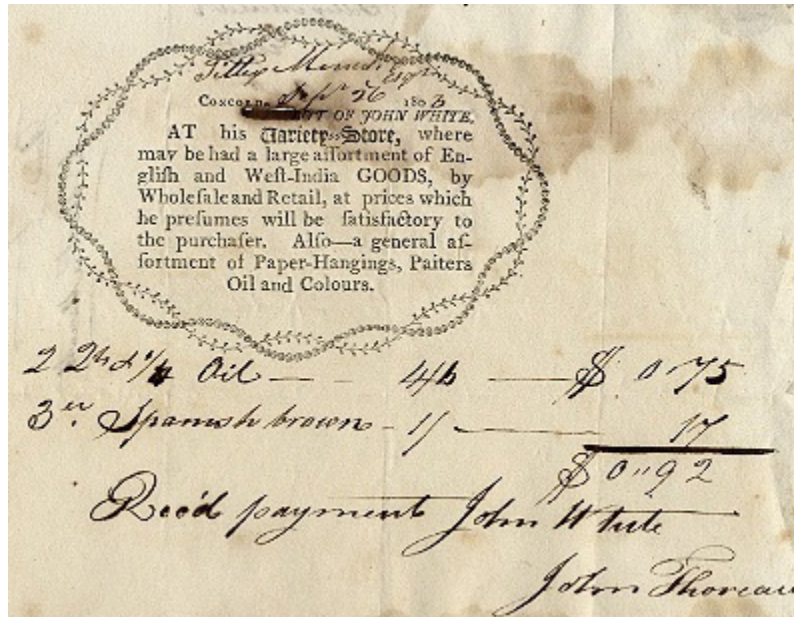
INDEX

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1802

➡ The orphaned [John Thoreau](#) went into Deacon [John White](#)'s store in [Concord](#) as clerk.⁹



THE DEACONS OF CONCORD

**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**

9. Would this have put [Henry Thoreau](#)'s father into direct contact with the Deacon's cousin [Ammi White](#)?



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1804



[John Thoreau](#) moved to Salem and learned the dry-goods business working for a merchant named Hathaway.

**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1808



At about this point, in [Concord](#), with [John Thoreau](#) having reached the age of about 21, and with his having for about four years worked in Salem for a merchant named Hathaway while learning the dry-goods business, he was opening a store for himself. He borrowed \$1,500.⁰⁰ of his stepmother [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#) to set up in this business,¹⁰ providing as security for the business loan a \$1,000.⁰⁰ mortgage on his eighth share of the old house at Number 57 in [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#)'s North End, a structure which was then worth on the market approximately \$10,000.⁰⁰. A yellow building on the corner where the Thoreau town house would stand in later years, this store would eventually be altered and moved and would become the residence of [John Keyes](#).¹¹

HENRY'S RELATIVES

10. Who would his son Henry borrow from?

- In 1840 he borrowed at least \$41.⁷³ from his father
- In 1842 he borrowed Mrs. Hawthorne's fine music box
- In 1843 he borrowed \$17.⁰⁰ from Emerson
- In 1847 he borrowed \$15.⁰⁰ from Emerson
- In 1849 he in effect borrowed an unspecified amount from publisher James Munroe for 1,000 copies of A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS
- It could be said that he borrowed the cabin site at Walden Pond (although it could also be said that he rented it at the price of his labor clearing brush and stumps from the area that became the beanfield), and he did indeed borrow an ax.

11. In Thoreau's journal: "When about twenty-one, [Father] opened a store for himself on the corner where the town house stands of late years, a yellow building, now moved and altered into John Keyes's house."



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1809



[John Thoreau](#) did so well in his store in [Concord](#) that Isaac Hurd, Jr. went into partnership with him. The partnership would soon dissolve, but the partners would be unable to settle without taking each other to law. Thoreau's father would bring his books into court and gain the case.

**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1810



At approximately this year [John Thoreau](#)'s uncle [Peter Thoreau](#) died in [Boston](#) and he went to Bangor and set up with one Billings, selling to, among others, native Americans.


**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**




JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1811

 [John Thoreau](#) being in financial difficulties, his mortgage on his eighth share to the house at Number 57 in [Prince Street](#) was placed on record with the [Boston](#) authorities.

 July: [Cynthia Dunbar](#), professing Christian faith and a resolve to lead a moral life, joined the First Church of the Reverend [Ezra Ripley](#) in [Concord](#). (Six months later she would become pregnant by [John Thoreau](#). Was the Reverend disappointed at this 24-year-old, supposedly chaste, woman's sexual activity?)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1812

➡ 2d half of January: During the courtship of [John Thoreau](#) and [Cynthia Dunbar](#), John had been living on the [Concord](#) square and learning merchandising from Deacon [John White](#), while Cynthia, the daughter of Mrs. Captain Minot, had been living with her mother in the farmhouse on Virginia Road. At this point what usually happened in New England during courtship in those days happened, and Cynthia became pregnant.

THE DEACONS OF CONCORD

DUNBAR
FAMILY

THOREAU
GENEALOGY

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

➡ May 11, Monday: [John Thoreau](#) and [Cynthia Dunbar](#) were united in [Concord](#), in a wedding ceremony officiated over by the Reverend Ezra Ripley.

Marriages

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

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



John in later years



Cynthia in later years

DUNBAR FAMILY

THOREAU GENEALOGY

Cynthia would have been a noticeably pregnant bride, since [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#) would be born on October 22nd, but I simply do not know whether in that time and that place such a thing would have been a scandal (at least during earlier New England generations, a bride being already pregnant would have been quite normal and expectable).



At the turn of the century rural women in Massachusetts had been marrying at over 23 years of age, three years later than their mothers (their daughters would be marrying, in the 1830s, at over 25 years of age, two years later than this generation and five years later than their grandmothers). Therefore the age of this bride, 25 years, was not at all unusual for the time and the place.

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

2nd day 11th of 5 Mo// The usual rounds of buisness & no peculiar occurrence



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



June 18, Thursday: Franz Schubert begins instruction in counterpoint with Antonio Salieri in Vienna.

Unaware of course that Great Britain had already rescinded its offending actions two days before, President [James Madison](#) signed the joint congressional Declaration of War. This 2d war of the United States of America upon Great Britain, which would take place over a number of years, is now denominated in our history books the “[War of 1812](#)” (evidently we spare ourselves embarrassment when we do not give this war an accurate name).¹² –Not that any of this makes any difference (only a fool would suppose that nations go to war for the reasons they proffer)!

Upstate New York was woefully unprepared. [Fort Niagara](#) had deteriorated during the decade after 1800 as its garrison had become increasingly smaller. Many of the old buildings, some of them dating to the French occupation, had disappeared. The walls on the land side remained in place, but there was never a large enough workforce to keep them in good condition. At the outbreak of hostilities the Americans could muster only 150 soldiers to man this strongpoint. However, the British preparedness was not much better. The Napoleonic Wars in Europe had been sucking up all of England’s attention, with [Canada](#) on the back burner at best, so there were in this year only a couple of thousand of British regular soldiers in all of what is today the province of Ontario. The United States Army although far larger was composed mostly newly organized units consisting of untrained recruits. The Americans were confident, but without justification. Some of the bloodiest fighting would occur along the [Niagara River](#). Captain Nathaniel Leonard would do what he could to improve his defensive readiness, while the corresponding enemy commander likewise concentrated on organizing a defense. Much of the summer would be spent in preparation as units of the state militia were activated and moved toward the Niagara Frontier. In order to keep the regular army and the militia well separate and diminish friction, the militia camp was established at Lewiston, six miles away upriver.

At some point during this period of intermittent scattered hostilities, [John Thoreau](#) would become the commissary for¹³ Fort Independence on Castle Island in Boston Harbor. Thoreau would make a note of this in his journal in 1850:



After October 31, 1850: ... My father was commissary at Fort Independence in the last war. He says that the baker whom he engaged returned 18 ounces of bread for 16 of flour, and was glad of the job on those terms. ...

**HENRY’S
RELATIVES**

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

5th day 18 of 6th M 1812// Our Meeting was very large. Anne Greene was concern’d in supplication, then Micajah Collins in an acceptable testimony, then David Sands in a very extensive &

12. Interestingly, the federal government of the USA stated that one of the reasons why it was declaring war on Britain was the British embargo on [hemp](#). After the Brits had lost this one, the analysis made by the [Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington](#) would be that their forces had suffered from a lack of command discipline: “They wanted this **iron fist** to command them.”

CANNABIS

13. This is what we would consider similar to “running the PX” at a smallish current military base.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

powerful testimony

In the last (Preparative) David had a few close remarks on the subject of Rainess [?]

At 5 OClock a meeting was appointed for the people of colour, many attended but not all of them by a very considerable - D Sands was by far the greatet laborer amongst them, Anne Willis Hannah Dennis & James Hazard had small testinnies to bear. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



October 22, Thursday: A 1st child, [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#), was born to [John Thoreau](#) and [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), who had married one another on the eleventh of May in that year.



DUNBAR
FAMILY

THOREAU
GENEALOGY



John in later years

Cynthia in later years

We may note that when this child would belatedly be recorded in the Concord town records, she would be recorded as having been born as of the year 1813. (The town's records are not all that accurate or complete, but might this error have been purposefully registered in order to remove any doubt as to Helen's legitimacy as the eldest child of this very new marriage?)

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

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

5th day 22 of 10 M / Our friend Christo Hely was in town & attended Meeting & the funeral of Sam Wilcox - but being previously engaged I went to Conanicut with our friend D Buffum to attend the funeral of Job Watson where David was largely & very acceptably engaged in declaring the truth to the People. - We dined at John Weedens & got home before sunset. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1813



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

JOHN THOREAU

**DUNBAR
FAMILY**

**THOREAU
GENEALOGY**



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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](#).¹⁴



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.¹⁵ (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.)

14. 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."

15. 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, SENIOR

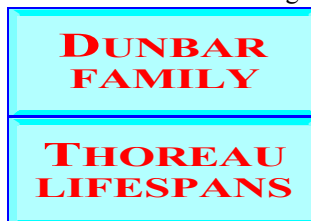
JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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

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.¹⁶ 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.



16. [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, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1816



Middle of October: Mrs. [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), mother of two, became pregnant for the 3d time.

JOHN THOREAU

**THOREAU
GENEALOGY**

**DUNBAR
FAMILY**



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1817



[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 Savers¹⁷

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.¹⁸

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CUTTING OUT APPAREL FOR THE POOR, a guide issued in London 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

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

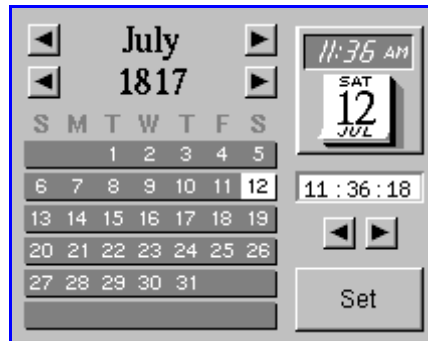
divided each into twelve, make 24 squares of diaper double, half a yard and near a nail wide, but not quite square.¹⁹

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.²⁰

[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



18. 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 too 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 preparing, 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.”

19. 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.

20. 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, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

(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?”**²¹

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 ORROK



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

21. 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:

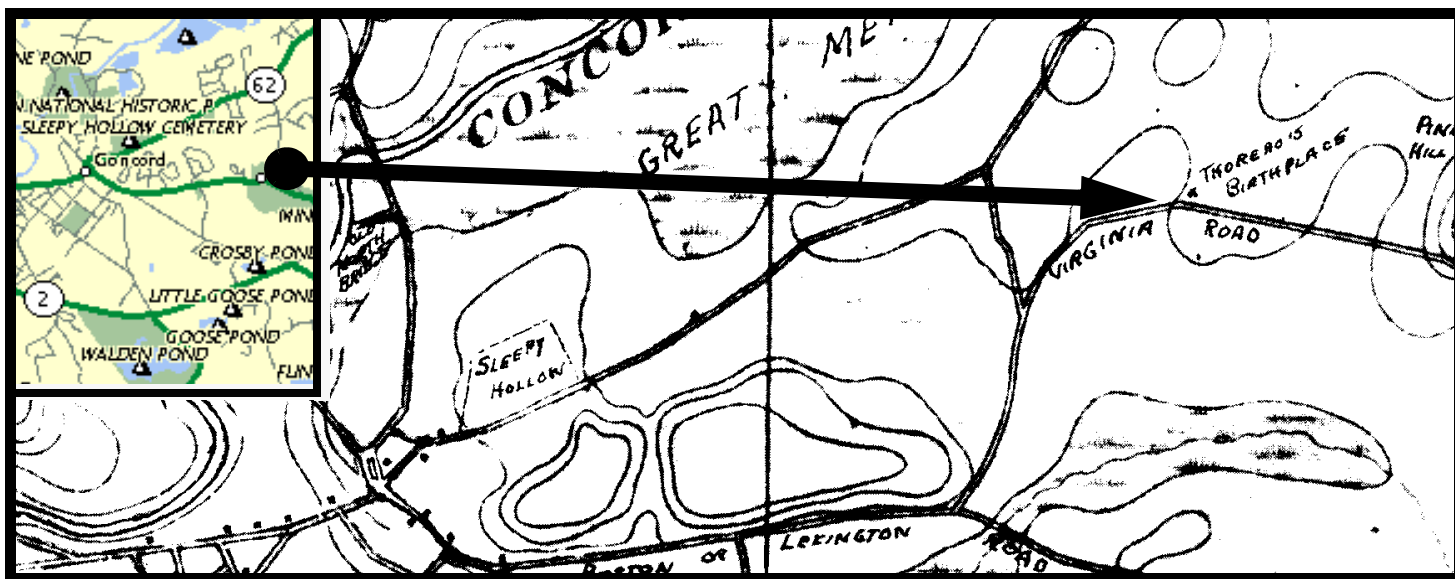
“Time of birth questionable. That does not affect the sign positions of the planets. A five planet majority in Mutable signs (communications). Only one in a Fixed sign: Mars in Taurus. Most of his emphasis was on simplifying life and had to do with the trivia of day-to-day living. The one Fixed sign 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.”

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

[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.



The Minott house on the Virginia Road

341 Virginia Rd



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



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**

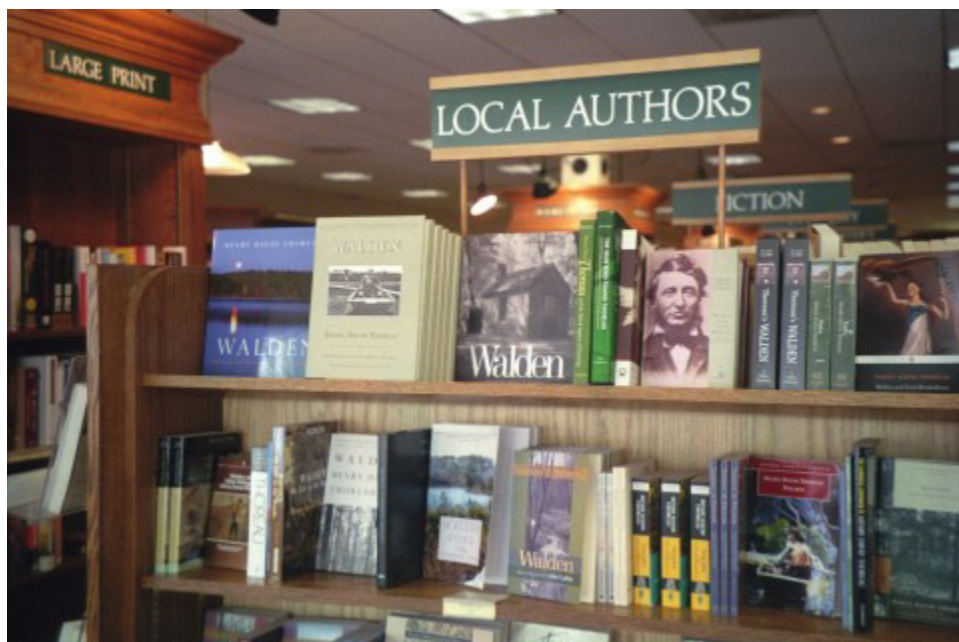
**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

been ...



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



The Minott house on the Virginia Road

THOREAU RESIDENCES

Thoreau continued in 1855:



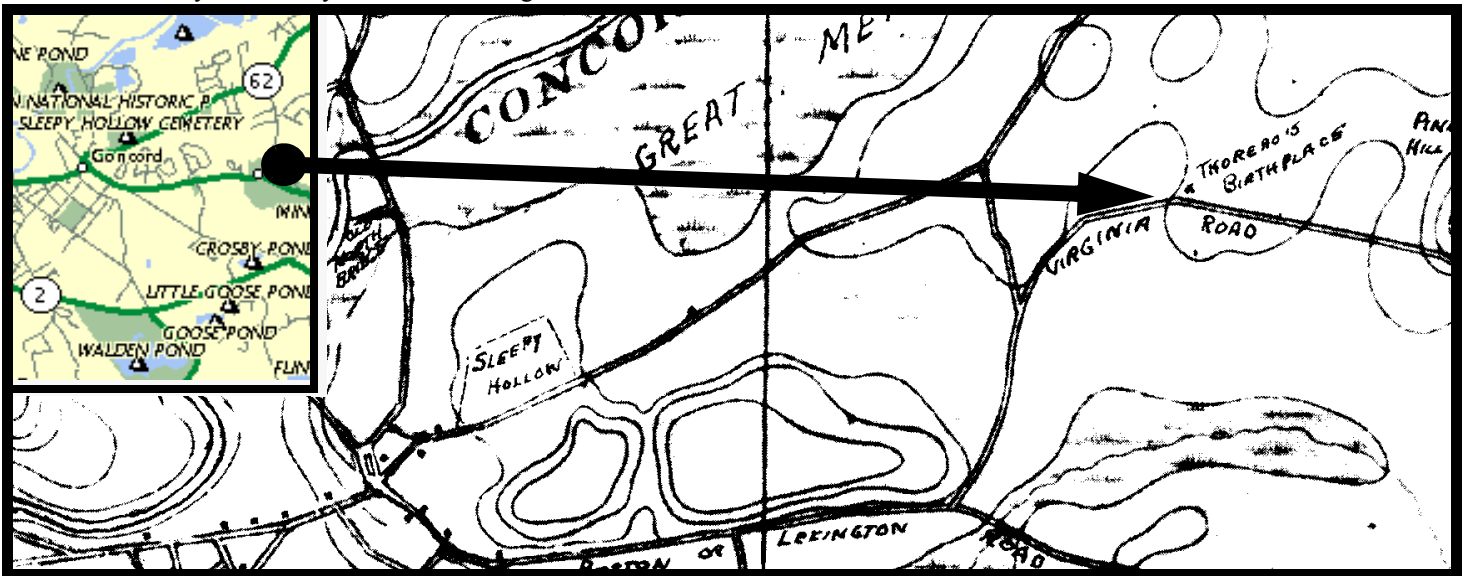
The Catherine's the other half of the house. Bob Catherine's and John threw up the turkeys. Lived there about eight months. Si Merriam next neighbor. Uncle David died when I was six weeks old.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

David Henry would be 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.



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

→ August 23, Saturday: Father [John Thoreau](#), having borrowed from his stepmother [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#) in 1808 → in order to set himself up in the dry goods business and having mortgaged the family home on Prince Street in Boston for \$1,000.⁰⁰ in order to provide security for this loan, it turned out had dug himself a deep hole because since then business had not been good. At this point he and his wife [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) needed to turn the Prince Street property over to Joseph Hurd, executor of the estate of his stepmother who had died in 1814, who transferred ownership to the Thoreau sisters. There is a drawing of the rather unimposing house in question on page 118 of Edward G. Porter's RAMBLES IN OLD BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND (Boston 1887):



The Red House, where Grandmother lived, we the west side till October, 1818, hiring of Josiah Davis, agent for Woodward. (There were Cousin Charles and Uncle C. more or less.) According to day-book. Father hired of Proctor, October 16, 1818, and shop of Spaulding, November 10, 1818. Day-book first used by Grandfather, dated 1797. His part cut out and used by Father in Concord in 1808-9, and in Chelmsford, 1818-19-20-21.

**HENRY'S
RELATIVES**



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



October 12, Sunday: [David Henry Thoreau](#) was christened, by his parents [John Thoreau](#) and [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) in recognition of his paternal uncle [David Orrok](#), son of [Friend David Orrok, Sr.](#) and [Friend Sarah Tillet Orrok](#), who had died in August.²²



October 12: “I was baptized in old M[eeeting] H[ouse] by Dr. [Ezra] Ripley, when I was three months, and did not cry.”

Nobody knows where the family came up with the name “Henry,” but such untraditional naming was quite common among Huguenot transplant families of this period as they gradually assimilated to their new context and removed the “markers” by which they could be discriminated. There are some things to be said about [Huguenots](#) naming conventions from this period, that inform us of why little David Henry was not named Barzillai or Ralph or Stephen or whatever. American descendants of Huguenot refugees tended to favor names which existed in some form in French, such as Henry (*Henri*) and John (*Jean*). They also favored Old Testament names over the names of New Testament saints, whom were to them tainted with Catholicism. Hence “David” after King David of the Old Testament and the same as in French — satisfying both naming conventions at once. The ten most favored names were Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, David, Jacob, Salomon, and Samuel.²³

3d Lieutenant of the Corps of Artillery [James Duncan Graham](#), freshly minted, began to serve at the United States Military Academy, West Point as Adjutant.

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

1st day 12 of 10 M / Soon after taking my seat I felt life to arise & circulate among us, & my spirit was comforted with the prospect. — Lydia Almy for the first time in several years appeared in testimony, I thought very sweetly — & Abigail Robinson for a great rarity appeared in a testimony of some length — The meeting was large & attended by a considerable number of other societies, as they have been in the forenoon, for some time — In the Afternoon the meeting was again pretty well attended but silent & to me rather a poor time, but not accompanied by that distressing hardness as at sometimes. —After

22. Professor William E. Cain, in the frontmatter to *A HISTORICAL GUIDE TO HENRY DAVID THOREAU* (NY, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) writes that this uncle David “died in Concord in July.” We wonder from whence Professor Cain has derived this information that David had died in Concord, and from whence he has derived this information that David had died in July. He may well be correct. He was asked, by email, whether he has perchance investigated, and discovered the grave of David in what has now become the old section of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, or whether he has perchance managed to obtain a Concord documentary record of this death, but has not yet responded.

23. In the late 16th Century in Rouen, France, for purposes of illustration of these naming traditions, the ten most popular names for Huguenot boys had been, in order of popularity from most popular down, *Jean, Pierre, Jacques, Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, David, Jacob, Salomon*, and *Samuel*, whereas the ten most popular names for Catholic boys had been, in the same order, *Jean, Guillaume, Pierre, Nicolas, Jacques, Robert, François, Charles, Richard*, and *Abraham*. We may note that only the name *Abraham* appears on both lists. The influence of tradition presents itself in the fact that there is a 70% match between the list of names from Rouen and the list of names from the US despite the passage of four full generations. Now, it might be objected that the name “David” was assigned on the basis of an uncle named [David Orrok](#) who lay dying at the time, but there is of course a reason why that uncle was named “David,” and besides, it was at least as conventional among Huguenots to perpetuate or recycle names used in previous generations of the family as it was among other ethnic groups. From the 17th through the middle of the 19th centuries, over 60% of the families in Hingham assigned the name of the Huguenot father to a son (as, John Thoreau the father and little John the first son), and over 70% assigned the name of the Huguenot mother to a daughter (in America the Huguenots if you remember tended to outmarry, so [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) was, of course, not Huguenot, so the Thoreau daughters became Helen and Sophia rather than, perhaps, little Cynthia and, then, perhaps, Naomi). Thus, and this sums up my comment, the very fact that little David Henry was named David Henry speaks to the fact that their Huguenot heritage was a matter of importance in this family.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

*tea took a little walk round the hill with my H set the evening
with my Mother. –*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1818

➡ March: The Thoreaus left the gray house on Virginia Road, where [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) had spent a portion of her youth and where her David Henry had been born, while the baby was but eight months old. They moved initially to a house they rented from Josiah Davis, at 47 Lexington Road in Concord.

HENRY THOREAU
THOREAU RESIDENCES



"Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?"
-JOURNAL May 1, 1857



➡ August 23, Sunday: Father [John Thoreau](#) had borrowed from his stepmother and the family home on Prince Street in Boston had been mortgaged for \$1,000.⁰⁰ but his business had not done well. At this point he needed to sign his remaining share in the family home and the deed over to his sisters. There is a picture of this rather unimposing house on page 118 of Edward G. Porter's RAMBLES IN OLD BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND (Boston 1887). [Henry Thoreau](#) would make a journal entry later, about this period: "The Red House, where Grandmother lived, we the west side till October, 1818, hiring of Josiah Davis, agent for Woodward. (There were Cousin Charles and Uncle C. more or less.) According to day-book. Father hired of Proctor, October 16, 1818, and shop of Spaulding, November 10, 1818. Day-book first used by Grandfather, dated 1797. His part cut out and used by Father in Concord in 1808-9, and in Chelmsford, 1818-19-20-21."

THOREAU RESIDENCES



"Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?"
-JOURNAL May 1, 1857



➡ October: The Thoreaus relocated from Josiah Davis's rental house at 47 Lexington Road in [Concord](#) to a red house next door to the church in Chelmsford (Chelmsford was where [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) had spent the rest of her childhood) to live with [Mary Jones Dunbar Minot](#). We learn from this that [Henry Thoreau](#) had a sort of a family relationship with the Minots or Minotts who lived in [Concord](#), and we can learn that the name was indifferently spelled with one or two t's.

DUNBAR
FAMILY



"Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?"
-JOURNAL May 1, 1857



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



The Red House, where Grandmother lived, we the west side till October, 1818, hiring of Josiah Davis, agent for Woodward. (There were Cousin Charles and Uncle C. more or less.) According to day-book. Father hired of Proctor, October 16, 1818, and shop of Spaulding, November 10, 1818. Day-book first used by Grandfather, dated 1797. His part cut out and used by Father in Concord in 1808-9, and in Chelmsford, 1818-19-20-21.

Father [John Thoreau](#) had borrowed from his stepmother and the family home at Number 57 on [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#) had been mortgaged for \$1,000.⁰⁰ but his business had not done well. That spring he would need to sign the deed over to his sisters. There is a picture of this rather unimposing house on page 118 of the Reverend Edward Griffin Porter's RAMBLES IN OLD BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND (Boston 1887):

[THOREAU RESIDENCES](#)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

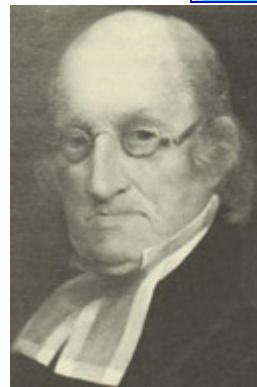


November 10, Tuesday: [John Thoreau, Senior](#) rented the Spaulding store in Chelmsford MA. It was customary in those heavy-drinking times for a storekeeper to pour a glass for a favored customer, so he solicited his former pastor, the Reverend [Ezra Ripley](#), for the letter of recommendation which he needed in order to be able to provide this hard liquor. On the blank back of a piece of pious meditation, the Reverend would write out the following “to whom it may concern” variety of commendation letter:



Understanding that Mr. John Thoreau, now of Chelmsford, is going into business at that place, and is about to apply for license to retail ardent spirits, I hereby certify that I have been long acquainted with him, that he has sustained a good character, and now view him as a man of integrity, accustomed to storekeeping, and of correct morals.

THOREAU RESIDENCES



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


3rd day 10th of 11th M / There were two funerals in the Neighbourhood this Afternoon, Capt Engs Wife & Benj Watsons wife, the former of a Dropsy the latter of a [Consumption](#). –

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

 November 15, Sunday: Simeon Marshall of Gloucester, 22 years of age, drowned at sea.

[John Thoreau, Senior](#)'s Chelmsford MA grocery store opened its doors for business. The plan was that while [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) waited counter, John would be painting signs on commission.

THOREAU RESIDENCES



John in later years



Cynthia in later years

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

1st day 15 of 11th M / Our Morning Meeting was silent & to me a season of but little life. — In the Afternoon soon after taking my seat was favor'd with a quickening of life which continued in a good degree thro' the meeting. father Rodman was concerned in a short lively testimony

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.²⁴

JOHN THOREAU

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

THOREAU RESIDENCES

24. 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, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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."



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1819



June 24, Thursday: [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) was born in Chelmsford MA, the 4th and, surprisingly, the final child of [John Thoreau](#), Senior and [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#).



John in later years



Cynthia in later years

DUNBAR
FAMILY

HENRY'S
RELATIVES

An intriguing factoid is that although this birth unlike David Henry's is on record in [Concord](#)'s town records, it is on record not as of this date but as of September 27th:

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Cynthia had her last baby at age 33 although, in the 18th Century, mothers usually had had their final pregnancy in their early 40s, presumably because, since the turn of the 19th Century, white women in New England towns had been having their final pregnancies at an earlier age in each decade, and in that way creating fewer children per family. In general, the number of children per white family increased as one traveled toward the frontier of white settlement, reaching seven or so in Illinois and Indiana; nevertheless the usual number in Massachusetts and Connecticut in the 1830s was still five or more, so the Thoreaus' four children, [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#), then [John Thoreau, Jr.](#), then [David Henry Thoreau](#), and then finally [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), would have been considered to be a small family or a family that was still being eagerly worked on.

[Walter Roy Harding](#)'s THE DAYS OF HENRY THOREAU: A BIOGRAPHY. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966:

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

WALTER HARDING'S BIOGRAPHY

Chapter 1 (1817-1823) -Downing gives a cursory account of the Thoreau and Dunbar heritage and more fully traces the nature and movement of the Thoreau family in the first five years of Henry's life.

Thoreau's father, [John Thoreau](#), while intellectual, "lived quietly, peacefully and contentedly in the shadow of his wife," Mrs. [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), who was dynamic and outspoken with a strong love for nature and compassion for the downtrodden.

- 1st [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#) -quiet, retiring, eventually a teacher.
- 2d John Thoreau, Jr. -"his father turned inside out," personable, interested in ornithology, also taught.
- 3d [David Henry Thoreau](#) (born July 12,1817) -speculative but not noticeably precocious.
- 4th [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) -independent, talkative, ultimately took over father's business and edited Henry's posthumous publications.

The Thoreau's constantly struggled with debt, and in 1818 John Sr. gave up his farm outside Concord and moved into town. Later the same year he moved his family to Chelmsford MA where he opened a shop which soon failed and sent him packing to Boston to teach school.

(Robert L. Lace, January-March 1986)



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

5th day 24th of 6th M / With My H & John in a Chaise went to



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Portsmouth to attend the Moy [Monthly] Meeting. Stoped on the way at Uncle Saml Thurstons & were soon joined by Elizabeth Walker & Company, after a little refreshment we went to meeting, which was a favord season, Elizabeth having much to communicate in the course of the public Meeting, & I have no doubt that the living Power of Truth rose into dominion in many minds present. – In the last meeting we had but little buisness, but the little that we had was pretty well transacted. – We dined at R Mitchells & towards night rode home. –

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1819/1820: This was *David Henry Thoreau*'s year two.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1820

1820/1821: This was [David Henry Thoreau](#)'s year three.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1821



There at Chelmsford, Massachusetts [David Henry Thoreau](#) learned to walk before he chopped off his right big toe (presumably with the sort of thick-bladed hatchet used for splitting kindling):



TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS

Per a later journal entry: "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." That house next door to the meeting-house was the house bought in 1799 by David Henry's grandfather, which is now the east wing of the Colonial Inn. "Aunt Sarah" was Sarah Thoreau, John's sister who was working in [Concord](#) as a seamstress. It was of course utterly dangerous for the family to be living so near to the town's stored explosives.

THOREAU RESIDENCES

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

JOHN THOREAU

Here is some more of what Thoreau recorded, on January 7, 1856, that he had been told about that early period:

[January 7, 1856] They tell how I swung on a gown [?] on the stair way when I was at Chelmsford – the gown [?] gave way; I fell & fainted & it took 2 pails of water to bring me to – for I was remarkable for holding my breath – in those cases – [Aunt L. tells how (a 4th of July?) I stood at the window there & exclaimed – the bells ring, & the guns fire, & the pee-pe you"] Mother tried to milk the cow which father took on trial – but she kicked at her & spilt the milk (They say a dog had bitten her teats) Proctor laughed at her as a city girl & then he tried but the cow kicked him over – & he finished by beating her with his cow-hide shoe – Capt. Richardson milked her warily – standing up. Father came home – & thought he would "brustle right up to her" for she needed much to be milked but suddenly she lifted her leg & "struck him fair & square right in the muns" – knocked him flat & broke the bridge of his nose – which shows it yet. He distinctly heard her hoof rattle on his nose. This "started the claret" & without staunching the blood he at once drove her home to the man he had her of – She ran at some young women by the way – who saved themselves by getting over the wall in haste. Father complained of the powder in the M.H. garret at Town meeting but it did not get moved while we lived there.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Here he painted over his old signs for guide-boards – & got a fall when painting Hale's (?) factory. Here the bladder John was playing with burst on the hearth – The cow came into the entry after pumpkins – I cut my toe – & was knocked over by a hen with chickens &c &c. Mother tells how at the Brick House we each had a little garden a few feet square – & I came in one day having found a potatoe just sprouted which by her advice I planted in my garden – Ere long John came in with a potatoe which he had found & had it planted in his garden – "O mother I have found a potatoe all sprouted. I mean to put it in my garden." &c Even Helen is said to have found one – But next I came crying – that some body had got my potatoe – &c &c – but it was restored to me as the youngest & original discoverer if not inventor of the potatoe – & it grew in my garden – & finally its crop was dug by myself & yielded a dinner for the family. I was kicked down by a passing ox – had a chicken given me by Lidy – Hannah – & peeped through the key hole at it – Caught an eel with John – Went to bed with new boots on – and after with cap – "Rasselas" given me. &c &c – Asked P. Wheeler – "Who owns all the land?" Asked mother having got the medal for geography, "Is Boston in Concord" – If I had gone to Miss Wheeler a little longer should have received the chief prize book – "Henry Lord Mayor" – &c &c

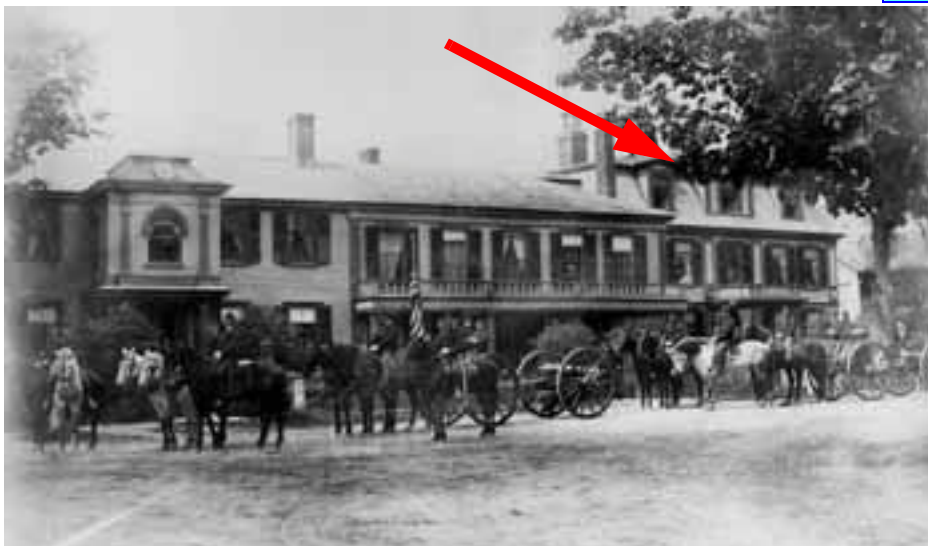


End of March: Toward the end of the month, the Thoreaus moved to [Concord](#) and for a short time "Lived next the meeting-house, where they kept the powder in the garret." This was the house bought in 1799 by [David Henry Thoreau](#)'s grandfather; it is now the east wing of the Colonial Inn and to the best of anyone's knowledge no explosives are stored next door. (The family would then go on to reside in [Boston](#).)

THOREAU RESIDENCES

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU


JOHN THOREAU





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

 March 21, Wednesday: [John Thoreau, Senior](#)'s grocery store in Chelmsford MA was abandoned after a little more than two years of marginal operation.


[THOREAU RESIDENCES](#)



John in later years

The family moved to [Boston](#).

[CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU](#)

 September 10, Monday: After moving from Chelmsford MA back to [Concord](#) for a short stay, and then to a house in [Boston](#)'s South End, the Thoreaus moved to 4 Pinckney Street in [Boston](#) itself.

[THOREAU RESIDENCES](#)

[CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU](#)

[JOHN THOREAU](#)



"Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?"
-JOURNAL May 1, 1857



1821/1822: This was [David Henry Thoreau](#)'s year four.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1822



During this year and the two following ones it would be Othniel Dinsmore, hired from elsewhere, who would be the schoolmaster for [Concord](#)'s grammar students.

1785	Nathaniel Bridge	9 months	1812	Isaac Warren	1 year
1786	JOSEPH HUNT	2½ years	1813	JOHN BROWN	1 year
1788	William A. Barron	3 years	1814	Oliver Patten	1 year
1791	Amos Bancroft	1 year	1815	Stevens Everett	9 months
1792	Heber Chase	1 year	1815	Silas Holman	3 months
1793	WILLIAM JONES	1 year	1816	George F. Farley	1 year
1794	Samuel Thatcher	1 year	1817	James Howe	1 year
1795	JAMES TEMPLE	2 years	1818	Samuel Barrett	1 year
1797	Thomas O. Selfridge	1 year	1819	BENJAMIN BARRETT	1 year
1798	THOMAS WHITING	4 years	1820	Abner Forbes	2 years
1802	Levi Frisbie	1 year	1822	Othniel Dinsmore	3 years
1803	Silas Warren	4 years	1825	James Furbish	1 year
1807	Wyman Richardson	1 year	1826	EDWARD JARVIS	1 year
1808	Ralph Sanger	1 year	1827	Horatio Wood	1 year
1809	Benjamin Willard	1 year	1828	David J. Merrill	1 year
1810	Elijah F. Paige	1 year	1829	John Graham	1 year
1811	Simeon Putnam	1 year	1831	John Brown	

Two public school teachers from outside [Concord](#), we learn, had been beating the students and allowing the older boys to terrorize the younger pupils. (Does that piece of information indicate that the “Abner Forbes” in the chart above prepared by Dr. Lemuel Shattuck in 1835, had been involved?) Therefore Squire Samuel Hoar, Dr. Abiel Heywood, Josiah Davis, Nathan Brooks, and [Colonel William Whiting](#) in this year had built a two-story structure on Academy Lane, at about the location at which Middle Street was eventually positioned, to begin there a private college-preparatory school, the [Concord Academy](#).

The *Academy*, built in 1822, is 40 feet long, 30 wide, and 2 stories high. The grammar schoolhouse is of the same size, the lower story being occupied as a school-room, and the upper one as a masonic hall. It was built in place of one burnt December 31, 1819, and dedicated, with two other new ones, for primary



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

schools, September 7, 1820. In 1799, seven new school-houses, one in each district, including the centre, were built at an expense to the town of about \$4,000.²⁵

We can compare and contrast the schooling which the Thoreau children would be receiving due to the careful concern of their mother [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and father [John Thoreau](#), Senior in a town near Boston on this side the ocean with the lack of concern for such things in another family of the period in a similar town near London as well as in a similar family financial circumstance. Here is how Charles Dickens, in 1845 or 1846, would be describing his plight in this Year of Our Lord 1822 after having been yanked from the William Giles schoolroom in the dock town of Chatham at the age of approximately ten:

[I]n the ease of his [father John Dickens's] temper, and the straitness of his means, he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of educating me at all, and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him in that regard, whatever. So I degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the little house [on Bayham Street in Camden Town]; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living.

EDUCATION.— Many of the original inhabitants of [Concord](#) were well educated in their native country; and, "to the end that learning be not buried in the graves of the forefathers," schools were provided at an early period for the instruction of their children. In 1647, towns of 50 families were required to have a common school, and of 100 families, a grammar school. Concord had the latter before 1680. An order was sent to this town, requiring "a list of the names of those young persons within the bounds of the town, and adjacent farms, who live from under family government, who do not serve their parents or masters, as children, apprentices, hired servants, or journeymen ought to do, and usually did in our native country"; agreeably to a law, that "all children and youth, under family government, be taught to read perfectly the English tongue, have knowledge in the capital laws, and be taught some orthodox catechism and that they be brought up to some honest employment." On the back of this order is this return: "I have made dillygent inquiry according to this warrant and find no defects to return. Simon Davis, Constable. March 31, 1680." During the 30 years subsequent to this period, which I [Dr. Lemuel Shattuck] have denominated the *dark age* in Massachusetts, few towns escaped a fine for neglecting the wholesome laws for the promotion of education. Though it does not appear that Concord was fined, a committee was appointed in 1692, to petition the General Court, "to ease us in the law relating to the grammar school-master,"

25. [Lemuel Shattuck's 1835 A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#) Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: [John Stacy](#)

(On or about November 11, 1837 [Henry David Thoreau](#) would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study. On July 16, 1859 he would correct a date mistake buried in the body of the text.)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

or to procure one "with prudence for the benefit of learning, and saving the town from fine." From that time, however, this school was constantly maintained. For several years subsequent to 1700, no appropriations were made to any other school. In 1701, grammar scholars paid 4d. and reading scholars 2d. per week towards its support; and from that time to 1712, from £20 to £30 were annually raised. In 1715, it was kept one quarter, in different parts of the town, for £40. The next year £50 were raised for schools; £35 for the centre, and £5 for each of the other three divisions. In 1722, Timothy Minott agreed to keep the school, for ten years, at £45 per year. In 1732, £50 were raised for the centre and £30 for the "out-schools"; and each schoolmaster was obliged to teach the scholars to read, write, and cipher, — all to be free. In 1740, £40 for the centre, and £80 for the others. These grants were in the currency of the times. In 1754, £40 lawful money were granted, £25 of which were for the centre. Teachers in the out-schools usually received 1s. per day for their services. The grammar-school was substituted for all others in 1767, and kept 12 weeks in the centre, and 6 weeks each, in 6 other parts, or "school societies" of the town. There were then 6 schoolhouses, 2 of which were in the present [1835] limits of Carlisle, and the others near where Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 6, now [1835] stand. This system of a *moving school*, as it was termed, was not, however, continued many years. In 1774 the school money was first divided in proportion to the polls and estates.

The districts were regulated, in 1781, nearly as they now [1835] are. The town raised £120, in 1784, for the support of schools, and voted, that "one sixteenth part of the money the several societies in the out-parts of the town pay towards this sum, should be taken and added to the pay of the middle society for the support of the grammar-school; and the out-parts to have the remainder to be spent in schools only." This method of dividing the school-money was continued till 1817, when the town voted, that it should be distributed to each district, including the centre, according to its proportion of the town taxes.

The appropriations for schools from 1781 to 1783, was £100; from 1784 to 1792, £125; 1793, £145; 1794 and 1795, £200; 1796 to 1801, £250; 1802 to 1806, \$1,000; 1807 to 1810, \$1,300; 1811, \$1,600; 1812 to 1816, \$1,300; 1817 and since, \$1,400. There are 7 districts, among which the money, including the Cuming's donation, has been divided, at different periods, as follows. The last column contains the new division as permanently fixed in 1831. The town then determined the amount that should be paid annually to each district, in the following proportions. The whole school-money being divided into 100 parts, district, No. 1, is to have 52½ of those parts, or \$761.25 out of \$1,550; district, No. 2, 7⁵/₈ parts; district, No. 3, 8¾ parts; district, No. 4, 8⁵/₈ parts; district, No. 5, 8¾ parts; district, No. 6, 7¹/₈ parts; district No. 7, 7¹/₈ parts; and to individuals who pay their money in Lincoln and Acton, ½ a part.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

District. Old Names.	1801.	1811.	1821.	1830.	1832.
No. 1. Central	\$382·92	\$791·48	\$646·15	\$789·18	\$761·25
No. 2. East	95·28	155·45	160·26	109·69	110·56¼
No. 3. Corner	68·49	135·48	142·48	117·00	119·62½
No. 4. Darby	70·53	130·69	123·10	138·23	125·06¼
No. 5. Barrett	107·29	163·51	145·89	125·11	119·62¼
No. 6. Groton Road	64·63	105·41	93·55	79·16	103·31¼
No. 7. Buttrick	67·64	126·68	114·16	84·77	103·31¼
Individuals	22·22	41·30	24·41	6·86	7·25
	<u>\$884.00</u>	<u>1,650.00</u>	<u>1,450.00</u>	<u>1,450.00</u>	<u>1,450.00</u>

At the erection of new school-houses in 1799, the first school committee was chosen, consisting of the Rev. [Ezra Ripley](#), Abiel Heywood, Esq., Deacon John White, Dr. Joseph Hunt, and Deacon George Minott. On their recommendation, the town adopted a uniform system of school regulations, which are distinguished for enlightened views of education, and which, by being generally followed since, under some modification, have rendered our schools among our greatest blessings.

The amount paid for private schools, including the Academy, was estimated, in 1830, at \$600, making the annual expenditure for education \$2,050. Few towns provide more ample means for acquiring a cheap and competent education. I [Dr. Lemuel Shattuck] have subjoined the names of the teachers of the grammar-school since the Revolution, — the year usually beginning in September.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1785	Nathaniel Bridge	9 months	1812	Isaac Warren	1 year
1786	JOSEPH HUNT	2½ years	1813	JOHN BROWN	1 year
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1811	Simeon Putnam	1 year	1831	John Brown	

The *Concord Academy* was established, in 1822, by several gentlemen, who were desirous of providing means for educating their own children and others more thoroughly than they could be at the grammar-school (attended, as it usually is, by a large number of scholars) or by sending them abroad. A neat, commodious building was erected, in a pleasant part of the town, by the proprietors, consisting of the Hon. Samuel Hoar, the Hon. Abiel Heywood, and Mr. Josiah Davis, who own a quarter each, and the Hon. Nathan Brooks and Colonel William Whiting, who own an eighth each. Their intention has always been to make the school equal to any other similar one. It was opened in September, 1823, under the instruction of Mr. George Folsom, who kept it two years. He was succeeded by Mr. Josiah Barnes and Mr. Richard Hildreth, each one year.

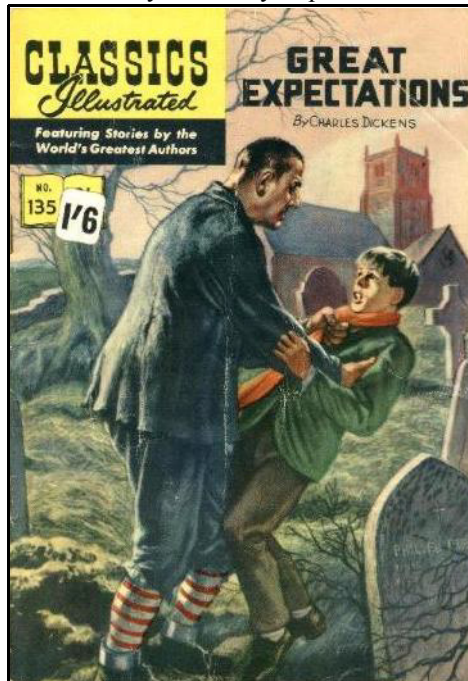
Mr. Phineas Allen, son of Mr. Phineas Allen of Medfield, who was born October 15, 1801, and graduated at Harvard College in 1825, has been the preceptor since September, 1827.²⁶

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

And this was **before** his father John Dickens would fall into the Marshalsea debtors' prison south of the river Thames, and **before** Charles himself would be allowed by his father and mother to fall into the child labor of the Warren's shoe-blackening factory off the Strand! It would not be until the author had reached 48 years of age, in his GREAT EXPECTATIONS, that he would be able to purge himself of the memories of the helpless child of this period, who had been so victimized by fecklessly improvident loving incompetent parents.



1822/1823 was [David Henry Thoreau](#)'s year five. The Thoreaus moved to Chelmsford MA. Little David Henry first went to infant school while they were living there.

Later on in life, in 1851, Thoreau would write about being deprived, during this period, of "interesting books":

When I was young and compelled to pass my Sundays in the house without the aid of interesting books, I used to spend many an hour till the wished-for sundown, watching the martins soar, from an attic window; and fortunate indeed did I deem myself when a hawk appeared in the heavens, though far toward the horizon against a downy cloud, and I searched for hours till I had found his mate. They, at least, took my thoughts from earthly things.

26. [Lemuel Shattuck](#)'s 1835 [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#) Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: [John Stacy](#)
(On or about November 11, 1837 [Henry Thoreau](#) would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study. On July 16, 1859 he would correct a date mistake buried in the body of the text.)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Per Professor Walter Roy Harding's THE DAYS OF [HENRY THOREAU](#) (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966):

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

WALTER HARDING'S BIOGRAPHY

Chapter 1 (1817-1823) -Downing gives a cursory account of the Thoreau and Dunbar heritage and more fully traces the nature and movement of the Thoreau family in the first five years of Henry's life.

Thoreau's father, John, while intellectual, "lived quietly, peacefully and contentedly in the shadow of his wife," Mrs. Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau, who was dynamic and outspoken with a strong love for nature and compassion for the downtrodden.

- 1st Helen -quiet, retiring, eventually a teacher.
- 2nd John Jr. -"his father turned inside out," personable, interested in ornithology, also taught.
- 3rd Henry (born July 12,1817) -speculative but not noticeably precocious.
- 4th Sophia -independent, talkative, ultimately took over father's business and edited Henry's posthumous publications.

The Thoreau's constantly struggled with debt, and in 1818 John Sr. gave up his farm outside Concord and moved into town. Later the same year he moved his family to Chelmsford where he opened a shop which soon failed and sent him packing to Boston to teach school.

(Robert L. Lace, January-March 1986)

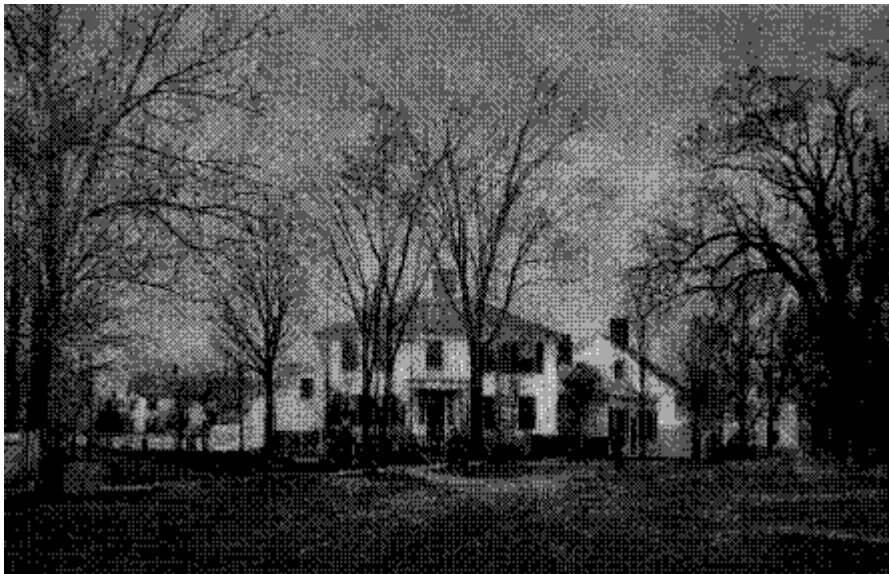
[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1823

March: [John Thoreau, Senior](#) left off teaching school at 6 Cornhill Court in [Boston](#), [David Henry Thoreau](#) was taken out of the Boston infant school, and the Thoreaus removed from Whitwell's house on Pinckney Street in Boston to rent space in the Jonas Hastings house in [Concord](#), built in about 1790, Deacon [William Parkman](#)'s brick house at the corner of Main Street and Walden Street,



where the father would go into the pencil-making business of Dunbar & Stow that was making use of graphite that [Charles Jones Dunbar](#) had discovered in 1821 near Bristol in New Hampshire, and also take up responsibility for the mill, milldam, race, and pond on Mill Brook just south of the "Milldam" district.

(Over the years the family would be living in nine different [Concord](#) buildings — nine, that is, in Concord alone, without adding in all the places they had lived elsewhere.)

We now know exactly where Henry's Uncle Charles had discovered the plumbago because Dr. Brad Dean has tracked down the following source information:

***Collections, Historical & Miscellaneous, and Monthly Literary Journal*. Vol. 2. Concord, N.H.: J. B. Moore, 1823. Edited by John Farmer and Jacob B. Moore.**

Plumbago, or Graphite.—This article has lately been discovered in the towns of Bristol and Francestown in this State. In Bristol, it has been found of superior excellence, and is said to be very abundant. By the politeness of Mr. Charles S. Dunbar, the proprietor of the land which contains it, the editors have been furnished with several specimens, one of which, they sent to Dr. MITCHELL of New-York, who, in a communication on the subject, speaks as follows:

"Your specimen of Plumbago was cordially received. I set a value upon it, by reason of the native and Fredonian source whence it came, and on account of its own apparent worth and excellence.

"It is pleasing to find our landed proprietors inquiring somewhat below the surface, for the good things contained in the grants they received by *superficial* measurement.—When they shall go deep into the matter,



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

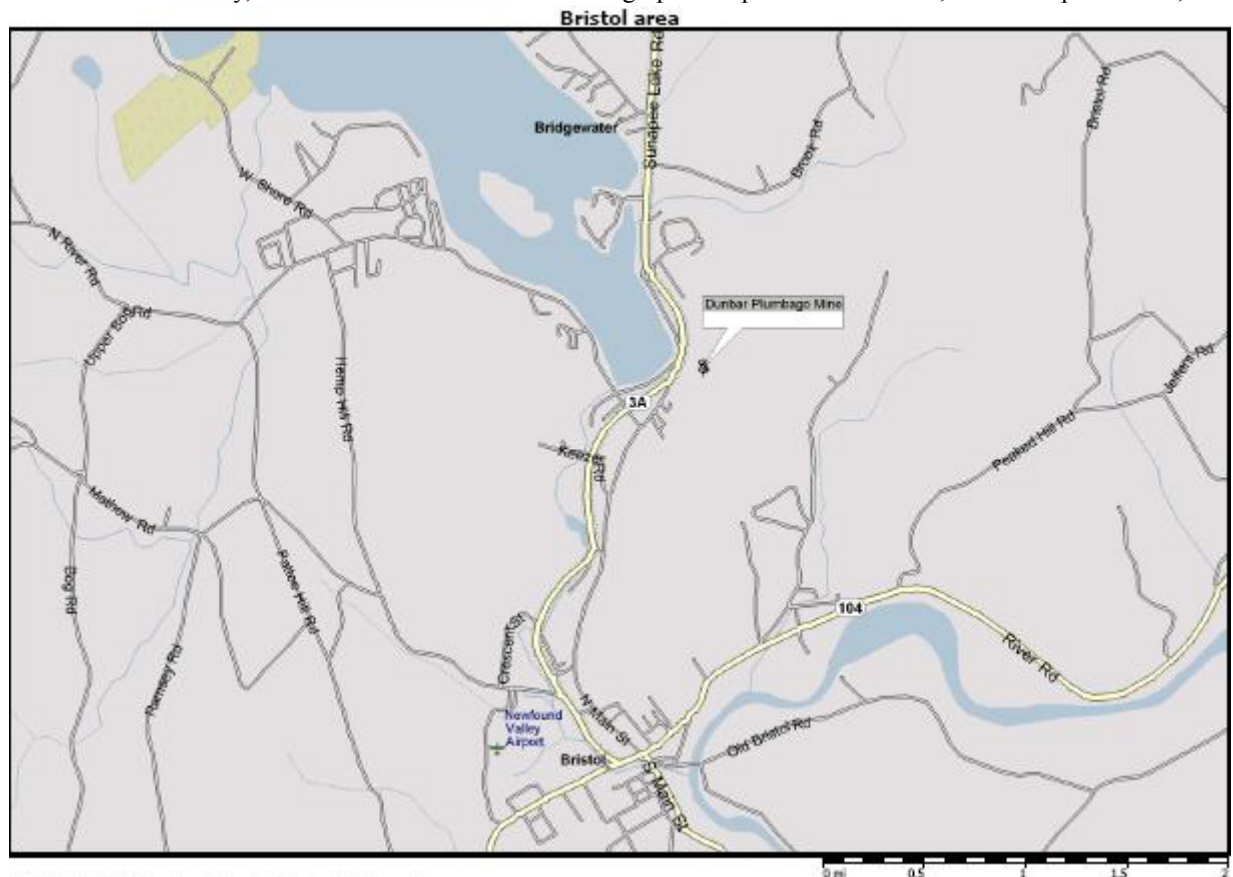
they will learn the importance of the French maxim, *approfondissez*, which, you know, means, *go to the bottom of the subject*. I trust the time is approaching when the purchaser of lands will require not merely a geometrical description, but a geological one; whereby the purchaser shall know that the gets so many acres *free and clear*, and moreover, such and so many strata *nice and proper*.

“I congratulate you on the discovery of such a treasure in our country. Much is due to the Mines that supply us with pencils and crucibles.”

Specimens have been furnished Professor Dana, of Dartmouth College, who thinks it equal to the celebrated Burrowdale ore.

That which has been discovered in Francetown is said to be of good quality. We are not informed whether it exists in large or small quantities. There has also been found in the south part of Francetown, near Lewis's mills, some beautiful specimens of Rock Crystal.

Which is to say, Uncle Charles had discovered the graphite deposit in the Bristol, New Hampshire area, here:



(Brad has visited the area and tells us there's nothing much there to be seen now, to mark the place where the graphite had been.)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

This photograph of [Concord](#) Center, taken in about 1865, shows in the distance the Jonas Hastings house belonging to Deacon [William Parkman](#) in which the Thoreaus were to reside from 1823 to 1826, at the corner of Main and Walden Streets.



As you can see, initially the Hastings corner had projected out into what is now part of Main Street, so that the house would need to be moved backward to allow Main Street to be widened prior to the opening in 1873 of the newly constructed Concord Free Public Library. (The Hastings house would ultimately be taken down to

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

make way for the business block put up by pharmacist John C. Friend in 1892.)



THOREAU RESIDENCES

[David Henry Thoreau](#) began to attend Miss Phœbe Wheeler's infant school. Here is a later reminiscence of this period in the life of the Thoreau family: "Mother reminds me that when we lived at the [Parkman house](#) she lost a ruff a yard and a half long and with an edging three yards long to it, which she had laid on the grass to whiten, and, looking for it, she saw a robin tugging at the tape string of a stay on the line. He would repeatedly get it in his mouth, fly off and be brought up when he got to the end of his tether. Miss Ward thereupon tore a fine linen handkerchief into strips and threw them out, and the robin carried them all off. She had no doubt that he took the ruff."



April 21, 1852: ... Was that a large shad bush where fathers mill used to be.? There is quite a water fall beyond. where the old dam was Where the rapids commence at the outlet of the pond, the water is singularly creased as it rushes to the fall



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

One of little David's toys, which he later said had really caught his attention, was a little pewter soldier (had it been cast at Concord's new lead factory?).

The Thoreau family, [John Thoreau, Senior](#) and [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) with the 5-year-old [David Henry Thoreau](#), and his older two siblings [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#) and [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and his younger sibling [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), with their grandmother the widow [Mary Jones Dunbar Minot](#), spent a memorable pic nic day that March on the exposed sandbar at the mouth of the cove on [Walden Pond](#).²⁷ When [Henry](#) remembered this for [WALDEN](#), below, he remembered it as his having been four years old, but later he corrected this to his having been five years old:



[WALDEN](#): When I was four years old, as I well remember, I was brought from Boston to this my native town, through these very woods and this field, to the pond. It is one of the oldest scenes stamped on my memory. And now to-night my flute has waked the echoes over that very water. The pines still stand here older than I; or, if some have fallen, I have cooked my supper with their stumps, and a new growth is rising all around, preparing another aspect for new infant eyes. Almost the same johnswort springs from the same perennial root in this pasture, and even I have at length helped to clothe that fabulous landscape of my infant dreams, and one of the results of my presence and influence is seen in these bean leaves, corn blades, and potato vines.

27. The water level of [Walden Pond](#) would be correspondingly low again, and the sandbar again exposed, in the year 2002!



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



While he was still age 6, [David](#) would be tossed by a [Concord](#) cow.

[Henry](#) would also later record another childhood memory from approximately this period, of driving cattle down the lane past [Walden Pond](#). This has some historical context, which I will quote from page 140 of Ruth



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

R. Wheeler's CONCORD: CLIMATE FOR FREEDOM:

After the Narragansett grants to veterans of King Philip's War, Concord farmers acquired pastures in New Ipswich, Ashburnham, Westminster, Templeton, and Holden, sometimes adjacent to farms owned by sons and cousins. Every May the dry cows and young stock were assembled and driven over the road to summer pasture. The men and boys made the drive on foot or on horseback and as roads improved a "democrat" or utility vehicle went along to hold oats for the horses, blankets, and a youngster or two. Farmers on the way would rent a fenced field to hold the stock at night and would allow the boys to sleep in the barn. Reciprocally, Concord farmers had fenced yards to hold overnight upcountry stock being driven to market. These were very small drives compared to those we see in pictures of the West, but they were usually a boy's first trip away from home: they stood for romance and adventure. During the nineteenth century, as Boston grew and became a busy seaport, traders gradually took over the business, buying up cows, driving them off to pasture, feeding them in the fall on the aftermath in Concord fields, and finally driving them down to stockyards in Watertown or dressing them off in Concord for salt beef. Of course, this gave farmers extra income as butchers, tanners, candlemakers, and coopers. Now picket fences became necessary in the village to keep stray animals out of one's yard.

Note that I am not saying that Thoreau's memory of driving cattle past [Walden Pond](#) would have had to have originated specifically in this Year of Our Lord 1822, nor that it was of such a large herd or over such a long distance, but only that it is likely that he would have held this memory in the context of such local cow business precisely as now an adult's memories of cows encountered on the farm during childhood would be held in the context of stories heard about the "Wild West" and about "cowboys" on "cattle drives."

Now that I have mentioned some Spring and Autumn business that Thoreau would have been observing in about this year of 1822, I will take the occasion, and mention some Winter business that he may well have been observing in about this year as well: Bear in mind that there were no snowplows in those days of sleighs and sledges. Public roads were not **plowed** during the winter, they were **packed**. The device that packed the snow was termed a "pung" and it was pulled by oxen rather than horses. If the snow was deep or wet, the pung would need to be pulled by several yoke of oxen. A good pack of snow on a road could sometimes assure smooth sleighing for the duration of the winter.

[THOREAU RESIDENCES](#)

The remark about the [flute](#) at this point in [WALDEN](#) may remind us that [Thoreau](#)'s intent was, importantly, to see with "new infant eyes."



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



After August 6, 1845: ... Well now to-night my flute awakes the echoes over this very water, but one generation of pines has fallen and with their stumps I have cooked my supper, And a lusty growth of oaks and pines is rising all around its brim and preparing its wilder aspect for new infant eyes. ...



Per [Walter Roy Harding](#)'s [THE DAYS OF HENRY THOREAU](#): A BIOGRAPHY (NY: Knopf, 1966):

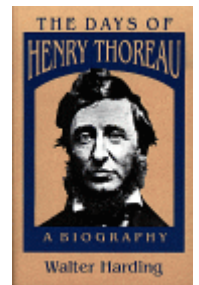
"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

Chapter 1 (1817-1823) -Downing gives a cursory account of the Thoreau and Dunbar heritage and more fully traces the nature and movement of the Thoreau family in the first five years of Henry's life.

Thoreau's father, John, while intellectual, "lived quietly, peacefully and contentedly in the shadow of his wife," Mrs. Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau, who was dynamic and outspoken with a strong love for nature and compassion for the downtrodden.

- 1st Helen -quiet, retiring, eventually a teacher.
- 2nd John Jr. -"his father turned inside out," personable, interested in ornithology, also taught.
- 3rd Henry (born July 12, 1817) -speculative but not noticeably precocious.
- 4th Sophia -independent, talkative, ultimately took over father's business and edited Henry's posthumous publications.

The Thoreau's constantly struggled with debt, and in 1818 John Sr. gave up his farm outside [Concord](#) and moved into town. Later the same year he moved his family to Chelmsford where he opened a shop which soon failed and sent him packing to Boston to teach school.



"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

In 1823 uncle [Charles Jones Dunbar](#) discovered [graphite](#) in New Hampshire and invited [John Thoreau](#) to join Dunbar and Stow Pencil Makers back in [Concord](#).

Henry's [Concord](#) youth was "typical of any small town American boy of the 19th century."

Henry attended Miss Phœbe Wheeler's private "infants" school, then the public grammar school, where he studied the Bible and English classics such as [William Shakespeare](#), [John Bunyan](#), Dr. Samuel Johnson and the Essayists.

Henry was considered "stupid" and "unsympathetic" by schoolmates he would not join in play, earning the nicknames "Judge" and "the fine scholar with the big nose." At school he was withdrawn and anti-social but he loved outdoor excursions.

From 1828-1834 Henry attended [Concord Academy](#) (Phineas Allen, preceptor). Allen taught the classics -[Virgil](#), Sallust, [Caesar](#), [Euripides](#), [Homer](#), Xenophon, [Voltaire](#), Molière and Racine in the original languages- and emphasized composition.

Henry also benefitted from the Concord Lyceum and particularly the natural history lectures presented there.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

WALTER HARDING'S BIOGRAPHY

Chapter 3 (1833-1837) -Thoreau enters Harvard (president Josiah Quincy), having barely squeezed by his entrance exams and rooming with Charles S. Wheeler

Thoreau's Harvard curriculum: Greek (8 terms under Felton and Dunkin)-composition, grammar, "Greek Antiquities," Xenophon, Demosthenes, Aeschines, Sophocles, Euripides, Homer. Latin Grammar (8 terms under Beck and McKean)-composition, "Latin Antiquities," Livy, Horace, Cicero, Seneca, Juvenal. Mathematics (7 terms under Pierce and Lovering) English (8 terms under ET Channing, Giles, W&G Simmons)-grammar, rhetoric, logic, forensics, criticism, elocution, declamations, themes. Mental Philosophy (under Giles) [Paley](#), Stewart. Natural Philosophy (under Lovering)-astronomy. Intellectual Philosophy (under Bowen) Locke, Say, Story. Theology (2 terms under H Ware)-[Paley](#), Butler, New Testament. Modern Languages (voluntary) Italian (5 terms under Bachi) French (4 terms under Surault) German (4 terms under Bokum) Spanish (2 terms under Sales) Attended voluntary lectures on German and Northern literature (Longfellow), mineralogy (Webster), anatomy (Warren), natural history (Harris).

Thoreau was an above average student who made mixed impressions upon his classmates.

In the spring of '36 Thoreau withdrew due to illness -later taught for a brief period in Canton under the Rev. Orestes A. Brownson, a leading New England intellectual who Harding suggests profoundly influenced Thoreau.

(Robert L. Lace, January-March 1986)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Allen, Gay Wilson. "A New Look at Emerson and Science," pages 58-78 in LITERATURE AND IDEAS IN AMERICA: ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF HARRY HAYDEN CLARK. Robert Falk, ed. Athens OH: Ohio UP, 1975

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

Allen examines NATURE and [Waldo Emerson](#)'s attitudes toward science in the light of four of Emerson's early lectures. These lectures, given in 1833-34, were about science, and were titled "The Uses of Natural History," "On the Relation of Man to the Globe," "Water," and "The Naturalist." Allen's 1975 essay furthers the work done by Harry Haydon Clark in his 1931 essay "Emerson and Science;" Clark did not have access to these lectures.

The first lecture, "The Uses of Natural History," was, Allen says, a "preliminary sketch" for NATURE. In this lecture Emerson elaborated on the uses of nature much as he did in NATURE: how nature contributes to human health (beauty, rest); to civilization (with due Emersonian skepticism about technology); to knowledge of truth (here Allen discusses the influence of geology on Emerson: how the age of the earth and the slowness of earth's transformative processes confuted traditional religious doctrine); and to self-understanding (nature as language that God speaks to humanity – nature as image or metaphor of mind) (60-64).

Emerson's second lecture, "On the Relation of Man to the Globe," was also a preliminary sketch for NATURE. In this lecture, Allen says,

Emerson drew heavily on his readings in geology, along with some biology and chemistry, and attempted to demonstrate how marvelously the world is adapted for human life. (64)

Emerson's sources included Laplace, Mitscherlich, Cuvier; his arguments echoed Lamarck (evolution, nature adapted to humans) and [the Reverend William] Paley (argument from design) (64-67).

The third lecture, "Water," was Emerson's "most technical" according to Allen, which is, perhaps, why it is not discussed at any length. It is also not assessed for its scientific accuracy. Allen does say that Emerson "read up on the geological effects of water, the laws of thermodynamics, the hydrostatic press, and related subjects" (67).

Allen says that Emerson's fourth lecture, "The Naturalist," "made a strong plea for a recognition of the importance of science in education" (60). Emerson "emphasized particularly the study of nature to promote esthetic and moral growth" (67). Emerson wanted science for the poet and poetry for the scientist; the fundamental search for the *causa causans* (67-69). He was reading Gray and other technical sources, observing nature, and reading philosophers of science, especially Coleridge and Goethe (68).

Allen says that the value of these lectures is not merely the light they shed on Nature but what they reveal about "his reading and thinking about science before he had fused his ideas thus derived with the Neoplatonic and 'transcendental' ideas of Plotinus, Swedenborg, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle, and seventeenth-century English Platonists" (69).

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR****JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR**

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

Allen concludes that [Waldo Emerson](#)'s theory of nature in NATURE is derived far more from Neoplatonism than modern scientific knowledge, but Emerson was not turning his back on science; he wanted instead to spiritualize science, to base science on the theory that the physical world is an emanation of spirit, "the apparition of God" (Chapter 6), or "a projection of God in the unconscious." (70)

Allen contends that Emerson's theory anticipates Phenomenology in its emphasis on mind/world interactions and correspondences. Science, Allen says, continued to have a "pervasive influence" on Emerson's thought even after 1836:

Indeed, the two most basic concepts in his philosophy, which he never doubted, were "compensation" and "polarity," both derived from scientific "laws," i.e. for every action there is a reaction, and the phenomena of negative and positive poles in electrodynamics. To these might also be added "circularity," which translated into poetic metaphors the principle of "conservation of energy." (75)

One could argue, I think, that these scientific laws were themselves "derived from" philosophical and metaphysical speculations (e.g. Kant); their life-long conceptual importance to Emerson, in other words, does not seem precisely described as scientific.

[Cecily F. Brown, March 1992]



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



October 23, Thursday: The United States navy was making brief landings along the coast of Cuba in this year, in pursuit of [pirates](#). The landing on this date, the last for the year, was at Camrioca.

[US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS](#)

The Boston [Weekly Messenger](#) announced that at the recent cattle show in Brighton, [John Thoreau, Senior](#)'s pencils made in [Concord](#) had won a \$2.⁰⁰ prize.

In Philadelphia, [Eastern State Penitentiary](#) first opened its doors (or, rather, it being a prison, a better rendition would I suppose be that it first locked its doors and drew its blinds). Its initial inmate was "...Charles Williams, Prisoner Number One. Burglar. Light Black Skin. Five feet seven inches tall. Foot: eleven inches. Scar on nose. Scar on Thigh. Broad Mouth. Black eyes. Farmer by trade. Can read. Theft included one twenty-dollar watch, one three-dollar gold seal, one, a gold key. Sentenced to two years confinement with labor. Received by Samuel R. Wood, first Warden, Eastern State Penitentiary..."

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*5th day 23 of 10th M / A Short testimony by J Dennis & by me
some favour experienced as well as Some tossings & roving of
mind -*

*The epistle from the last Yearly, to the Subordinate Meetings
was read in The Preparative meeting, & tho' I had heard it
several times before, now seemed fresh - The Queries were
answered as usual. -*

[RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS](#)



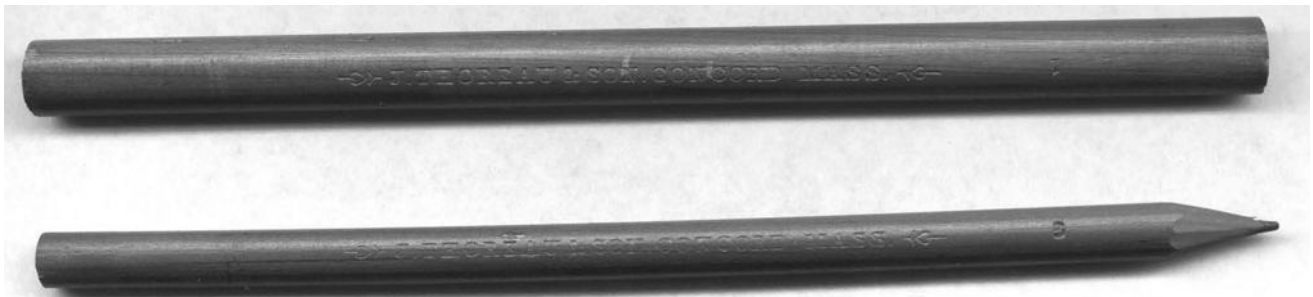
JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1824



“John Thoreau & Son” entered upon the manufacture of [pencils](#).



From Thoreau’s later journal, the phrase “father’s mill used to be located” indicates that at one point in time, the Thoreau family pencil business had been large enough to sustain its own little sawmill up in the Esterbrook Country of [Concord](#). It was at the site of a small wooded pond, where there had evidently at that time been a mill and where enough water power to turn a saw was available to prepare the cedar strips for the pencils. By the time Henry would be an adult, going on his walks, [John Thoreau, Senior](#)’s sawmill had become nothing but a ruin. Here is a current photograph and an old photograph:



The Thoreaus were renting a brick house at the corner of Main Street and Walden Street in [Concord](#) (the Parkman “Brick House” is not the one in the center of this photo):



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

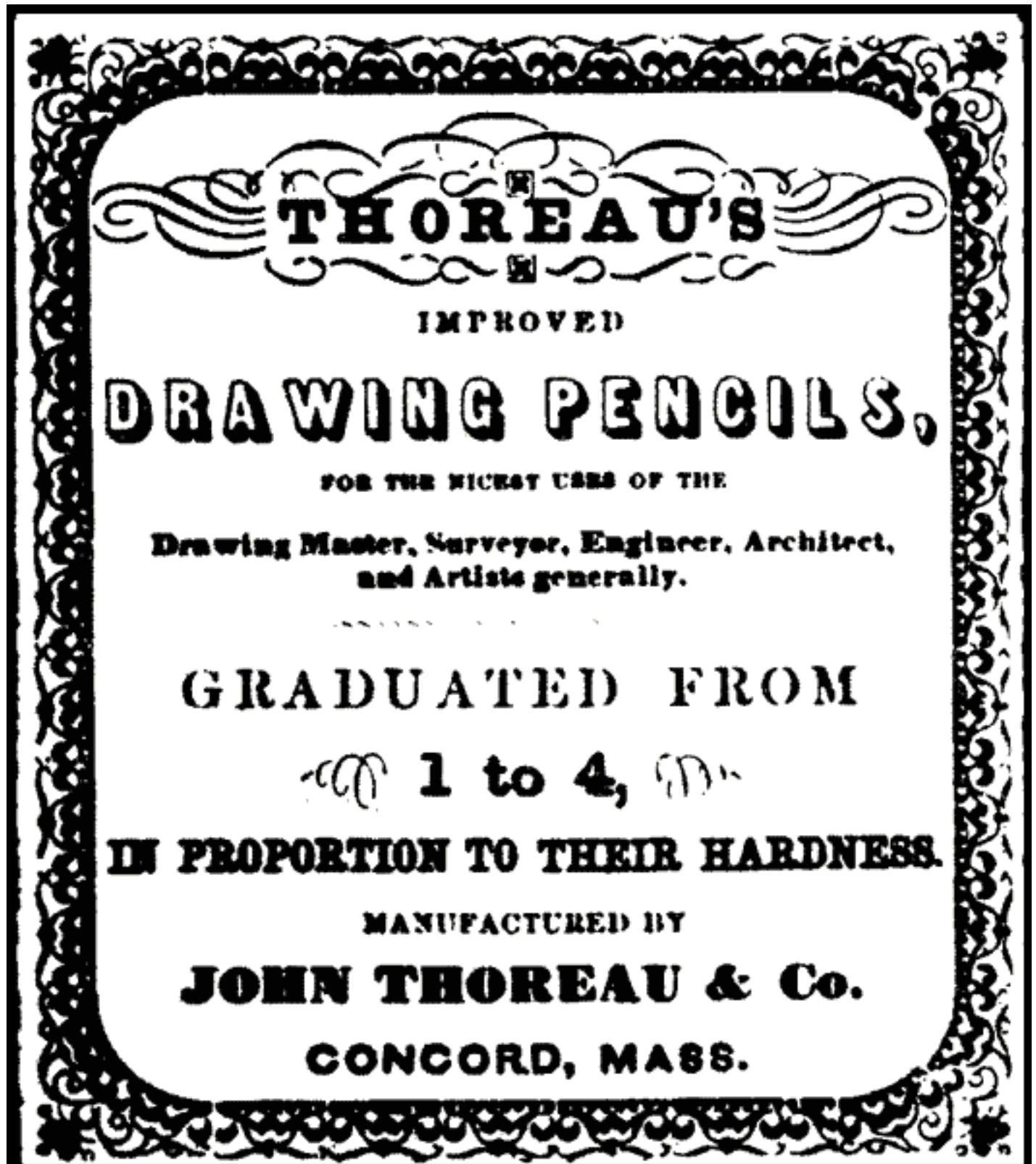
[HDT](#)

[WHAT?](#)

[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



THOREAU'S
IMPROVED
DRAWING PENCILS,
FOR THE NICEST USES OF THE
Drawing Master, Surveyor, Engineer, Architect,
and Artists generally.
GRADUATED FROM
1 to 4,
IN PROPORTION TO THEIR HARDNESS.
MANUFACTURED BY
JOHN THOREAU & Co.
CONCORD, MASS.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1825



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

THOREAU RESIDENCES



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1826



Spring: In [Concord](#), the organization of a chapter of Royal Arch Masons (over and above the town's existing Corinthian Lodge of Free Masons).

[The Thoreaus](#) moved from the brick house Jonas Hastings had erected in about 1790 at the corner of Main Street and Walden Street in [Concord](#) into the Davis house next door to the substantial residence of the attorney Samuel Hoar²⁸ and across the street from the "Shattuck House (now William Monroe's)": the actual journal entry is "Davis's House, (next to S. Hoar's) to May 7th, 1827."²⁹



David Henry was attending the Concord Academy and studying under Preceptor [Phineas Allen](#).

THOREAU RESIDENCES



"Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
s year that Samuel Hoar was becoming a Massachusetts senator. (In politics, Hoar began as
g, and would continue as a Whig until the nomination of slavemaster Zachary Taylor for
is now at #166 Main Street in Concord, and is referred to as the Concord Academy's Aloian House





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?"
-JOURNAL May 1, 1857



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1827



During this year a mechanical pencil was being advertised in a [London](#) publication. The advertisement characterized it as a “propelling pencil.”



In Salem MA, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dixon began the manufacture of items related to carbon ([pencils](#), stove polish, and lubricants) in their home. Thoreau’s eventual involvement with pencil engineering is traceable, through his father, to Dixon. Although Dixon had had a meager education (the name of the town of manufacture on the case for his pencils was, for instance, printed as “Slem”!), early in life he had been able to devise a machine for cutting files. When he took up printing, lacking funds for metal type for a time he carved his own type out of wood. When he began to melt type metal in Salem, he experimented with the creation of crucibles of graphite. He used this supply of [graphite](#) also to manufacture stove polish and pencils. However, when Dixon tried to peddle pencils of American manufacture in Boston, he was told that to offer them as of high quality he would need to place foreign labels on them. He ceased making pencils for the time being, but apparently not before [John Thoreau, Senior](#) had learned from him the rudiments of pencil making. There is little to indicate that in the 1820s any Americans were aware of the French process for pencil making. From a friend who was a chemist, Francis Peabody, Dixon may have learned of Conté’s use of clay in French pencil leads, but we don’t know that he experimented with such a process. While the Thoreaus may in turn have learned that mixing clay with the graphite could make a better pencil, they also would need to develop the process through experimentation.

(In later years the Dixons of Salem would relocate their enterprise to Jersey City NJ and develop a machine that could produce 132 pencils a minute. The Dixon factory would become the 1st fullscale pencil factory in the United States.)





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



May 7, Monday: [The Thoreaus](#) had moved in Spring 1826 from the brick “Josiah Jones” house at the corner of Main Street and Walden Street in [Concord](#), into the Davis house next door to the substantial residence of the attorney Samuel Hoar and across the street from the “Shattuck House (now William Monroe’s),” and at this point they moved again, across the street to the Shattuck house, the address of which was at that time #63 Main Street (it is now #185 Main Street). They would live in this house “to spring of 1835.” It was their 3d Concord residence in four years. [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) would determine to make extra cash as her sisters-in-law were doing in the old Thoreau home on the town common, by taking in lodgers. This nice facility would be made into her boardinghouse.³⁰

THOREAU RESIDENCES



“Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?”
—JOURNAL May 1, 1857



30. What Shattucks did they know?

- [Daniel Shattuck](#)
- [Henry L. Shattuck](#)
- [Lemuel Shattuck](#) the author of [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#)

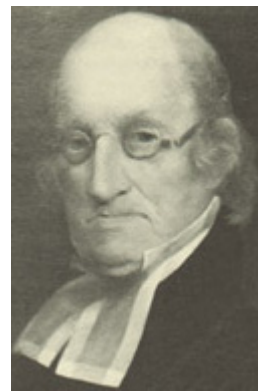


JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1828

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



THE DEACONS OF CONCORD

Even [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) was for a time involved in this defection. Professor Robert A. Gross describes it in his “Faith in the Boardinghouse: New Views of Thoreau Family Religion”:³¹

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

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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



April 25, Friday: In Cambridge, Ephraim Buttrick, Esq. got married with Mary King.

In one of "the great conflagrations which the world has witnessed," Bascom & Cole's English and West Indian Shop on Concord's Milldam burned down. Since [John Thoreau, Senior](#) was a regular member of Concord's



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

volunteer fire brigade, he would assuredly have been there manning the [Concord](#) town fire “tub” or wagon.

[WALDEN](#): Breed’s hut was standing only a dozen years ago, though it had long been unoccupied. It was about the size of mine. It was set on fire by mischievous boys, one Election night, if I do not mistake. I lived on the edge of the village then, and had just lost myself over Davenant’s Gondibert, that winter that I labored with a lethargy, -which, by the way, I never knew whether to regard as a family complaint, having an uncle who goes to sleep shaving himself, and is obliged to sprout potatoes in a cellar Sundays, in order to keep awake and keep the Sabbath, or as the consequence of my attempt to read Chalmers’ collection of English poetry without skipping. It fairly overcame my Nervii. I had just sunk my head on this when the bells rung fire, and in hot haste the engines rolled that way, led by a straggling troop of men and boys, and I among the foremost, for I had leaped the brook. We thought it was far south over the woods, -we who had run to fires before,- barn, shop, or dwelling-house, or all together. “It’s Baker’s barn,” cried one. “It is the Codman Place,” affirmed another. And then fresh sparks went up above the wood, as if the roof fell in, and we all shouted “Concord to the rescue!” Wagons shot past with furious speed and crushing loads, bearing, perchance, among the rest, the agent of the Insurance Company, who was bound to go however far; and ever and anon the engine bell tinkled behind, more slow and sure, and rearmost of all, as it was afterward whispered, came they who set the fire and gave the alarm. Thus we kept on like true idealists, rejecting the evidence of our senses, until at a turn in the road we heard crackling and actually felt the heat of the fire from over the wall, and realized, alas! that we were there. The very nearness of the fire but cooled our ardor. At first we thought to throw a frog-pond on to it; but concluded to let it burn, it was so far gone and so worthless. So we stood round our engine, jostled one another, expressed our sentiments through speaking trumpets, or in lower tone referred to the great conflagrations which the world has witness, including Bascom’s shop, and, between ourselves we thought that, were we there in season with our “tub”, and a full frog-pond by, we could turn that threatened last and universal one into another flood. We finally retreated without doing any mischief, -returned to sleep and Gondibert. But as for Gondibert, I would except that passage in the preface about wit being the soul’s powder, -“but most of mankind are strangers to wit, as Indians are to powder.”



PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

INSURANCE

NARCOLEPSY

ALEXANDER CHALMERS

BASCOM & COLE



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

(Concord records show various Coles: Abraham Cole, Daniel Cole, Reverend Jonathan Cole, Joseph Green Cole. There was a Reverend Ezekiel L. Bascom who at one time was pastor of a church in Gerry, and there is a man of this name, without the title of Reverend, listed in Concord records. There is a pastel portrait by Ruth Handshaw Bascom of him, dated 1829 — the portrait consists of a cut-out profile head executed in pastel and graphite, attached with sealing wax to a painted cut-out torso.)



January 14, Monday: The 1st part of Franz Schubert's Die Winterreise D.911 was published by Haslinger.

The “yellow shop” formerly used by [John Thoreau and Company](#) was leased by Nathan Stow and Cyrus Stow to Ebenezer Hubbard.

This Indenture, made the *fourteenth* day of *January* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and *twentyeight*
WITNESSETH, THAT *We, Nathan Stow and Cyrus Stow, both of Concord in the County of Middlesex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Butchers*
do hereby Lease, Demise, and Let unto *Ebenezer Hubbard of said Concord, Yeoman,* a certain *yellow shop with the cellar under it, and the privileges of the door-yard* which are necessary for the improvement and beneficial occupation of said shop in the same manner as said shop has been improved and occupied heretofore by *John Thoreau and Company, said shop being the same which was*



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1829



Spring: In [Concord](#), the [Thoreau family](#) was residing in the “Shattuck House (now William Monroe’s)” at 63 Main Street.³²

THOREAU RESIDENCES



“Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?”
-JOURNAL May 1, 1857



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.

32. What Shattucks did they know?
[Daniel Shattuck](#)
Henry L. Shattuck
Dr. [Lemuel Shattuck](#) the author of [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1830

→ [Daniel Shattuck](#) bought the house which is now the west part of [Concord](#)'s Colonial Inn and moved into it. Shattuck would help found the Middlesex Insurance Company, National Bank, Savings Bank, and Milldam Company. His brother [Lemuel Shattuck](#), who had been helping with the store since 1823, moved into rooms above the store, where he would remain until 1833, when he would relocate to [Boston](#) to become a book publisher. Brother Lemuel would in 1835 publish the 1st history of [Concord](#), would present the 1st report ever given at a town meeting, would get a law passed making such reports mandatory throughout the state, and would found both the American Statistical Society and the New England Genealogy Society.

→ Having completed his studies at the Harvard medical school, [Edward Jarvis](#) began medical practice, in Northfield. His practice would not do well and in periods between patients he would walk the woods. He gave lectures on "vegetable physiology and natural history" at the lyceums in and around Northfield, and delivered minisermos at the Sunday School such as one on "the evidence of design, wisdom, and benevolence manifested in the anatomical structure and physiological operation of the animal organs ... [which] presented ... an extremely interesting proof not only of the skill and love of the Creator, but also of the constancy of this skill and benevolence in sustaining our lives and being here." (It must have been at least interesting, and perhaps also perplexing, for those attending such a Sunday School class to receive such a minisermos on God's oversight from a man of accomplishment who had been born with a speech impediment.) A group of young women there became interested in botanizing and according to THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF EDWARD JARVIS (1803-1884), published in 1992, under his tutelage "became zealous students, and made excellent progress in the science." According to his TRADITIONS AND REMINISCENCES OF CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 1779-1878, very recently published, despite loss of some enterprises [Concord](#) was during this period continuing as a town of some considerable manufacturing importance because David Loring was beginning the manufacture of lead pipe there (we may recall that [Henry Thoreau](#) would do some contract engineering work on the manufacturing equipment for this plant):

David Loring made lead pipe at the site of Warner's pail factory [from] about 1830 to after 1847. Nathanael Munroe made 8-day clocks on the dam. He had eight hands [employees] to help him. He removed to [Baltimore](#) about 1818. Lemuel Curtis made time pieces, [and] wall clocks, on the dam. He moved to Burlington about 1820. Benjamin R. Haggar made seaman's compasses in a building on the spot where Mrs. Barber now (1876) lives. He moved to [Baltimore](#) about 1818. Peter Wheeler exported beef and pork, packed and salted, to the West Indies until his death in May 1813, aged 58. He lived in the house now occupied by Nathan Stow. Andrew Edwards made organs in a shop where William Monroe afterwards made [pencils](#). H. David Hubbard made [pencils](#) previously in an old shop on the north corner of Walden and Heywood streets next east of Mr. [John] Vose's tan yard. Major James Barrett and Jonathan Hildreth made bellows for family use and sold them in [Boston](#), 1822. Nathan Barrett carried on coopering and sent a large quantity of barrels to Boston and Brighton for the beef and pork packers. Stephen Wood had a tan yard on the mill dam. John Vose had one on Walden St. near Heywood St. next to the pond. Stephen Barrett also on his farm



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

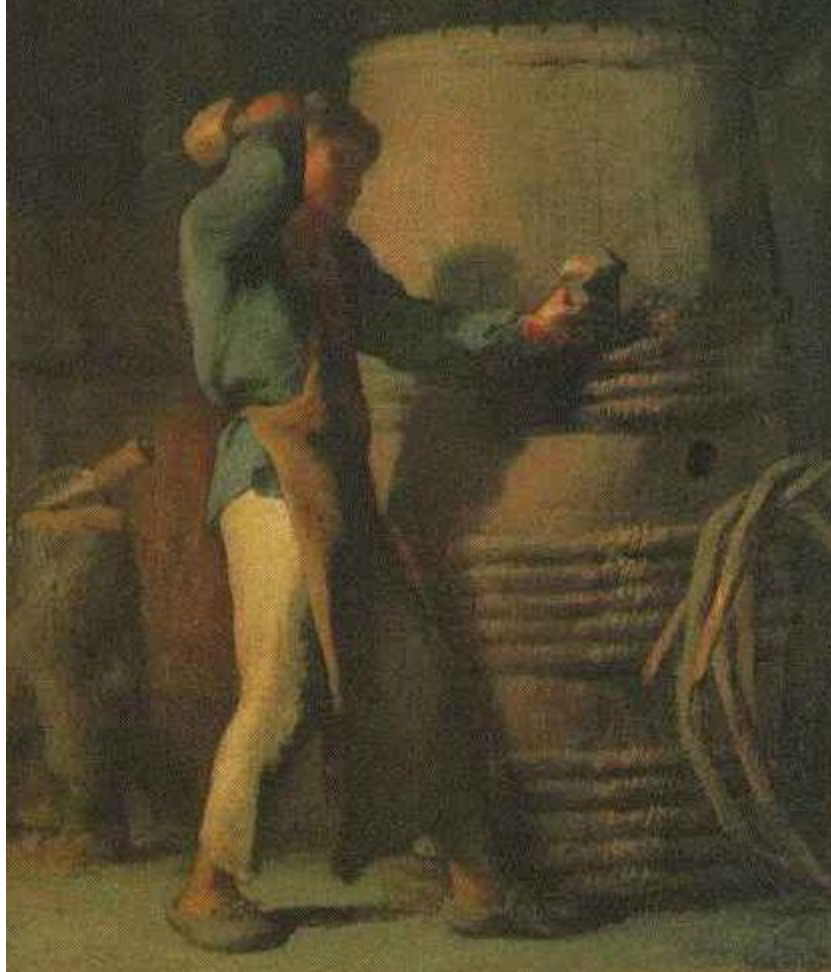
near the Carlisle line.... Mr. Joshua Jones drew wire in his shop by use of the trip hammer wheel. Small rods were drawn through steel plates with holes successively smaller until he reached the desired size. At the same time Mr. Jones made cut nails, cutting [them] by machine from the end of iron plates of proper thickness and width. Then these header pieces were put into a vice with a [indecipherable] and the upper end pounded by hand and a head made.





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Possibly as part of the businessmen's agreement which was creating the "Milldam" district of downtown [Concord](#) in this year, [John Thoreau, Senior](#) gave up operation of the mill, milldam, race, and pond on Mill Brook, which he had been operating since 1823, and began to manufacture [pencils](#).



At some point during this decade, Eben Wood would begin to grind [plumbago](#) exclusively and routinely for the Thoreau [pencil](#) factory of Concord.

So what was the relationship between this Nathanael Munroe mentioned above as having made 8-day clocks



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

on the dam before relocating to [Baltimore](#), and the William Monroe who was still at this point making pencils in Concord?



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1831



July 3, Sunday: [Edward Bliss Emerson](#), in the Caribbean for his health, was discovering the white folks there to be considerably different from those he'd rubbed elbows with back home: "Men do not strive here as in N E after the perfect man. It is present pastime or gainful industry or chance which they follow as their stars."

[Waldo](#)'s bro was having an excellent opportunity to observe first hand and close up the iniquitous system of [race slavery](#) by which sweetness was being brought into the world. Now there seem to have been two sorts of white people in the world, namely the white folks who can view such an ongoing atrocity and be left with a vague feeling sorta like "Gee, I'm sure glad I'm not a slave, myself, and pass the [cane sugar](#), please" versus the white folks who were shattered by such information, who came to be filled with a determination that whatever else needed to be cured about this wicked world we live in, getting rid of this particular iniquity was way, way up at the top of the list. Waldo's bro would turn out to be of the former sort of white folks rather than of the latter sort. He toured through the worst of it learning about it first hand and close up — and found it all kinda picturesque sorta.

([Henry Thoreau](#), on the other hand, would never had any of this first hand contact, but would come to be filled with such revulsion for the system by which sweetness was being brought into the world, that he would go way out on a limb trying to figure out how sweetness might be produced locally and in perfect innocence. His attempt to figure out how to process the sap from local *Betula lutea* (yellow birch) trees would result in

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1856 in the only recorded argument he had with his father [John Thoreau, Sr.](#))



March 21, 1856: Had a dispute with Father about the use of my making this sugar when I ... might have bought sugar cheaper at Holden's. He said it took me from my studies. I said I made it my study; I felt as if I had been to a university.

SWEETS
WITHOUT
SLAVERY



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1833



September: A [Concord](#) Ornamental Tree Society was formed, to sponsor the planting of trees along the town streets. The 44 members included [Dr. Josiah Bartlett](#), Squire Nathan Brooks, Deacon Reuben Brown, Stedman Buttrick, Squire Samuel Hoar, Dr. [Edward Jarvis](#), Abel Moore, the [Reverend Ezra Ripley](#), [Daniel Shattuck](#), [John Thoreau, Senior](#), and [Colonel William Whiting](#).



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1834



In the early 1830s, Thoreau pencils were finding a steady market with or without the family name imprinted, and were threatening William Munroe's similar local business. With both firms having their plumbago ground at Ebenezer Wood's mill on the fast-flowing Assabet River, it appears that Munroe had attempted to persuade Wood to stop grinding for Thoreau, and his plot had backfired when Wood, who evidently was making more money from Thoreau, instead stopped grinding for Munroe. The Munroe business had faltered while the Thoreaus were prospering. When [graphite](#) could no longer be obtained from their claim near Bristol, New Hampshire, they continued using ore mined near Sturbridge, Massachusetts, and later, when that had been



exhausted, they would purchase ore mined in Canada. It appears that, by the time he went away to college, [Henry Thoreau](#) would have been quite familiar with the manufacture of pencils, since his family had been making them in the shed behind the house for about a decade. Indeed, in this year when Henry made a trip with father [John Thoreau, Senior](#) to New-York, what they were doing was selling pencils wholesale to the stores

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

there, and the income would be used in part for Henry's education at Harvard College.

[PENCILS](#)

None of the pencils made in America at this time could be manufactured from the pure Borrowdale graphite because as a raw material it was simply not available, and evidently the Conté formula for mixing the graphite powder with clay was either unknown or unperfected outside the European continent, and thus the American offerings would all need to be characterized as “greasy, gritty, brittle, inefficient” products. Users, especially artists and engineers, had always on the lookout for the next piece of grit that would spoil their line or gouge the paper. The Thoreau pencils competed successfully because, in mixing their inadequately purified and inadequately ground [graphite](#) with such substances as glue, in adding a little bayberry wax or spermaceti, and in applying the mixture with a brush while warm to the grooved part of a cedar case and gluing another piece of cedar on top of it, the workers in the pencil shed behind the Thoreau boardinghouse in [Concord](#) were making pencils that were less imperfect than those of their competitors such as Munroe. No American pencils could come anywhere near the quality of the best English or French pencils, but by offering these local pencils at reasonable prices, by the mid-1830s Thoreau & Company had become well established.

This is likely to have been the map of New Hampshire available to the Thoreaus, out of the atlas of Anthony

HDT

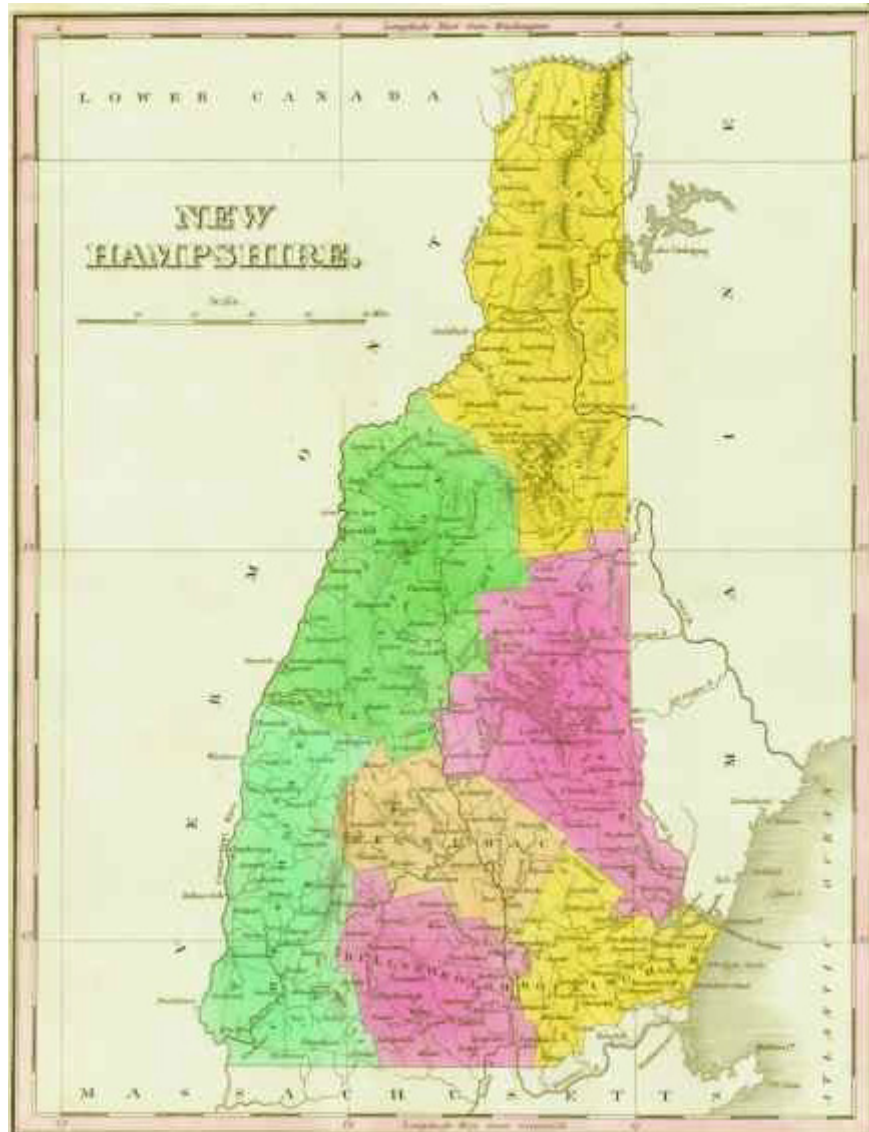
WHAT?

INDEX

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Finley:





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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:³³

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+

33. 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.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Henry D. Thoreau +1845+





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

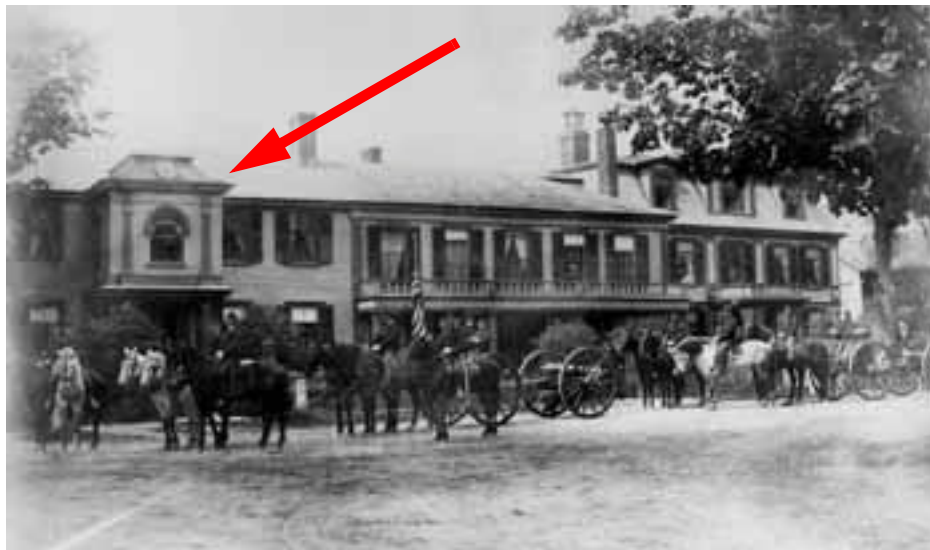
JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



The Thoreau family in [Concord](#) would live in “Aunt’s House, to spring of 1837,” the house which is now the west part of Concord’s Colonial Inn, with [Aunt Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#) (Aunt [Sarah Thoreau](#) having died in 1829): David Henry was away most of the time, as a student at Harvard College.

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

JOHN THOREAU, SR.



On the Isle of Jersey, a savings bank was opened. According to Marcel R. Garnier’s *L’ANCÊTRE* (THE ANCESTOR), it was in about this year that John Guillet,³⁴ originally from the Isle of [Jersey](#), moved from Québec to Ontario.



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



THOREAU RESIDENCES

34. In the Huguenot diaspora, the Guillet family was closely entangled with the Thoreau family.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

May 2, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) lectured at the [Concord Lyceum](#) in [Concord](#). This was the 3d lecture of the series, "The Head."

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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 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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1841

May 24, Wednesday: [William Whiting](#) was born in Dudley, Massachusetts. In 1873 he would be a member of the Massachusetts state senate. In 1878 he would be the mayor of Holyoke, Massachusetts. In 1883/1889 he would be a U.S. Representative from Massachusetts 11th District. He would die in Holyoke, Massachusetts on January 9, 1911 and the body would be placed at Forestdale Cemetery in Holyoke.

Election Day night was considered to be an appropriate occasion for [drunkenness](#) and celebration, and thus for high-spirited pranks and for the settling of old scores. [Henry Thoreau](#) was living with the Emersons and was up very late, studying, when he heard the fire bell clanging, jumped over Mill Brook, and ran out in advance of the fire “tub” or wagon, which would presumably have been manned by his father [John Thoreau](#), Senior as a regular member of the Concord volunteer fire brigade.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

[next screen]

WALDEN: Nearer yet to town, you come to Breed's location, on the other side of the way, just on the edge of the wood; ground famous for the pranks of a demon not distinctly named in old mythology, who has acted a prominent and astounding part in our New England life, and deserves, as much as any mythological character, to have his biography written one day; who first comes in the guise of a friend or hired man, and then robs and murders the whole family, -New England Rum. But history must not yet tell the tragedies enacted here; let time intervene in some measure to assuage and lend an azure tint to them. Here the most indistinct and dubious tradition says that once a tavern stood; the well the same, which tempered the traveller's beverage and refreshed his steed. Here then men saluted one another, and heard and told the news, and went their ways again.

Breed's hut was standing only a dozen years ago, though it had long been unoccupied. It was about the size of mine. It was set on fire by mischievous boys, one Election night, if I do not mistake. I lived on the edge of the village then, and had just lost myself over Davenant's Gondibert, that winter that I labored with a lethargy, -which, by the way, I never knew whether to regard as a family complaint, having an uncle who goes to sleep shaving himself, and is obliged to sprout potatoes in a cellar Sundays, in order to keep awake and keep the Sabbath, or as the consequence of my attempt to read Chalmers' collection of English poetry without skipping. It fairly overcame my Nervii. I had just sunk my head on this when the bells rung fire, and in hot haste the engines rolled that way, led by a straggling troop of men and boys, and I among the foremost, for I had leaped the brook. We thought it was far south over the woods, - we who had run to fires before, - barn, shop, or dwelling-house, or all together. "It's Baker's barn," cried one. "It is the Codman Place," affirmed another. And then fresh sparks went up above the wood, as if the roof fell in, and we all shouted "Concord to the rescue!" Wagons shot past with furious speed and crushing loads, bearing, perchance, among the rest, the agent of the Insurance Company, who was bound to go however far; and ever and anon the engine bell tinkled behind, more slow and sure, and rearmost of all, as it was afterward whispered, came they who set the fire and gave the alarm. Thus we kept on like true idealists, rejecting the evidence of our senses, until at a turn in the road we heard crackling and actually felt the heat of the fire from over the wall, and realized, alas! that we were there. The very nearness of the fire but cooled our ardor. At first we thought to throw a frog-pond on to it; but concluded to let it burn, it was so far gone and so worthless.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

JOHN C. BREED

JOHN CODMAN

The cellar hole of this habitation is located just into the Walden Woods off the northern end of what is now the Fairyland parking lot on Walden Street.

ALEXANDER CHALMERS



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

WALDEN: So we stood round our engine, jostled one another, expressed our sentiments through speaking trumpets, or in lower tone referred to the great conflagrations which the world has witness, including Bascom's shop, and, between ourselves we thought that, were we there in season with our "tub", and a full frog-pond by, we could turn that threatened last and universal one into another flood. We finally retreated without doing any mischief, -returned to sleep and Gondibert. But as for Gondibert, I would except that passage in the preface about wit being the soul's powder, - "but most of mankind are strangers to wit, as Indians are to powder."

It chanced that I walked that way across the fields the following night, about the same hour, and hearing a low moaning at this spot, I drew near in the dark, and discovered the only survivor of the family that I know, the heir of both its virtues and its vices, who alone was interested in this burning, lying on his stomach and looking over the cellar wall at the still smouldering cinders beneath, muttering to himself, as is his wont. He had been working far off in the river meadows all day, and had improved the first moments that he could call his own to visit the home of his fathers and his youth. He gazed into the cellar from all sides and points of view by turns, always lying down to it, as if there was some treasure, which he remembered, concealed between the stones, where there was absolutely nothing but a heap of bricks and ashes. The house being gone, he looked at what there was left. He was soothed by the sympathy which my mere presence implied, and showed me, as well as the darkness permitted, where the well was covered up; which, thank Heaven, could never be burned; and he groped long about the wall to find the well-sweep which his father had cut and mounted, feeling for the iron hook or staple by which a burden had been fastened to the heavy end, -all that he could now cling to,- to convince me that it was no common "rider." I felt it, and still remark it almost daily in my walks, for by it hangs the history of a family.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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

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



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

- Bronson Alcott ?
- Abba Alcott ?
- Anna Bronson Alcott ?

35. 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, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1842

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.³⁶

Thoreau Deaths

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

DIED :

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

**THOREAU
LIFESPANS**

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

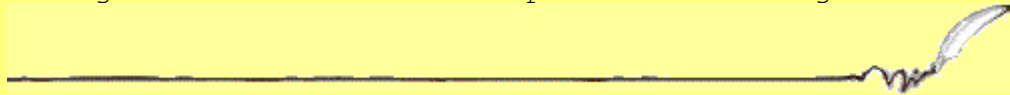


JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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.”³⁷



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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.

37. 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, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

conversion, Frost was imagining a post-deathbed conversion: alive or dead, people were going to see that 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, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1843

May 22, Monday: Tom Thumb was exhibited in [Boston](#).

[Joseph Smith, Jr.](#)'s wife of many years Emma Hale Smith was shocked to discover her husband secluded in an upstairs bedroom of their home in Nauvoo, Illinois with a family maidservant, [Eliza M. Partridge](#) (with whom her husband had entered into secret plural marriage on March 8th).

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Mrs. Lidian Emerson](#) from Castleton, [Staten Island](#):

You always seemed to look down at me as from some elevation — some of your high humilities — and I was better for having to look up. I felt taxed not to disappoint your expectations.

Castleton, Staten Island, May 22nd

1843

My Dear Friend,

I believe a good many conversations with you were left in an unfinished state, and now indeed I don't know where to take them up. But I will resume some of the unfinished silence[]. I shall not hesitate to know you. I think of you as some elder sister of mine, whom I could not have avoided — a sort of lunar influence — only of such age as the moon, whose time is measured by her light. You must know that you represent to me woman — for I have not travelled very far [or] wide — and what if I had? I like to deal with you, for I believe you do not lie or steal, and these are very rare virtues. I thank you for your influence for two years — I was fortunate to be subjected to it, and am now to remember it. It is the noblest gift we can make — What signify all others that can be bestowed? You have



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

*helped to keep my life “on loft,” as Chaucer
[of Griselda] says, and in a better sense. You always
^ seemed to look down at me as from some
elevation, some of your high humilities,
and I was the better for having to look*

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Page 2

*up. I felt taxed not to disappoint your
expectation — or could there be any accident
so sad as to be respected for something
better than we are? It was a pleasure
even to go away from you, as it is not
to meet some, as it apprised me of my
high relations, and such a departure is a
sort of further introduction and meeting.
Nothing makes the earth seem so
spacious as to have friends at a distance[.]
They make the latitudes and longitudes.
You must not think that fate
is so dark there, for even here I can see
a faint reflected light over Concord, and
I think that at this distance I can better
weigh the value of a doubt there.
Your moonlight — as I have told you,
though it is a reflection of the sun,
allows of bats and owls and other twilight
birds to flit therein. But I am very
glad that you can elevate your life with
a doubt — for I am sure that it is
nothing but an insatiable faith after all
that deepens and darkens its current — And
your doubt and my confidence are only
a difference of expression.
I have hardly begun to live on Staten Island
yet, but like the man who, when forbidden
to tread on English ground, carried*

Page 3

*Scottish ground in his boots, I carry Con-
cord ground in my boots and in my
hat — and am I not made of
Concord dust? I cannot realize
that it is the roar of the sea I
hear now, and not the wind in Walden*



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

*woods. I find more of Concord after all
in the prospect of the sea, beyond Sandy[-]
Hook than in the fields and woods.
If you were to have this Hugh the
gardener for your man you would
think a new dispensation had commenced.
He might put a fairer aspect on the
natural world for you, or at any [rate]
a screen between you and the [almshouse.]
There is a beautiful red honeysuckle
now in blossom in the woods here, which
should be transplanted to Concord, and
if what they tell me about the tulip
tree be true, you should have that
also. I have not seen Mrs Black
yet, but I intend to call on her
soon. Have you established those simpler
modes of living yet? — “In the full
tide of successful operation?” —
Tell Mrs[.] Brown that I hope
she is anchored in a secure haven, and de-
rives much pleasure still from reading
the poets — And that her constellation*

Page 4

*is not quite set from my sight, though it
is sunk so low in that northern horizon.
Tell Elizabeth Hoar that her bright
present did “carry ink safely to Staten
Island”, and was a conspicuous object
in Master Haven’s inventory of my [goods]
effects. — Give my respect to M^{me}
Emerson, whose Concord face I should*

{written perpendicular to text in center of page:
Address: Mrs. Lidian Emerson[.]
Concord
Mass[.]}

*her be glad to see here this summer; and remem-
^ ber me to the rest of the household who
have had vision of me. [Has Edith de-
generated or Ellen regenerated [yet,] for I
fear and hope that so it will be?*

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

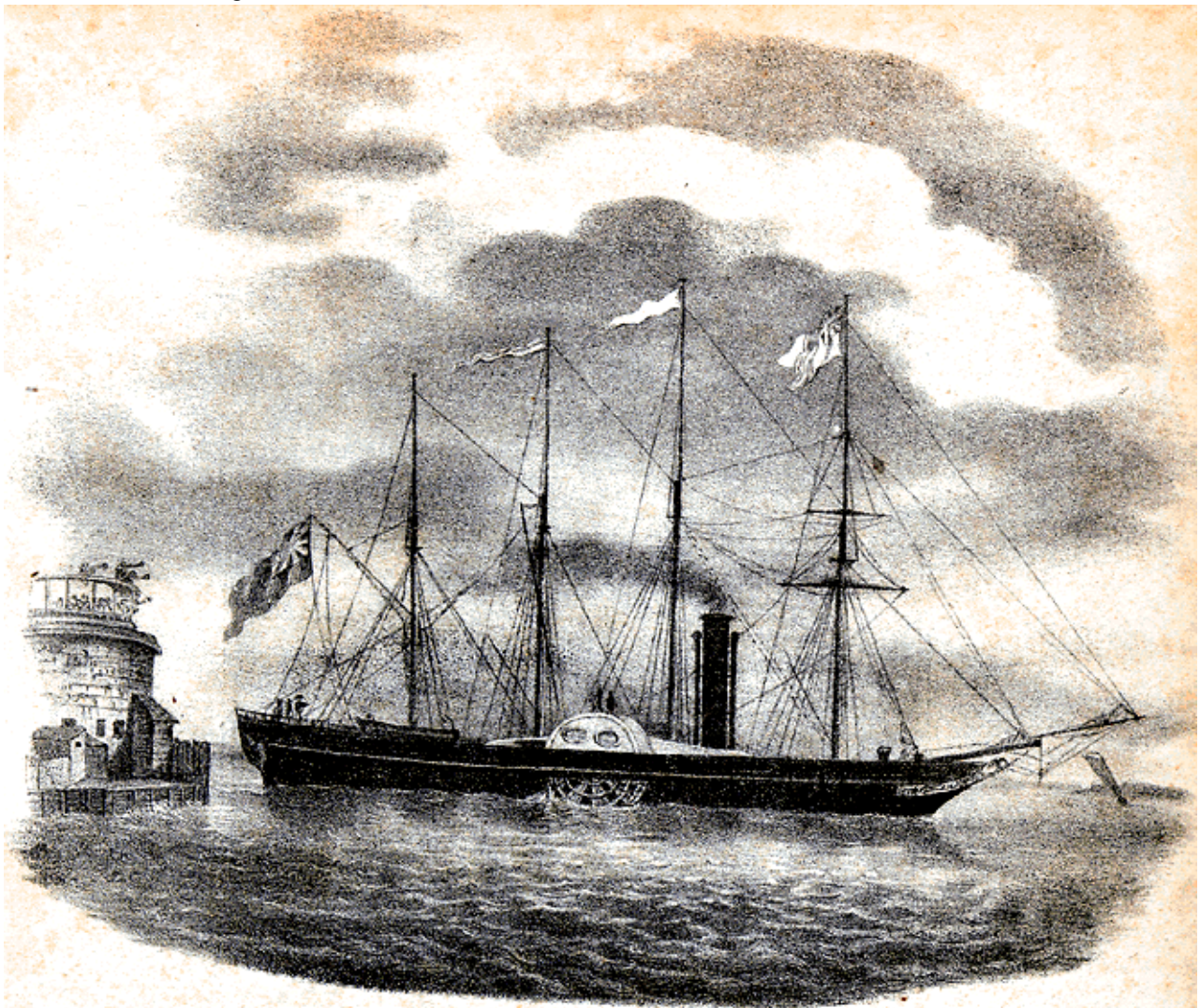
JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

*Shake a day-day to Edith, and
say "[G]ood night" to Ellen for me.]
Farewell — Henry D. Thoreau*

Lidian commented to her friend [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), Thoreau's mother, that Henry had written her a "grateful and affectionate" letter, and Cynthia remarked tactfully that her Henry "was always tolerant." It must have been rather difficult for Cynthia and [John Thoreau](#), Senior, to watch from the sidelines as their surviving son's affections were pre-empted and their parental influence diluted by this local gentry with which they could not compete.

[Thoreau](#) also wrote on this day to his younger sister [Sophia](#), informing her that he had seen the *Great Western*, the latest thing in steam sailboats:



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Castleton, Staten Island, May 22nd. — 43
Dear Sophia,
I have had a severe cold ever since
I came here, and have been confined to the
house for the last week with bronchitis, though
I am now getting out, so I have not seen
much in the botanical way. The cedar seems
to be one of the most common trees here,
and the fields are very fragrant with it.
There are also the gum and tulip trees. The
latter is not very common, but is very
large and beautiful, bearing flowers as
large as tulips and as handsome. It is
not time for it yet. The woods are now
full of a large honeysuckle in full
bloom, which differs from ours in being
red instead of white, so that at first
I did not know its genus. The painted
cup is very common in the meadows
here. Peaches, and especially cherries, seem
to grow by all the fences.
Things are very forward here com-
pared with [Co]ncord. The apricots growing
out of doors are already as large
as plums. The apple, pear, peach, cherry,
and plum trees, have shed their blossoms.
The whole Island is like a garden,

Page 2

and affords very fine scenery. In front
of the house is a very extensive wood, beyond
which is the sea, whose roar I can hear
all night long, when there is no wind, if
easterly winds have prevailed on the At-
lantic. There are always some vessels
in sight — ten, twenty, or thirty miles off —
and Sunday before last there were hundreds
in long procession, stretching from New
York to Sanday Hook, and far beyond,
for Sunday is a lucky day.
I went to New York Saturday before
last. A walk of half an hour, by half
a dozen houses, along the Richmond road,
ie. the road that leads to R — on

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

which we live — brings me to the village [Southfield] of Stapleton, ~~still~~ in [Castleton,] where is the lower dock; but if I prefer I can walk along the shore three quarters of a mile further toward New York, to Quarantine, ~~another~~ village of Castleton, to the upper dock, which the boat leaves five or six times every day, a quarter of an hour later than the former place. Further on is the village of New-Brighton — and further still Port Richmond, which villages another steam-boat visits.

Page 3

In New York I saw Geo. Ward, and also Giles Waldo and William Tappan, [whom] I can describe better when I have seen them more — They are young friends of Mr [Em-] erson. Waldo came down to the Island to see me the next day. I also saw the Great Western, the Croton Water works, and the picture gallery of the National Academy of Design. But I have not had time to see or do much in N. Y. yet. Tell Miss Ward I shall try to my put ~~her~~ microscope to a good use, and if I find any new and pressible flower, will throw it into my common place book[.] Garlic, the original of the common onion, grows like grass here all over the fields, and during its season spoils the cream and butter for the market, as the cows like it very much. Tell Helen there are two schools just established in this neighborhood, with large prospects, or rather designs, one for boys, and another for girls. The latter by a Miss Errington — and though it is very small as yet — I will keep my ears open for her in such directions — The encouragement is very slight. I hope you will not be washed away by



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

*the Irish sea. Tell Mother I think
my cold was not wholly owing to imprudence[]
Perhaps I was being acclimated.*

Page 4

*Tell [fa]ther that Mr Tappan whose son I know — and whose clerks young
Tappan and Waldo are — has invented
and established a new and very important
business — which [Wa]ldo thinks would
allow them to burn 99 out of 100
of the stores in NY, which now
only offset and cancel one another.
It is a kind of intelligence office for
the whole country — with branches in the
principal cites, giving information with
regard to the credit and affairs of every
man of business in the country. Of
course it is not popular at the south
and west. It is an extensive business and
will employ a great many clerks.
Love to all — not forgetting aunt
and aunts — and Miss and Mrs Ward.
[Y^r] Affectionate Brother
Henry D. Thoreau.*

THOREAU RESIDENCES

Elsewhere, Thoreau would muse, in a manuscript now at the Huntington Library in Pasadena, that has been dated by Franklin Benjamin Sanborn to the 1848-1850 period and contains material that would get put in WALDEN:

A Sister,

One in whom you have - unbounded faith - whom you can - purely love. A sweet presence and companion making the world populous. Whose heart answers to your heart. Whose presence can fill all space. One who is a spirit. Who attends to your truth. A gentle spirit - a wise spirit - a loving spirit. An enlargement to your being, level to yourself. Whom you presume to know.... The stream of whose being unites with your own without a ripple or a murmur. & this spreads into a sea.

I still think of you as my sister.... Others are of my kindred by blood or of my acquaintance but you are part of me. You are of me & I of you I cannot tell where I leave off and you begin.... To you I can afford to be forever what I am, for your presence will not permit me to be what I should not be.... My sister whom I love I almost have no more to do with. I shall know where to find her.... I can more heartily meet her when our bodies are away. I see her without the veil of the body.... Other men have added to their farms I have annexed a soul to mine.

When I love you I feel as if I were annexing another world to mine.... O Do not



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

disappoint me.

Whose breath is as gentle and salubrious as a Zephyr's whisper. Whom I know as an atmosphere.... Whom in thought my spirit continually embraces. Unto whom I flow.... Who art clothed in white. Who comest like an incense. Who art all that I can imagine - my inspirer. The feminine of me - Who art magnanimous

It is morning when I meet thee in a still cool dewy white sun light In the hushed dawn - my young mother - I thy eldest son.... Whether art thou my mother or my sister - whether am I thy son or thy brother.

On the remembrances of whom I repose - so old a sister art thou - so nearly hast thou recreated me ... whose eyes are like the morning star Who comest to me in the morning twilight.

From another holograph sheet in Thoreau's handwriting, a sheet which is torn at the top:

By turns my purity has inspired and my impurity has cast me down.

My most intimate acquaintance with woman has been a sisters relation, or at most a catholic's virgin mother relation — not that it has always been free from the suspicion of lower sympathy. There is a love of woman [page torn] with marriage; — of woman on the [page torn] She has exerted the influence of a goddess on me; cultivating my gentler humane nature; cultivating & preserving purity, innocence, truth, [end of page]

[Succeeding fragment; marked 1850 by Franklin Benjamin Sanborn.] *Woman, is a nature older than I and commanding from me a vast amount of veneration -like Nature. She is my mother at: the same time that she is my sister, so that she is at any rate an older sister.... I cannot imagine a woman no older than I. ... Methinks that I am younger than aught that I associate with. The youngest child is more than my coeval?*

June 8, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to his mother [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and father [John Thoreau](#) in [Concord](#) from Castleton on [Staten Island](#):

*Castleton, Staten Island, June 8th
1843*

Dear Parents,

I have got quite well now, and like the lay of the land and the look of the sea very much— Only the country is so fair that it seems rather too much as if it were made to be looked at. I have been to N.Y. four or five times, and have run about the island a good deal. Geo. Ward when I last saw him, which was at his house in Brooklyn, was studying the Daguerreotype process, preparing to set up in that line. The boats run now almost every hour, from 8 AM. to 7 Pm. back and forth, so that I can get to the city much more easily than before. I have seen there one Henry James, a lame man, of whom I had heard before, whom I like very much, and he ask s me to make free use of his house, which is situated in



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

a pleasant part of the city, adjoining the University. I have met several people whom I knew before, and among the rest Mr Wright, who was on his way to Niagara.

I feel already about as well acquainted with New York as with Boston, that is about as little, perhaps. It is large enough now and they intend it shall be larger still. 15th Street – where some of my new acquaintances live, is two or three miles from the Battery where the boat touches, clear brick and stone and no give to the foot; and they have layed out, though not built, up to the 149th Street above. I had rather see a brick for a specimen for my part such as they exhibited in old times. You see it is quite a day's training to make a few calls in different parts of the city (to say nothing of 12 miles by water and three by land, ie. not brick or Stone) especially if it does not rain shillings which might interest omnibuses in your behalf. Some Omnibuses are marked "Broadway – Fourth Street" – and they go no further – others "8th Street" and so on, and so of the other principal streets. This letter will be circumstantial enough for Helen.

This is in all respects a very pleasant residence – much more rural than you would expect of the vicinity of New York. There are woods all around. We breakfast at half past six – lunch if we will at twelve – and dine or sup at five. Thus is the day partitioned off. From 9 to 2 or thereabouts I am the schoolmaster – and at other times as much the pupil as I can be— Mr and Mrs Emerson and family are not indeed of my kith or kin in any sense – but they are irreproachable and kind.

I have met no one yet on the Island whose acquaintance I shall actually cultivate – or hoe around – unless it be our neighbor Capt Smith – an old fisherman, who catches the fish called moss-bonkers – (so it sounds) and invites me to come to the beach when he spends the week and see him and his fish.

Farms are for sale all around here— And so I suppose men are for purchase. North of us live Peter Wandell – Mr Mell – and Mr. Disusway (dont mind the spelling) as far as the Clove road; And south John Britton – Van Pelt, and Capt Smith, as far as the Fingerboard road. Behind is the hill, some 250 feet high – on the side of which we live, and in front the forest and the sea – the latter at the distance of a mile and a half.

Tell Helen that Miss Errington is provided with assistance. This were as good a place as any to establish a school, if one could wait a little. Families come down here to board in the summer – and three or four have been already established this season.

As for money matters I have not set my traps yet, but I am getting the bait ready. Pray how does the garden thrive and what improvements in the pencil line? I miss you all very much. Write soon and send a Concord paper to yr affectionate son Henry D. Thoreau

[Thoreau](#) also wrote to [Waldo Emerson](#):



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

STATEN ISLAND, June 8, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have been to see Henry James, and like him very much. It was a great pleasure to meet him. It makes humanity seem more erect and respectable. I never was more kindly and faithfully catechised. It made me respect myself more to be thought worthy of such wise questions. He is a man, and takes his own way, or stands still in his own place. I know of no one so patient and determined to have the good of you. It is almost friendship, such plain and human dealing. I think that he will not write or speak inspiringly; but he is a refreshing forward-looking and forward-moving man, and he has naturalized and humanized New York for me.

He actually reproaches you by his respect for your poor words. I had three hours' solid talk with him, and he asks me to make free use of his house. He wants an expression of your faith, or to be sure that it is faith, and confesses that his own treads fast upon the neck of his understanding. He exclaimed, at some careless answer of mine, "Well, you Transcendentalists are wonderfully consistent. I must get hold of this somehow!" He likes Carlyle's book, but says that it leaves him in an excited and unprofitable state, and that Carlyle is so ready to obey his humor that he makes the least vestige of truth the foundation of any superstructure, not keeping faith with his better genius nor truest readers.

I met Wright on the stairs of the Society Library, and W.H. Channing and Brisbane on the steps. The former (Channing) is a concave man, and you see by his attitude and the lines of his face that he is retreating from himself and from yourself, with sad doubts. It is like a fair mask swaying from the drooping boughs of some tree whose stem is not seen. He would break with a conchoidal fracture. You feel as if you would like to see him when he has made up his mind to run all the risks. To be sure, he doubts because he has a great hope to be disappointed, but he makes the possible disappointment of too much consequence. Brisbane, with whom I did not converse, did not impress me favorably. He looks like a man who has lived in a cellar, far gone in consumption. I barely saw him, but he did not look as if he could let Fourier go, in any case, and throw up his hat. But I need not have come to New York to write this.

I have seen Tappan for two or three hours, and like both him and Waldo; but I always see those of whom I have heard well with a slight disappointment. They are so much better than the great herd, and yet the heavens are not shivered into diamonds over their heads. Persons and things flit so rapidly through my brain, nowadays, that I can hardly remember them. They seem to be lying in the stream, stemming the tide, ready to go to sea, as steamboats when they leave



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

the dock go off in the opposite direction first, until they are headed right, and then begins the steady revolution of the paddle-wheels; and they are not quite cheerily headed anywhither yet, nor singing amid the shrouds as they bound over the billows. There is a certain youthfulness and generosity about them, very attractive; and Tappan's more reserved and solitary thought commands respect. After some ado, I discovered the residence of Mrs. Black, but there was palmed off on me, in her stead, a Mrs. Grey (quite an inferior color), who told me at last that she was not Mrs. Black, but her mother, and was just as glad to see me as Mrs. Black would have been, and so, forsooth, would answer just as well. Mrs. Black had gone with Edward Palmer to New Jersey, and would return on the morrow.

I don't like the city better, the more I see it, but worse. I am ashamed of my eyes that behold it. It is a thousand times meaner than I could have imagined. It will be something to hate, — that's the advantage it will be to me; and even the best people in it are a part of it, and talk coolly about it. The pigs in the street are the most respectable part of the population. When will the world learn that a million men are of no importance compared with one man?

But I must wait for a shower of shillings, or at least a slight dew or mizzling of sixpences, before I explore New York very far.

The sea-beach is the best thing I have seen. It is very solitary and remote, and you only remember New York occasionally. The distances, too, along the shore, and inland in sight of it, are unaccountably great and startling. The sea seems very near from the hills, but it proves a long way over the plain, and yet you may be wet with the spray before you can believe that you are there.

The far seems near, and the near far.

Many rods from the beach, I step aside for the Atlantic, and I see men drag up their boats on to the sand, with oxen, stepping about amid the surf, as if it were possible they might draw up Sandy Hook. I do not feel myself especially serviceable to the good people with whom I live, except as inflictions are sanctified to the righteous. And so, too, must I serve the boy. I can look to the Latin and mathematics sharply, and for the rest behave myself. But I cannot be in his neighborhood hereafter as his Educator, of course, but as the hawks fly over my own head. I am not attracted toward him but as to youth generally.

He shall frequent me, however, as much as he can, and I'll be I.

Bradbury told me, when I passed through Boston, that he was coming to New York the following Saturday, and would then settle with me, but he has not made his appearance yet. Will you, the next time you go to Boston, present that order for me which I left with you?



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

If I say less about Waldo and Tappan now, it is, perhaps, because I may have more to say by and by. Remember me to your mother and Mrs. Emerson, who, I hope, is quite well. I shall be very glad to hear from her, as well as from you. I have very hastily written out something for the Dial, and send it only because you are expecting something, — though something better. It seems idle and Howittish, but it may be of more worth in Concord, where it belongs. In great haste. Farewell.

HENRY D. THOREAU

WILLIAM HOWITT

(The “Bradbury” he mentions in this letter was of the publishing house of Bradbury & Soden, which had published, in Nathan Hale’s BOSTON MISCELLANY, and promised to pay for but so far neglected to pay for, “Walk to Wachusett.”)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1844

Fall: [William Thomas Green Morton](#) entered Harvard Medical School, where at the chemistry lectures of [Dr. Charles T. Jackson](#) he would learn of the anesthetic properties of [sulfuric ether](#) (the med student would leave without graduating).

As the Thoreaus built their "[Texas](#)" House on Texas Street (now Belknap Street), it was [Henry Thoreau](#) who dug the cellar hole. This was to be the family home and boardinghouse "to August 29th, 1850" (this structure would be damaged beyond repair by fire and the devastating hurricane of 1938).



"Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?"
-JOURNAL May 1, 1857





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

This structure, and the shanty Thoreau would build on [Walden Pond](#) in the spring, summer, and fall of 1845: were they traditionally framed or were they “balloon” framed?



Americans’ technologies of building in the first decades of the 19th Century had evolved gradually from those of their 17th- and 18th-Century ancestors and for the most part would have been recognizable to earlier generations of housewrights. But a radically new way of putting buildings together appeared in the early 1830s, probably first developed by carpenters struggling to keep pace with the rapid growth of the settlement of [Chicago](#) on the tree-poor [Illinois](#) prairie. “Balloon framing” replaced the massive timber frame with a structural skin of numerous light, weight-bearing members, later standardized as two-by-fours, which were simply nailed together, not intricately joined. Carpenters could put up a balloon frame more quickly and could use much smaller-dimensioned lumber. Balloon framing was adopted first by builders in fast-growing Western cities and commercial towns, for whom speed and economizing on materials were highly important. It was slower to arrive in older, Eastern cities and took even longer to arrive in the countryside, where it did not really begin to replace the old ways until after 1860. Eventually rapid construction with lighter lumber triumphed almost everywhere; traditional timber framing and log construction had almost disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century.



REPLICA OF CABIN

THOREAU RESIDENCES

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

On Princes Street in Edinburgh, [Scotland](#), the Scott Monument stood complete in all its magnificence.



The enormously expensive monument includes 64 statues mostly of characters from Sir [Walter Scott](#)'s novels, but with some figures from Scottish history. One of the statues on the upper tier of the northeast buttress, next to Robert the Bruce, purports to represent [Robert Paterson](#), called "Old Mortality."

September 9, Monday: Father [John Thoreau](#) paid \$100.⁰⁰ (or \$25??) for a house lot on Texas Street (now Belknap Street) close to the new train station in [Concord](#) and adjoining the tracks of the new Fitchburg and Boston Railroad.



"TEXAS" HOUSE
THOREAU RESIDENCES

[HDT](#)

[WHAT?](#)

[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

September 10, Tuesday: Father [John Thoreau](#) purchased, from David Loring for \$25.⁰⁰, three quarters of an acre on which to build his family a home of their own, to be known as the “Texas House” because at the time this [Concord](#) street was to be named Texas Street. [Henry Thoreau](#) would be digging the cellar hole for this, and lining it with stone. It was to be the family home and boardinghouse “to August 29th, 1850.” This structure would be damaged beyond repair by fire and the devastating hurricane of 1938. This structure, and the shanty Thoreau would build on Walden Pond in the spring, summer, and fall of 1845: were they traditionally framed or were they “balloon” framed?

[THOREAU RESIDENCES](#)

[Brigham Young](#) “got married with” Clarissa Ross.



[Dr. Alexander Keith Johnston](#) began a visit to [Jardine Hall](#) at Applegirth on the River Annan in Dumfriesshire: “And now we found ourselves in the avenue leading to Jardine Hall, where a most friendly and cordial reception awaited us, and we were soon at comfort and ease with the family.)

[SCOTLAND](#)

Tuesday, 10th September. I spent this day in a stroll through the gardens and grounds of Jardine Hall, and through part of the estate. The House, built of a dark red sandstone, reminded me of Twizel House, which it resembles in outward appearance, but the interior arrangements are entirely different. There were many things to interest us in the gardens, which are well kept; and the grounds contain many fine trees, especially beech and ash, and a very large hawthorn stands near the house, which Mr. Selby has engraved in his History of British Forest Trees. [Sir William Jardine](#) pointed out to me some beautiful and thriving specimens of the Firs that have been introduced of late years into this country, and which grow here very fast and freely. In my stroll adown the Annan —a sweet stream— I noticed some small shoals of Dace, called here “Skellies,” a fish I had not seen previously; and here too I gathered for the first time, *Jasione montana*, and was much taken with the beauty of its dark blue flowers. It grows in profusion in all this part of Dumfriesshire, some fields being as full of it nearly, as they are of the daisy with us. Several species of polygonums — *Hydropiper*, *lapathifolium*, and *Persicaria* — abounded to a most noisome degree in many of the fields; which, indeed, in general seemed almost choked with annual weeds.

The contrast between the land here, and in Berwickshire, is greatly in favour of the latter. The only plant of rarity I gathered was *Utricularia intermedia*. It grew in abundance in a ditch cut through a swampy field, which not many years ago was a pond of resort for myriads of wild ducks. It is now firm enough to bear a coarse sort of grass, which is annually mown and makes good meadow hay; and this conversion from water to solid land, is solely the result of nature, and of the annual decay of the aquatic plants that grew in the lake — the pond — the morass —the bog— and which will ere long be the meadow. About Jardine Hall, *Lepidium Smithii* grows plentifully, and I observed it to be common in other parts of Dumfriesshire and Galloway. *Polytrichum urnigerum* was most profuse, on banks by the road sides, in our walk this day, and was really an interesting object.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

September 12, Thursday: [John Thoreau](#) borrowed \$500.⁰⁰ from Augustus Tuttle to purchase materials for the construction of the “Texas” House, a mortgage on the home being offered as security. John Thoreau, [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#) were present as the mortgage was signed, sealed, and delivered. Tuttle would be repaid in September 1855.³⁸



Henry himself dug and stoned the cellar of this new family home. The Thoreaus would live in this “Texas House, to August 29th, 1850.”



“Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?”

—JOURNAL May 1, 1857



[Henry](#)’s experience, helping his father build the new family home, the house they referred to as the “Texas” house because it was so far out on the grassy plains beyond the new railroad tracks south-west of the Milldam, would help him in his solitary carpentry at Walden Pond.

And, something Thoreau scholars seem never to have considered, although they well know that Henry and Edward Hoar had recently, negligently burned down nearly 300 acres of the woods north of Concord at great cost to some of the town’s citizens: Thoreau may have had a supplemental reason for getting out of the family home. The loss he had helped cause was on the order of \$2,000.⁰⁰, which at that time was approximately the value of two really fine new houses facing Concord common. And the Hoar family seems to have made a cash payment to the financially injured parties—the brothers Cyrus Hubbard and Darius Hubbard, and A.H.

Wheeler—while we know that the Thoreaus instead elected to conspicuously, promptly, and locally spend their surplus money by embarking on the construction of this new home. The Texas house cost the family \$25.⁰⁰ (or \$100??) for the lot, \$475.⁰⁰ for construction materials, and \$600.⁰⁰ for labor. This was being thrown in

Henry’s face in the streets! We know there were arson fires, we know there were grudge fires, we know that 38. This mortgage was placed on record on September 14, 1844 and recorded as discharged on February 11, 1856.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

everything was not sweetness and light in Concord in the first half of the 19th Century. Could one supplemental reason for Henry's stay on Walden Pond have been, that he needed to reduce his family's fears that their new house might go up in flames, that if something had to go up in a grudge fire, it would be something that they could do without such as a shanty on a lake? Anybody who knows anything about living in small towns knows that the Thoreau family's action must have been like touching a recent skin burn, and that so long as Thoreau was under the roof of the newly built, reasonably isolated Thoreau family home on the outskirts of Concord, that new house was in danger of going up in flames any snowy winter or wet spring when the townspeople could be sure the fire would not spread. We can imagine that, if such a situation occurred in our own lives, today, we would be greatly concerned at the attitude of the people we had injured – who considered that we were living high instead of meeting our obligations. And at our present level of historical research into life in Concord in the early 19th Century, we haven't been able to clear this up. Perhaps the Concord newspapers and other dated public records have preserved some clue, that will help us clear this up. For instance, what sort of people were these woods owners, the Hubbard brothers and A.H. Wheeler?

THOREAU RESIDENCES

[Dr. Alexander Keith Johnston](#)'s visit to [Jardine Hall](#) continued:

SCOTLAND

Thursday, Sept. 12th. A long drive to-day. Starting immediately after breakfast, we took the road to Dumfries; which for some miles was very uninteresting, and would have been more so, had I not had [Sir William](#) to tell me the names and history of the more prominent objects and hills in our view. These I have now almost forgotten. The first and better half of our road was very much of a continued ascent, until we reached a poor village, with a name so foreign to my ears, that I could not retain it in my memory. There is a considerable seminary, or "Classical and Commercial Academy" in it, but we saw none of the scholars or boarders. From the hill above this village, there opened upon us a fine view, which reminded me of Milfield Plain; but the latter had a decided superiority in all respects. The plain below was a large basin encircled with hills, traversed by the little river Lochar on the nearest side, and occupied by the town of Dumfries to the south-west. Lochar Moss lies in the centre, an enormous peat bog of about 10 miles in length, and 3 in breadth; and our road cuts it into two unequal halves. This road is remarkable for its origin: a stranger, a great number of years ago, sold some goods to certain merchants at Dumfries on credit; he disappeared, and neither he nor his heirs ever claimed the money; the merchants in expectation of the demand, very honestly put out the sum to interest; and after a lapse of more than 40 years, the town of Dumfries obtained a gift of it, and applied the same towards making this useful road. We presume the good folks of Dumfries had concluded that the stranger had laired himself in this bog, and sunk in one of its pits, which served him for an untombstoned grave, a thing they of Dumfries seem to have in fear. Lochar Moss supplies the good people of Dumfries with an abundance of peat, which is the fuel with the commonality all over this district, and there were workers of it scattered throughout the moss. There is a certain interest about these men, who appeared to be of the lowest class in general. No noise attends their monotonous labour, the spade cuts without grating, the clod is thrown aside without evoking a sound, there is no converse, each toils by himself, without giving or receiving another's orders or directions; silence reigns around, and imparts to the labour a peculiar, but rather disagreeable, interest; for this outward solemnity of nature tells not favorably on the minds of men of the low degree of cultivation these have. Solitude is not for them. Dumfries is a very fine town. We walked through its broad, clean, busy street with pleasure, admired its shops, its bridges, and its magnificent asylum for the insane, at a little distance on a wooded bank above the Nith; drove through the pretty suburb of Maxwelltown, and following the course of the Nith, took a seaward direction. The road was greatly improved in interest; the land and the style of farming good. We were not long in arriving at New Abbey, where we rested an hour, in order to examine its beautiful remains. Within its walls there lie the bodies of many Maxwells, the prevalent families in this neighborhood; and as the head of them is a Roman Catholic, there appear to be many of that religion hereabouts. Near the Abbey there is a Chapel and manse for the priest and his charge. Leaving the Abbey, we had a pleasant walk through the churchyard; around the old garden, with its fern-clad wall; and up the road a little, where it is lined with a double row of limes, that meet overhead and form an avenue, where monks may have mused, or conned their sermons, in days of yore. There is a monument in the Abbey, erected to the memory of two young gentlemen — brothers,— who were drowned together hard by; and I now feel sorry that I did not take a copy of the inscription on their tombstone. I gathered some memorials of the place from its damp walls, which the ivy strives in vain to decorate. It is trite to make contrasts, for, in this world everything must suffer change and decay; nor doth it seem of use to revive



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

a picture of the Celebration of High Mass, with all the gorgeous pageantry, in an Abbey that now shelters a herd of cows from the inclemency of the weather. What may be the thoughts of the spirit of the Lady Foundress, I know not! How vain it is to attempt to immortalize our affections, which are, and must be, part of our perishable organization! The Abbey was founded by Devorgilla, daughter of Alan, Lord of Galloway, and wife of John Baliol, Lord of Castle Bernard, who died and was buried here; his lady embalmed his heart and placed it in a case of ivory bound with silver, near the high altar; on which account the Abbey is often called Sweet Heart, and *Suavi-cordium*.³⁹ Again we are on the road, and attention is kept awake by the novelty of every scene and object we pass. But the first place we note is the neat and pretty hamlet of Kirkbean; whose ornate character tells as plainly as a guide could, that a rich proprietor's residence is at hand; and a triumphal arch erected across the road proclaimed to us that this proprietor, Mr. Oswald, MP., for Ayrshire, had brought to the favorite residence his lady, the widow of the late Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, to whom he had been married about three weeks ago. And next we admire a small and humble cottage, covered in front with the vine and fig tree, which appeared to be in a flourishing condition; and I observe that all hereabouts, and afterwards on our route, the brambles abound to a degree greatly beyond what they do on the Eastern Borders, and are loaded with fruit. The species too are not the same as they are with us. The prospect improves as we drive on, and we often stop to admire it; the Solway and its broad sands, the Westmoreland and Cumberland hills, the opposite coast with its indistinctly seen villages, the hills and woods of Galloway. Many interesting localities were pointed out by [Sir William](#) which served the purpose of raising and satisfying a curiosity that died away on the spot. We nighed the shore of the Solway; the road sides rough with brambles, and rich in many other plants that interest an eastern botanist. *Sedum telephium*, almost unknown on the eastern side of the island, was not uncommon here, truly wild and luxuriant. But it was as interesting to notice the different habit which some plants, common to the two districts, here assumed; in general they were more luxuriant. The banks too, where steep and elevated, were clothed to the very base with a very rash vegetation of numerous plants, and with trees and shrubs. A rock called "Lot's Wife," at the foot of a rocky deep ravine, was a tempting object, but time could not be spared for a descent upon it; it was rich in many a flower, and at an earlier season must have been gay and joyful with their various blossoms. We halt at Douglas Hall, a hamlet of poor cottages, where it was difficult to find accommodation for the horses. And then we had a nice stroll, first over some links, where I gathered *Thalictrum flavum*, which is a rare plant in Scotland, and *Erythraea linarifolia*. *Ruppia maritima* was plentiful in some pools of brackish water. We then entered on the Solway sands, which spread far and wide, around and before; my head was full of Sir Walter Scott and his vivid descriptions of them. This extent of sands has a grandeur and solemn influence, which is greater than one could imagine mere extent of a fiat surface could give; but you feel the scene, and that feeling would be even oppressive — fearful perhaps — were one alone to traverse their weary and watery level. After walking a short way over this fiat surface, we reached a coast bounded by a rocky precipitous bank of great height and rugged beauty. The rocks were hard and sharp as flint, of a reddish color, broken into acute angles and masses, and caverned with many caves that lead sometimes far inwards. Often an enormous mass of rock had fallen down and concealed the front of these dark recesses; and more than one might have been the type of the cave that sheltered Dick Hatterig and his ruffian smugglers. As this fine and bold piece of coast was wooded too to the very ledge, there were other places whence Kennedy might have been precipitated;— indeed the scenery seemed to be exact to that described by Sir Walter Scott, in his "Guy Mannering" It is of these very rocks that Chambers says:—"It has been supposed, with no inconsiderable degree of probability, that they furnished materials for the scenery of Ellangowan."— I enjoyed this scenery greatly, and it was rich also in a botanical view. First in interest, there was the Samphire, growing in places whence to have gathered it would be indeed a "dreadful trade." — "Half-way down hangs one that gathers Samphire,— dreadful trade!" [Sir William](#) told me, that within his memory a man living at Douglas Hall, was wont thus annually to collect Samphire from these rocks. I succeeded in reaching one tuft, which supplied me with specimens as memorials of the Colvend rocks; which, I ween, are somewhat grander than those of Dover, and not less immortal in man's memory were they; in fact, the objects the great Northern Novelist had in his eye, when he drew the coast scenery of "Guy Mannering." The *Pyrethrum maritimum* grew here abundantly, also in inaccessible spots; but it was truly ornamental, as its large white flowers showed bravely with the dark rock behind. The rock was studded everywhere with these and other sweet flowers. The *Arenaria marina*, *Silene maritima*, *Statice armeria*, *Sedum telephium*, *Cochlearia officinalis*, *Asplenium marinum*, commingled

39.["She feundit intil Galoway
Of Cistertians order an Abby,
Dulce Cor she gart thame all
That is *Sweet Heart* the Abby call,
But now the men of Galloway
Call that Steid New-Abby." WYNTOWN.

It is named by Lesly "*Monasterium novum, seu Sauvi-cordium*." —*DE ORIGINE, &c., SCOTORUM*, p. 9.]



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

themselves on the rugged front, with wiry grasses, the Ivy, the Holly, the Whin, and several fine arching briars and roses; while on more exposed abutments, several yellow and green lichens found space to spread their circular patches. [Sir William](#) pointed out one or two specimens of the Yew, which would seem to be indigenous here. Left this scene with reluctance, and ascending the bank, we returned to Douglas Hall by a high road, that afforded extensive views of the Solway and the coast. I know not in what direction we were now driven; but the road was tortuous and interesting, and fringed on each side with numberless briars, the species different from those of Berwickshire, and more productive of fruit. The hills around us were granite, and the country was very unequal and rocky; so that Galloway must be as ticklish a place as Galway, for the gentlemen who love to follow the hounds fair; indeed we were told that fox hunting was here an unknown sport, and the proprietors give 10s 6d. for every fox that any countryman may destroy, by fair means or foul. There were many valleys stretching up and between these rough hills, that, as a botanist, I yearned to explore; but, it was onwards we must go, contented with the glances of fields which it seemed very certain I would never again re-visit. Oats and barley appeared to be the only corns cultivated, and the fields were redolent of annual weeds. Peat mosses were numerous, and in each of them a solitary individual worked away in cheerless silence. After a long stage in which we had passed very few houses, and not even an onstead, we came to Dalbeattie, a nice looking village that looks as if it had been set down in this thinly peopled district by some mistake, and one wonders what the inhabitants of it can find to do. Yet it has every symptom of comfort about it, and the stone houses are all covered with blue slates, and white washed. There is a good Inn in the village, and a mail coach passes daily through it. A few minutes drive now brought us to Munches, and to the end of our day's travels.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1845

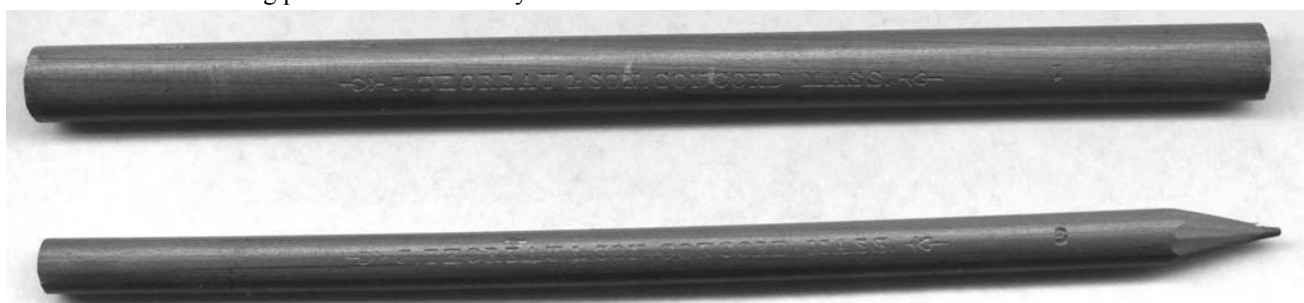
July 12, Saturday: Since we know by the inscription on the fruitwood, ivory and brass [flute](#) in Concord Museum that father [John Thoreau](#) gave this instrument to [Henry Thoreau](#) in 1845, and since in a Journal entry that was written sometime after July 16 but before August 6 Thoreau referred to playing “my flute,” we are probably pretty safe if we assume that this was John’s present to Henry on July 12th as his son was preparing to move to the cabin on the pond to lead a poet/hermit’s life:

John Thoreau +1835+
Henry D. Thoreau +1845+



1847

Thoreau [pencils](#) were very much in demand as a superior writing instrument and in this year the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association awarded them a diploma for excellence. Since [Henry Thoreau](#)'s mother Sophia was taking in boarders for \$0.⁷⁵ per week, about one day's wages, the family could easily presume that Thoreau was holding up his end of it if he spent one day per week in the sheds behind the house, manufacturing pencils with the family.



Be aware that the family business that had been begun by [John Thoreau](#) was not simply the manufacture of [pencils](#). Although they turned their hand to many things, such as the manufacture of sandpaper (which had been invented in 1834) and glass paper, basically the manufacturing part of their business arose out of the processing for sale of a deposit of very pure [graphite](#) discovered by their relative Charles Dunbar.⁴⁰ They processed this graphite in any way that would prepare it for a market: for instance, they manufactured plates for the carbon batteries of the day. The grinding of the graphite was done by water power in the mills at the waterfalls of the Assabet in Acton. Charles had filed this mineral claim for only seven years, and the family needed to get the best of the graphite out of the earth and utilized before the seven years were expired. Then, after their own source of graphite was gone, in order to continue this line of work they had learned, they procured good quality Canadian graphite on the open market.

40. The mineral "graphite" is formed by the metamorphosis of carbonaceous sediments, and by the reaction of carbon compounds with hydrothermal solutions or magmatic fluids, or possibly by the crystallization of magmatic carbon. It consists of layered sheets of carbon-ring molecules, one atom thick. It is named in allusion to its use in writing: because these sheets are disconnected from each other, they shear readily when rubbed onto a rough surface, and, because carbon is black and insoluble, they leave a dark smear on paper. Graphite came to be used as a marker in 1564, when the purest deposit ever found was discovered in Cumberland, England. At first it was used in chunks, then the chunks were cut into small square-cornered sticks, then the sticks were wrapped in string to make it easier to hold them, then people began to glue the [graphite](#) sticks into grooves cut in small wands of wood. In 1795 a French chemist developed a way to economize the use of graphite by grinding it, mixing it with clay, and firing it in a kiln. It was mined in, among other places, New England and Ontario, until about 1918, when, since it was crushed to a powder anyway, the block mineral form was replaced by a cheaper powder produced from petroleum coke. The first American pencils were made in 1812. The wood used at the time was Eastern red cedar, although other species had to be found as that tree became over-exploited.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



They produced black lead art [pencils](#), and red and blue to complete their “line,” in various hardnesses, and managed to make them the equal of those produced in Germany by Faber, and in London by Rhodes, and by Beekman & Langdon. Henry developed the first manufacturing method by which the “pencil lead” could be inserted without splitting the wood, and found a way to grind the plumbago mixture much finer by allowing only the finest particles to drift upward on an air current. The powder was mixed with the finest clays of Bavaria to produce pencils that could wholesale at \$6.⁰⁰ the gross and then retail for \$0.⁷⁵ the dozen or, sometimes, \$0.²⁵ each. Various members of the family made trips around New England to solicit bulk orders. There is suspicion that the family’s poor pulmonary health was exacerbated by this constant environment of plumbago - for guests noted that everything in their home was covered with the drift of fine black dust. The cottage manufacture of pencils became more and more competitive and, upon the invention of the high-speed rotary printing press in 1847, [Thoreau](#) gradually shifted the family business into the grinding of the exceedingly fine [graphite](#) powders such state-of-the-art machines used in place of fluid ink. He sold these powders in bulk by confidential contract and relied on industrial secrecy and on the highest standards of quality and customer service to maintain high wholesale prices (instead of trusting to patents, which in effect would merely have spread the word about his new manufacturing techniques and mix ingredients). At first he was able to get \$10.⁰⁰ per pound for his fine electrotyping powders, and he was selling 600 pounds a year. As time went on he had to cut his price to \$8.⁰⁰, then to \$5.⁰⁰, then to \$2.⁰⁰ per pound, but the size of the market kept increasing and the family annual income kept increasing as well. By 1853 the family was no longer bothering to make pencils in the sheds behind the house. Among the other things Henry was, such as “poet/naturalist,” he was an exceedingly competent industrial engineer/marketing planner/sales representative.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1848

The following is by [Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson](#):

[I]t appears they invented a process, very simple, but which at once put their black lead [[plumbago](#)] for fineness at the head of all manufactured in America. This was simply to have the narrow churn-like chamber around the mill-stones prolonged some seven feet high, opening into a broad, close, flat box, a sort of shelf. Only lead-dust that was fine enough to rise to that height, carried by an upward draft of air, and lodge in the box was used, and the rest ground over. I talked with the mechanic who showed me this [Warren Miles, who after the development of this dust box suggested that they shift from iron balls for grinding to stone balls, since the grit from the stone balls would no longer create a problem], and who worked with the Thoreaus from the first, was actively helpful in the improvements and at last bought out the business from Mrs. Thoreau and carried it on for years, – and with others who knew something of the matter. The evidence is strong that Henry's mind and hand were active in the rapid carrying of this humble business to the front. It seems to be probable that, whether the father thought out the plan alone or with Henry, it was the latter's mechanical skill that put it into working shape.... But here is another chapter to the black-lead story not so well known. About 1848-49 the process of electrotyping was invented, it is claimed, in Boston. It was a secret process, and a man engaged in it, knowing the Thoreau lead was the best, ordered it in quantity from Mr. John Thoreau, the latter guarding carefully the secret of his method, and the former concealing the purpose for which he used it.... As his father became feebler Henry had to look after the business to some degree for the family, and to give some help after his father's death, though Miss Sophia attended to the correspondence, accounts, and directing and shipping the lead (brought in bulk, after grinding, to the house, that its destination might not be known) to the customers in Boston and New-York. Yet Henry had to oversee the mill, bring the lead down, and help at the heavier part of boxing and packing, and this I am assured by two friends he did until his fatal sickness. The work was done in an upstairs room in the L.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1849

January 15, Monday: In downtown [Boston](#)—where everything that happens of course happens for the greater glory of God— Chief Justice [Lemuel Shaw](#) lectured [Washington Goode](#) for an hour and a half on the habits of “intemperance” which he had had, the “ungodly” associates which he had had, the “dens of crime” which he had frequented, etc., informed him that having led such a life there was simply “no hope” that the governor of the state might reduce his sentence. The lecture probably was just what Seaman Goode needed. The judge then consigned him to be [hanged](#) by the neck, on May 25, Friday, 1849 (this seems to have been a traditional day upon which to conduct public hangings), until he was dead.⁴¹ The opponents of the death penalty, to wit, the Standing Committee of the Massachusetts Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, would have a little more than four months to mobilize public opinion to bring pressure to bear on Governor George Nixon Briggs:

Why Sir, even the boys, and they are worth saving, for we have nothing else to make men, and even Governors of, are now saying in our streets, “it is only a nigger.”

During those four months 24,440 signatures would be collected, petitioning the Governor Briggs to commute Seaman Goode’s sentence, from death by hanging to life in prison without any possibility of parole.

For instance, [Friend Joseph Ricketson](#), [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)’s brother who, if I mistake not, was a birthright [Quaker](#) in good standing with his Monthly Meeting, reported that:

I have exerted myself very much for the last month in behalf of Washington Goode; there were several petitions here and we obtained 746 signatures.

In addition to the 24,440 signatures mentioned, there was one petition, from Woburn, Massachusetts, bearing a total of nine signatures, which demanded that Governor Briggs remain steadfast in the plan of “exicution.”

An article would appear in the [Boston Republican](#), pointing up the fact that in France the guillotine had been adopted, after consultation with medical men, as the least painful mode of execution, and that since the last hanging in Boston, “the [Ether](#) discovery has taken place.”

The question now arises, how shall the *hanging* be performed here in Boston.... Shall not the convict share also the advantage of this benign discovery? He is to be hanged by the neck. Shall not this be done *with the least possible pain*? If we follow the spirit of the law, there would seem to be no doubt that it must be done with the least possible pain. And it seems equally clear that it is within the *discretion* of the Sheriff, to permit any form of alleviating the pain, which is consistent with the one thing imposed upon him by the law; namely, the hanging of Goode, by the neck, until he is dead. We will not undertake to determine, whether Humanity does not require, that the convict, if he chooses, shall be allowed the benefit of ETHER. We content ourselves with saying that it is clearly within the *discretion* of the Sheriff to permit the pains of the convict to be thus

41. In fact, [Boston](#) had not [hanged](#) anyone for simple homicide since 1826, almost a quarter of a century before, and there was another prisoner, Augustus Dutée, whose sentence to be hanged was being commuted during this period to life in prison — but then, we may presume that Augustus Dutée was a white man, not only because his sentence was commuted but also because the documents do not comment on his race as they would most assuredly have commented had he been anything other than white. In addition to Dutée, seven other murderers were then serving life in Massachusetts prison after having had their sentences to be hanged commuted by the state governor.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

alleviated.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

The petition to commute the sentence of seaman Goode to life in prison without opportunity for parole that was being circulated and sponsored in Concord (either by [Anna Maria Whiting](#), one of the town's leading abolitionists, or by Caroline Hoar, the wife of Rockwood Hoar) is still in existence and bears, on the men's side of the sheet, the signature of [Henry Thoreau](#) as second in that column. It bears, on the women's side of the sheet, the signature of his younger sister, [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), as 5th in that column, followed in immediate succession by the signature of his mother, [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), the signature of his elder sister, [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#), the signature of his aunt [Louisa Dunbar](#), and the signature of his [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#). The signature of his father [John Thoreau, Sr.](#), however, appears nowhere on this petition. **Why not?** Thoreau's father was 62 years old at this point and still very actively engaged in his home business. Is one to suppose that he, quite alone in his home, **wanted** Seaman Goode to dance on air?

**DUNBAR
FAMILY**

The full text of that petition, as it came to be circulated in the [Prisoner's Friend](#), had been as follows:



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, solemnly protest against the intended execution of Washington Goode, as a crime in which we would under no circumstances participate, which we would prevent, if possible, and in the guilt of which we will not, by the seeming assent of silence, suffer ourselves to be implicated.

We believe the execution of this man will involve all who are instrumental in it in the crime of murder – of the murder in cold blood of a helpless fellow being.

The arguments by which executions are generally defended are wholly wanted here. The prisoner is not one who in spite of good instruction and example, for purposes of avarice, revenge or lust, deliberately planned the murder of a fellow-being. The intended victim of law was a man of misfortune from birth, made by his social position, and still more by the color which God gave him, the victim of neglect, of oppression, of prejudice, of all the evils inflicted upon humanity by man. If in a paroxysm of drunken rage, he killed his opponent, (and this is the utmost alleged against him,) his case comes far short of premeditated murder.

But even this fact is extremely doubtful. It is supported only by the most suspicious testimony, and such as would not have weighed with any jury to touch the life of a white man. And since the trial, facts have come to light materially lessening the credibility of the evidence which led to conviction.

The glaring unfairness of his mode of trial is of itself sufficient ground for this protest. The maxim which gives to the accused a trial by his peers was essentially violated. In a community where sympathy with a colored man is a rare and unpopular sentiment, the prisoner should have been tried by a jury composed partly, at least, of his own race. This violation of the principles of equal justice demands our solemn protest.

We claim also that the petition of more than 20,000 of our fellow-citizens to have this man's life spared, demands respect. Such a number of voluntary petitioners, all upon one side, indicates the will of the sovereign people of the State, that the penalty should be commuted. Our respect for the right of the people to a voice and a just influence in the administration of public justice, also demands this solemn protest against the legal murder of Washington Goode.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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



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

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





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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



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

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

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

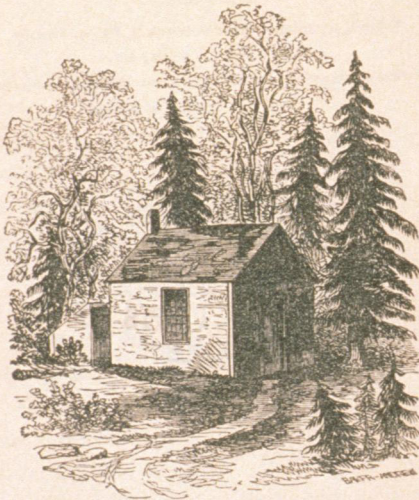
persuade him to leave it out.

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

JOHN THOREAU, SR.

WALDEN;
OR,
LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,
AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."



I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. — Page 22.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LIV.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

HDT

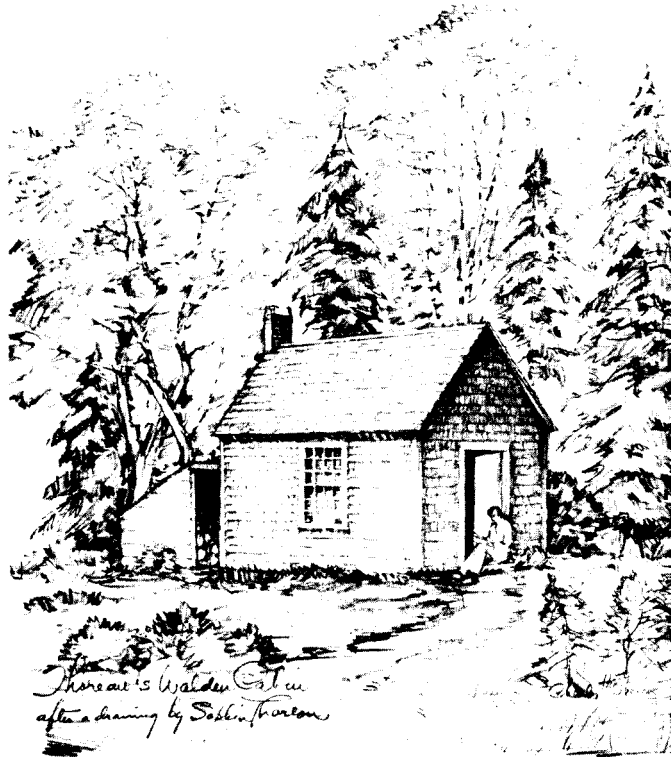
WHAT?

INDEX

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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



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





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

June 14, Thursday: [Helen Louisa Thoreau](#) died at age 36 of [tuberculosis](#).

Thoreau Deaths

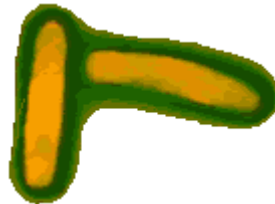
Name	Death Date	Age	Buried
John	March 1801	47	Concord
Mary	July 24, 1811	25	Concord
Sarah	August 1829	38	Concord
Miss Betsey	November 1839	60s?	Concord
John	January 1842	27	Concord
Helen L.	June 1849	36	Concord



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

[Henry David Thoreau](#) would startle mourners by cranking up a music box while they were carrying out the coffin after the funeral service.⁴²



THOREAU
LIFESPANS




42. The music box was presumably the one [Richard F. Fuller](#) had given him in the summer of 1842, the one with placid Lucerne on its lid. Those of us who interest ourselves in this sort of thing would be interested to learn what tune it played. [Get the panegyric that Henry wrote about Helen after her death, which has seemed to some “almost hysterical.” Refer to Perry Miller, CONSCIOUSNESS IN CONCORD, pages 101-2.]



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

September 29, Saturday: For \$1,450, [John Thoreau](#), Senior bought the [Yellow House](#) at 73 Main Street in Concord. (The Thoreau family would move in on August 29, 1850  after extensive renovations. Since the home was owned by the Alcotts after the Thoreaus, it is now referred to as the Thoreau-Alcott House.)



"Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth,
a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?"
-JOURNAL May 1, 1857





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1850

May 25, Saturday: An issue of Chambers' Edinburgh Journal:

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

ISSUE OF MAY 25

William Jackman and Jenett Nelson Scott Jackman's daughter Jessie Ellen Jackman was born in Wisconsin.

On Waldo Emerson's 47th birthday, he went to "Ancient Forest" in Warren County with a group of young men to see the Indian mounds and circular ridges there.



Henry Thoreau surveyed, for his father John Thoreau, the lot on Main Street near the corner of the present Thoreau Street that they had purchased from Daniel Shattuck, for their Yellow House. In his journal Thoreau mentioned that a mountain ash and a pitch pine were on that lot.



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

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

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

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/129.htm



June 12, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed, for Daniel Shattuck, one of the Concord cottage houselots on Main Street adjacent to the lot that father [John Thoreau](#) had recently purchased.

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



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

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

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

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/108.htm

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

August 29, Friday: The wife and children of [Professor John White Webster](#) visited him for the last time in his cell. The professor knew, but his family was prevented from knowing, that the ceremony had been set for the next morning.

The “Yellow House, reformed”:⁴³ Having completed the extensive renovations to the property they had purchased at 73 Main Street in Concord, the Thoreau family moved into its [Yellow House](#). The family would live in this residence, now the “Thoreau/Alcott” house, for the remainder of [Henry Thoreau](#)’s life, with him occupying the finished attic room.⁴⁴



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

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

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

- [John Thoreau](#), 63-year-old male
- [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#), 63-year-old female
- [Henry David Thoreau](#), 33-year-old male

43. “Reformed” here means that the ceilings had been raised and extensive modifications had been made.

44. Did this Thoreau home have a lawn? America’s obsession with outdoor living spaces in the vicinity of their homes would not begin until after the [US Civil War](#), with sports such as lawn croquet catching on in the leisured middle class. In all likelihood, the lot on which the Thoreau boardinghouse stood inside this pretty fence in the 1850s consisted of swept dirt and sand kept bare — except of course for the family’s large garden.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

- [Sophia E. Thoreau](#), 31-year-old female
- [Jane Thoreau](#), 64-year-old female
- [Maria Thoreau](#), 53-year-old female
- Margaret Doland, 18-year-old female
- Catherine Riorden, 13-year-old female

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1853

Sam Turner of Brooklyn obtained a patent for the substitution of colophonic tar for linseed oil in the manufacture of [printing ink](#).

The family business of the Thoreaus had shifted from [pencils](#) into the grinding of the exceedingly fine [graphite](#) powders that state-of-the-art high-speed rotary printing presses had begun to use in place of fluid [ink](#). They were selling these powders in bulk by confidential contract and relying on industrial secrecy and on the highest standards of quality and customer service to maintain high wholesale prices (instead of trusting to patents, which in effect would merely have spread the word about his new manufacturing techniques and mix ingredients). At first they were able to get \$10.⁰⁰ per pound for their fine electrotyping powders, and they was selling 600 pounds a year. By this point the Thoreaus were no longer bothering to fabricate their pencils in the sheds behind their home. Instead, Horace Rice Hosmer was finishing the family's pencils for [John Thoreau](#) at Hayward & Mile's Pencil Shop.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1854

July 9, Sunday: The [Reverend Thomas Starr King](#) of the Universalist Church in Charlestown, Massachusetts thanked [James Thomas Fields](#) for a “luscious copy” of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#).⁴⁵



TIMELINE OF WALDEN

The Reverend would review the gift for the [Christian Register](#):

A young man, eight years out of college, of fine scholarship and original genius, revives, in the midst of our bustling times, the life of an anchorite. By the side of a secluded pond in

45. James T. Fields. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND PERSONAL SKETCHES. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 188, page 89.

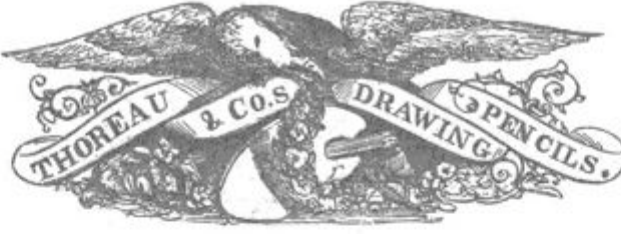
[HDT](#)

[WHAT?](#)

[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



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JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Concord, he builds with his own hands a hut which cost him twenty-eight dollars and twelve and a half cents; and there he lived two and a half years, "cultivating poverty," because he "wanted to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and suck out all its marrow."

Here he found that the labor of six weeks would support him through the year; and so he had long quiet days for reading, observation, and reflection, learning to free himself from all the hollow customs and false shows of the world, and to pity those who by slavery to inherited property seemed to be doing incredible and astonishing penance.

In the account he gives us of his clothes, house, food, and furniture, we find mingled many acute and wise criticisms upon modern life; while in his descriptions of all living things around him, birds, fishes, squirrels, mice, insects, trees, flowers, weeds, it is evident that he had the sharpest eye and the quickest sympathy.

One remarkable chapter is given to the sounds that came to his ear, with suggestions, full of poetry and beauty, of the feelings which these sounds awakened. But nothing interested him so much as the Pond, whose name gives the title to his book.

He describes it as a clear sheet of water, about a mile in circumference; he bathed in it every morning; its cool crystal depths were his well, ready dug; he sailed upon its bosom in summer, he noted many curious facts pertaining to its ice in winter; in short, it became to him a living thing, and he almost worshiped it.

But we must not describe the contents of this book any farther. Its opening pages may seem a little caustic and cynical; but it mellows apace, and playful humor and sparkling thought appear on almost every page....

Rarely have we enjoyed a book more, or been more grateful for many and rich suggestions...

As we shut the book up, we ask ourselves, will the great lesson it teaches of the freedom and beauty of a simple life be heeded? Shall this struggle for wealth, and this bondage to the impedimenta of life, continue forever? Will the time ever come when it will be fashionable to be poor, that is, when men will be so smitten with a purpose to seek the true ends of life that they will not care about laying up riches on the earth?

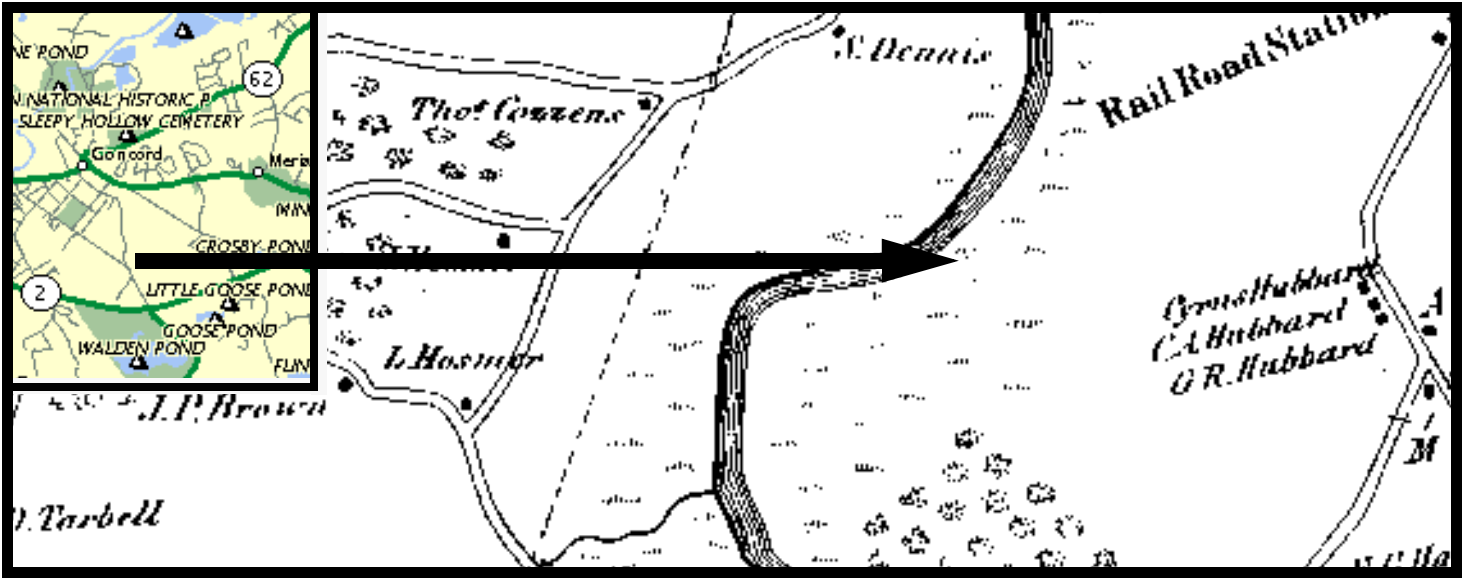
Such times we know there have been, and thousands listened reverently to the reply, given in the last of these two lines, to the inquiry contained in the first; "O where is peace, for thou its path hast trod?" "In poverty, retirement, and with God." Who can say that it is impossible that such a time may come round, although the fashion of this world now runs with such a resistless current in the opposite direction.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Hubbard's Bathing-Place (and from there to Fair Haven).



This day saw the first meeting of Concord's "Vigilance Committee," organized in the wake of Anthony Burns's return to slavery earlier that year ([Thoreau](#) doesn't mention such a meeting in his journal entry for the day). Attendees were: Mary Merrick Brooks, Waldo and Lidian Emerson, [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and [John Thoreau](#), Mary Rice, Charles Bowers, Joshua R. Brown, Nathan B. Stowe, Nathan Henry Warren, James Weir, Stearns Wheeler, and [William Whiting](#). Since, at this informal meeting, the attenders signed a pledge that they would do whatever was in their power to aid fleeing slaves, some incautious commentators have presumed that this meeting, and this new committee, had something to do with the [Underground Railroad](#)! What the attenders did, however, was merely to agree to sponsor a weekly series of public meetings on the topic of slavery. Emerson for instance agreed to invite the Reverend Theodore Parker to deliver an opening lecture. Of course they would honor their pledge, but of course, the Emersons couldn't be expected to invite persons of color to enter their home, so it wouldn't be within their power to interpret this pledge as including the aiding of any actual fleeing slave individuals. Surely such a pledge should be categorized as pious attitudinizing, or as righteous posturing, or as good public relations proselytizing, rather than as some incautious historians have supposed, the sort of Underground Railroad activism in which Cynthia and John and Henry Thoreau, were involved, for which they were putting their own persons and the assets of their family on the line. (I cannot presently cite any occasion on which any person of color ever was allowed to enter the Emerson home in Concord at any point during the 19th Century, before or after the Civil War, even as a servant. If a person is to be categorized as "vomit" on the basis of the color of his or her skin, would they then proceed to allow such a "vomit" person through the door — just because they were in need?)

My guess would be that we can take a clue from the fact that [Thoreau](#) hadn't bothered to attend this meeting, and recognize from that, that actually this meeting didn't have one doggone thing to do with the [Underground Railroad](#). (If it did have something to do with such covert agendas — then this would be the very first instance of which we have any record of anyone ever putting anything having to do with that clandestine operation into incriminating ink on an incriminating piece of paper other than Bronson Alcott scribbling in a voluminous personal journal that he could be quite confident nobody but himself would trouble themselves to glance at.)

We need constantly to bear in mind that there were two very distinct types of white abolitionist, the non-racist



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

abolitionist and the racist abolitionist. The non-racist abolitionists wanted to help improve the lives of black Americans and were opposed to race slavery because it harmed the lives of black Americans. The racist abolitionists didn't think there even ought to be such a thing as a black American, and were opposed to race slavery because it created a place for black people in America, where they ought not to have any place at all. Likewise, there were two reasons for being in favor of the [Underground Railroad](#), because it helped black people who needed help, and because it helped remove black people from the local area by shuffling them off toward the north where there might or might not be a place for them and that didn't matter. (The genius of the abolition movement was to make strange bedfellows of these two very different sorts of personality, the non-racist Thoreau personality and the racist Emerson personality, enabling them to work together at a common task.) The point is that people like [Thoreau](#), who wanted to help improve people's lives, would sometimes be willing to place their own homes at risk of confiscation, but people like Emerson who just wanted weeds to grow somewhere else than in their own vicinity would never place their fine homes at risk of confiscation. That, to mix a metaphor, would be to risk throwing the clean white baby out with the dirty black bathwater!



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1855

August 10, Friday: Calvin Wheeler Philleo's novel TWICE MARRIED: A STORY OF CONNECTICUT LIFE (New York: Dix & Edwards, 10 Park Place; London: Sampson Low & Son) was reprinted from Putnam's Monthly.

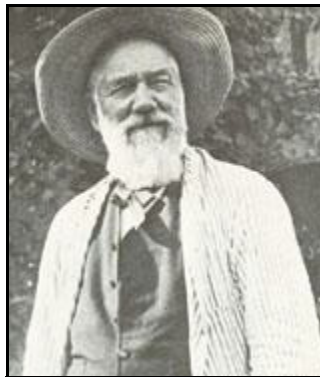
TWICE MARRIED, A NOVEL

According to the Massachusetts census of 1855 the Thoreau household consisted of "[John Thoreau](#), 69, M[ale]; Cynthia, 69, F[emale]; Henry D., 38, M[ale]; Sophia E., 34, F[emale]; [Sophia Dunbar](#), 74, F[emale]; Louisa Dunbar, 69, F[emale]." [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and [Louisa Dunbar](#) were listed as born in New Hampshire, all others in Massachusetts. The father was listed as "Manufacturer," [Henry Thoreau](#) as "Gentleman," and (of course) no occupations were listed for homemakers.⁴⁶(The census taker for [Concord](#)

DUNBAR
FAMILY

SOPHIA E. THOREAU

was Sheriff Sam Staples.)



Aug.10. P.M. — To Nagog. Middle of huckleberrying. — (then no more entries until August 19th)

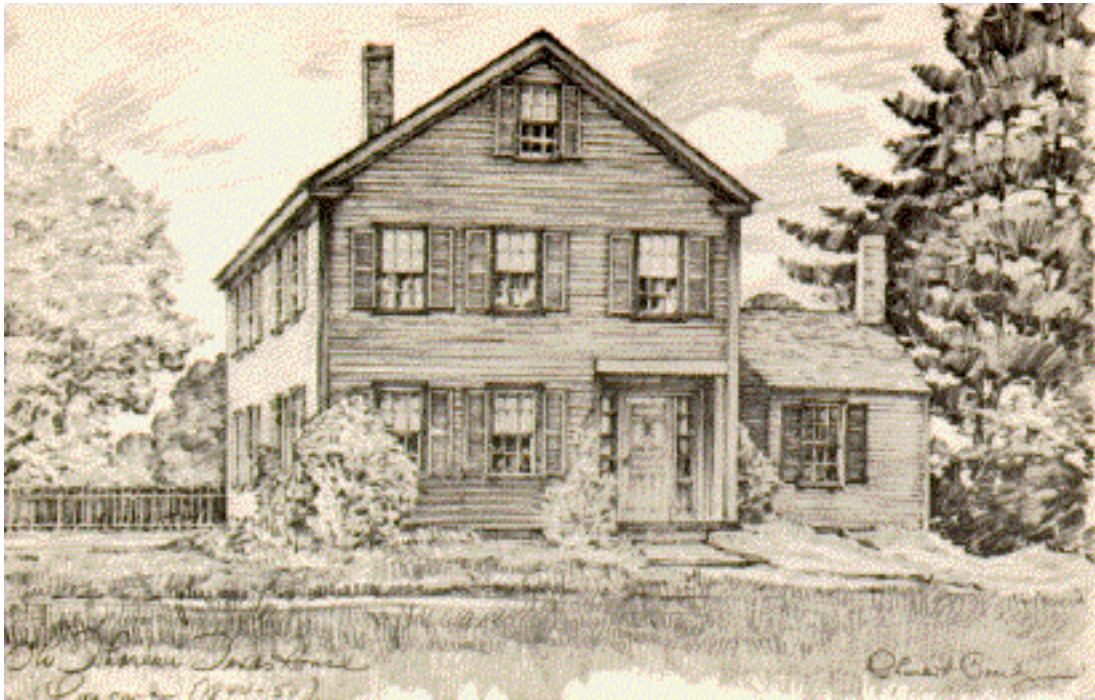
46. Volume 21 in the Massachusetts State Archives in Boston. The historian [Lemuel Shattuck](#), the lawyer Moses Prichard, and the manufacturer William Monroe were also listed by census taker Sam Staples as gentlemen. [Waldo Emerson](#) was listed almost appropriately as "Writer of Books" and [Ellery Channing](#) almost appropriately as "Do Nothing" (see [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) drawing made in 1856).



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

September: [John Thoreau](#) repaid to Augustus Tuttle the \$500.00 he had borrowed in 1844 to purchase materials for the construction of the [“Texas” House](#).⁴⁷



October 21, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) and his father [John Thoreau](#) had just had a conversation about the old houses in [Concord](#):



October 21: ... I have been thinking over with father the old houses in this street— There was the Hubbard (?) house at the fork of the roads—The Thayer (Bo house—(now Garrisons) The Sam Jones’s now Channings— Willoughby Prescotts (a bevel roof— which I do not remember) where Loring’s is— (Hoars was built by a Prescott)— Ma’m Bond’s. The Jones Tavern (Bigelow’s) The old Hurd (or Cumming’s?) house— The Dr Hurd House— The Old Mill—& The Richardson Tavern (which I do not remember— On this side— The Monroe house in which we lived —The Parkman House in which Wm Heywood 20 years ago told me^that he helped raise the rear of 60 years before—(it then sloping to one story behind) & that then it was called an old house Dr Ripley said that a Bond built it. The Merrick house— A rough-cast house where Bates’ is Betty—& all the S side of the mill dam— Still further from the center—the old houses & sites are about as numerous as above— Most of these houses—slanted to one story behind.

47. This mortgage was placed on record on September 14, 1844 and recorded as discharged on February 11, 1856.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1856

In [Concord](#), [Henry Thoreau](#) and his father [John Thoreau](#) witnessed the last will and testament of the Reverend Barzillai Frost.

February 11, Monday: [Caroline Lee Hentz](#) died of pneumonia at the age of 56. The body would be placed in the cemetery of St. Luke's Church in Marianna, Florida. During this year would be published her THE BANISHED SON, her COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE, and her ERNEST LINWOOD.

The Texas House mortgage that the Thoreau family of Concord had placed on record on September 14, 1844 was recorded at this point as having been discharged.



THOREAU RESIDENCES

[John Thoreau](#)'s full payment of the Augustus Tuttle mortgage on the [Yellow House](#) was placed on record with Concord Justice of the Peace George Merrick Brooks.



Feb. 11. P. M. -To Fair Haven Pond by river.

Israel Rice says that he does not know that he can remember a winter when we had as much snow as we have had this winter. Eb. Conant says as much, excepting the year when he was twenty-five, about 1803. It is now fairly thawing, the eaves running; and puddles stand in some places. The boys can make snowballs, and the horses begin to slump occasionally.

Saw a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (~~Partridge~~)] by the riverside, opposite Fair Haven Hill, which at first I mistook for the top of a fence-post above the snow, amid some alders. I shouted and waved my hand four rods off, to see if it was one, but there was no motion, and I thought surely it must be a post. Nevertheless I resolved to investigate. Within three rods, I saw it to be indeed a partridge;  to my surprise, standing perfectly still, with its head erect and neck stretched upward. It was as complete a deception as if it had designedly placed itself on the line of the fence and in the proper place for a post. It finally stepped off daintily with a teetering gait and head up, and took to wing.

I thought it would be a thawing day by the *sound*, the peculiar sound, of cock-crowing in the morning. It will indicate what steady cold weather we have had to say that the lodging snow of January 13th, though it did not lodge remarkably, has not yet completely melted off the sturdy trunks of large trees.



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Early March: The author who had written in [WALDEN](#) of being able to get sugar not from the foreign [sugar cane](#) that was grown under slavery, but from local pumpkins, [sugar beets](#), and maples, at this point attempted to get sugar from the yellow birch, which supplied only a teaspoonful for each quart of sap.





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

WALDEN: Every New Englander might easily raise all his own breadstuffs in this land of rye and Indian corn, and not depend on distant and fluctuating markets for them. Yet so far are we from simplicity and independence that, in Concord, fresh and sweet meal is rarely sold in the shops, and hominy and corn in a still coarser form are hardly used by any. For the most part the farmer gives to his cattle and hogs the grain of his own producing, and buys flour, which is at least no more wholesome, at a greater cost, at the store. I saw that I could easily raise my bushel or two of rye and Indian corn, for the former will grow on the poorest land, and the latter does not require the best, and grind them in a hand-mill, and so do without rice and pork; and if I must have some concentrated sweet, I found by experiment that I could make a very good molasses either of pumpkins or beets, and I knew that I needed only to set out a few maples to obtain it more easily still, and while these were growing I could use various substitutes beside those which I have named, "For," as the Forefathers sang,-

"we can make liquor to sweeten our lips
Of pumpkins and parsnips and walnut-tree chips."

Finally, as for salt, that grossest of groceries, to obtain this might be a fit occasion for a visit to the seashore, or, if I did without it altogether, I should probably drink the less water. I do not learn that the Indians ever troubled themselves to go after it.

Thus I could avoid all trade and barter, so far as my food was concerned, and having a shelter already, it would only remain to get clothing and fuel. The pantaloons which I now wear were woven in farmer's family, -thank Heaven there is so much virtue still in man; for I think the fall from the farmer to the operative as great and memorable as that from the man to the farmer;- and in a new country fuel is an encumbrance. As for a habitat, if I were not permitted still to squat, I might purchase one acre at the same price for which the land I cultivated was sold -namely, eight dollars and eight cents. But as it was, I considered that I enhanced the value of the land by squatting on it.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

[Henry Thoreau](#) also tried to make maple sugar, but got into his only recorded argument with his father [John Thoreau](#) about this. One wonders what the argument was really about: was it really only about the foolishness of wasting one's time and energies, or, perhaps, was it about the foolishness of being opposed to an inevitable evil such as that of human slavery?



March 21, 1856: Had a dispute with Father about the use of my making this sugar when I ... might have bought sugar cheaper at Holden's. He said it took me from my studies. I said I made it my study; I felt as if I had been to a university.

SWEETS
WITHOUT
SLAVERY

For background, this is from Sidney W. Mintz's *SWEETNESS AND POWER: THE PLACE OF SUGAR IN MODERN HISTORY* (Harmondsworth, England: Elisabeth Sifton Books/Penguin Books, 1986, pages 21-2), and one wishes that it were not so damnably Eurocentric — for people in the woodlands of the north-east coast of the North American continent had been boiling maple sap for countless generations although as far as the Eurocentric mind was concerned, these people never were so much as alive and their practices whatever they



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

were of no relevance:

The intrinsic nature of sugar cane fundamentally affected its cultivation and processing. "Though we speak of sugar factories," writes one scholar,* "what actually takes place there is not a manufacturing process but a series of liquid-solid operations to isolate the sucrose made by nature in the plant." The practice of crushing or comminuting the cane fibers so their liquid content can be extracted must be almost as old as the discovery that the cane was sweet. This extraction can be accomplished in a number of different ways. The cane can be chopped, then ground, pressed, pounded, or soaked in liquid. Heating the liquid containing the sucrose causes evaporation and a resulting sucrose concentration. As the liquid becomes supersaturated, crystals begin to appear. In effect, crystallization requires the concentration of a supersaturated solution in which sucrose is contained in liquid form. While cooling and crystallizing, low-grade massecuites leave "final" or "blackstrap" molasses. This molasses, or treacle, cannot be crystallized further by conventional methods. It is, of course, quite sweet, and can be used for sweetening food; in the English diet, it was for more than a century at least as important as any crystalline form of sugar; in refined forms, it remains important to this day. This much of the process is ancient. Supplementary steps leading to sugars that are less dark, chemically purer, or more refined (the latter two are not the same thing), and to an ever-increasing differentiation of final products, including alcoholic beverages and many different syrups, have developed over the centuries. But the basic process is very old. In fact, there is no other practical means by which to "make" sugar from the cane than by "a series of liquid-solid operations" accompanied by heating and cooling; and maintaining proper temperatures, while keeping the investment in heating methods and fuels affordable, has been a serious technical problem throughout most of sugar's history.

* Hagelberg, G.B. OUTLINE OF THE WORLD SUGAR ECONOMY
(*Forschungsbericht* 3; Berlin: *Institut für Zuckerindustrie*, 1976, page 5)

Thoreau learned from experiment that upland sumac made the best spouts. At one point, walking home on the river ice with a bucketful of recovered sap, he slipped and spilled all but a pint. At another point he by mistake put in soda instead of saleratus while boiling on the kitchen stove, and spoiled a batch. He tapped black birch, yellow birch, white birch, and canoe birch, after awhile bottling rather than boiling the sap.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

June 17, Tuesday: The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) wrote to Dr. Fuster, a Viennese professor, mentioning news of [Professor Pierre Jean Édouard Desor](#).

In Worcester, [Henry Thoreau](#), H.G.O. Blake, and Theophilus Brown needed to use a carriage when they went out to Quinsigamund Pond, because they were being accompanied by [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#).

[Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) abandoned [Newport, Rhode Island](#) to visit [Concord](#) to see Henry, unaware that Henry had gone to Worcester. The father [John Thoreau](#) must have been very short indeed, for a man who himself stood 5'3" to have pronounced him "very short":



Left Newport this morning at five o'clock for Concord, Mass., via Providence and Boston, and arrived at C. about 12 M. The sail up the Providence or Blackstone River was very fine, the morning being clear and the air very refreshing. My object in coming to Concord was to see H.D. Thoreau, but unfortunately I found him on a visit at Worcester, but I was received with great kindness and cordiality by his father and mother, and took tea with them. Mrs. Thoreau, like a true mother, idolizes her son, and gave me a long and interesting account of his character. Mr. Thoreau, a very short old gentleman, is a pleasant person. We took a short walk together after tea, returned to the Middlesex Hotel at ten. Mrs. T. gave me a long and particular account of W.E. Channing, who spent so many years here.

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

ELLERY CHANNING

DUNBAR FAMILY

PROVIDENCE



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Dangerfield Newby	6' 2"
Charles Augustus Lindbergh	6' 2"
President Bill Clinton	6' 2 ¹ / ₂ "
President Thomas Jefferson	6' 2 ¹ / ₂ "
President Lyndon B. Johnson	6' 3"
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.	6' 3"
Richard "King Dick" Seaver	6' 3 ¹ / ₄ "
President Abraham Lincoln	6' 4"
Marion Morrison (AKA John Wayne)	6' 4"
Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior	6' 4"
Thomas Cholmondeley	6' 4" (?)
William Buckley	6' 4-7"
Franklin Benjamin Sanborn	6' 5"
Peter the Great of Russia	6' 7"
Giovanni Battista Belzoni	6' 7"
Thomas Jefferson (the statue)	7' 6"
Jefferson Davis (the statue)	7' 7"
Martin Van Buren Bates	7' 11 ¹ / ₂ "
M. Bihin, a Belgian exhibited in Boston in 1840	8'
Anna Haining Swan	8' 1"



June 19, Thursday: [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) to his journal, in [Concord](#):

EDMUND HOSMER



Walked after breakfast with Mr. Thoreau, Senr., by appointment to the cemetery and over the ridge to see Mr. Hosmer, an intelligent farmer. Purchased the life of Mary Ware, and a framed portrait of Charles Sumner, the former for Mrs. Thoreau, and the latter for her daughter Sophia.

H.D. Thoreau and his sister S. arrived home this noon from a trip to Worcester. Passed a part of the afternoon on the river with H.D.T. in his little boat, - discussed Channing part of the time. Took tea and spent the evening at Mr. T.'s (Item) H.D.T. says buy "Margaret."

CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU

SOPHIA E. THOREAU

ELLERY CHANNING

JOHN THOREAU, SR.

DUNBAR FAMILY



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR





JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

June 20, Friday: [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) to his journal, in [Concord](#):

BAKER FARM



6 P.M. Just returned from a sail on the river with Thoreau, having been all day. Bathed twice, visited the Baker farm and the Conantum farmhouse. Just going out to tea with the Thoreaus to Mrs. Brooks's, an abolitionist. Took tea at Mrs. Brooks's. I was pleased with her downright principles on the subject of slavery. Her husband appeared pleasant and agreeable, but not particularly engaged in the anti-slavery enterprise. Home at ten; retire about eleven. Mr. Thoreau, Senr., although ordinarily a quiet man, is very intelligent, and a fine specimen of the gentleman of the old school. I am strongly impressed with his sterling merits – a character of honesty illumines his countenance. Few men have impressed me so favorably.

MARY MERRICK BROOKS

NATHAN BROOKS

JOHN THOREAU, SR.



June 20, Friday: To [Baker Farm](#). Walking under an apple tree in the little Baker Farm peach orchard, heard an incessant shrill musical twitter or peeping, as from young birds, over my head, and, looking up, saw a hole in an upright dead bough, some fifteen feet from the ground. Climbed up and, finding that the shrill twitter came from it, guessed it to be the nest of a downy woodpecker [**Downy Woodpecker** [Picoides pubescens](#)], which proved to be the case, –for it reminded me of the hissing squeak or squeaking hiss of young pigeon woodpeckers, but this was more musical or bird-like. The bough was about four and a half inches in diameter, and the hole perfectly circular, about an inch and a quarter in diameter. Apparently nests had been in holes above, now broken out, higher up. When I put my fingers in it, the young breathed their shrill twitter louder than ever. Anon the old appeared, and came quite near, while I stood in the tree, keeping up an incessant loud and shrill scolding note, and also after I descended; not to be relieved.

JAMES BAKER



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

June 21, Saturday: [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) to his journal, in [Concord](#):



Exceedingly warm at Concord. Thermometer at 93 in the shade north side Mr. Thoreau's house, 12 M., rose to 97; spent the forenoon with Mr. Thoreau, Senr., walked down by the river and sat under the shade of the willows by the bank. I had a pleasant conversation with Miss Thoreau this P.M.; walked to Walden Pond with H.D.T. this P.M.; bathed, and crossed the pond with him in a boat we found upon the shore. Saw the Scarlet Tanager by the aid of Thoreau's glass, a bird I had never seen before. He was perched upon the topmost bough of a pine, and chanted forth his simple song with considerable earnestness for some time. R.W. Emerson called upon me this evening; talked of Channing and the Kansas affairs. Walked home with him and with Thoreau. This has been extremely warm, thermometer at 99 at 5 P.M. north side shade of Mr. T.'s house.

ELLERY CHANNING
JOHN THOREAU, SR.
SOPHIA E. THOREAU
WALDO EMERSON

A series of poems by [Louisa May Alcott](#), entitled "Beach Bubbles," began in Boston's [Saturday Evening Gazette](#).

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to Calvin H. Greene of Rochester, Michigan.

Concord Saturday

June 21st '56

Dear Sir

On the 12 ult I forwarded the two books to California, observing your directions in every particular, and I trust that Uncle Sam will discharge his duty faithfully. While in Worcester this week I obtained the accompanying daguerreotype — which my friends think is pretty good — though better looking than I.

<i>Books & postage</i>	<i>— — — \$2.64</i>
<i>Daguerreotype</i>	<i>.50</i>
<i>Postage</i>	<i>— — — <u>.16</u></i>
	<i>3.30</i>
	<i>5.00</i>
	<i><u>3.30</u></i>

*You will accordingly
find 1.70 enclosed with my shadow.
Yrs*

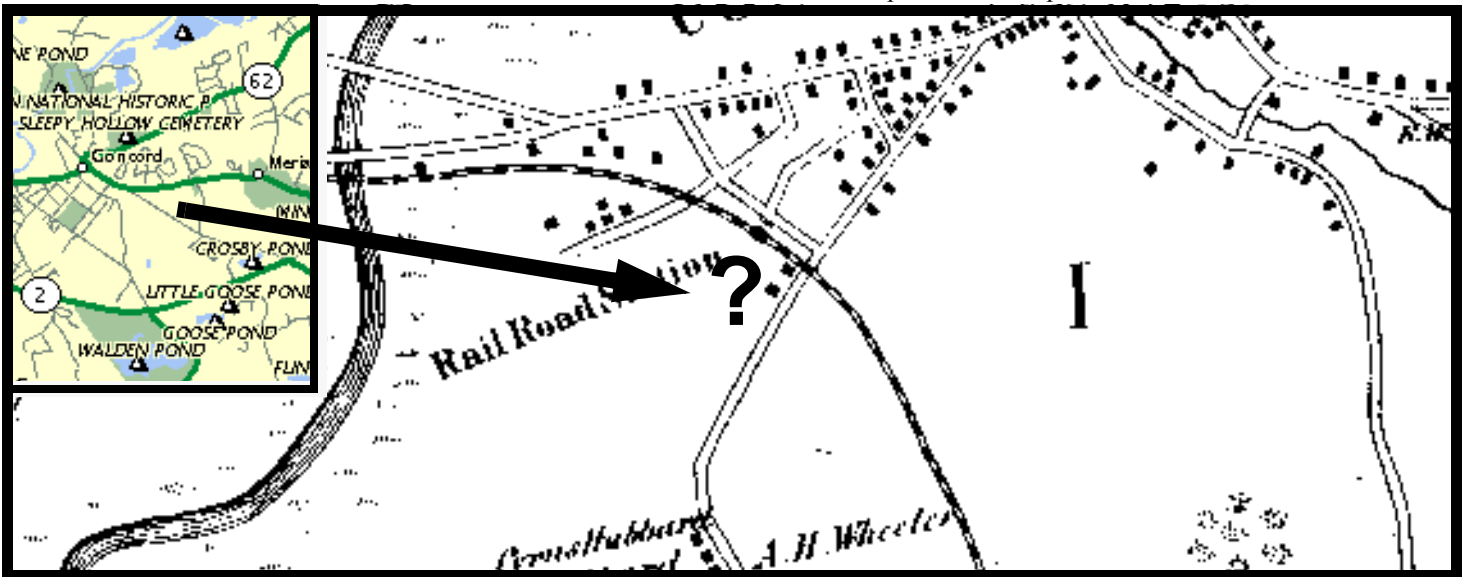
[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Henry D. Thoreau

September 13, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed, for David Loring, 18 acres of Texas Street land. This lot was near William Monroe, Henry Wheeler, Cyrus Hubbard, William W. Wheildon, Nathan Brooks, [John Thoreau](#) and the discontinued road which went from Main Street near the present Belknap Street.



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1857

March: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) brought John Brown to speak at the [Concord](#) City Hall and introduced him to [Henry Thoreau](#) during the noon meal, which they had at the Thoreau boarding house. Thoreau spent the



afternoon discoursing with Brown (Brown told Thoreau about the battle in Kansas of June 1856) and, as [Waldo Emerson](#) had just returned from a lecture tour, introduced them to one another. It is likely, however, that Emerson and Brown had already met at an earlier, privileged meeting at the home of the millionaire railroader John Murray Forbes in Milton, Massachusetts, a meeting to which they would not been likely to refer in the presence of Thoreau. Brown spoke of the struggle in Kansas in June of the previous year. In visiting the Thoreau home, he met [John Thoreau, Senior](#). We may notice in Emerson's journal that he sided with John Brown the strong white defender of the victim negro, against the Sermon on the Mount. In the following snippet from his journal, the Reverend Emerson is proclaiming in effect that the injunction "resist not evil" is a dangerous piece of mushyheadedness, and that what we need to do to make our nation into a kinder gentler America is to go out and kill some of the people who are preventing our nation from being a kind gentle

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

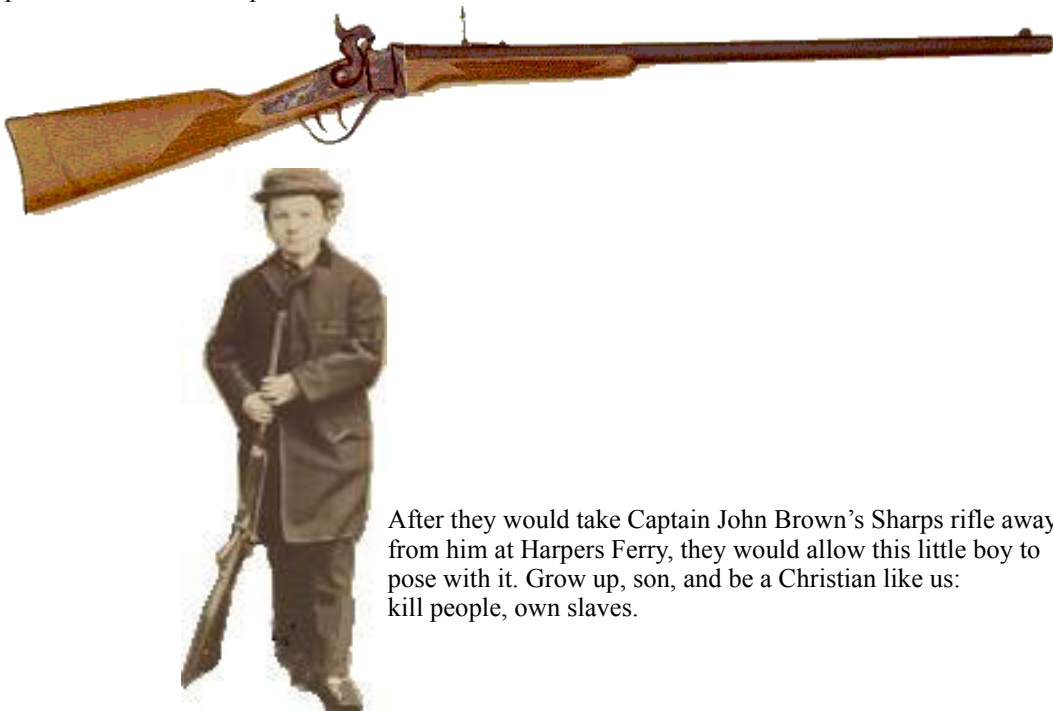
JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

America.⁴⁸

Captain John Brown of Kansas gave a good account of himself in the Town Hall, last night, to a meeting of Citizens. One of his good points was, the folly of the peace party in Kansas, who believed, that their strength lay in the greatness of their wrongs, & so discountenanced resistance. He wished to know if their wrong was greater than the negro's, & what kind of strength that gave to the negro?

The elder [John Thoreau](#) helped purchase for Brown one of Christian Sharps's "ten rounds per minute" 1853-model breech-loading cap-and-ball carbine, 37 ³/₄ inches overall with a 21 ³/₄-inch rifled barrel, that used a "pellet without cut-off" primer.⁴⁹



After they would take Captain John Brown's Sharps rifle away from him at Harpers Ferry, they would allow this little boy to pose with it. Grow up, son, and be a Christian like us: kill people, own slaves.

48. We may remind ourselves, as we read the above, that back during February 1854 [Waldo Emerson](#) had been scheming with the saintly Bronson Alcott on a different-but-strangely-similar final solution to the American race problem, a solution in which white men would castrate all their black men so that only the white owners would be able to fecundate their black women. We might therefore want to turn the above jotting quite around, and inquire of Mr. Emerson and Mr. Alcott what kind of strength it gave to the black man to be castrated as they had been musing in February 1854, and what kind of strength it gave to the black woman to bear children which would be in successive generations lighter and purer, until finally their taint had been erased and we had arrived at an America of blond beastly angels. It is interesting to juxtapose the musing of 1854, in which we note that the Sermon on the Mount is quite disregarded, and the musing of 1857, in which we note that the Sermon on the Mount is quite disregarded. The musing of 1857 seem to be defending the black American but the musing of 1854 seemed to have been attacking the black American — so how did we get from the malevolence-against-the-black one to the succeeding malevolence-against-the-white one while continuing to quite disregard the Sermon on the Mount? (This is nothing if not perplexing. Perhaps someone can explain the transition.)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

This weapon was being manufactured in Hartford CT, although the fishy Christian Sharps was then in the process of selling out and moving to Phila-delphia, the city of brotherly love, where he would set up another weapons manufactory. [Thoreau](#) also “subscribed a trifle.”⁵⁰ We should not evade anything here: it is clear that [Waldo Emerson](#), donating \$25.⁰⁰, and the Thoreaus, did know at the time they made their donations that their money was to be applied not to provisions such as food or clothing but to the purchase of rifles and ammunition. Here are two company-solicited testimonials to this “hot thing” killing machine which Waldo Emerson, John Thoreau, Senior, and Henry David Thoreau helped to provide to John Brown. The first is dated “Magoffansville, Texas, June, 1853”:

The ten Sharps’ carbines purchased of you were all put to immediate use in arming my escort, and for range, accuracy, and rapidity of firing, they are far superior to any arm known. They have gone through what an ordinance officer would term a pretty severe field test, without the least injury.

In all of our shooting of bear, deer, wolves, &c., I have never known the ball to be found in the animal. Having been a frontier man for fourteen years, I had occasion to look after a bosom companion to stand by me in case of life or death; and hence I have given some little attention to the subject of fire arms, and think I can tolerably well appreciate their excellence; and in my search after such a comforter, I have found no arm that in all its attributes begins to compare with the Sharps’ arm and for army, navy, caravan or sporting service, it is sure to take and hold the front rank.

Capt. Henry Skillman,
U.S. Mail Contractor.

49. The version of this weapon sold to the Chinese government was inscribed “Old Reliable” in Chinese characters.

50. This phrase “subscribed a trifle” comes from his Journal entry of October 22, 1860 in which he is evidently wrestling with his conscience, perhaps feeling that he was unduly influenced in going along with his father in this matter: “I subscribed a trifle when he was here three years ago, I had so much confidence in the man –that he would do right,— ... I do not wish to kill or to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both of these things would be by me unavoidable. In extremities I could even be killed.” (XII, 437) We must bear in mind that it would have been especially painful for Thoreau to have had a falling-out with his father during this period, as Thoreau’s father was going into a period of sickness which would last some two years and would end in his taking to his room for a few weeks, and then peacefully dying. During this period he would be, as Thoreau later described, “going down-town in pleasant weather, doing a little business from time to time, hoeing a little in the garden, etc.” He was coughing and raising material from his lungs. Normally a taciturn man, he was becoming noticeably more silent even than usual.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

The second of these company-solicited testimonials is datelined Washington, January, 1855:



In answer to your inquiries, I take great pleasure in bearing testimony to the great value and use of Sharps' rifles. Upon two expeditions across the continent to California, I have had the ten rifles in active use the whole time in the field. With ten men armed with these rifles we felt equal to thirty. Its simplicity enabled the men to understand it at a glance, and they loaded and fired it with great accuracy and rapidity, killing game at four hundred and fifty yards. It inspired the men with great confidence in their strength and power to defend themselves against superior numbers. With ten men, a negro and a Mexican, I kept at bay one hundred and forty Apache warriors, all fully armed, just on the eve of an attack on Gov. Gardner's ranch in Sonora. I look upon it as far the best rifle and the only proper one for mounted men that I have ever seen.

Andrew B. Gray.

We must bear in mind that it would have been especially painful for [Thoreau](#) to have had a falling-out with his father during this period, as Thoreau's father [John Thoreau](#) was going into a period of sickness which would last some two years and would end in his taking to his room for a few weeks, and then peacefully dying. During this period he would be, as Thoreau later described, "going down-town in pleasant weather, doing a little business from time to time, hoeing a little in the garden, etc." He was coughing and raising material from his lungs. Normally a taciturn man, he was becoming noticeably even more silent than usual.

Would the John Murray Forbes that Emerson had been meeting, the railroad magnate, be the daddy of the Forbes who would marry Emerson's daughter? Would he have been related to the Scottish adventurer Hugh Forbes who at one time was John Brown's principal lieutenant?⁵¹

During this month, at a racetrack in Savannah, Georgia, there was being transacted the largest auction of human beings in the history in the United States of America. During the two days it took to dispose of 436 men, women, and children, it was as if the heavens were crying, the rain fell so unceasingly. This auction would come to be known, appropriately, as "the weeping time."

51. Captain John Brown's scheme, which he referred to as the "Subterranean Pass Way," was that the escaped, armed slaves were to "swarm" into and set up a center of resistance in the Alleghenies from which they could liberate Virginia and then invade Tennessee and northern Alabama. Such a scoping of the situation never met with much respect from other of the other schemers. In particular, the Scottish adventurer Hugh Forbes, Brown's onetime principal lieutenant, regarding blacks as inherently childlike, credulous, and cowardly, believed such a scheme to be doomed to failure from its inception. The scenario preferred by Forbes would have involved the herding of the slaves together by armed bands of white men and the driving of such herds of humans up the mountain chain toward Canada, neatly disposing of America's entire race problem — by simple relocation of it to another country. Evidently the two planners parted company over issues such as this after Forbes had functioned in Tabor, Iowa as the leader of military training for the recruits, and then Forbes attempted blackmail. When not offered a payoff, he wrote long, detailed letters to congressmen and to others, and it is one of the unresolved issues, how anyone in high office in Washington DC could have avoided knowing in advance that Brown was plotting a strike of some sort against slavery.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Some twenty years earlier the owners, the brothers Pierce and John Butler, had inherited their family's plantations, but Pierce, [Fanny Kemble Butler](#)'s ex-husband, had squandered his \$700,000 portion and, beyond that, gotten deeply into debt. Management of the estate was transferred to trustees who sold off Pierce's once grand but now dilapidated Philadelphia mansion for \$30,000. Other Butler properties were sold as well, but it was not enough to obtain for Pierce a continuation of his luxury, so he had the trustees turn to the Georgia plantations and their "moveable" property.

At the time, the overall holdings of the Butler family included 900 slaves. Half of them, 450, were assigned to the estate of the brother John, who had since died, and would remain on the plantations. Of the other 450 – Pierce's half – about 20 would be allowed to continue to live in slavery on Butler property. The remainder were herded onto railway cars and steamboats and brought to the Broeck racetrack to be sold to the highest bidder. Philadelphia socialite Sidney George Fisher would note in his diary that "It is highly honorable to [Butler] that he did all he could to prevent the sale, offering to make any personal sacrifice to avoid it," but we don't know of any such sacrifice actually made. The two-day sale of 436 human beings netted \$303,850 for Butler, amply more than he needed to satisfy all his creditors. Of the auction, Fisher wrote:

It is a dreadful affair, however, selling these hereditary Negroes.... Families will not be separated, that is to say, husbands and wives, parents and young children. But brothers and sisters of mature age, parents and children of mature age, all other relations and the ties of home and long association will be violently severed. It will be a hard thing for Butler to witness and it is a monstrous thing to do. Yet it is done every day in the South. It is one among the many frightful consequences of slavery and contradicts our civilization, our Christianity, or Republicanism. Can such a system endure, is it consistent with humanity, with moral progress? These are difficult questions, and still more difficult is it to say, what can be done? The Negroes of the South must be slaves or the South will be Africanized. Slavery is better for them and for us than such a result.

Mortimer "Doesticks" Thomson, a popular newsman, wrote a lengthy, uncomplimentary article about the auction for the New-York [Tribune](#) under the headline "What Became of the Slaves on a Georgia Plantation." He reported how the slaves, eager to impress potential masters who they perceived as likely to be kind, would sometimes cheerfully respond to buyers "pulling their mouths open to see their teeth, pinching their limbs to find how muscular they were, walking them up and down to detect any signs of lameness, making them stoop and bend in different ways that they might be certain there was no concealed rupture or wound...." This white columnist commiserated with the unfortunate slaves after the sale, stating, "On the faces of all was an expression of heavy grief; some appeared to be resigned to the hard stroke of Fortune that had torn them from their homes, and were sadly trying to make the best of it; some sat brooding moodily over their sorrows, their chins resting on their hands, their eyes staring vacantly, and their bodies rocking to and fro, with a restless motion that was never stilled...." The highest price paid for one family – a mother with five grown children – had been \$6,180. The highest price for one individual had been \$1,750. The lowest price for one person was \$250. Soon after the last slave was sold, the rain stopped and champagne bottles were popped in celebration. Pierce, once again wealthy, would be able to make a trip to southern Europe before returning to reside to Philadelphia.

The Reverend Samuel Joseph May wrote to his cousin the Reverend Samuel J. May, Jr. to declare his embarrassment at having supported a party which had in effect to obtain votes for its candidate [John Charles](#)



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

[Frémont](#) been pandering to racists, and had then **despite** such an extreme sacrifice failed to succeed at the national polls. He declared himself to be

glad the Republican Party did not succeed.



[Thoreau](#) wrote to someone named Adams.⁵²

At the invitation of Governor Salmon Portland Chase, [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) lectured the Ohio legislature, promising worldly success to those like himself who were willing to risk all by taking their stand upon the firm bedrock of moral principle. (A pleasant fantasy, that! Civil War days would demonstrate that Conway was truly a master of the pleasant fantasy, could truly tell people what they longed to hear: Hark! Hark! I can see the light at the end of the tunnel! I have a plan for ending the bloodshed! All you need to do is pay some attention to me!)

March 30, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed some land that [John Thoreau, Sr.](#) purchased that had been in use as a garden ([Thoreau](#) allowed previous owner Julius M. Smith to harvest his root vegetables). This house lot in Concord would become from the estate of Sophia Thoreau the property of the Alcott family, and in 1877 Louisa May Alcott would donate Henry's autograph survey document of this house lot to the Morgan Library & Museum (225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street, New York City 10016), where it can now be accessed as RecordID 116219 and Accession Number MA2111.



⁵². There was a Frank Adams in the Concord area.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1858

Horace Rice Hosmer borrowed some of [John Thoreau, Senior](#)'s [pencil](#)-making machinery "to make Red Crayons."

It was in this year that Hiram L. Lipman began to manufacture and market a [pencil](#) with "a rubber" attached to one end (he had patented this device on March 30, 1853). Only later would this come to be termed "an eraser" and only after other uses for such "rubber" material had become common. But for now both ends of the pencil would be business ends and Lipman would make his fortune.⁵³



53. In 1875 in *Reckendorfer v. Faber* (92 U.S. 347) his patent would be invalidated on the perfectly reasonable, if sniffy, legal grounds that all this guy had actually accomplished was the attachment of an object to another object.

READ ABOUT THIS CASE



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1859

January 7, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to from Boston by the inheriting son Henry Walker Frost, to appear in the East Cambridge Probate Court at 10AM on the following Tuesday, January 11th, in order to warrant the will which had been left by the deceased Reverend Barzillai Frost — which he and his father [John Thoreau](#) had witnessed some three years before.

Boston Jan 7th. 1859

Mr H. D. Thoreau.

Dear Sir,

*Will you do me the favor of meeting me at the Probate Court room
in East Cambridge on Tuesday next (11th inst) at ten o'clock A. M.
in order to prove my father's will to which {MS torn} witness.
My mother {MS torn} that {portion of page missing}*

John Brown arrived in [Concord](#), to stay overnight with [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) in preparation for his Saturday evening lecture before the Concord Lyceum.

January 13, Thursday: [John Thoreau](#), who so loved to sit in the shops of Concord or at the post-office and read the daily papers, but who had been coughing and expectorating a great deal, had stopped coughing but “continued to raise” phlegm from his lungs. At this point he “took to his chamber” in his final illness and –although for few weeks he would still be able to sit up in his chamber– he would not come down from his bedroom again alive.

In the United States Senate, Mr. Seward introduced “a bill (Senate, No. 510) in addition to the acts which prohibit the slave trade.” This bill would be referred to committee, reported by the committee, and dropped on the floor (SENATE JOURNAL, 35th Congress, 2d session, pages 134, 321).

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: This decade is especially noteworthy for the great increase of illegal importations into the South. These became bold, frequent, and notorious. Systematic introduction on a considerable scale probably commenced in the forties, although with great secrecy. “To have boldly ventured into New Orleans, with negroes freshly imported from Africa, would not only have brought down upon the head of the importer the vengeance of our very philanthropic Uncle Sam, but also the anathemas of the whole sect of philanthropists and negrophilists everywhere. To import them for years, however, into quiet places, evading with impunity the penalty of the law, and the ranting of the thin-skinned sympathizers with Africa, was gradually to popularize the traffic by creating a demand for laborers, and thus to pave the way for the *gradual revival of the slave trade*. To this end, a few men, bold and energetic, determined, ten or twelve years ago [1848 or 1850], to commence the business of importing negroes, slowly at first, but surely; and for this purpose they selected a few secluded places on the



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

coast of Florida, Georgia and Texas, for the purpose of concealing their stock until it could be sold out. Without specifying other places, let me draw your attention to a deep and abrupt pocket or indentation in the coast of Texas, about thirty miles from Brazos Santiago. Into this pocket a slaver could run at any hour of the night, because there was no hindrance at the entrance, and here she could discharge her cargo of movables upon the projecting bluff, and again proceed to sea inside of three hours. The live stock thus landed could be marched a short distance across the main island, over a porous soil which refuses to retain the recent foot-prints, until they were again placed in boats, and were concealed upon some of the innumerable little islands which thicken on the waters of the Laguna in the rear. These islands, being covered with a thick growth of bushes and grass, offer an inscrutable hiding place for the 'black diamonds.'⁵⁴ These methods became, however, toward 1860, too slow for the radicals, and the trade grew more defiant and open. The yacht "Wanderer," arrested on suspicion in New York and released, landed in Georgia six months later four hundred and twenty slaves, who were never recovered.⁵⁵ The Augusta Despatch says: "Citizens of our city are probably interested in the enterprise. It is hinted that this is the third cargo landed by the same company, during the last six months."⁵⁶ Two parties of Africans were brought into Mobile with impunity. One bark, strongly suspected of having landed a cargo of slaves, was seized on the Florida coast; another vessel was reported to be landing slaves near Mobile; a letter from Jacksonville, Florida, stated that a bark had left there for Africa to ship a cargo for Florida and Georgia.⁵⁷ Stephen A. Douglas said "that there was not the shadow of doubt that the Slave-trade had been carried on quite extensively for a long time back, and that there had been more Slaves imported into the southern States, during the last year, than had ever been imported before in any one year, even when the Slave-trade was legal. It was his confident belief, that over fifteen thousand Slaves had been brought into this country during the past year [1859.] He had seen, with his own eyes, three hundred of those recently-imported, miserable beings, in a Slave-pen in Vicksburg, Miss., and also large numbers at Memphis, Tenn."⁵⁸ It was currently reported that depots for these slaves existed in over twenty large cities and towns in the South, and an interested person boasted to a senator, about 1860, that "twelve vessels would discharge their living freight upon our shores within ninety days from the 1st of June last," and that between sixty and seventy cargoes had been successfully introduced in the last eighteen months.⁵⁹ The

54. New York Herald, Aug. 5, 1860; quoted in Drake, REVELATIONS OF A SLAVE SMUGGLER, Introduction, pages vii.-viii.

55. HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 35th Congress, 2d session, IX. No. 89. Cf. 26TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, pages 45-9.

56. Quoted in 26TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, page 46.

57. For all the above cases, cf. 26TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, page 49.

58. Quoted in 27TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, page 20. Cf. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, 1859; SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 36th Congress, 1st session, III. No. 2.

59. 27TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, page 21.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

New York Tribune doubted the statement; but John C. Underwood, formerly of Virginia, wrote to the paper saying that he was satisfied that the correspondent was correct. "I have," he said, "had ample evidences of the fact, that reopening the African Slave-trade is a thing already accomplished, and the traffic is brisk, and rapidly increasing. In fact, the most vital question of the day is not the opening of this trade, but its suppression. The arrival of cargoes of negroes, fresh from Africa, in our southern ports, is an event of frequent occurrence."⁶⁰

Negroes, newly landed, were openly advertised for sale in the public press, and bids for additional importations made. In reply to one of these, the Mobile Mercury facetiously remarks: "Some negroes who never learned to talk English, went up the railroad the other day."⁶¹ Congressmen declared on the floor of the House: "The slave trade may therefore be regarded as practically re-established;"⁶² and petitions like that from the American Missionary Society recited the fact that "this piratical and illegal trade – this inhuman invasion of the rights of men, – this outrage on civilization and Christianity – this violation of the laws of God and man – is openly countenanced and encouraged by a portion of the citizens of some of the States of this Union."⁶³

From such evidence it seems clear that the slave-trade laws, in spite of the efforts of the government, in spite even of much opposition to these extra-legal methods in the South itself, were grossly violated, if not nearly nullified, in the latter part of the decade 1850-1860.

January 30, Sunday: Clotilde, 15-year-old daughter of King Vittorio Emanuele of Sardinia, got married with the 1st cousin of Emperor Napoléon III in the Royal Chapel at Turin. The marriage would be widely perceived as an alliance by France and Sardinia against Austria.

John Thoreau, although bedridden, was alert, and was able on this Sunday to sit up in his bedroom for a little while.



January 30: How peculiar the hooting of an owl! It is not shrill and sharp like the scream of a hawk, but full, round, and sonorous, waking the echoes of the wood.

The surface of the snow, especially on hillsides, has a peculiarly combed or worn appearance where water has run in a thaw; i.e., the whole surface shows regular furrows at a distance, as if it had been scraped with an immense comb.

60. Quoted in 27TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, page 21

61. Issue of July 22, 1860; quoted in Drake, REVELATIONS OF A SLAVE SMUGGLER, Introd., page vi. The advertisement referred to was addressed to the "Ship-owners and Masters of our Mercantile Marine," and appeared in the Enterprise (Miss.) Weekly News, April 14, 1859. William S. Price and seventeen others state that they will "pay three hundred dollars per head for one thousand native Africans, between the ages of fourteen and twenty years, (of sexes equal,) likely, sound, and healthy, to be delivered within twelve months from this date, at some point accessible by land, between Pensacola, Fla., and Galveston, Texas; the contractors giving thirty days' notice as to time and place of delivery": Quoted in 26TH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, pages 41-2.

62. CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 35th Congress, 1st session, page 1362. Cf. the speech of a delegate from Georgia to the Democratic Convention at Charleston, 1860: "If any of you northern democrats will go home with me to my plantation, I will show you some darkies that I bought in Virginia, some in Delaware, some in Florida, and I will also show you the pure African, the noblest Roman of them all. I represent the African slave trade interest of my section." Lator, CYCLOPÆDIA, III. 733.

63. SENATE MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENT, 36th Congress, 1st session, No. 8.

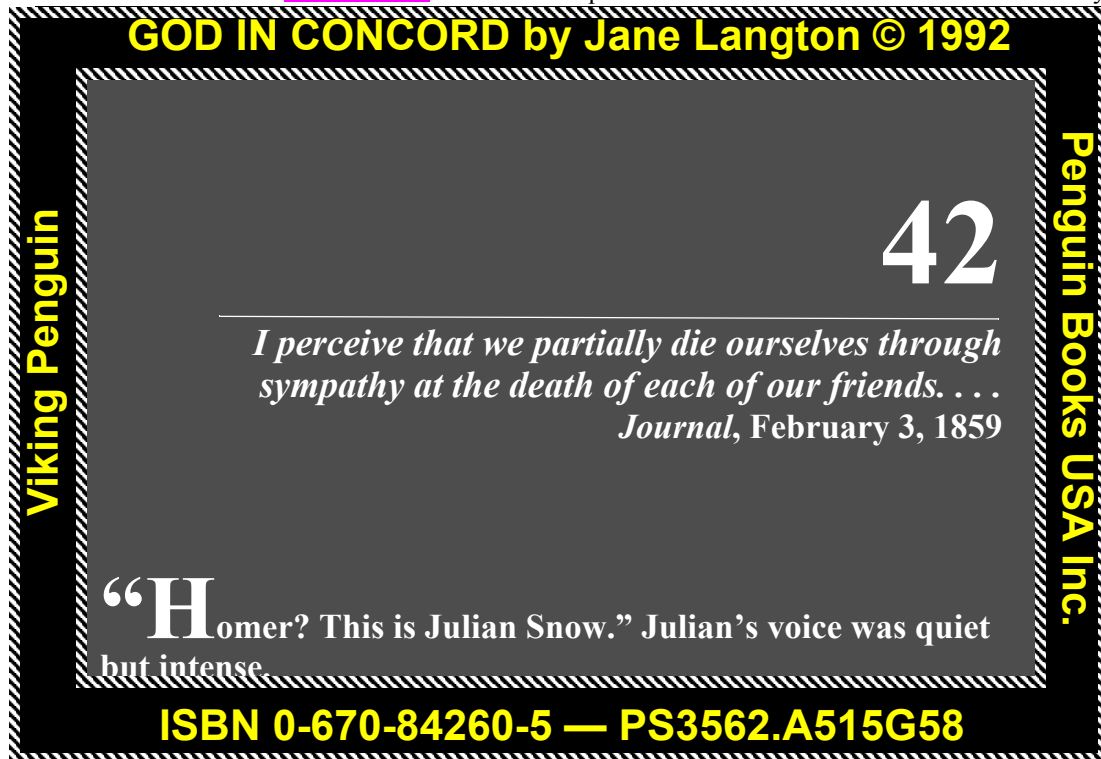


JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

February 3, Thursday: [Sam Houston](#) made a speech on the floor of the federal Senate condemning [John Charles Watrous](#), for having been corrupt while Judge of the Eastern Judicial District of [Texas](#) (none of the accusations would ever be substantiated and Judge Watrous would continue on the bench, not finally retiring from the bench until 1870 at the age of 68).

At 2:55 in the afternoon [John Thoreau](#) died. He was quite conscious to the last and his death was easy.



He had reached 72 years of age. In [Henry](#)'s journal, the following dated sentence has a page to itself:



February 3: Five minutes before 3 P.M., Father died.

THOREAU LIFESPANS

The journal also includes:



After a sickness of some two years, going down-town in pleasant weather, doing a little business from time to time, hoeing a little in the garden, etc., Father took to his chamber January 13th, and did not come down again. Most of the time previously he had coughed and expectorated a great deal. Lately he did not cough, but continued to raise. He continued to sit up in his chamber till within a week before he died. He sat up for a little while on the Sunday four days before he died. Generally he was very silent for many months. He was quite conscious to the last, and his death was so easy that we should not have been aware that he was dying, though we were sitting around his bed, if we had not watched very closely....



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

Father first came to this town to live with his father about the end of the last century, when he was about twelve years old. (His father died in 1801.) Afterward he went to the Lexington Academy (Parker's?) a short time, perhaps a year, then into Deacon White's store as clerk; then learned the dry-goods business in a store in Salem. (Aunt J. shows me a letter from him directly after his going there, dated 1807.) Was with a Hathaway. When about twenty-one, opened a store for himself on the corner where the town house stands of late years, a yellow building, now moved and altered into John Keyes's house. He did so well there that Isaac Hurd went into partnership with him, to his injury. They soon dissolved, but could not settle without going to law, when my father gained the case, bringing his books into court. Then, I think, he went to Bangor and set up with Billings, selling to Indians (among others); married; lived in Boston; writes thence to aunts at Bangor in 1815 with John on his knee; moved to Concord (**where I was born**), then to Chelmsford, to Boston, to Concord again, and here remained. Mother first came to Concord about the same age that father did, but a little before him. As far as I know, Father, when he died, was not only one of the oldest men in the middle of Concord, but the one perhaps best acquainted with the inhabitants, and local, social, and street history of the middle of the town, for the last fifty years. He belonged in a peculiar sense to the village street; loved to sit in the shops or at the post-office and read the daily papers. I think that he remembered more about the worthies (and unworthies) of Concord forty years ago, both from dealing as a trader and from familiar intercourse with them, than anyone else. Our other neighbors, now living or very recently dead, have either come to town more recently than he, or have lived more aloof from the mass of the inhabitants.

GOD IN CONCORD by Jane Langton © 1992

Viking Penguin

30

How enduring are our bodies, after all!
Journal, February 3, 1859

Julian Snow was having a hard time waking up. He kept telling himself that something was wrong. He tried to pull

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Penguin Books USA Inc.

February 21, Monday: [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) wrote to her cousin Marianne or Mary Anne Mitchell Dunbar of Bridgewater, Massachusetts in regard to the death of her father [John Thoreau](#):

It gives me pleasure to respond to any expression of sympathy at this time of sad bereavement, & I would thank you most heartily for your very kind note. —It is two years last Oct. since our dear fathers long & wasting sickness commenced. He has been a most patient sufferer. At the last he declined very

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

rapidly, he was confined to his chamber but three weeks & to his bed only one week. I shall be ever grateful that his suffering was not more acute & that his nearest & dearest friends were at hand with their sympathy & aid to comfort & relieve him so far as was in their power— Through all my dear fathers illness he was borne up by that fallacious hope so often attendant on consumption. I do not think that he realized the impossibility of recovery till about ten days before he left us, but then he was 'all ready, willing & waiting to be gone' as he said. My fathers two sisters were with us at the time of his death. They have since returned to Boston & I assure you we are lonely indeed. I feel as if there was nothing for me to do now that all anxiety on poor fathers account has ceased. But it is a great consolation to think of him at rest. Oh my dear friend would that I could express my appreciation of divine wisdom as manifested to us all. It is surely safe to trust the good God who so wisely cares for us. While I must ever mourn his absence I shall delight to cherish the memory of his many virtues, & I trust that our loss is his gain.— Mother is at present suffering with the influenza.



CYNTHIA DUNBAR THOREAU



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

1865

At some point during this year [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), with perhaps some assistance from [Ellery Channing](#), saw the first complete book edition of [Thoreau's CAPE COD](#) through to publication:

The title-page date of the first edition is 1865. But Horace E. Scudder, literary advisor for Houghton, Mifflin and Company and editor of the Riverside Edition of Thoreau's Writings, asserts in his brief introduction to volume four, [CAPE COD](#), that the first edition was released as a Christmas book in 1864. Scudder may have reached this conclusion from the book's copyright notice, dated 1864, or from the December 1864 date on the twenty-four pages of Ticknor and Fields advertising bound into most copies of the first edition. The explicit cost-book entry for publication on March 25, 1865 is supported by notices and advertisements in trade journals, general magazines, and newspapers and by early reviews of CAPE COD. No announcements of the title appeared in late-1864 issues of the American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular; Ticknor and Fields's holiday gift book was an illustrated edition of Tennyson's ENOCH ARDEN. The first mention of CAPE COD occurred in the February 15, 1865, issue, where it was advertised as forthcoming in the present season. A similar publisher's announcement appeared in the March 1 issue of the Literary Gazette and in the March Atlantic Monthly. On April 1, the Literary Gazette included CAPE COD in its List of Books Recently Published in the United States. In this issue of the fortnightly Literary Gazette Ticknor and Fields advertised CAPE COD as one of several New Books Just Published by the firm: Readers of "Walden" and "Maine Woods" will welcome this last work of the gifted Thoreau. "Cape Cod" has been pronounced the best of his productions. On March 25 the Boston Advertiser had noted the publication of the book that same day. Advertising CAPE COD and its other Thoreau titles in the April 15 Literary Gazette and in the May issue of the Atlantic, Ticknor and Fields quoted from appraisals of Thoreau's work in the Boston Evening Traveller, the Hartford Press, and the Boston Recorder. On May 15 and June 1, advertisements in the Literary Gazette named CAPE COD among Recent Publications; and on August 1 and 15 LETTERS TO VARIOUS PERSONS and CAPE COD were offered as two of the Choice New Books Lately Published by Ticknor and Fields.

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) alleged that in this year and the next he had permission to go through the papers of the [Reverend Ezra Ripley](#) stored in an attic of the Old Manse, and that among these papers, written on the



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

back of a pious meditation from 1818, he discovered the following document:

Understanding that Mr. John Thoreau, now of Chelmsford, is going into business at that place, and is about to apply for license to retail ardent spirits, I hereby certify that I have been long acquainted with him, that he has sustained a good character, and now view him as a man of integrity, accustomed to storekeeping, and of correct morals.

Clearly, at some point during the year 1818, after the Thoreaus had moved to Chelmsford, [John Thoreau, Sr.](#) had solicited his former pastor, the Reverend Ripley, for the sort of letter of recommendation which he needed in order to be able to offer⁶⁴ hard liquor to his favored customers while he “kept shop” there.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

64. It was customary in those heavy-drinking times for a storekeeper to pour a glass for a favored customer.



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR



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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: December 13, 2014



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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

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



JOHN THOREAU, SENIOR

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