



## Mapping Thoreau’s Bioregionalism

by Yeojin Kim

Among the many occupations that Henry Thoreau plied throughout his life—school teacher, essayist, lecturer, pencil maker, and occasional helping hand in myriad day jobs throughout Concord—his career as a land surveyor, perhaps, is one of the most curious. As Patrick Chura has observed, in colonial North America, “the multiple purposes of establishing individual ownership, taxable value and legal jurisdiction were embodied in the person of the land surveyor.”<sup>1</sup> While Thoreau “enjoyed surveying, for no other job gave him the same freedom to set his own hours and places of business,” he often feared that men who employed him “misused his skills,” and “the task often left him bitter and depressed.”<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, land surveying serves as an apt metaphor to describe the life-long career of Henry Thoreau. Throughout his books, essays, and journal entries, Thoreau incessantly records his investigation of the flora and fauna, topographic details, natural history, and phenological phenomena of a local ecology. Furthermore, he draws the maps of Concord, Maine, Canada, Cape Cod, and Minnesota while carrying out his duties as a land surveyor and traveling in various parts of North America. Noticeably, most if not all of Thoreau’s works are situated in the Northeastern coastal forests bioregion that encompasses such areas as southern New York, the New England mixed forests, and Maine’s North Woods. This bioregion’s humid continental climate, with its oak forests and coastal pines, yield large amounts of timber while also providing land for pasture and grain harvesting.

What is significant about Thoreau’s survey of the Northeastern coastal bioregion and his mapping of it throughout his works is the way that it complicates and even subverts the conventional land-surveying of his time that espouses the sovereign power of national states and consolidates the private wealth and land property rights



Photograph by Todd Truby

Looking down the Esker Trail, Walden Pond.

of owners. One of his earliest essays, “The Natural History of Massachusetts,” published in *The Dial* in July 1842, is precisely a case in point. In this piece, Thoreau states that the “merely political aspect of the land is never very cheering.”<sup>3</sup> This is an ironic statement, for the essay is supposed to be “a review of a series of government-sponsored reports surveying the plants and animals of the state,” as Laura Dassow Walls aptly points out.<sup>4</sup> Thoreau’s review, instead, criticizes the state-initiated efforts to survey and

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classify the zoological and botanical orders of Massachusetts. Thoreau, for instance, mocks such a misconception as “the crow was brought to this country by the white man” by stating that “I shall as soon believe that the white man planted these pines and hemlocks. . . . there is the rook in England, and the crow in New England” (12). Sometimes he even corrects the information provided by the State Report, drawing on his daily observations: “The fishes commonly taken in this way are pickerel, suckers, perch, eels, pouts, breams, and shiners. . . . The number of these transverse bands, which the Report states to be seven, is, however, very variable, for in some of our ponds they have nine and ten even” (21).

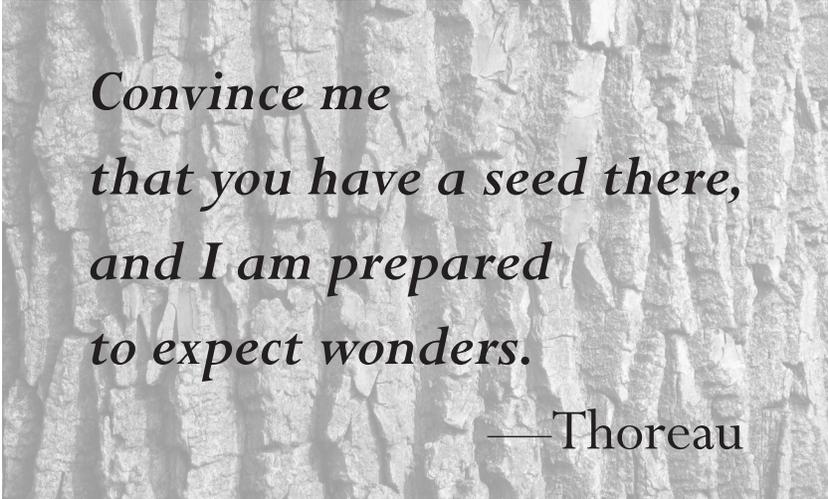
Thoreau’s works are clearly influenced by his career as a land surveyor. Instead of a conventional state map, however, Thoreau draws a bioregional map that charts and delineates the local ecology and its natural history as well as its intersection with a human community. Rick Van Noy has defined literary cartographers as those who explore “how maps function in literary texts . . . or how maps in themselves can tell a story . . . [and] how literature can be used for cartographic means: to control, order, or limn a place.”<sup>5</sup> Following Van Noy, I would say that Thoreau’s works embody the literary bioregional cartography of the Northeastern coastal forests. What underlies his bioregional work is his deep sense of place and environmental ethics. By applying a framework of bioregionalism to understand Thoreau’s career, one can better appreciate Thoreau’s life’s work and his environmental praxis as being deeply rooted in the bioregional ground of Northeastern coastal forests.

A bioregion generally refers to an ecologically and geographically defined life-place, having little, if anything, to do with politically designated borders or regions that would subsequently merge into larger sovereign national states. When the school of bioregionalism began to emerge in the 1970s, it was hailed as an ecologically derived political or cultural practice that would most likely complement the national and even global politics of environmentalism. While bioregionalism as such may be a fairly new field of study, throughout the history of the U.S. from the colonial period to the present, the exploitation of natural resources and its consequence of environmental degradation have prompted many ecologically conscious writers to forcefully address their concerns about the environmental issues of a bioregion. Among nineteenth-century American writers, Thoreau best exemplifies the workings of a bioregional consciousness or a bioregional imagination, because he offers a deep-map narrative of a bioregion against the state-initiated efforts of land surveying and the U.S. Coast, which is bent upon imposing a sovereign national border on nature. His endeavors, instead, divest a region of its political markers and return it to a bioregion, or a life-place.

Thoreau’s bioregional works bear on his typical textual move that juxtaposes the present with the remote past. In so doing, he highlights the morphological changes of a landscape, such as the disappearance of certain species from Northeastern forests, the dispersion and demographic changes of native flora, and the growing human intervention into a bioregion. In *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, for instance, meandering down the stream of the Concord River under the North Bridge, Thoreau embarks on an extended passage that describes the native flora of Concord, including the narrow-leaved willow, the polygonum, the arrow-head, the pickerel-weed, the snakehead, and the trumpet-weed. The native flora scattered throughout the Northeastern Coastal Forests epitomizes for Thoreau “a historical remoteness” that floats from the past to the future along the river.<sup>6</sup> *Cape Cod* is another instance of Thoreau’s signature mapping strategy that juxtaposes a present map that he draws from his excursions into the sandy shores and cliffs of the Northeastern beach with earlier maps, including those by French, Dutch and English navigators during the

seventeenth century.<sup>7</sup> As always, Thoreau attends to the natural history of plants growing in the region, including corn, fruit trees, and lichen.

*The Maine Woods*, particularly, evokes nostalgia toward “America’s native past [that] became the primitive ground against which the new nation defined itself,” thereby arousing an ethos of preservation among its readers.<sup>8</sup> Describing the Penobscot River basin, for instance, Thoreau



*Convince me  
that you have a seed there,  
and I am prepared  
to expect wonders.*

—Thoreau

highlights the morphological change in the landscape by noting the disappearance of the white pine. He now finds sawmills where the white pine used to thrive. In this piece, Thoreau most forcefully articulates his preservationist ethics toward the Northeastern coastal forests, the white pine being the keystone species of the bioregion. In one of his last essays, “An Address on the Succession of Forest Trees,” Thoreau offers a hopeful vision of the perennial existence of pine trees: “Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.”<sup>9</sup>

Thoreau’s later works, including the manuscripts of “The Dispersion of Seeds,” “Wild Fruits,” and *Indian Notebooks*, delve deeper into various factors that contribute to the mutation of a bioregional border by delineating the dispersion of biota by animal activities, wind and water, and even human migration. As Tom Lynch emphasizes, a bioregional border is characterized by “blending and intergrading rather than being rigidly bounded.”<sup>10</sup> Thoreau captures the main causes that contribute to the dispersion of certain flora in such passages as the one following, where he underscores the agency of the crow in the dispersion of apple trees:

Consider how the apple tree has spread over the country, through the agency of cows and other

quadrupeds, making almost impenetrable thickets in many places and yielding many new and superior varieties for the orchard. . . . One winter, observing under an oak on the snow and ice by the riverside some fragments of frozen-thawed apples, I looked further and detected two or three tracks of a crow and the droppings of several that must have been perched on the oak, but there were no tracks of squirrels or other animals there. . . . The nearest apples trees were thirty rods off across the river. The crows had evidently brought the frozen-thawed apples to this oak for security, and here eaten what they did not let fall on the snow.<sup>11</sup>

Thoreau orchestrates his bioregional works around a seasonal cycle, or his “Kalendar.” As Kristen Case explains, “[i]n the final years of his life, Thoreau attempted to collect his observations of seasonal change over the years in a variety of lists and charts” that constitute “a project he sometimes referred to as his ‘Kalendar.’”<sup>12</sup> This project, then, completes the bioregional map of Northeastern coastal forests that he endeavored to construct throughout his life by adding a third dimension to the temporal and spatial axes of the map: the axis of a circle, or the eternal return of a life-cycle.<sup>13</sup>

It is ironic that Thoreau began his paid surveying job after the publication, at his own expense, of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, which left him with a pile of unsold copies sitting in his attic and debts still to pay. Nevertheless, the land surveying of the Northeastern coastal forests bioregion was his lifetime career, which began much earlier, during his sojourn at Walden, while surveying the pond. The bioregional praxis embodied in his works points us towards a true preservationist ethic of environmentalism. By learning from Thoreau’s literary bioregional cartography, we could also gradually dissociate ourselves from an anthropocentric framework of viewing the non-human nature and, instead, appreciate the innate aesthetic, ecological, and spiritual values of a life place in which a biotic community abides, writing and re-writing a bioregional border.

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#### Notes

1 Patrick Chura, *Thoreau the Land Surveyor* (Tallahassee, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010): 3.

2 Robert F. Stowell, *A Thoreau Gazetteer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970): ix.

3 Henry David Thoreau, “Natural History of Massachusetts,” *Excursions*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007): 4; hereafter cited parenthetically.

4 Laura Dassow Walls, *Seeing New Worlds: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth-century Natural Science* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995): 37.

5 Rick Van Noy, *Surveying the Interior: Literary Cartographers and the Sense of Place* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2003): 3.

6 Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, ed. Carl F. Hovde, William L. Howarth, and Elizabeth Hall Witherell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980): 20, 17.

7 See Thoreau, “Provincetown,” *Cape Cod*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

8 John Kucich, “Lost in the Maine Woods: Henry David Thoreau, Joseph Nicolai, and the Penobscot World,” *The Concord Saunterer* 19/20 (2011-12): 27.

9 Thoreau, “An Address on the Succession of Forest Trees,” *Excursions*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007): 181-82.

10 Tom Lynch, *Xerophilia: Ecocritical Explorations in Southwestern Literature* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2008): 23-24.

11 Thoreau, *Faith in a Seed*, ed. Bradley P. Dean (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993): 79.

12 Kristen Case, “Thoreau’s Radical Empiricism: The Kalendar, Pragmatism, and Science,” *Thoreavian Modernities* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013): 188.

13 The legacy of Thoreau’s Kalendar has been taken up by the Primack lab at Boston University, a team of researchers who work on the climate change in Massachusetts, primarily tapping into Thoreau’s work on phenology. See Richard Primack, *Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau’s Woods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).



Photograph by Todd Truby

A towering white pine in the Walden Woods.

## When Anarchists Speak of Thoreau

by Daniel Vollaro

A few months before the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003, I drove down to Washington, D.C. to participate in a big anti-war demonstration. While I was there, I met a young anarchist near the reflecting pool of the Lincoln Memorial. His name was Allan. He was from South Dakota originally, but now lived in a collective on the West Coast. He was taking a break from the action, sitting on a bench on the path to Constitution Gardens, drinking out of a tall water bottle and looking weary. He was wearing overalls and a black t-shirt, with a bandana pulled down around his neck and a green canvas backpack over his shoulder—pretty much the iconic image of a young anarchist in the twenty-first century.

At some point during our conversation, Allan dug a finger-worn copy of *Walden and Civil Disobedience* from inside his backpack and waved it in the air to make a point.

“This is the real stuff,” he said.

“You mean civil disobedience,” I asked?

“No, I mean anarchy,” he said.

Anarchists, I have since learned, have a special affinity for Thoreau. They have been reading, interpreting, appropriating, and quoting from him for over a century—Peter Kropotkin, Leo Tolstoy, Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman, Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Paul Goodman, Edward Abbey, Gary Snyder, Fredy Perlman, David Watson, David Foreman, Bob Black, and John Zerzan, to name just a few—and they have cultivated a uniquely anarchist interpretation of his work that is politically charged and distinctive from mainline liberal and right libertarian perspectives.

Thoreau entered the anarchist canon near the end of the nineteenth century, just as the movement was gaining both intellectual credibility and worldwide infamy. When British Socialist Henry Salt spoke of Thoreau’s “anarchist doctrines” and “anarchist views” in his 1890 biography,<sup>1</sup> anarchists all over the world were discovering Thoreau. In 1893, a young Russian immigrant to the U.S. named Emma Goldman was reading Thoreau in New York City’s Blackwell’s Island prison, where she was serving a ten-month sentence for unlawful assembly and incitement to riot.<sup>2</sup> A year later, Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy acquired a copy of “Resistance to Civil Government” and had it translated into Russian for the Russian-language journal *Svobodnoe slovo*<sup>3</sup> (The Free Word). Russian-prince-turned-revolutionary Peter Kropotkin also likely encountered Thoreau at about this time.

By the time Bartolomeo Vanzetti read Thoreau in prison in the 1920s, many anarchists simply assumed that Thoreau had always been a member of their tribe. In 1907, Benjamin Tucker, the great American popularizer of anarchist ideas, promised to mail subscribers of his journal *Liberty* “A Brace of Anarchist Classics,

namely Herbert Spencer’s ‘The Right to Ignore the State’ and Thoreau’s ‘On the Duty of Civil Disobedience.’”<sup>4</sup> Kropotkin’s seminal 1910 *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry on anarchism lists Thoreau along with John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, Walt Whitman, Leo Tolstoy, and Emile Zola as “modern authors expressing anarchist ideas.”<sup>5</sup> That same year, Goldman published an essay titled “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For” in which she hails Thoreau as “the greatest American Anarchist.”<sup>6</sup>

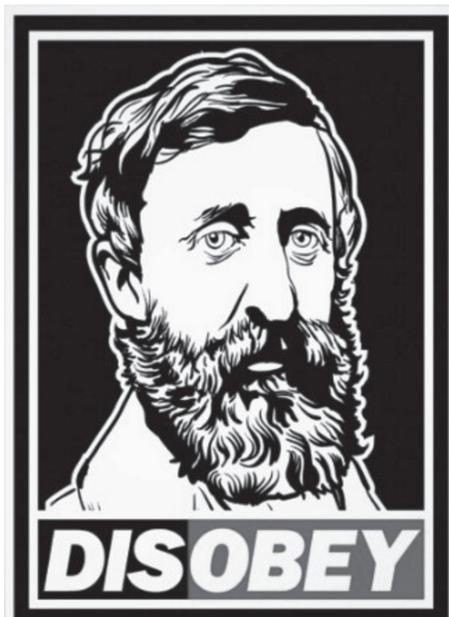
American anarchists were not merely appropriating Thoreau for their purposes; they were also building a counter tradition around his legacy. At a time when most critics and writers depicted Thoreau as a nature writer,<sup>7</sup> anarchists were among the first to recognize the political potential of his polemical writing. Goldman expresses this potential in a pamphlet she published along with Alexander Berkman in 1919, when the two were on the verge of being deported from the U.S. for their anarchist beliefs. The pamphlet,

titled *Deportation: Its Meaning and Menace*, argues that Thoreau would also have been eligible for deportation under the Espionage Act, along with other great Americans such as William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson.<sup>8</sup> She chooses this quote from “Resistance to Civil Government” to illustrate why Thoreau might have been a target of the state in a post-World War I ideological climate.

“Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart.”<sup>9</sup>

This quote, or some version of it, sometimes turns up in anarchist literature and histories of anarchism to demonstrate that Thoreau was a “consistent anarchist,”<sup>10</sup> an outlaw,<sup>11</sup> or a supporter of the idea that “morality and man-made law [...] have little to do with each other.”<sup>12</sup> The Winter 2004 issue of the anarcho-primitivist journal *Green Anarchy* presents the same quote on a page that promises to “reclaim Thoreau for anarchy.” The editors write: “Although his works inspired champions of nonviolent resistance such as Gandhi, Tolstoy, and King, Thoreau’s vision was far more radical than theirs.”<sup>13</sup>

It’s the “far more radical” Thoreau that many anarchists find so appealing. Thoreau has been domesticated in America, carved into the Mount Rushmore of nonviolent resistance along with Gandhi and Martin Luther King, but anarchists have never forgotten that Thoreau is dangerous to the establishment. American anarchist Bob Black tells the story of being assigned to read “Resistance to Civil Government” in junior high school in the 1960s. “Spontaneously and as one the students (I was probably one of them) rose up—this was in a public school in a middle-class liberal suburb—to denounce Thoreau’s anarchist madness,” he recalls. “The teacher



Courtesy of Dan McCall

didn't train us to react that way. It came naturally to adolescents habituated by schooling and the family [...] The teacher had to play Devil's—that is, Thoreau's—Advocate as no student would."<sup>14</sup> Fredy Perlman, writing in *The Fifth Estate*, claims Thoreau (along with Melville and Hawthorne) is a critic of technology, but because his writings are now considered “classic,” defenders of the status quo have felt compelled to carry out a cold war against him through the education system, by maligning and misinterpreting him.<sup>15</sup>

Anarchists are far more inclined than mainstream liberals to take Thoreau at his word when he criticizes democracy, and they are less inclined to read between the lines of “Resistance to Civil Government” to construct a Thoreauvian respect for democratic institutions. Anarchists tend to oppose majoritarianism and representative democracy,<sup>16</sup> so they are especially fond of this line from “Resistance to Civil Government”: “All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers, or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral question; and betting naturally accompanies it.”<sup>17</sup> Emma Goldman and Bob Black used this quote to support the anti-voting position held by many anarchists. Goldman says, “A close examination of the machinery of politics and its achievements will bear out the logic of Thoreau,”<sup>18</sup> and Black bluntly asserts that “The majority isn't always right.”<sup>19</sup> Colin Ward, the great British anarchist, writes that anarchists have traditionally stayed away from the polls because it makes no sense for advocates of no government to support efforts to improve government, and he quotes from another passage in “Resistance to Civil Government” to support his argument: “Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence.”<sup>20</sup>

This reading of Thoreau as anti-democratic is not an outlier interpretation. Political scientist Leigh Kathryn Jenco observes that Thoreau's own words about democracy reveal a deep skepticism and critique. She writes “[...]The theory and practice of democracy fundamentally conflict with Thoreau's conviction in moral autonomy and conscientious action.”<sup>21</sup> Jenco understands what many careful readers of Thoreau have learned, that “Resistance to Civil Government” contains the seeds of several interpretations on the question of government. Anarchists tend to overlook Thoreau's apparent rejection of the “no government” position early in the essay. “I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government,” he writes (64). But interpreters bent on making Thoreau an ally of government reform are justifiably attracted to these words.

Near the end of “Resistance to Civil Government,” Thoreau offers a few lines of tepid support for the idea of democracy, calling the progress from monarchy to democracy, “a progress toward a true respect for the individual,” but asks, “is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government?” (89). Thoreau appears to reject representative democracy for a more ideal, as-yet-unnamed form of government. Many anarchists might fill in these blanks with some form of direct democracy.

Thoreau's influence can be felt throughout the anarchist tradition in the twentieth century, from anarcho-primitivists and advocates of “deep ecology” who portray him, somewhat simplistically, as an enemy of technology and a supporter of a return to pre-agricultural lifestyles to the many who have found inspiration in *Walden* for experiments in self-sufficiency and alternative lifestyles. Appropriations of Thoreau by anarchists vary, but most of them share in common a deep appreciation of his radicalism. Anarchists remind us that Thoreau does not easily

align with a positively constructed idea of American culture or politics. He is the fount for some of our most radical and anti-establishment ideas.

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## Notes

1 Salt's biography is often cited as the book that introduced Ghandi to Thoreauvian ideas. See Henry Salt, *The Life of Henry David Thoreau* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1890), 99, 139, 234.

2 Hippolyte Havel, *Introduction to Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1910), 27.

3 Joel Myerson, et al eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 633.

4 Paul Eltzbacher, *Anarchism* (London: A. C. Field, 1908), 329.

5 Peter Kropotkin, “Anarchism,” from *The Encyclopedia Britannica*,” in Kropotkin: “*The Conquest of Bread*” and *Other Writings*, ed. Marshall S. Shatz (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 233. Kropotkin wrote this entry for the 11th edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1910.

6 Emma Goldman, “Anarchism, What it Really Stands For,” in *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Mother Earth publishing association, 1910), 53-73.

7 Walter Harding, *Thoreau: A Century of Criticism* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1954), 2.

8 Berkman, Alexander and Emma Goldman, *Deportation: Its Meaning and Menace. Last Message to the People of America*. (Ellis Island, New York: N.p., 1919).

9 Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, “Deportation: It's Meaning and Menace: Last Message to the People of America,” *Anarchy Archives*, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/goldman/deportation.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/goldman/deportation.html)

10 Ziga Vodovnik, *A Living Spirit of Revolt: The Infrapolitics of Anarchism*, (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2013), 153.

11 Randall Amster, *Anarchism Today*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 97.

12 Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 1992), 185.

13 “Reclaim Thoreau for Anarchy,” *Green Anarchy* (Winter 2004), 56.

14 Bob Black, *Beneath the Underground*, (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 1994), 37.

15 Fredy Perlman, “The Machine Against the Garden” (The Anarchist Library, 2013), 7. Originally published in the *Fifth Estate* 20, no. 2 (October 1985).

16 In his history of anarchism, *Demanding the Impossible*, Peter Marshall observes that while “anarchists feel that representative democracy is preferable to monarchy, aristocracy or despotism, they still consider it to be essentially oppressive”; hereafter cited parenthetically.

17 Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” in *Reform Papers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 69.

18 Goldman, 70.

19 Bob Black, “Debunking Democracy,” *The Anarchist Library*. <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/bob-black-debunking-democracy>. Originally published by CAL Press Pamphlet Series, No. 2, (Berkeley, CA: CAL Press, 2011).

20 Colin Ward, “The Case Against Voting,” in *New Society* 80, (May 15, 1987): 109.

21 Leigh Kathryn Jenco, “Thoreau's Critique of Democracy,” *The Review of Politics* 65, no. 3 (Summer, 2003): 356.

## Jon Fadiman: Twenty Years at Walden Pond

by *Clarissa Eaton*

Standing behind the counter of the Shop at Walden Pond, Jon Fadiman is part professor, part tour guide. He is also an adept conversationalist. On the day I visit my father, he is talking with someone who has come to see Walden for the first time.

“So tell me what I absolutely must see here,” the young man says, expecting a quick response.

“Well,” says Jon, in his kind yet authoritative voice, “this isn’t a museum where you *must see* the one most important piece of art. This is nature. It’s about having an appreciation for your surroundings. Get out there and marvel.”

In his twenty years at the Shop, Jon has found plenty at which to marvel in the Walden Woods. The Thoreau Society’s longest-serving employee, Jon has worked at the Shop at Walden Pond since its inception. In that time the gray-shingled garrison overlooking the iconic Walden Pond has attracted everyone from local visitors to out-of-town tourists, nature enthusiasts, as well as Thoreau scholars and admirers. Now this small store, cluttered with books, postcards, t-shirts, and a plethora of Thoreau-related merchandise, will soon will be demolished, making way for a new Visitors Center in 2016.

The move is bittersweet. My father has found a home at the Shop, so much so that he has gotten both his daughter and his granddaughter involved with the Society. So I thought I would take

the opportunity to gather details of his twenty-year experience, including the joy of coordinating a retail establishment connected to Henry David Thoreau’s famed haven.

Jon has become an icon at both the Shop and within the Thoreau Society. This fatherly figure is a juxtaposition of frank opinion, sharp wit, and innate curiosity. To the numerous visitors he is the ideal personality one would expect at such a place: a gruff-yet-kind older gentleman eager to engage visitors in conversation. Unless, of course, he feels it would be better that they get out and wander. To me, however, the fit between the man and this place was a puzzle. This was the brilliant engineer, the busy and overly active world traveler. How is it possible that he is content in a small retail establishment overlooking a quiet pond? In a fascinating manner, the ambiance of Walden Pond has absorbed my father.

Twenty years ago Jon was looking for a simple part-time job close to his Concord home. “Why did you decide to work here?” I asked my father. “I was accustomed to working with books,” he says. “Anything literary felt comfortable. I grew up in a literary family. My father was an author, my mother an editor, and our home is wall-to-wall books.” One might think it an odd transition for an engineer and international marketing entrepreneur to settle into a quiet little shop selling books and t-shirts. However, as Jon points out, it is in many ways a natural evolution.

Jon’s background as an engineer did help with figuring out the original computer system. It is his experience in international sales, however, that meshes with the clientele at the shop. Visitors from all over the world come to Walden Pond. My father’s ability to speak several languages is a benefit. Even more relevant is his respect and understanding of different cultures.

Jon quotes Thoreau, saying “Like Thoreau, ‘I have traveled a good deal in Concord’ but first, I simply traveled widely, and now people come to me.” In fact Jon’s greatest joy in working at the shop comes from the interaction with a great variety of people. He revels in conversing with people, and learning their different reasons for a journey to Walden. He often encounters expert, knowledgeable customers browsing for specific books, or wishing simply to engage in a philosophical discussion. Many, of course, come merely to use the pond for recreation, since Walden Pond is the only large swimming area in the region open to all, by deed from the Emerson family. Others come as a kind of pilgrimage in an attempt to understand Thoreau’s Walden experience.



Photograph by Clarissa Eaton

Jon Fadiman speaks with visitors at the Shop in October



Photograph by Clarissa Eaton

Jon Fadiman at the old Shop at Walden Pond

These “Walden Pilgrims” have heard of the place, but know very little other than that. They are often amazed at Thoreau’s background, and Jon enjoys the opportunity to discuss it. “One of the reasons I like being here, although I’m not an expert, is the ability to educate people and impart information. It’s something I love, something I’m good at, and a bonus of working at the shop.”

Jon relishes his interactions with customers and historians. One of his favorite events is the book signing at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering. As a literary enthusiast, and former Concordian, Jon appreciates the opportunity to meet and promote so many authors. He says, “I’m not just selling a commodity, I’m taking part in something that has real meaning.” Even in the bustle of the large crowd all wanting to purchase their books and get them signed, Jon finds time to chat about common interests or obscure subjects. This is his opportunity to promote and engage in the legacy of Thoreau’s surroundings and philosophy.

This balance between retail and legacy can be a challenge, but it is one he addresses gladly. Jon explains, “There’s always a compromise both in the care of Walden Pond and the shop itself. We must allow people to enjoy it, yet limit the impact of people. So, we provide enough services that people want to come, without commercializing the surroundings. On one hand we want only the books on Thoreau, transcendentalism, things he would approve of, but on the other hand, the shop is the money-making arm of a non-profit organization, and we aim to give the tourists what tourists want. We have the books people want, and things to attract sightseers, but always in good taste.” “It is a challenge,” he says, “and a constant exercise in balance.”

Jon consistently points out that this is not a typical retail job, and that is why he loves it. In this shop, retail clerk and customer will often pause during a transaction to admire the sunset over Walden Pond.

“The customers usually have time, they are polite, and wish to experience the area and the beauty that draws people. There’s something almost magical about the clarity of the water, it’s so clean and clear, that the beauty of the place affects us all, and we stop to consider how much nature affected Thoreau. To me there is a kind of tranquility in the clear water and modest hills—the epitome of serenity. That’s one of the reasons I enjoy it, and why I have stayed for 20 years.”

Again, he quotes Thoreau, “I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright.”<sup>1</sup>

For Jon, this part-time job has become a way of life—an ideal balance of cultural interaction and environmental opportunity. And with the completion of the new, larger, green-energy designed Visitors Center, Jon will continue to enjoy his life and work at the Pond.

• **Clarissa Eaton** is the director of L’Ecole de Ballet, a classical ballet school in Littleton Massachusetts. When she is not volunteering for the Thoreau Society, Clarissa teaches French and Spanish to preschoolers and is working on her Master’s degree in English Literature at UMass Boston.

## Notes

1 Henry David Thoreau, “Walking,” *Excursions*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007): 195.

# Wyeth and Thoreau

Inspired Art from Inspired Thought



Thoreau Fishing, N. C. Wyeth, 1936. Private collection

Two  
Exhibitions  
in Historic  
Concord

on view  
through  
September 18,  
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## Abstracts: Papers Presented for the Thoreau Society Panel at the Modern Language Association Austin, Texas, January 6-10, 2016

### Anticipating Thoreau at 200

**Rochelle Johnson, College of Idaho, Chair  
Respondent: Kristen Case, University of Maine,  
Farmington**

### Sandy Petrulionis

**Penn State University, Altoona**

**“Beyond all men of his day”: T. W. Higginson and Thoreau’s  
Legacy in Postbellum America**

Critics have long noted that activist editor and author Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823-1911) played a crucial part in launching Henry Thoreau’s reputation. It was a limited and sedate figure Higginson extolled, however. Although both men were committed to radical abolitionist politics during the antebellum era, including their mutual admiration for John Brown; and although by the end of the nineteenth century, Thoreau’s critical standing had come to encompass his more provocative political writings, Higginson rarely mentioned these works over a lifetime of published commentary on Thoreau. Instead, Higginson was one of the earliest practitioners of what would become a trend over the next hundred and fifty years—of brandishing Thoreau selectively in service to one’s own causes. Building on Lawrence Buell’s claim that Higginson was “Thoreau’s first literary disciple of any importance,”<sup>1</sup> this essay advances the argument that Higginson also modeled himself personally on Thoreau—as a writer and budding naturalist. Consequently, during the post-war decades, with his own radical politics tucked in the past, he largely ignored Thoreau’s political writings and identity.

In writings spanning over forty years, but particularly in his reviews of Thoreau’s first three posthumous books in the mid-1860s, Higginson constructed a de-politicized, reductive portrait of Thoreau as an original American author-explorer whose stoic resilience and nobility served as a model of the ideal of authorship and moral manhood to which Higginson himself aspired. Complicating this project was the competitive tension created as Higginson confronted others, especially Sophia Thoreau, James Russell Lowell, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and H. G. O. Blake, whose protective hands, vindictive words, and editorial willfulness also left their indelible marks on Thoreau’s postbellum reputation.

1 Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1995), 413.

### Lance Newman

**Westminster College**

**Thoreau’s Materialism and Environmental Justice**

Henry David Thoreau has too often been read in ways that disconnect his political and environmental concerns. Accounts of his political thought tend to ignore his engagement with the land,

while environmentally-inflected readings tend to represent him as a solitary and single-minded avatar of wildness. But for Thoreau, who evolved steadily from a Transcendental idealist into a materialist natural historian, social justice and nature’s well-being could not be separated. He increasingly applied a natural historian’s habits of mind—empirical observation and materialist analysis—to the social and political life of Concord, and by extension, to the antebellum United States as a whole. As a result, he saw that capitalism actively managed the relationship between humans and nature by organizing labor according to the economic forms of property and profit. The exploitation of labor (both wage and slave) and the appropriation of nature were thus twin features of an intensely destructive modernity. Accordingly, Thoreau acknowledged the need, not just for individual self-reform, but for collective action in pursuit of wholesale social change. In short, Thoreau was a materialist, not just in the philosophical sense, but also in the political sense. He believed that not just our ideas, but the socio-economic relationships that shape our lives on the land, must be changed if we are to achieve a just society in a healthy environment.

Seen in these terms, Thoreau can serve as an important literary touchstone for an environmental justice movement that recognizes the material connections between the exploitation of labor, racial and sexual oppression, and environmental destruction. He can also inform the recent turn toward a new materialism in the environmental humanities. In *Walden*, Thoreau redevelops the ancient idea that higher human functions are impossible if basic needs have not been fulfilled, and in doing so, he suggested that bodily and mental being are tightly interwoven. At the same time, he repurposes the ideas of Arnold Guyot and other mid-nineteenth-century geographers, who applied materialist and empiricist ways of thinking to questions about the relations between humans and their environments. In contrast with their environmental determinism, which functioned as a racist apology for colonialism, Thoreau offers a possibilistic theory of the relationships between societies and their geographical settings; that is, he emphasizes the human capacity to adapt creatively to varying material conditions. *Walden* demonstrates that the processes by which we fulfill our basic bodily needs, as well as the lives of the mind and spirit that our bodies make possible, are both constrained and activated by the ecosocial environments that we create and within which we live. As Emerson put it, Thoreau “insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances, and the animal wants of man.”

Thoreau’s materialism is central to his continuing relevance in a world threatened by increasingly global ecosocial stresses, for it was not merely an abstract philosophical stance. His integrative sense of global political and economic interconnection inspired him to oppose slavery not only as a violation of human rights, but also as an environmental disaster. In a word, Thoreau’s materialism, in both his life and works, reminds us that a vibrant life of the mind and spirit requires bodily well-being which in turn requires a just social order on a healthy planet.

Alan Hodder  
Hampshire College  
Thoreau and the New American Spirituality

Since Thoreau's death in 1862, critics have understood his contributions in strikingly disparate and sometimes dissonant ways. As a result, readers have been presented with widely varying images of Thoreau: as poet-naturalist, cracker-barrel philosopher, abolitionist and social prophet, critic of capitalism, consummate literary craftsman, ecologist and proto-environmentalist, and so on. To this gallery of familiar portraits, another has been added more recently, which for the purposes of this essay I will simply call "the spiritual Thoreau." It is a conception that has become increasingly evident in both scholarly and popular treatments since the turn of the twenty-first century, and it deserves more critical attention. My purpose in this essay is to consider more carefully this new portrayal of Thoreau—where it manifests itself, what changing religious and cultural circumstances it reflects, how it arose, and whether and to what extent it corresponds to what we actually know of the man and his ideas through his own writings and the reflections of his friends

## *The Political Thought of Henry David Thoreau: Privatism and the Practice of Philosophy: A Review*

by Patrick Morgan

McKenzie, Jonathan, *The Political Thought of Henry David Thoreau: Privatism and the Practice of Philosophy*. Lexington, Kentucky: Kentucky University Press, 2016. 205p.

When thinking about Thoreau's relationship to politics, or collective social action in general, there is often a tension in conceptualizing his patterns of engagement. Do we see trends or anomalies? Some scholars envision a mature Thoreau who—much like Emerson—eventually softens his stance against collective action. Other scholars envision an abiding non-involvement punctuated by periods of—in William E. Cain's words—"profound but sporadic" engagement.<sup>1</sup> In his new book, Jonathan McKenzie aligns with the latter group, but he goes a step further by provocatively asserting that Thoreau's forays into politics represent failures of his overarching philosophical goal. "While we may attempt to read Thoreau's defense of John Brown or his critique of the Fugitive Slave Act as victories over his entrenched individualism," writes McKenzie, "Thoreau's comprehensive vision leads us to see these momentary interludes as failures to properly craft and care for an insulated self" (135).

McKenzie expertly contextualizes Thoreau's self-crafting as a nineteenth-century interpretation of Socratic philosophy. According to this Socratic vision, selfhood must be earned, and necessitates constant vigilance to buffer oneself against potential distractions, including democratic participation (6). For McKenzie, this earning of selfhood resonates with Foucault's use of *askesis* in "The Hermeneutics of the Subject," a concept denoting the work one undertakes to transform the self. One method for working on the self is "self-writing," which is interpreted as "a series of exercises or tests in constituting a self" (6). Thus McKenzie argues that Thoreau's *Journal* "confers an *askesis*," allowing Thoreau to develop his philosophical self (22).

Thoreau's overriding philosophy, according to McKenzie, informs his development of a privatist political theory (164). Privatism is "a political theory that electively dismisses political participation in favor of the amplification of private life" (26). In other words, keeping in mind the consistent goal of simplifying one's commitments, privatism calls into question each act of political engagement, demanding that each person assess the degree to which any political action will vitiate the self and one's ultimate task of self-cultivation. For Thoreau, privatism opens up room for self-cultivation amidst the alienating effects of democratic participation (1). This focus on the self informs McKenzie's particular definition of "politics": "the engagement of the self with constituted public values, using discursive tools to espouse and understand public problems" (1).

In McKenzie's view, Thoreau's *Journal* is a vibrant space of self-fashioning where Thoreau repeatedly works on himself through reflective simplification. The *Journal* becomes a way for Thoreau to examine his perceptive powers by testing his ability to pare down the world. The act of writing, in other words, is



Courtesy of Andrew Celentano

## Andrew Celentano Plays Thoreau Bicentennial Benefit in Concord

by Victor Curran

Anyone who has heard Andrew Celentano play at a Thoreau Society Annual Gathering can attest that he is a pianist of remarkable talent. On May 1, he offered his musical gifts on behalf of

the Thoreau Bicentennial, performing a benefit concert in Concord.

The program blended piano music by Thoreau contemporaries, impressionist composers, and Andrew's own compositions, inspired by Thoreau.

Some 50 people attended the performance at the home of Concord friends who generously hosted the concert and provided sumptuous refreshments. The event raised over \$1100 for the Thoreau Bicentennial.

Andrew, a Thoreau Society board member, studied violin and performed at Carnegie Hall with the MIT Symphony Orchestra. He taught himself to play piano as a teenager, but began formal classical piano lessons about 12 years ago. He plays on Saturdays at the BSO Café in Boston's Symphony Hall, and has recorded a CD of his own compositions, titled "Wanderer in Dreamland," which is available from the Thoreau Society Shop ([www.shopatwaldenpond.org](http://www.shopatwaldenpond.org)), with proceeds to benefit the Society.

synonymous with Thoreau's practice of philosophy, as he strives to form a philosophical personality that is strong enough to withstand the allure of democratic political participation. One way he traces this working-on-the-self project of the Journal is through recognizing patterns of speech, such as the way Thoreau transitions from general observations to private admonitions, always relating general lessons to the self (6-7).

It is a testament to McKenzie's lucid style and cogent unveiling of his argument that I found myself actively thinking about the possibilities of his dynamic view of the Journal as a tool for self-fashioning. I kept wondering if this working-on-the-self trait of the Journal applies in the same way to its prose and poetic sections. Do the poetry and prose within Thoreau's self-writing practices enact the work of philosophy in the same way? I would like to suggest that Thoreau's poetry and prose, though they both function as tools for self-fashioning, enact that self-fashioning differently. The prose sections—given McKenzie's examples, such as the transition from general observation to private admonition, or the description of solitary characters for emulation—appear to do the “work of the self on the self” particularly when the prose passages are topically related or relatable to the self. In contrast, the very act of composing a poem—regardless of topic—is, in Thoreau's view, a test of one's inner fiber, and thus a tool for self-crafting. As he writes in a manuscript held in the Houghton Library:

The coward ever sings no song,  
He listens to no chime,  
He has no heart, he has no tongue,  
To build the lofty rhyme.<sup>2</sup>

Using the same common measure Dickinson would reinvent, Thoreau gives us a single-sentence poem defining the coward figure as someone marked by inability: the inability to sing, to listen, and build a rhyme. For Thoreau, the poet-as-rhyme-builder requires emotional intelligence and strength (heart) and linguistic dexterity (tongue). The sheer act of building a poem is a test of one's inner strength, as if the ability to make that sonic connection—a rhyme—is itself an act of courage. The composing of a poem tells him what he's composed of, regardless of the poem's topic or content. Perhaps this is merely a factor of my literary critical background meeting McKenzie's political science background, but I might revise his fruitful view of the Journal by making room for the way—in Thoreau's view—literary genres (even within the Journal itself) fashion the self in distinct ways.

In McKenzie's view, many readers—those who reify his sporadic engagements with politics and those who “pronounce his political philosophy a ‘failure’ for its inability to appropriate

liberal values”—overlook just how unique Thoreau's approach is (161). As McKenzie argues, “by assigning the determination of worth to the self alone, he places the self beyond criticism, thus freeing himself to perform the ‘experiment’ of his life without worry or guilt” (147). Thoreau's concept of morality, according to McKenzie, isn't imposed from a prefabricated code of conduct, but rather, crystallizes from a radically individual response to the question of living (150).

• **Patrick Morgan** is an English PhD candidate at Duke University and the editorial assistant of *American Literature*.

#### Notes

1 William E. Cain, “Henry David Thoreau: 1817-1862: A Brief Biography,” in *A Historical Guide to Henry David Thoreau*, ed. William E. Cain (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 49.

2 Henry David Thoreau, “The coward ever sings no song,” in *Henry David Thoreau: Collected Essays and Poems*, ed. Elizabeth Hall Witherell (New York: Library of America, 2001), 567.

## My Father's Dream

by Lisa Russ Spaar

*What shall I learn of beans or beans of me?*  
HDT, *Walden*

He doesn't know it, but he's in the long row  
with Thoreau, decades behind him, young soul

in old body bent over an ancient tool,  
Johnson grass & crab already whispering fool, fool,

claiming, impatient, the mile he's just hoed,  
craven moon above glistened as the needle's eye

his dead wife mouths, whiskery tail of thread,  
linsey-woolsey stitching of bean plants moth-eaten by deer

that step behind him, soundless, this time a doe  
and two new fawns in filigree, voracious flow,

tracks labial in the fresh chop. Why do it, then,  
so much more than he can ever salvage, eat, or share,

past eighty, though the holes he makes, in mineral din,  
are *not for himself to lie down in*. A catch of rain

hums farewell in a notched gauge; netted by stars,  
wasp-gouged pears drop, occult,

a visitor's foot-fall coming from the orchard  
whether he's ready, or not. *How then can our harvest fail?*

Henry calls back to him, cheery, hale,  
in the nineteenth-century voice

of his father's father, also a farmer, when a furrow  
has never cared one whit for its husband.

• **Lisa Russ Spaar** is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Rona Jaffe Award. Her most recent books are *Monticello in Mind: 50 Contemporary Poems on Jefferson* (University of Virginia Press, 2016) and *Orexia: Poems* (Persea, 2017). She is a professor at the University of Virginia.

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**Thoreau Bicentennial**  
**Annual Gathering**  
**July 12–16, 2017**  
**Concord, Massachusetts**

## Thoreau's Wildflowers: A Review

by Corinne H. Smith

Henry David Thoreau, *Thoreau's Wildflowers*. Edited by Geoff Wisner. Illustrated by Barry Moser. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. 300 pp.

It is easy to find Thoreauvian connections with nature. We can go outside, encounter a specific plant, wonder what Henry Thoreau thought or wrote about it (since he was prolific on such matters) and then come back inside and look up the references. Often we can verify that we have shared a common experience, in spite of the many years that separate us. The connection is complete.

The key lies in knowing where and how to search the texts. The 1906 Houghton Mifflin, 1962 Dover, and more contemporary Princeton editions of Thoreau's journal have indexes. But the first two use only general terms. And the newer volumes force the user to turn to the backs of each one. In these instances, the task is cumbersome and time-consuming. It sure helps if someone else has already looked up the information and has done most of the work for us.

A few individuals have complied with this need. In the 1980s, Harvard University's Concord Field Station associate and botanist Ray Angelo published a thin yet valuable paperback, *Botanical Index to the Journal of Henry David Thoreau* (Salt Lake City, Peregrine Smith Books, 1984). He has since made this important resource available for free and online.<sup>1</sup> It lists every plant mentioned in Thoreau's journals, by both common and scientific name, and includes changes to these designations over time. Numerical references point the user toward the original text as printed in the Houghton Mifflin and Dover editions. Because of this large inventory, the plants, trees, and shrubs are covered for us. The only missing parts are the journal entries themselves. These have to be accessed elsewhere.



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Pontederia (pickerelweed) by Barry Moser



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Thistle by Barry Moser

In the 1990s, author and gardener Peter Loewer released *Thoreau's Garden: Native Plants for the American Landscape* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1996). Thoreau's "garden," of course, was the entire natural landscape of Concord. Here about 50 individual plants are addressed in chapters arranged by family species groups. The narrative combines some of Thoreau's journal quotes with Loewer's commentary. The compiler added his own pen-and-ink illustrations. This book is a nice reference for the more common sightings, but it is far from comprehensive.

Recently author and editor Geoff Wisner got the idea to gather a collection of Thoreau's best and poetic writings about wildflowers into one volume. And he thought it should be illustrated. As he explained during a session of the 2015 Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, he had seen the work of illustrator and printmaker Barry Moser in Vernon Ahmadjian's *Flowering Plants of Massachusetts* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979). Moser had also supplied illustrations for Robert D. Richardson's biographies, *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), and *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Wisner thought Moser's botanical drawings would make a perfect match for Thoreau's descriptions. They do. More than 200 appear here.

Wisner used both the Houghton Mifflin and Princeton journal editions to glean his selections. He chose representative entries mostly from dates in the 1850s, when Thoreau's botanical explorations were peaking. He limited the sightings to wild and native plants found within the Concord town limits. Some trees and shrubs are included too, since some are "flowerlike" or at least appear to bloom. Wisner decided upon using a seasonal approach. The entries begin in March and end in February, nicely mirroring the cycle of the growing season. Hundreds of wildflowers are described and seen here. The book concludes with a list of botanical terms, a map of Concord, a bibliography, and an index that contains common and scientific names as well as locations and individuals.

Ray Angelo's 1984 "Thoreau as Botanist" essay is reprinted here too, though without an update. In it, he states: "Thoreau's studies in botany did not result in significant contributions to the science of botany." But Richard B. Primack and his Boston University researchers have since used Thoreau's historical botanical data to prove the reality of climate change. Wisner refers to these recent studies in his own introduction.

Through Thoreau's journal entries, we follow the rise and retreat of Concord's wild vegetation. Not only can we see the plants, we can also smell and touch them through the naturalist's apt descriptions—which are not only about the species, but also about the spotting of them. Some sightings are quick and casual; others are quite detailed. We can follow Thoreau's investigations, his joys at discoveries, and often, his questions about further identification, sometimes with later-inserted answers. And the scientific observer cannot be separated from the natural philosopher and creative writer:

"To the poet the earth is a flower garden wherever he goes, or thinks." (May 6, 1858)

"Flowers were made to be seen, not overlooked." (June 15, 1852)

"Men will travel to the Nile to see the lotus flower, who have never seen in their glory the lotuses of their native streams." (July 2, 1852)

Through it all, the skunk cabbage is "the secret hero of this book," as Wisner claims. Its rising shoots are harbingers of spring;

and Thoreau continues to find remnants of this plant throughout the year in various parts of town.

This reviewer would have preferred that the illustrations more accurately match the text, so that the moment a new plant is first introduced, its drawing shows up on the same or the adjacent page. As it stands, the two may be a page or two or more apart. Still, most double-page spreads include at least one drawing. And the editing process must have been intense to match the words and graphics as nearly as possible. This may be a minor flaw to nitpick in an otherwise beautiful and inspirational book.

Geoff Wisner has given us a handsome and valuable new resource. It can be one of the first books to consult to read what Thoreau said about a specific plant. It can also be used as a personal and seasonal guidebook, so that the user can find botanical connections with Thoreau. And as with any such collection, it will naturally lead some devoted readers back to the original journal texts. *Thoreau's Wildflowers* makes a nice shelf companion to Helen Cruickshank's *Thoreau on Birds* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), as well as to Ray Angelo's *Botanical Index*.

• **Corinne H. Smith** is an independent scholar from southeastern Pennsylvania. She is the author of *Westward I Go Free: Tracing Thoreau's Last Journey* and *Henry David Thoreau for Kids*.

#### Notes

1 Ray Angelo's *Botanical Index to the Journal of Henry David Thoreau* is accessible online at <http://www.ray-a.com/ThoreauBotIdx>.

## President's Column

by *Michael Schleifer*

What continues to surprise and delight me is the breadth of Thoreau's appeal, finding him in the most unexpected places. Last fall, in my continuing effort to compensate for the reading I deliberately avoided in high school (not to mention college, graduate school and, for that matter, junior high and elementary school), I picked up Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*. The synopsis—a prosperous and socially prominent middle-aged man is shaken from his self-satisfaction by a growing restlessness with the limitations of his life. The story reflects the nature of a conformist society that causes individuals to lose their place in the world. Although there is no explicit mention of Thoreau in the text, a Thoreauvean would likely draw comparisons between Lewis's novel and *Walden*, both of which express a desire to escape society for a time in order to reclaim oneself.

This was the first book by Lewis that I read, and having enjoyed it, I looked for more. Given the current state of our political discourse, *It Can't Happen Here* was most alluring. Written in 1935, it is an account of the rise of fascism in the United States, paralleling 1930s Europe. The story's protagonist, a left-leaning newspaper editor named Doremus Jessup, is described in the introduction by Thoreau scholar Michael Meyer as "a nineteenth-century styled individualist...whose allegiance to predominant American values such as self-reliance and independence mark him as a political subversive." Yet he is a tentative liberal who basically wants to be left alone to enjoy his life. Sound like anyone we know?

Meyer, as some of you may recall, is a past president of the Thoreau Society and co-author, with Walter Harding, of the *New Thoreau Handbook*. He also directed Brad Dean's dissertation. Meyer points out that "Lewis's attraction to this kind of individualism is evident in a 1937 review he wrote for *Newsweek* of *Walden*," a book "written by another Yankee who minded his own business (mostly)." The first sentence of Lewis's review contains a description of Thoreau as appealing as any I've ever seen: "Once upon a time in America there was a scholar who conducted a one-man revolution and won it."

What Lewis's protagonists share with Thoreau is a courage to express views they know will be unpopular. Thoreau, in his "A Plea For Captain John Brown," exhibits such courage. At a time when most Americans voiced scorn for Brown, Thoreau spoke of him in the highest regard, criticizing others who say their prayers at night and then go to sleep aware of injustice but doing nothing to change it. He is no less critical of the press, chastising *The Liberator* for calling Brown's actions "a misguided, wild, and apparently insane — effort." Like Thoreau, Doremus Jessup comes to embrace, or at least understand, what drove John Brown. Jessup chooses this path too, writing critically of the fascist regime, resulting in his internment in a concentration camp. He escapes, joins the underground and is relentlessly pursued, but "goes on in the red sunrise, for a Doremus Jessup can never die."

How many of us have had that desire, to express our strongly held convictions loudly for our more tepid peers to hear? Thoreau's enduring spirit lives through us as well.

• **Michael Schleifer** has been president of the Thoreau Society since 2012.

## Thoreau Speaks to the World

by Richard E. Winslow III

Thoreau's spirit is everywhere. Even more than 150 years after his death, he remains a bright star radiating in today's media—as a conservationist, naturalist, civil disobedience advocate, writer, scientist, and so on—a universal messiah for those who have embraced him for their particular cause. Not a day goes by that I do not see his name attached to new books, reviews, articles, advertisements, building inscriptions, nature trails, even in popular culture, his face emblazoned onto T-shirts and souvenirs. Thoreau is an industry. He sells.

In 2011 the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* published my discoveries in two installments under the heading, "Honoring Thoreau." Since then I have found additional materials which amplify and augment existing scholarship. These over-a-century-ago critics perceived, tolerated, and often lambasted, a controversial figure, so much in contrast to his present-day image as a spiritual Everyman.

Some testimonies to Thoreau's legacy have never been printed, and, in fact, are lost. On many occasions I have visited the Walden Pond cabin site and always look toward the nearby rock pile. I have read many poignant and heartfelt messages on paper, sometimes charcoal on stones, written by people from all over the world, bonding with Thoreau as their close friend. By the next rainfall or heavy wind, these intimate confessionals are washed or blown away, soon to be replaced with fresh, new thoughts. The man's appeal is universal.

Simplify! I step aside. These new items to Thoreau scholarship speak for themselves. For the two previous installments of nineteenth-century notices of Thoreau, see the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* number 274 (Spring 2011) and 275 (Summer

2011). As before, the citation form follows that established by Gary Scharnhorst in his *Henry David Thoreau: An Annotated Bibliography of Comment and Criticism before 1900* (New York: Garland, 1992). The numbers place each item in its appropriate order.

### 1849

81a "New Publications," [*Boston*] *Daily-Evening Transcript*, 28 May 1849, 2:5.

Announces publication of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. "Here we have a volume of 413 pages, containing some finely descriptive prose, with some incomprehensible poetry." Reviewer then quotes "Conscience is instinct bred in the house" as an example.

93b "Concord and Merrimack Rivers," review of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, *Lowell American*, 7 July 1849, 1:1-3.

"Concord has of late years made important contributions to American Literature,—Emerson's Essays and Poems, Hawthorne's "Mosses," Channing's Poems,—and now we have Mr. Thoreau's Book, which is more a Concord Book than the others, for it tells of Concord River, and is written by a native of the town. It is worthy of a place by the side of the others. We have rarely read so delightful a book." The reviewer then quotes long passages and concludes: "We can only further say that the book contains more than four hundred pages, is handsomely printed, and is for sale by Merrill & Heywood. We notice that Mr. Thoreau has in press another volume called *Walden; or Life in the Woods*. *Walden* is the name of a fine pond in Concord, on the banks of which Mr. Thoreau lives in rather a hermit style; how, he will tell us in the book. We shall be glad to see it."



Skipping Stones at Walden.

Photograph by Matt MacPherson

## 1853

135a *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6 August 1853.

Notice that Thoreau is among the 161 new men elected to membership in the American Association for the Advancement of Society.

## 1854

137a "Literary Announcement," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 27 March 1854, 2:2.

Announces publication of *Walden* among a group of titles issued by Ticknor, Reed & Fields.

143a [William W. Wheildon?] "Hounds in Walden Woods," *Bunker-Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror*, 29 July 1854, 1:5-6.

Eleven-hundred-word excerpt from "Winter Animals" in *Walden*.

162a [William W. Wheildon?] "H. D. Thoreau's Life at Walden Pond," review of *Walden*, *Bunker-Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror*, 12 August 1854, 2:3-5.

An extensive review that concludes in part: "Thoreau's book we earnestly commend to the perusal of our friends. It is refreshing to week day mortals during these blistering summer days. It is a 'psalm of life,' of consolation and healing, to those whom the wolf of want has driven into a corner. It shows at least what can be done by man, if he reaches, by any untoward circumstances, an extremity. It opens the heart of a man deeply enamored of Nature. It is a book with which men cannot quarrel. It can have no counterpart. No man ever lived as Thoreau lived, before, for a similar purpose. No man will imitate his example. Yet his forest life has lessons of the deepest wisdom."

## 1858

283a *Cambridge Chronicle*, 26 June 1858.

"'Chesuncook' is continued and 'to be continued,' it is good, but this writer's manner is not as new and fresh as it was in 'Walden;' Thoreau is not many sided, and herein he resembles some others who have grown up in the same 'school.'"

## 1862

353a [William W. Wheildon?] *Bunker-Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror*, 10 May 1862, 2:4.

"Henry D. Thoreau, a well-known writer and author of *Walden*, &c. died at Concord, of consumption. The funeral services took place yesterday afternoon at Rev Mr Reynolds's church, when a brief eulogistic address was pronounced by Mr Emerson, his friend and neighbor."

354a [New York] *Journal of Commerce*, 12 May 1862, 2:5.

"Henry D. Thoreau, the eccentric author of 'A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers,' and 'Walden, or, Life in the Woods,' died at Concord, Mass., on Tuesday, aged forty-four years."

354b W. B., "Henry D. Thoreau," *Lowell Weekly Journal*, 16 May 1862, 3:2-3.

Extended obituary. "Thoreau could have made of himself a scientific naturalist, a physicist, strictly speaking, of the first order. He had the keen senses and instincts of an Indian, . . . Stoic

and dreamer as he was, with scarcely any interest in the ordinary pursuits of life, Thoreau was a true patriot, and was anxious for the progress and well being of his country." Though the writer thinks Thoreau's writings "are of course not likely to be popular," he says of *Walden*: "In some respects we prefer it to any book which has been produced on this side of the Atlantic."

365a *Bunker-Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror*, 24 May 1862, 3:1.

"*The Atlantic Monthly*, for June, opens with a paper on Walking, by the late Henry D. Thoreau, of Concord, who well understood the subject."

372a "Death of an Author," *Maine Farmer*, 29 May 1862, 2:6.

Obituary notice quotes the *Boston Transcript*, item 346 in Scharnhorst.

392a "A Walk With Thoreau," *Maine Farmer*, 28 August 1862, 4:4.

Excerpt from Emerson's *Atlantic Monthly* essay on walking with Thoreau. Item 390 in Scharnhorst.

## 1863

427a [George William Curtis,] "The Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 26 (January 1863), 281-282.

Passing references to Thoreau in a description of (an unnamed) Daniel Ricketson, whose shanty has walls on which "Wonderful artists have wrought the design: not spiders and butterflies and worms, nor the frost in autumn tinting forest leaves or ripening of them, as Thoreau says" but of copies of writings by "Milton, and John Woolman, and Dr. Johnson, and Henry Thoreau, and Cowper, and old John Brown, and Plutarch, and George Fox, overlap and crowd and combine in promiscuous wisdom."

434a "The Landlord," *Cambridge Chronicle*, 16 May 1863.

Reprint of the Thoreau essay.

460a *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3 October 1863.

Notes publication in *Atlantic Monthly* of Thoreau's "Life Without Principle": "though perhaps somewhat visionary in some parts, the article is generally quite lucid showing how much precious thought is expended on trivialities, and how an excess of worldly business warps the intellect and lessens the number of true noblemen—reduces them to the rank of operatives . . ."

468a "Literature," *Boston Daily Courier*, 21 October 1863, 2:2.

Notice of the publication of *Excursions*.

471a Review of *Excursions*, *Portland [Maine] Daily Press*, 23 October 1863, 2:2.

"Thoreau was one of the most remarkable men of his time. He was endowed with high moral and intellectual faculties and endeavored to live physically and morally up to his highest idea of right. He wished to rebuke the extravagance of the age by living in the most simple and natural manner possible. Some think him a mono-maniac in regard to diet, exercise, air, &c., and that his course of life, carried to the extent he carried it, does not tend to increase happiness and longevity we shall find no difficulty in inducing the majority of the people to believe.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was an intimate friend and genial companion of Thoreau, gives in this work, a very interesting biographical sketch of the author, who with all his unsocial and

misanthropic habits was one of the noblest works of God—an honest man.”

484a “New Publications,” review of *Excursions*, *Boston Daily Journal*, 30 October 1863, 2:3.

“Whether Thoreau was or was not all that his friends believe him to have been, he will be remembered only as an enthusiastic lover of nature and a close student of her outward manifestations. . . . [A]s a delineator of out-door surface life he excels. When treating of this his favorite topic, he is less dogmatic and paradoxical, less startling and overstrained, more content to use words in their established meanings and relations and more felicitous in the shaping of his material than when attempting to handle other subjects. Away from men, among trees and birds and flowers, he grows reverent and tender. It is charming to be with him in the woods, charming to watch with him for the gray squirrel and rabbit, to make friends with the nuthatch and partridge, to see the snow fall in the early winter and vanish in the last spring time.”

485a “New Publications,” review of *Excursions*, *Boston Morning Journal*, 31 October, 1863, 4:5.

Reprint of item 484a above.

#### 1864

515a [George William Curtis,] “The Editor’s Easy Chair,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 28 (January 1864), 277-282.

Passing reference to Thoreau in a review of Ik Marvel’s *My Farm*: “It has not the deep Indian insight of Henry Thoreau” (p. 278).

521a J. A., “In Memory of H. D. Thoreau,” *Cambridge Chronicle*, 16 January 1864.

Poem.

530a “Contemporary Literature,” review of *Excursions*, *Freewill Baptist Quarterly*, 12 (April 1864), 230-231.

“Thoreau has won a name largely by means of his repulsions and iconoclasm. He had ability, vigor, persistence, a strong love of nature, an eye keen to see its subtler beauty, and a heart alive to its varied influences; but he had also egotism, veneration for oddities and antagonisms, and strong prejudices against almost everything regular, systematic, and reputable.” After quoting Thoreau on the law, the reviewer concludes: “There may be some very profound moral philosophy veiled by these words; but what appears obvious on the surface of them is a special liking for ancient barbarism and ignorance, and an exaltation of impulse over duty. The human race hardly needs help in such directions.”

560a “[New Books?] review of *Maine Woods*, [*Buffalo*] *Morning Express*, 18 June 1864.

After an initial paragraph describing the book’s contents, the reviewer concludes: “The plain unadorned narrative of these excursions, with the simple and minute descriptions and the quaint reflections which intersperse it, is strangely interesting—made so by the simple love of nature which inspires it all. For the utterness and thoroughness of Thoreau’s worship of nature was something seldom paralleled. It absorbed his whole being and left him scarcely a human sympathy. We never could admire such a

## Call for Submissions: The Thoreau Bicentennial, 1817-2017

To celebrate the bicentennial of the birth of Henry David Thoreau, the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* will be publishing a double-sized issue in summer of 2017.

We welcome short essays between 500 and 2,000 words, including scholarly pieces, biographical accounts, personal reflections, and other articles commemorating the occasion with thoughts on Thoreau’s enduring relevance and the persistent appeal of his writings.

Submissions received by March 3, 2017, will be considered for inclusion in the bicentennial issue. All submissions should conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Whenever possible, the Princeton University Press editions of *The Collected Writings of Henry D. Thoreau* should be used as standards for quotations. Contributors need not be members of the Thoreau Society, but all non-members are heartily encouraged to join. Scholarly essays will go through the TSB’s peer-review process before publication. Significantly longer submissions may be forwarded to the editor of *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies*.

Please send submissions to Mark Gallagher,  
mark.gallagher@thoreausociety.org

**THOREAU**  
**200**  
**1817-2017**  
**THE THOREAU SOCIETY**



Courtesy of the Concord Museum

“Henry Thoreau in His Hut” by Paul Hawthorne (1938)

character; but there is interest in it, and pleasure in the contagion of its enthusiasms.”

560b “New Publications,” review of *The Maine Woods*, *Boston Morning Journal*, 22 June, 1864, 2:4.

“This volume contains two papers—Katahdn, and Chesuncook—that have been previously published, and a new paper entitled *The Allegash and the East Branch*. Mr. Thoreau was a faithful student of nature, and his writings reproduce for the reader all the minutiae of detail that was visible to his eye. This prolixity of description is sometimes tedious, but more often is necessary to complete the picture. Probably no books have been written that give so close a portraiture of the wildness of life and scenery that still exists in the Maine woods as this volume and it is therefore especially attractive to all that class of readers who are only familiar with the country in its cultivated aspects.

568a “An Island Paradise,” *Maine Farmer*, 21 July, 1864, 4:4.

Excerpt from the *New York Round Table* comparing Thoreau to Charles Waterton, who was called “The English Thoreau.”

### 1865

599a “Literary Notices,” review of *Cape Cod*, *North American and United States Gazette*, 29 March 1865, 1:6.

“Thoreau the Hermit made himself more or less widely known in New England and throughout the country by his love for

natural scenery and his charming descriptions of what he admired. . . . His tastes were subtle and metaphysical, and his descriptions have a piquancy which all works do not possess—a subtle, intellectual flavor, as agreeable as prawns upon the table. There is an individuality and characterization about his descriptions which cannot fail to charm, and every one who has once touched the gist of his cookery will miss the master mind which put in the flavoring, though the substance is eternal. The volume is very prettily got up.”

602a “Recent Publications,” review of *Cape Cod*, *Portland [Maine] Daily Press*, 29 March 1865, 3:4.

“Thoreau says that he did not see why he might not as well make a book on Cape Cod as his neighbor Emerson on ‘Human Culture.’ ‘It is but another name for the same thing, and hardly a sandier phase of it.’ But if the topic be dry and sandy, the book is rich and juicy. It is full of wise thoughts quaintly expressed, of odd conceits and nice bits of description, and of a constant, loving sympathy with Nature in all her moods, which makes this author one of her best interpreters. It was Thoreau’s creed that ‘Man in the bush with God may meet;’ and he did not really believe in the possibility of meeting Him anywhere else. He turned from cities and from men, to live in woods and fields; and from such teachers as are met there he gathered his best lessons. The present volume displays the best peculiarities of its very original author, and will be found to equal if not exceed in interest any work of his which has before appeared.”

612a “New Publications,” review of *Cape Cod, Supplement to the Boston Journal*, 8 April 1865, 1:7.

“Like all of Thoreau’s books, it is marked by humor, originality and a close observation of men and nature. The readers of the ‘Atlantic’ who remember the Wellfleet Oyster Man have had a foretaste of the pleasure to be derived from it.”

622a “Brief Literary Notices,” review of *Cape Cod, Eclectic Magazine*, n.s. 1 (May 1865), 654.

“All who have read Thoreau’s previous works will be likely to read this new volume. There is a peculiar fascination about his pen, especially when he describes natural objects and scenery.”

643a “New Publications,” review of *Letters to Various Persons, Boston Morning Journal*, 25 July 1865, 2:7.

“The previous volumes of this talented but eccentric author will awaken a desire to see this, which is made up to a large extent of his private correspondence, and will therefore enable the reader to get a better insight into the writer’s mind than can be obtained from any of his other works. The letters cover a wide range, extending from 1840 to 1862, and embrace a great variety of topics. The peculiarities of the author are prominent in them. The volume also contains several poems which bear the unmistakable stamp of their paternity. A party of summer tourists would find this volume a most agreeable companion for the quiet hours of their vacation.”

647a “Recent Publications,” review of *Letters to Various Persons, Portland [Maine] Daily Press*, 27 July 1865, 2:3. “It is apt to be the fortune of men like Thoreau that the world does not really find them out until it has lost them. People in general are not very penetrating, and the eccentricities of such men are like a rough burr, which only the frost of death can open, and reveal the sound, sweet kernel within. This strange untamed recluse, with his ideal reverence for truth, and his savage scorn of shams, his love for nature and for books, and his contempt for men and newspapers, his inaptitude for common life, and want of *rapport* with those who live in it, could not hope to find his fit audience at once. Indeed, he will never speak to a wide circle of readers, but the few who do appreciate the rich peculiarities of his genius will have an enjoyment most keen. The letters of Thoreau exhibit, as might be expected, his peculiarities in a marked degree. We have no difficulty in crediting the assurance given by Mr. Emerson in his preface, that they have been trimmed and altered by no presumptuous hand, that they are just as they came from the brain of their author, and as truly representative of the individual man as the pine-cone is of the pine. The few poems which appear at the close of the volume have the same wild flavor of nature about them. The book will be found a choice companion for the sea-side, or other vacation ramble.”

686a “North American Review,” *Cambridge Chronicle*, 14 October 1865.

Brief description of Lowell’s review of *Letters to Various Persons* in the *North American Review*.

## 1866

704a “Suburban Correspondence,” *Cambridge Chronicle*, 30 June 1866.

Letter describes Concord of June 24, 1866. Notes “In this grand old town we have Walden Pond and its environment of woods—the hermitage of Henry D. Thoreau. The very place seems sacred to his memory. From this green solitude he thought out, and wrote much of his ‘Walden.’”

713a “A Night in Concord Jail,” *Lynn [Massachusetts] Reporter*, 25 August 1866, 1:7, 2:1.

Excerpt from “Civil Disobedience.” Spells the author “Thorough.”

724a “New Publications,” *Boston Daily Journal*, 19 September 1866, 2:4.

Ticknor & Co. have “published another volume of Thoreau’s writings, including an account of a *Tour in Canada*, and a number of *Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers*, which make a very interesting and suggestive volume.”

739a “Recent Publications,” review of *A Yankee in Canada with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers, Portland [Maine] Daily Press*, 26 September 1866, 2:2.

Approximately 500-word review. Of the Canada trip, the reviewer notes: “Despite the genuine kindness of Thoreau’s nature he was too much given to the indulgence of a certain vein of cynicism to be entirely a genial or winning companion, but the marvellous keenness of his observation, his quaintness and humor could hardly fail to make him an entertaining one.” Of the individual essays, the reviewer concludes: “The other papers in this volume consist of various public addresses and magazine articles published at various periods during the last five-and-twenty years. Though exhibiting a wholly different phase of the author’s mind, they are yet equally characteristic of him.”

751a “A Yankee in Canada,” *Portland [Maine] Daily Press*, 8 October 1866, 2:2.

Series of excerpts from *A Yankee in Canada with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers*.

751b “New Books,” review of *A Yankee in Canada, [Montpelier, Vermont] Green Mountain Freeman*, 10 October 1866, 1:1-2.

“Thoreau has written much that is worth reading, and much that stimulates thought in others; and the latter kind of writing is rare enough to be valuable. The book before us has the marked characteristics of his pen, piquant, graphic, rich and appreciative in its description of all natural objects, and bold, sharp, aggressive, and often cynical in its criticisms and observations of men and their work. Charity was not a controlling element in his make-up, and *colouer de rose*, except when he was painting nature, was not in much request in his writing. He abhorred society as a pretentious and lying sham, and he had little patience with any form of order or law that did not conform exactly to his idea. He was a non-conformist of the strictest sect, in dress, society, politics, and religion, as his writings abundantly prove, and this volume among the rest. And yet there is a freshness, originality, heartiness, and frankness about all his pen has given us, a raciness and flavor

of genius, that make his books exceedingly entertaining.” About half a column of excerpts follows. Reviewer notes the accompanying essays, saying: “Thoreau was an admirer of Phillips, John Brown, and every champion of the anti-slavery cause, and he was warmly eulogistic in his praise of them, and intensely caustic in his criticisms upon conservatives and trimmers. Those who would like to review their impressions of the old anti-slavery war, will find in several of the papers in this volume some of the most vigorous and pointed writing of that time. Thoreau had little confidence in cities and their populations when questions of justice, humanity, and truth were to be decided, but he had large faith in the vigorous, honest thought of the country.”

## 1867

769a “American Poetry,” *North British Review*, n.s. 7 (April 1867), 456-487.

Passing reference to Thoreau’s life at Walden Pond as an example of Matthew Arnold’s “strange disease of modern life” (p. 471).

776a M. D. Conway, “The Great Show at Paris,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 35 (July 1867), 238-253.

Two passing references to Thoreau: “Thoreau’s ‘Walden’ might be safely intrusted to J. L. Hamon,” and the spirit that led Rousseau to solitude, “was made flesh in Thoreau” (p. 251).

776b “American Poetry,” *Littel’s Living Age*, 6 (20 July 1867), 167-184.

Reprint of item 769a above.

778a M. D. Conway, “More of the Great Show at Paris,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 35 (November 1867), 777-792.

Passing reference to Thoreau: “There are many illustrations here of Thoreau’s remark, that the serious occupations of one age are the sports of the next” (p. 785).

778b T[homas] W[entworth] Higginson, “Literature as Art,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 20 (December 1867), 745-754.

Several mentions of Thoreau: “to devote one’s life to perfecting the manner, as well as the matter of one’s work . . . to live and die only to transfuse external nature into human words, like Thoreau . . . this is to pursue literature as an art.” “It is a remarkable fact, that the most penetrating and fearless of all our writers, Thoreau,—he who made Nature his sole mistress, and shook himself utterly free from human tradition—yet clung to Greek literature as the one achievement of man that seemed worthy to take rank with Nature, pronouncing it ‘as refined, as solidly done, and as beautiful almost as the morning itself.’” “We cannot say of either Emerson or Thoreau, for instance, that his style is adequate to his needs, because the needs are immense, and Thoreau, at least, sometimes disdains effort. But the only American authors, perhaps, whose style is an elastic garment that fits all the uses of the body, are Irving and Hawthorne. This has no reference to the quality of their thought, as to which in Irving we feel a slight mediocrity.”

## 1868

783a “The Great American Novel,” *The Nation*, 6, 9 January 1868, 27-29.

Passing reference to Thoreau in a discussion of *The New Priest of Conception Bay* by Robert Traill Spence Lowell: “True, large, and kindly portraits of rustic souls were in it, and, as we judge of such things, the best landscape pictures ever done by any American, unless we except Thoreau” (p. 28).

803a [Austin Abbott,] “A Village Library,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 36 (May 1868), 774-777.

“It was a remark of Thoreau, who, much as he contemned civilization, knew how to appreciate its best gifts, that every American village might have its park, its picture-gallery, and its library, the offspring of the commonwealth, as well as might the petty baron of a monarchical or feudal realm, who engrossed in himself the luxuries of his little community” (p. 777).

## 1870

833a [John Burroughs,] “More about Nature and the Poets,” *Appleton’s Journal of Literature, Science, and Art*, 4 (10 September 1870), 314-316.

“Almost every neighborhood has such a character, more or less marked—some person with the flavor of the soil about him, who is the referee upon [flora and fauna]. Henry Thoreau, for instance, looked with a kindred eye into the face of unspeaking Nature, though he was perhaps too much of a priest, too much of an ascetic, to afford an eminent example of the kind of character I am thinking of” (p. 314).

833b [Henry Ware,] “Nathaniel Hawthorne,” *Appleton’s Journal of Literature, Science, and Art*, 4 (1 October 1870), 405-408.

Mentions Thoreau as one of Hawthorne’s distinguished Concord friends: “here he strolled and talked with Emerson and Channing and Thoreau and Alcott and Lowell and Longfellow” and quotes from the introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* about “talking with Thoreau about pine-trees and Indian relics, in his hermitage at Walden” (p. 406).

833c W., “Victor Hugo’s ‘Nature,’” *Appleton’s Journal of Literature, Science, and Art*, 4 (5 November 1870), 550-552.

Letter to the editor in rebuttal to item 833a above, in which Burroughs says Victor Hugo describes “a mad-dog nature”: “To insist that [Hugo’s] works shall be classed as monstrosities, because their treatment of the natural world, like that of Rembrandt or Turner in painting, or Æschylus or Shakespeare in poetry, is not in the manner of Mr. Thoreau, who, [Burroughs] thinks, looked upon Nature ‘with a kindred eye,’ is to deny to Art her time-founded privilege, and to dishonor and proscribe the great artists and poets I have named, whose works are, one and all, as void of the ‘homely Nature’ and as wide of ‘the simple fact’ which fascinate your critic as any of Victor Hugo’s can possibly.” (p. 552).

## 1872

860a George Alfred Townsend, “The Chesapeake Peninsula,” *Scribner’s Monthly*, 3 (March 1872), 513-524.

Passing reference in opening sentence: “Cape Cod, Long Island, and the Eastern Shore of Maryland were our three

peninsulas of the lost and vague, until Thoreau, Roosevelt, and the newspaper tourists shed light upon the former two" (p. 513).

### 1873

875a "Recent Literature," *Atlantic Monthly*, 31 (March 1873), 358-365.

Review of Bronson Alcott's *Concord Days*. Reviewer comments: "Most interesting are the remarks on notable writers of past and present times; but we shall naturally look a little closer at the pages devoted to Concord celebrities. Thoreau and Emerson are charmingly exhibited in clear and penetrating sentences, but we are inclined to doubt that the writer has caught Hawthorne's significance in all particulars. . . . Mr. Alcott is a delicate idealist; his book is a flowering of this idealism. . . ."

877a "Recent Literature," *Atlantic Monthly*, 31 (April 1873), 490-501.

Passing reference to Thoreau in a discussion of Wilson Flagg's nature writing: "Imagine an amiable Thoreau,—if you can" (p. 497).

892a "New Publications," review of Channing's *Thoreau: The Poet-Naturalist*, [*Boston*] *Saturday Evening Gazette*, 13 September 1873, 4:4.

900a A. B. Harris, "Indian Pipes," *Appleton's Journal*, 10 (27 September 1873), 402-403.

Uses Thoreau to introduce an account of searching for flora: "Thoreau was in the habit of saying that one could always find what one sought for, or words to that effect—the special flower, fern, lichen, bird, or insect; and, doubtless, in the main he was correct. But one must use common-sense, as on other subjects, and know something about the habits and haunts of plant or creature, and go at the right season—although *he* could find violets in November. But in *his* case Nature made an exception; she showed him her hidden treasures, and granted unusual tokens" (p. 402).

904a "The Concord Public Library. Dedication of the New Building," *Boston Evening Journal*, 2 October 1873, 1:7-8.

Prints Emerson's address in which he says of Thoreau: "Henry Thoreau was born in this town, a man of true genius, whose friends could not separate his genius from his character, or decide which exalted him most in this regard. His books praise him in the hands and hearts of multitudes in this country and in England." He then quotes from Thoreau's letter to Lucy Brown of January 23, 1843.

912a "Literary Notes," review of Channing's *Thoreau the Poet Naturalist*, *Appleton's Journal of Literature, Science, and Art*, 10 (25 October 1873), 542.

"Assuming almost too much general knowledge of the retired, withdrawing poet-naturalist, it studies the lessons and the traits of his life from the point of view of a most appreciative friendship; and, in a style almost too fragmentary, it sketches episodes from his mental as from his actual career. The book was probably written for a circle comparatively small; but, to those whose interest in that circle and its life is very deep, it will prove a most valuable memorial, and will bear the evidence of an intimate knowledge few were permitted to share."

### 1874

935a "The Bookmakers," [*New York*] *Evening Post*, 2 December 1874, 1:2.

Of Ticknor and Fields, the author says, "[Thoreau's] first book, 'A Week on the Concord River,' was published at his own expense. It fell flat, and the author, disgusted, ordered the whole edition to be sent to his house in Concord, where he stored the volumes away in an attic. Soon afterwards Ticknor & Fields discovered a copy of it, appreciated its merits and offered to take the edition. They sold the whole promptly, and this led to the publication by them of his other books, which proved to be exceptionally popular."

### 1877

971a Joel Benton, "John Burroughs," *Scribner's Monthly*, 13 (January 1877), 336-341.

Burroughs "has won the well-recognized position, which no one has held so well since Thoreau's death, of our Prophet of Outdoordom." "Like Thoreau, he can be happy walking through a swamp in the snow-porridge and desolation of a winter night, and find more rapture than most of us extract from a perfect morning in June." "As Thoreau when some one on a walk asked him for an Indian's arrow immediately stooped down and picked one up, so [Burroughs's] visual sense seems to respond to every interrogation the spirit prompts" (pp. 336, 340, 341).

975a "Recent Literature," *Atlantic Monthly*, 40 (July 1877), 113.

As an example of John Burroughs's critical acumen, the author uses this example: "Thoreau is the Lamb of New England fields and woods, and Lamb is the Thoreau of London streets and clubs."

978a "Literary Matters," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 28 September 1877, 6:3.

"Thoreau brought his disciples face to face with the great mysteries of nature and showed them the vast difference between God's world and man's world, but Thoreau's appreciation was no keener, nor his insight truer, than that of John Burroughs."

987a "New Publications," review of *Thoreau: His Life and Aims*, [*Boston*] *Saturday Evening Gazette*, 1 December 1877, 4:2.

### 1878

1024a "Editor's Literary Record," review of *Thoreau, His Life and Aims*, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 56 (March 1878), 628.

The book "is rather a eulogy than a biography. The author compares the object of his admiration with St. Francis of Assisi, and he really does seem to make out that there is possible such sympathy between man and the brute creation, illustrated by Thoreau's experience, that there may be some basis of fact underlying the legends of the power of the saint over the birds, the beasts, and the fishes. There was little in the life of Thoreau to relate; the aim of our author appears to be to bring his readers into sympathy with nature by bringing them into sympathy with her lover and interpreter. The book is a small one, easily carried in the pocket, and a capital companion for a ramble in the woods and the fields."

1036a “Books of the Day,” review of *Thoreau, His Life and Aims*, *Appleton’s Journal: A Monthly Miscellany of Popular Literature*, n.s. 4 (April 1878), 389-390.

Approximately 750-word review. Author says, “At first glance it is somewhat surprising that the first really adequate and appreciative analysis of Thoreau’s life and character should come to us from the hand of an Englishman; but an easy explanation is found in the fact that foreigners are always on the lookout for something abnormal and peculiar in our intellectual and social development, and English critics, in particular, have long ago settled it that whatever is odd and *outré* among us is most likely to be truly characteristic. Thoreau was unquestionably odd, and his life and opinions eccentric; therefore he must be more distinctively American than the orthodox and commonplace occupants of our literary Pantheon. . . . [B]ut as it happens that Thoreau, whether as a man or as a writer, is well worthy of all the study which either curiosity or sympathy is likely to prompt, and any theory is excusable, however mistaken it may be, which leads to such a suggestive bit of critical interpretation as Mr. H. A. Page’s ‘Study of Thoreau.’”

## 1879

1097a Thomas Wentworth Higginson, “Recent Essays,” *North American Review*, 129 (July 1879), 104, 105.

Review of John Burroughs, *Locusts and Wild Honey* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, 1879). Higginson comments on the attitude toward Greek literature by Burroughs and Thoreau: “Thoreau knew the Greeks better than Mr. Burroughs, and it was for the ‘refinement’ and ‘perfection’ of their work that he praised them, not for shaggy strength.” Higginson concludes: “though his thoughts often take a flavor from Emerson or Thoreau, [Burroughs] has studied well in their school, and his observations are his own.”

1106a [Curtis, George William,] “Editor’s Easy Chair,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 59 (November 1879), 946.

“If Plato’s Academy was to be revived upon the Western continent, no spot could have been more fitting than the banks of the tranquil Concord, where the Revolutionary farmers fired their famous shot, the home of Emerson and Thoreau and Alcott, and for some years of Hawthorne.”

## 1880

1112a Grindall Reynolds, “Concord,” *History of Middlesex County Massachusetts*, ed. Samuel Adams Drake (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1880), 1:404.

“Henry D. Thoreau was born in Boston, but came to Concord in boyhood, and lived and died here, and found, in its quiet rivers, lakes, and woods, inspiration for works which are full of the flavor of Nature.”

1114a “Culture and Progress,” *Scribner’s Monthly*, 19 (March 1880), 792.

Review of Thomas Wentworth Higginson’s *Short Studies of American Authors*. Brief mention of Thoreau’s unsold volumes of *A Week*.

## 1881

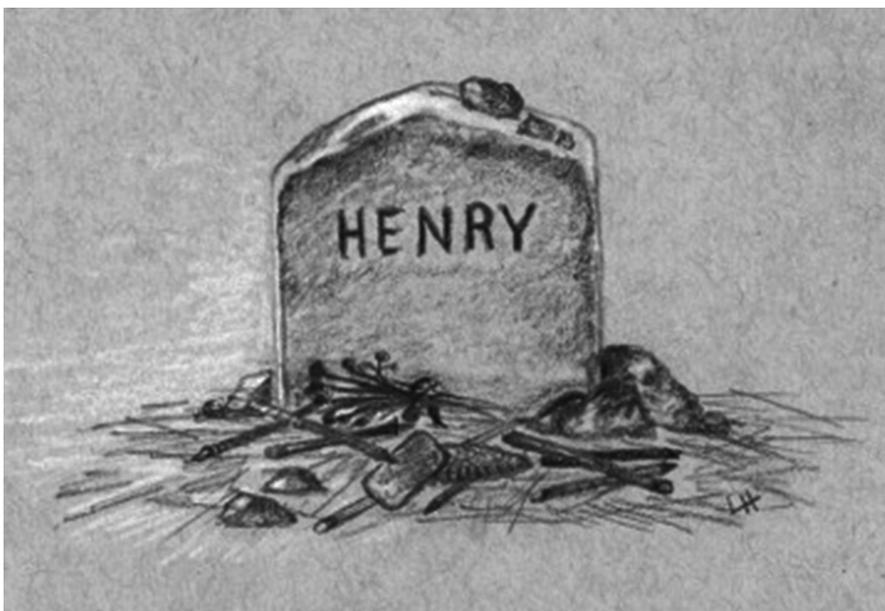
1166a A. Bowman Blake, “Philosophy at Concord,” *Appleton’s Journal: A Magazine of General Literature*, n.s. 10 (January 1881), 63-69.

Description of the 1880 Concord School of Philosophy with passing references to Thoreau: his bust was one of several displayed in the room; many people attending had “known and loved” Thoreau and his contemporaries; a morning devoted to Thoreau was “especially rich in this word-painting” (p. 67).

1178a “New Publications,” review of *Early Spring in Massachusetts*, *Saturday Evening Gazette*, 5 March 1881, 4:2-3.

1201a John Burroughs, “Thoreau’s Journal,” review of *Early Spring in Massachusetts*, *Christian Union*, 20 April 1881, 372:3, 373:1-3.

An approximately 3,000-word review in which Burroughs finds the volume monotonous but praises Thoreau’s sensibility. “Of necessity there is quite a monotony in the book, the same signs and motions of approaching spring occurring again and again. A much more readable and valuable book for the general public, or even for the special reader of Thoreau, could have been made if about one-third of the present matter had been discarded. . . .” “[A]s a rule Thoreau is best when he has something real and tangible to describe, and that rare spiritual and poetic light in him is turned upon some fact or phenomenon of nature about him. His concrete experience, what he saw and felt, and suffered or enjoyed, is of interest to all men, because he was a man of singularly sensitive and truthful nature, and things seen through his eyes are seen in relief and strikingly, with the halo of the ideal about them; but his speculations, especially his self



Courtesy of the artist

“Henry’s Stone” by Lauren Hehmeyer

catechisings and genuflections, and his belittling of the lives and pursuits of the rest of mankind, are less worth attending to.”

1224a “Editor’s Literary Record,” review of *Early Spring in Massachusetts*, *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 64 (December 1881), 152-153.

Approximately 500-word review. “The record of [Thoreau’s] observations, if less unstudied and self-forgetful than the delightful jottings of Gilbert White, is still very charming, giving the reader close glimpses of nature, and describing the innumerable secrets she revealed to him with graphic fidelity. But it is more than this. It is also a transcript of the mind of the poet-philosopher, and is opulent in subtle or profound reflections and condensed poetical utterances. Thoreau chose nature rather than man for his companion, not only because he loved nature better than he loved man, but because man always bored him, while nature never did. There was some latent selfishness and self-conceit in this.”

### 1882

1253a “Literary Notices,” review of Sanborn’s *Henry D. Thoreau*, *American Church Review*, No. 138 (July 1882), 283-284.

Calls Sanborn “better qualified than perhaps any one else to give Thoreau his rightful place in a great religious and literary movement.” Sanborn “puts this singularly eccentric and brilliant personage properly before the world.” “Mr. Sanborn has done Thoreau’s genius an imperishable service and himself great credit in this little volume. And yet Thoreau was such an exceptional being, his tastes and opinions were so entirely out of accord with the practical majority, that it is quite possible to dismiss it with a sneer and say that it is ‘much ado about nothing.’”

1255a “New Publications,” review of Sanborn’s *Henry D. Thoreau*, *Saturday Evening Gazette*, 1 July 1882, 1:8.

1314a “Transcendentalists,” *New York Times*, 23 October 1882, 2-6.

Passing mention of Thoreau as one of the now-dead original Transcendentalists who wrote for the *Dial*.

### 1883

1328a “Literature,” *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 25 (March 1883), 790-792.

Review of Thomas R. Lounsbury, *James Fenimore Cooper* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882). “[E]ven as mere description, we would rather have a few pages of ‘Walden’ or ‘The Maine Woods’ than all the pictures of lake, and sea, and forest that Cooper ever drew” (p. 792).

1328b A. F., “Mr. Emerson in the Lecture Room,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 51 (June 1883), 818-832.

Prints a letter written by a young man who heard Emerson’s lecture on “Notes on the History of the Intellect” at Harvard in the spring of 1870. Quotes two passages in which Emerson mentions Thoreau: “My friend Thoreau was full of fanciful suggestions from natural objects,” followed by several examples. Toward the conclusion of his lecture, Emerson described a kind of hero: “they are left alone, for the most part, as gods are; they are elemental, and not made for ball-rooms,—not heroes of communities; nothing could be more private, but yet always able to come in exigency and

ready for our sorriest plight. Such are strong in the drudgeries of endeavor; they excel in extricating us from bad society. To such a hero as I have described, men will listen as if they were under a perpetual spell. Such I call not so much men as influences! I knew one: he was at this university; of all unknown and unseen. I will read you something he has left, to show you how he looked upon the world.” The poem was Thoreau’s “The Stranger” (pp. 822, 832).

1337a C. B. T., “Concord Memories,” [*New York*] *Semi Weekly Evening Post*, 11 September 1883, 1:5-6.

“Concord is, or should be, the Mecca of the cultivated; . . . Memories of Hawthorne and Emerson, of Thoreau, Channing, and Margaret Fuller still invest it. . . . The only house in Concord that can be said to have been distinctively Thoreau’s home was the little shed on a sand-bar of Walden Pond, which he built as a protest against the follies and complex wants of society.” Author also describes the Thoreau family grave site.

### 1884

1364a “New Publications,” review of *Summer*, *Saturday Evening Gazette*, 14 June 1884, 1:8.

1387a “An English Estimate of Thoreau,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, 30 July 1884, 4:4-5.

Excerpts from the review of *Walden* in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, item 1383 in Scharnhorst.

1391a “Books of the Month,” review of *Summer*, *Atlantic Monthly*, 54 (August 1884), 286.

“Thoreau suffers far less than Hawthorne by this kind of posthumous publication; or rather—for Hawthorne does not suffer—there is less sense of the matter being raw material. Thoreau’s confessed books never had any constructive art. They were all a series of notes, and the reader is thus well satisfied with each successive selection, even though Thoreau himself did not make it.”

### 1885

1425a E. F. H., “Review of Current Literature,” *Unitarian Review and Religious Magazine*, 23 (March 1885), 276-279.

Review of John Burroughs, *Fresh Fields* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1884). “One long ago learned from Thoreau that it is possible to go travelling with a technical observer of nature, without losing any of its beauty. . . . Thoreau is the more restless and unconventional of the two, and yet each is sufficiently fixed in his well-worn orbit. If Burroughs lacks Thoreau’s Orientalism and his general *abandon* and untamableness, his sympathy with nature is equally intense. . . . Remembering Thoreau’s solitary trappings over New England and Canada, one cannot help noting the contrasts.” The reviewer concludes that Burroughs is “the nearer and more intelligible of the two” (pp. 276-277).

1430a “Philosophy at Concord,” [*New York*] *Semi Weekly Evening Post*, 4 August 1885, 1:8-9.

Report of a reading given by H. G. O. Blake at the annual Concord School of Philosophy. “Thoreau has been called ‘not only provincial, but parochial,’ and there is always something of monotony in his style; but those who were on reading terms with

Thoreau before, no doubt found the extracts pithy and agreeable.” The author quotes Blake’s description of his friendship with Thoreau: “Mr. Blake said that his relation to Thoreau could hardly be called one of personal friendship; its impersonality was its most remarkable feature.”

### 1886

1449a Frederick Wedmore, “To Millicent, from America,” *Temple Bar* 77 (May 1886), 233-245.

Describes visit to Concord, where the author went to Walden Pond, “by which Thoreau lived, and where he built himself a hut that he might observe nature in solitude.”

1449b Frederick Wedmore, “To Millicent, from America,” *Littell’s Living Age* 55 (24 July 1886), 230-237.

Reprint of item 1449a above.

1450a E. F. H., “Review of Current Literature,” *Unitarian Review and Religious Magazine*, 26 (August 1886), 185-186.

Review of John Burroughs, *Signs and Seasons* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1886). “There is nothing oracular and shy and impalpable, as there is in much of Thoreau’s outdoor writings. No one has written so well of Thoreau as Burroughs; but, except for their one ground of sympathy, no two could be farther apart in fundamental nature and tendency than they. The busy, pragmatic accountant, the expert at tangled books of debit and credit, is as quick and loving a reporter of the life of thicket and stream as he of the Walden experiment and the dreamful Week on Concord and Merrimack. But one all the time feels the difference. Burroughs’ mild and half unconscious protest does not prevent his being in many respects a very good exponent of our nineteenth century civilization, while Thoreau struggled to get as far away from it as possible.”

1452a D. A. Goodsell, “The American in Literature,” *The Chautauquan*, 7 (October 1886), 23-25.

Two passing references to Thoreau: “There is a certain face, long, thin, with high forehead, blue or gray eyes, with a ploughshare nose; bright, sweet, acute, refined, intense, dreamy, yet strong, which is wholly New England. It is the face of Emerson, of Thoreau, of John Brown” (p. 23), and “in Henry D. Thoreau and John Burroughs, and in a less degree in Dr. Abbott of New Jersey, we have something which is purely American. Their culture is English, but the tone, the philosophy, the wit, the close observation of nature, the pantheistic sympathy with animate creation will be found a combination which exists nowhere else” (p. 25).

### 1887

1484a “New Publications,” review of *Winter*, [Boston] *Saturday Evening Gazette*, 26 November 1887, 4:2.

1503a “Literary Notices,” review of *Winter*, *Hartford Courant*, 22 December 1887, 3:1.

“Henry D. Thoreau, in spite of the conceit the man had, is always read with interest, and any thing new of his is welcome. A lot of extracts from his journal, hitherto unpublished, have been gathered together and printed in a handsome volume under the title of *Winter*, which is the theme of much that he writes of, though there are plenty of asides.”

### 1888

1512a “Thoreau, Henry D.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 9th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1888), 23:313-314.

1512b “Thoreau on Books,” *The Bookworm* (London: Elliot Stock, 1888), p. 349.

Quotation on books from the chapter on “Reading” in *Walden*.

1512c “Cabot’s *Life of Emerson*,” *Quarterly Review*, 166 (January 1888), 154.

Review of James Elliot Cabot, *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1887). Emerson “was a source of living energy in wide fields of thought; but while Curtis, Clough, Margaret Fuller, Higginson, Lowell, Sterling, Theodore Parker, Thoreau, Winthrop, and Whitman acknowledged their debt to Emerson, none of them became his imitators.”

1512d W. H. H., “Book Reviews,” review of *Winter, The Writer: A Monthly Magazine for Literary Workers*, 2 (January 1888), 68

“Thoreau is winning since his death the recognition that was denied him while he was yet alive. His fame has been of slow growth, but for that very reason it will be the more likely to endure. No other American writer has ever described Nature so delightfully as he describes it. His best life was out of doors, and nothing about him escaped his observation. These extracts from his journal are full of interest, and their keen philosophy and charming descriptions will delight every cultivated reader.”

1516a “Books of the Month,” review of *Winter, Atlantic Monthly*, 61 (March 1888), 431.

“This volume . . . will have a strong interest for lovers of a writer who is winning a place in men’s regard as well as holding his place in literature. It seems to us that a softer manner pervades this book, and that one might almost take it as expressing riper thought; but that, of course, can be only fancy, since the plan of editing precludes such a notion. If the interest in Thoreau increases, his admirers and students will begin to wish that they had his writings before them more distinctly in chronological order. Mr. Blake’s careful dating, however, of these volumes of extracts will put the reader in possession of the means of such a survey.”

1518a “Cabot’s *Life of Emerson*,” *Littell’s Living Age* 61 (3 March 1888), 528.

Reprint of item 1512b above.

1524a “Emma Lazarus,” *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, 36 (October 1888), 878.

The author quotes Lazarus’s description of a visit with Ellery Channing and his reminiscences about Thoreau.

### 1889

1539a E[wald] F[lügel.] “Bücheranzeigen,” *Anglia*, 12 (1889), 221.

Review of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Short Studies of American Authors* (Boston, Lee and Shepard, 1888). “The sketch of Thoreau is the freshest and provides a counterweight to that of James Russell Lowell in *My Study Windows*,” item 1441 in Scharnhorst.

1540a William Sharp, "The Sonnet in America," *National Review*, 13 (April 1889), 191.

"Emerson, potentially the greatest of American poets, rests beside a comrade to whom rhythmic metrical speech was still more emphatically denied, his friend Thoreau, who, like him, now slumbers deep in Sleepy Hollow."

1542a William Sharp, "The Sonnet in America," *Littell's Living Age*, 66 (11 May 1889), 364.

Reprint of item 1540a above.

1548a "Outdoors and Indoors," *Atlantic Monthly* 64 (November 1889), 762.

Review of Bradford Torrey, *A Rambler's Lease* (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1889). "Mr. Torrey has not a grain of Thoreau's passion for 'going through a patch of scrub-oak in a bee-line;' it is not the wildness but the home quality of Nature that draws him most strongly to her.

### 1890

1575a Newman Smyth, "The Lake Country of New England," *Scribner's Magazine*, 8 (October 1890), 493-506.

Recounts the author's travels in the Maine woods, using Thoreau's phrase as his title. Several passing references to Thoreau.

1586a "New Publications," review of *Thoreau's Thoughts*, *Saturday Evening Gazette*, 15 November 1890, 4-3.

### 1891

1618a E[wald] F[lügel], "Amerikanische Litteratur," review of Sanborn's *Henry D. Thoreau*, in *Mitteilungen aus dem Gesammten Gebiete der Englischen Sprache und Litteratur*, 1 (March 1891), 365-368.

1632a Walter Lewin, "Obituary. James Russell Lowell," *The Academy*, 40 (22 August 1891), 155.

Speaking of Lowell's "excess of 'self-consciousness,' that sometimes barred him for forming an impersonal and impartial estimate," Lewin says that Lowell's "estimate of Thoreau is as perverse as Margaret Fuller's estimate of himself. When his self-consciousness was excited, his criticism was hopeless."

1632b John Burroughs, "A Study of Analogy," *Atlantic Monthly*, 68 (September 1891), 340-347.

"All trades, pursuits, occupations, furnish types or symbols for the mind. The word 'whitewash' has become a very useful one. Thoreau said he would not be as one who drives a nail into mere lath and plaster" (p. 341).

### 1892

1639a *International Cyclopædia: A Compendium of Human Knowledge*. Ed. H. T. Peck (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1892), 14:400.

Biographical entry.

1674a Review of *Autumn*, *Saturday Evening Gazette*, 17 September 1892, 1-1.

### 1893

1711a John W. Chadwick, "Recollections of George William Curtis," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 86 (February 1893), 469-476.

Describes meeting with Curtis in Concord. "Thoreau was then a few months dead; but even in health he was a man who 'would not go round the corner to see the universe blow up'" (p. 469).

### 1894

1780a "Comment on New Books," review of the first four volumes of the Riverside Edition of Thoreau's *Works*, *Atlantic Monthly*, 73 (January 1894), 138.

"From the nature of his studies and interests Thoreau was a journalizer rather than an artist. The artist faculty for wholes is strongest in Walden, for there again he is dealing with the one subject which possessed anything like unity in his mind, namely, Himself; but no one can read certain fragments of Thoreau's writing without discovering a singularly artistic power of creating epigrammatic sentences, and there are single scenes and incidents which are instinct with that fidelity to nature which is all the more striking when taken in conjunction with a mind so introspective as that of Thoreau."

1785a "Comment on New Books," review of the final six volumes of the Riverside Edition of Thoreau's *Works*, *Atlantic Monthly*, 73 (February 1894), 277.

"The new grouping of the volumes of fragments is more orderly than before, and in the Miscellanies some uncollected matter is for the first time made convenient to the student of Thoreau. We say 'student' advisedly, for we greatly doubt if the idle reader will attempt his translations from Pindar. A general index in the final volume is an admirable appointment, for one's recollection of Thoreau is of bits which it is hard to localize. Each volume besides has its own index. In re-reading one discovers single sentences which ought to be proverbs, so compact are they of rare wisdom."

1823a "Book Reviews," review of Sanborn's *Familiar Letters of Thoreau*, *Public Opinion*, 17 (25 October 1894), 732.

"It is a sign of health in our American life that the writings of Thoreau should be increasingly in demand. When a man of the past reaches the point at which large numbers call for all kinds of knowledge about him, and all possible products of his thought, it is pretty certain that he had something to say which is of sterling worth. Curiosity in many cases soon passes into indifference and neglect. But when it passes into careful examination and then into devoted admiration, truth must be present in some form. Many people have thought of Thoreau as a 'crank,' a unique personality, who would serve as a temporary interest because of his knowledge of and interest in Nature. But it is found to their surprise that he is one of the gifted interpreters of Nature, a man who lived the life of Nature because he could not breathe apart from it, and therefore knew in his soul the secret goings of the life of Nature.

The letters in this volume confirm this view. Many of them illustrate aspects of his character which we are glad to study in this more familiar way. There is much of his common daily life here, and we see the author of these letters in all his wholesomeness of life and character. The volume will be a treasure to every lover of Thoreau, and will, perhaps, serve to acquaint many for the first time with the charm of his personality."

1896

1944a "The Genius of Thoreau," *Public Opinion*, 21 (3 December 1896), 727-728.

Condensed reprint of Bradford Torrey, "Thoreau," *Atlantic Monthly* 78 (December 1896), 822-232. Item 1939 in Scharnhorst.

## International Symposium

*October 19-20, 2017*

École Normale Supérieure de Lyon,  
Lyon, France

# Thoreau from across the Pond

Organized by Julien Nègre (ENS de Lyon),

François Specq (ENS de Lyon), and

Laura Dassow Walls (University of Notre Dame)

### Guest speakers (confirmed):

Branka Arsić (Columbia University)

William Rossi (University of Oregon)

To submit a proposal, please send an abstract (250-300 words) and a short CV to

[thoreau.lyon2017@ens-lyon.fr](mailto:thoreau.lyon2017@ens-lyon.fr)

by September 15, 2016.

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Courtesy of Will and Donna Elwell

Setting the ridge pole on the Thoreau Cabin Pipeline Barricade in Ashfield, Massachusetts. The structure was built in the path of the proposed Northeast Direct Energy Pipeline in protest on March 16, 2016.

## Notes & Queries

by Mark Gallagher

In March, a Western Massachusetts barn builder by the name of Will Elwell erected a cabin in the town of Ashfield. It was built on a tract of land that was to be used for a new natural gas pipeline. This protest indeed paid homage to Thoreau, whose writings on civil disobedience are what inspired Elwell and a group of environmentalists calling themselves the “Sugar Shack Alliance” to disrupt and draw public attention to the proposed project that would have transported fracked gas to Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

So far, this act of civil disobedience seems to be working. The headline in the April 20 *Globe* says it all: “Kinder Morgan shelves \$3 billion pipeline project.” Citing “stiff consumer and political opposition,” the energy corporation scrapped its original plan. It is, however, going forward with a pipeline to Connecticut, one that may cut through Otis State Forest in Massachusetts, one that will surely be contested as well. In any event, the symbolic gesture on the part of Elwell certainly resonated with citizens across the Commonwealth.

I recently spoke with Will about his act of civil disobedience and asked him why he chose the Walden cabin as a symbol of protest because he was inspired by Thoreau. He says “We, as citizens, have a right and an obligation to shape our time, our government and our planet; socially, politically, economically, environmentally—and to do it in a civil manner.”

**James Finley**, who first brought the Kinder Morgan pipeline controversy to our attention, shares his comments on an article he read in the *New York Times* Sunday Review, one written by *Walden*

on *Wheels* author Ken Ilgunas about his experience walking the proposed Keystone Pipeline (“This is our country. Let’s walk it.” 23 April 2016). “Ilgunas’s meditation on the lack of access for walkers in the United States,” James says, “reflects attitudes toward private property and a history of eroding roaming rights (for racist and classist ends). At the same time, it mourns how Thoreauvian-style sauntering is pretty much impossible in America today.”

*Downeast* magazine ran a story marking the 50th anniversary of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. It mentions Thoreau and Polis’s trip and contains photos by Dom and Jarrod from the 150th-Thoreau-Wabanaki Tour. You can find it online at [downeast.com/allagash50](http://downeast.com/allagash50).

**Jym St. Pierre** tells us that Thoreau’s words are being used to stir support for a new national park in the state of Maine. A letter in the January 4 issue of the *Bangor Daily News* quotes Thoreau on the subject of “wildness.” Meanwhile, former Acadia National Park superintendents Sheridan Steele and W. Kent Olson previously voiced their support of a new park in an editorial that acknowledges Thoreau’s writings on the North Woods region, going as far to

suggest that the new national park be named after him.

**Brian Bartlett** calls our attention to Thoreau’s influence on the character of Spenser in the series of novels by Robert Parker:

“In one scene of his 1976 novel *Promised Land*, Spenser says, ‘I try to be honorable. But I know that’s embarrassing to hear. It’s embarrassing to say. But I believe most of the nonsense that Thoreau was preaching. And I have spent a long time working on getting myself to where I could do it. Where I could live life largely on my own terms’ (116). ‘And yet,’ responds his loving partner Susan Silverman, ‘you constantly get yourself involved in other lives and in other people’s troubles. This is no Walden Pond you’ve withdrawn to.’ (Yes, one could point out that Thoreau did sometimes get involved in ‘other peoples troubles,’ including those of his family, the Emersons, other neighbors, and escaping slaves.) Later in the novel, Spenser says to another character, ‘Thoreau said something once about judging the cost of things in terms of how much life he had to spend to get it. You and Harv aren’t getting your money’s worth. Thrift, I guess. It violates my sense of thrift’ (203).

“In other novels we learn that Spenser, following American private-eye traditions, has an unusual breadth of reading that includes Keats, Shelley, Kipling, Eliot, Frost, Auden, and Simon Schama’s *Landscape and Memory* (which refers to Thoreau on a dozen pages). In the 1981 novel with the somewhat Thoreauvian title, *Early Autumn*, Spenser rescues a troubled teen and drives him to the woods of Maine where he teaches him ‘autonomy’ (a key word in the novel) by building a cabin with him. At one point he tells his protégé: ‘Reality is uncertain. Lot of people need certainty.... Businessmen learn the way businessmen are supposed to be. Professors learn the way professors are supposed to be. Construction workers learn the way construction workers are supposed to be.

They spend their lives trying to be what they're supposed to be and being scared they aren't. Quiet desperation.' Then the narration continues: 'We passed a white clapboard roadside vegetable stand with last year's signs still up and the empty display cases dour in the momentary headlights. NATIVE CORN. BEANS. And then the pine woods along the road...' (139-40). *Walden* is there not only in the echo of the book's famous line about quiet desperation, but also in the combination of beans and pines."

**Henrik Otterberg** did a little digging on the derivation of the proverb "Scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," finding in Thoreau's favor:

"In Thoreau's *Journal* of August 6, 1851, he makes a virtue of necessity by lamenting far-off travel, and in the process, invents the modern version of a popular phrase: 'Now the American goes to England while the Englishman comes to America in order to describe the country— No doubt there some advantages in this kind of mutual criticism— But might there not be invented a better way of coming at the truth than this scratch-my back & I'll scratch your's method?'"

"Perhaps in Thoreau we have a prescient global-footprint critic. As to where he got the phrase from, it seems to have been current since the seventeenth century, possessing a nautical derivation. I quote from a Google search on Grammar-Monster.com: 'In the English Navy during the 17th century, the punishments for being absent, drunk, or disobedient were severe. One punishment would see the offender tied to the ship's mast and flogged with a lash (known as a cat o' nine tails) by another crew member. Crew members struck deals between themselves that they would deliver only light lashes with the whip (i.e., just 'scratching' the offender's back) to ensure they were treated the same should they ever find themselves on the receiving end at some time in the future.'

"I did a quick check in some copies of Thoreau's known (owned, borrowed or otherwise referred to in the writings) reference works: the expression is not found in Bartlett's *Dictionary of Americanisms* (1848) nor in his edition of Roget's *Thesaurus* (1852, too late anyway), or Wright's *Dictionary of Obsolete or Provincial English* (1857, ditto). Nor is it in Bailey's *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1759 edition), or in Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1848); neither in Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1828 edition), which Webster relied heavily on, or indeed in Charles Richardson's *A New Dictionary of the English Language* (1839 edition). There could be other places to look, of course, but my hunch is that, in Thoreau's day, some form of the expression could be heard now and then in and around the salty, maritime city of Boston."

Editor's Note: *The Yale Book of Quotations* attributes the expression to Thoreau, but the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*, no surprise, gives some Grub Streeter the credit ("Scratch me, says one, and I'll scratch thee." E. Ward, *All Men Mad* [1704]).

Speaking of idioms, **Clarence Burley** shares the following from the New England Historical Society. Citing Michael West's *Transcendental Wordplay: America's Romantic Pundsters and the Search for the Language of Nature* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press 2000), the NEHS blog claims that the word "OK" first appears in the *Boston Post* on March 23, 1839 ("An LOL Story: OK Is Born in Boston in 1839," 8 April 2016). It also points to the word's early appearance in Thoreau's journal for after April 26, 1850. "Once, a Concord tailor told him the pants he wanted were

out of fashion. He wondered where she got the idea. Oblivious to clothing fashion but susceptible to linguistic fads, Thoreau wrote, 'It is some Oak Hall O Call—OK all correct establishment which she knows but I do not.'"

**Michael Berger** reports that "an appreciation of *Walden* appeared as a cover story in the St. John's College alumni magazine, *The College*, followed by two profiles of alumni who struck out to live their own lives deliberately. One transformed an abandoned historic building in Cleveland into a cozy neighborhood pub, and the other became a beekeeper and journalist, researching beekeeping worldwide. The title of the appreciation is 'Freedom upon an Achillean Shore,' by St. John's tutor David Townsend. It recommends taking *Walden* with us, as Henry took the Iliad to the cabin, and reading it as it deserves, to help us chart our own lives."

More from Mike: "Thoreau was fond of etymologies and sometimes made them up. One of his favorite words is deliberate, from *librare*, to weigh. He counsels us to live deliberately, to weigh our priorities, skim the superfluities away and drive life into a corner, sifting for the essentials. But another way to think of this word is through a different root, *liber*, meaning free, and *liberare*, to make free. So in addition to weighing, to deliberate might also mean to take that course of action that liberates, that makes one free—free of the burdens of heedless living, free to pursue what matters most."

**Donna Koppenhafer** stumbled across a link to a November 2014 story on *elitedaily.com* titled "The Science Of Simplicity: Why Successful People Wear The Same Thing Every Day." It quotes T on the importance to "simplify, simplify," but, surprisingly, fails to mention his more fitting advice pertaining to one's personal wardrobe (see "Economy").

Some thoughts by **Vic Friesen** on the virtue of simplicity:

"Thoreau's motto, applicable to all things, was 'Simplify, simplify.' (Still, as a modern wag has put it, he should have said it only once had he *really* meant it.) Writers take note: he did *not* say, 'Discombobulate, discombobulate.' The dictum relates to George Orwell's later statement in 'Politics and the English Language': 'never use a long word where a short one will do, (or, if you must, perpetually refrain from the utilization of a gargantuan vocabulary where a miniature form provides sufficiency).

**Mark Sullivan** recommends Jennifer Raab's new book, *Frederic Church: The Art and Science of Detail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015): "It contains a lengthy comparison of how Thoreau and the Hudson River School painter Frederic Edwin Church attempt 'to reconcile part and whole, the visible and the vast.... Both men struggled to integrate science and belief, the minutiae of observable nature and the immensity of God's nature.'"

**Thomas Lynn** says "bonjour" and tells us that Thoreau was the subject of a recent article in the French *Philosophie Magazine*, introducing Thoreau to French audiences who may be unfamiliar with the "grand auteur."

The *New Yorker* online published a piece in its March 28 humor column titled "Journal from a #Blessed Road Trip, Inspired by Henry David Thoreau." **Esteban Córdoba** found it rather droll.

A few of you wrote asking how to spell Thoreau's Abenaki name given to him by Joe Polis. In *The Maine Woods*, Thoreau says that Joe Polis called him "The Great Paddler." According to **Chris Sockalexis** at last year's Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, the Abenaki version of that is "Kachi Awikani."



Courtesy of the artist

“Yo Thoreau” by Sean Fleming

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to our friend **Richard Winslow III**, whose tireless scholarship over the past several years has produced a third installment in his bibliographic series documenting Thoreau’s critical reception. According to Bob Hudspeth, “it is just the stuff that Walt Harding created the *Bulletin* to publish.” We couldn’t agree more. Thank you, Dick, for your valuable contribution to Thoreau studies. Your work is much appreciated.

• **Mark Gallagher** is the editor of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*.

**Please send your submissions  
for the *Bulletin* to the editor:**  
mark.gallagher@thoreausociety.org

Although exceptions will occasionally be made for longer pieces, in general articles and reviews should be no longer than 1500 words. Longer submissions may be forwarded by the editor to *The Concord Saunterer*. All submissions should conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The Thoreau Edition texts (Princeton University Press) should be used as the standard for quotations from Thoreau’s writings, when possible. Contributors need not be members of the Thoreau Society, but all non-members are heartily encouraged to join.

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